

**PROVIDENCE HEIGHTS
ALPHA SCHOOL
HEALTH AND SAFETY PLAN
2021-22 SCHOOL YEAR**



TRADITION.
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Introduction

Thank you to our entire Alpha community who helped to make in-person learning possible and successful last school year. While many schools in our area are discussing how to make up for learning loss, we saw growth and continued achievement and we could not have done it with you! We know that the upcoming 2021-22 school year will once again pose unique challenges, but with your continued support, patience, trust, and understanding, we are confident that we can overcome them and continue to thrive as a school and a community.

Our plan this year is to again prioritize the health and safety of our students and staff while continuing to maintain our high level of academic excellence.

That said, the health and safety of our students, staff, families and the Sisters of Divine Providence is our top priority. As a community, we trust that each of our families and our staff are and will continue to do their best to keep everyone healthy. We thank you in advance for your diligence and your adherence to the guidelines/rules presented in this document. We are truly a family and as such we are all asked again this school year to help and support each other through these ever changing times.

With all of that in mind, contained within this document is the Providence Heights Alpha School Health and Safety Plan for the return of our students and staff to school on September 1, 2021 (September 7, 2021 for Prekindergarten students). The plan that follows was informed by public health and safety guidelines, protocols and best practices recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Pennsylvania Department of Health (PADOH), Pennsylvania Department of Education (PADOE), and the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) for all brick and mortar schools – including public, charter, private, and parochial schools - at this time. Please understand that this is a fluid document and that some of the products and procedures listed below may change as we continue to monitor, evaluate, and update our plans as needed based on continued guidance from local, commonwealth, and national guidelines. We will promptly notify you of any such changes, and otherwise keep you informed to the best of our ability.

We acknowledge that parents/guardians will likely have questions and we will work to provide answers. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to our principal, Ms. Ruefle, so that we can work together to address/alleviate/resolve them to the best of our ability.



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Pandemic Coordinator/Team

<i>Individual</i>
Margaret (Peggy) Ruefle, Principal
Dana Stewart, Board President
Lisa Allen, School Nurse
Diem Nguyen, M.D
Shawn Beaman, M.D
Brandon Repko, M.D.
Heather Parker, Director of Admissions and Curriculum

Remaining Flexible and Adaptable

As a community we must be prepared to continue to be flexible in the 2021-22 school year. Although we are looking forward to returning students to the classroom in-person again this year, we also realize that there may still be short periods of disruption for a particular grade/class, or even longer periods of disruption should there be substantial spread of COVID within our school community or the community at large. Providence Heights has been working hard to once again develop a plan that combines the best health and safety practices, while still preserving the academic and core values of our school.

<i>COVID-19 Spread Level</i>	<i>Response</i>
Low to Moderate Spread	<p>Full-time Traditional In-Person instruction with health and safety protocols in place</p> <p>Live Streaming Instruction for students in grades 1-8 ONLY if they need to quarantine for an extended period of time.</p> <p>Short-term or long-term closures of classrooms or the entire campus in cases of a COVID-19 positive case or possible exposure resulting in remote learning needing to be implemented.</p>
Substantial/High Spread	Full Remote: Remote learning for all students and staff.

NOTE: At any time the principal may decide to move to Full Remote instruction for emergency reasons.



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Instructional Options

Traditional: In-Person Instruction (PK-8):

- Students will return to a traditional classroom setting with health and safety guidelines in place starting on Wednesday, September 1, 2021 for grades K-8 and Tuesday, September 7, for PreK (4 year old) students.

Remote: Live-Streaming for Longer Term Absence ONLY (Grades 1-8):

- This model will only be available on a case-by-case basis to students who will need to be absent for at least a week or more due to quarantining or other health related reasons deemed appropriate by the principal.
- Parents/guardians must provide the school staff at least 24 hours notice and must arrange to collect all student materials via a contactless pickup prior to the student live streaming.
- Students will access a live feed of their teacher(s) in the physical classroom through the Google Classroom and follow the traditional schedule throughout the school day. This will allow them real-time instruction and interaction with the teacher. This model however will allow for limited interaction with their classmates in the physical classroom.
- There will also be periods throughout the school day, for example during lunch, recess, physical education class, individual instruction, etc where the remote student may be unable to participate and the live streaming cameras will be turned off.
- *Note: Live streaming classes cannot be recorded due to privacy issues.*

Full Remote:

- All students and staff will participate in full online instruction through the Google Classroom. This model will be used only for full classroom or entire school closures.
- *Note: Full Remote Google Meets cannot be recorded due to privacy issues.*



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Communication

Providence Heights Alpha School recognizes that information and safety recommendations are constantly changing. We will continue to provide staff and parents/guardians with information as it becomes available.

School-wide:

- The Providence Heights Alpha school Healthy and Safety plan will be posted on our website.
- The Administration will provide updates to families via email messages as needed.
- The principal will be the contact person in the event of COVID positive cases or exposures in communication with the health department who will handle notifications required for contact tracing with the support of the school nurse and the Pandemic Team.
- All Alpha school staff and students will be instructed on safety protocols in place within the school.
- The school will notify parents/guardians via email or Option C indicating that their child(ren) was in a classroom with a student or staff member who has tested positive for COVID-19. (*See Exposure Guide matrix at the end of this document for next steps*)

Grades 1-8 Absence/Closure:

- In the event of a short-term or long-term closure, students will revert to the Full Remote instructional option which will run through the Google Classroom.
- All students will set up their Google Classroom accounts during the first few weeks of school.
- Should we need to go remote, instructions and/or instructional videos on how to navigate the Google Classroom to access assignments will be provided.
- In the event of an individual student(s)'s extended absence(s) of at least a week or more due to health-related reasons or quarantining, students will be able to participate in live streaming via Google Meet through the Google Classroom. *Note: Live streaming classes cannot be recorded due to privacy issues.*

Grades PreK-K Closure:

- In the event of a short-term or long-term closure, students will revert to the Full Remote instructional option. In this model, parents/guardians and students will work with their teachers to continue instruction using such avenues as email, virtual meets, and/or the student portal.
- In the event of an individual student(s)'s extended absence(s) due to health-related reasons or a quarantine, parents/guardians and students will work with their teachers to continue instruction. In this case, there will be no live streaming option, so these will act more as true absences for the student.



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Daily Health

School Health - Symptoms:

- All Providence Heights Alpha School students and staff will be required to do a self-assessment of symptoms at home before leaving for school each morning.
 - **Students or staff members should stay home if they experience any of the following:**
 - COVID-19 symptoms:
 - ✓ Subjective fever, chills, or body temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher
 - ✓ Muscle pain, body aches, headaches, or fatigue
 - ✓ Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - ✓ Cough
 - ✓ Sore throat, congestion, runny nose
 - ✓ New loss of taste or smell
 - ✓ Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
 - Other symptoms of possible concern:
 - ✓ Rash
 - ✓ Conjunctivitis (red eye)
 - ✓ Lymph node enlargement (swollen glands)
 - **Parents/guardians/staff will report possible COVID-19 symptoms and/or exposure to the school as soon as possible upon discovery.**
 - **Students may return to school after illness when:**
 - For a known or suspected COVID-19 exposure, contact your primary care physician (PCP) and follow his or her recommendations. Immediately notify the school. Please see the matrix at the end of this document for recommended protocols.
 - For all other illness, contact your primary care physician, and return to school after clearance from your PCP as well as:
 - ✓ 24 hours since last episode of active vomiting or diarrhea
 - ✓ 24 hours fever free without the use of fever-reducing medication
 - ✓ 24 hours after starting antibiotics for bacterial causes
- If students or staff become sick or symptomatic during the course of the school day, the individual will be isolated in an identified area, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be called, and likely asked to pick up their child within an hour of notification.

Hygiene and Screening:

- Students and staff will be encouraged and reminded to follow good hygiene practices, including [hand washing and/or hand sanitizing](#).
- Hand sanitizing stations are located in every classroom and in high traffic areas and will be monitored to ensure adequate inventory in all areas.



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- Students will continue to use water bottles and should all bring a filled and labeled water bottle to school daily. They will be permitted to keep their water bottles with them throughout the school day.

Social Distancing in Common Areas:

- Students and staff will be encouraged to distance as much as possible in common areas such as hallways and stairwells. Signs will be posted to promote social distancing.
- Restroom occupancy will continue to be limited and students will follow social distancing when transitioning to the restroom. Plastic shields will be placed in between sinks.

Social Distancing in Classrooms:

- Classrooms will be arranged whenever feasible to maintain 3ft of physical distancing between students/student desks, enabling most classes to return to normal.
- Signs will be posted to promote social distancing and staff and students will be reminded to maintain social distancing as much as possible throughout the school day.
- Staff will do their best to continue to educate, encourage, and enforce social distancing when possible.
- Since it may not be possible/feasible to maintain 3ft. of distance at all times, other preventative strategies will be in place to help reduce the risk of transmission.

Face Coverings:

Decisions regarding the wearing of face coverings will be based on the rate of local community transmission and recommendations from the Center for Disease Control, Pennsylvania Department of Health, Allegheny Health Department and Pennsylvania Department of Education.

- As of August 2021, we have a universal mask requirement indoors based on the aforementioned sources. All staff, students/children (over the age of 2), and visitors are required to wear a face covering while in the Alpha school buildings. Levels of transmission can be found here: <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>
- Masks should fit snugly and cover the mouth and nose at all times.
- Students will be expected to provide their own face coverings; however, additional masks will be on hand at school if needed.
- At this time, masks are optional outdoors. Masks should be worn in crowded outdoor settings when there is sustained close contact.
- Individuals not in compliance with our universal mask requirement will not be permitted in School buildings and may jeopardize enrollment.
- An exception may be made for students or staff with a documented medical reason, mental health condition, or disability precluding them from using facial coverings. Exceptions will be evaluated on a case by case basis and directed to our school nurse.
- Federal Law currently requires masks on all public transportation, including public and private school buses, all passengers and drivers on public school buses and vans must wear masks, regardless of vaccination status. This includes transportation to and from school, field trips, etc.



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Cleaning, Disinfecting, and Ventilation

Cleaning and Disinfecting:

- The entire school campus was cleaned and sanitized over the summer while it was unoccupied with CDC recommended disinfectants.
- Classrooms, common spaces, restrooms, shared equipment and high-touch surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected regularly.
- If a student tests positive for COVID-19 or a physician determines that the student is a presumed positive, then the classroom(s) in which that student was present will be blocked off and thoroughly cleaned/sanitized before reuse.

Ventilation:

- All of the classrooms at Alpha have working windows and individual A/C units that draw fresh air in. Many classrooms also have ceiling fans to circulate air. Windows will be opened whenever possible.
- Air purification units will be placed in each classroom.

Physical Materials

- Students will be required to bring their own supplies to minimize the number of shared objects in the classroom.
 - It is important that each student has their own supplies from our Summer Supply list. Items should be individually labeled whenever possible.
 - Younger students will each have a bin labeled with their name and containing all their supplies. Teachers will reach out if supplies need replenished.
 - Student belongings will be kept separated as much as possible.
- Families are asked to avoid sending any unnecessary personal items to school with their children.
- Should we have to go to full remote learning, families may sign out a laptop for at home use. Please contact the main office for details.



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Academic Day

Academic Schedules:

- Students and staff will again resume transitioning between classes as they did prior to COVID. Social distancing will be maintained as much as possible.
- Many aspects of the school day will return to normal, such as library operations, locker usage, recess, etc.

Mass:

- Mass/rosary/prayer services will continue to occur outdoors, virtually, or in the gym.

Lunch:

- Students will eat lunch in their classrooms or outdoors when weather permits again this year. Students will not be using the cafeteria.
- Students will wash or sanitize their hands before and after lunch and when eating indoors, desks will be cleaned/sanitized after lunch to avoid any allergy concerns.
- To limit shared contact, microwaves will not be available at this time. Students should bring items that do not require heating.
- Younger students should bring lunches that are ready to serve and kid friendly to limit contact (nothing that needs to be cut, peeled, opened if at all possible). Please provide utensils, napkins, condiments or anything else your child might need for lunch.

Swim:

- For health and safety reasons and as the pool is a shared space with the Sisters, Swim will not occur until such time as it is deemed safe for both the Sisters and the students.

School-wide Gathering/Assemblies:

- School-wide activities, gatherings and assemblies may be held in person or virtually, indoors or outdoors, depending on size, etc.

APEX/Daycare and Clubs/Activities:

- APEX will resume in the gallery of Ketteler with school day safety measures in place as much as possible.
- A limited number of afterschool activities will be available as well again with school day health and safety measures in place as much as possible.

Field Trips:

- Field trips will begin to resume on a limited basis based on healthy and safety guidelines/recommendations.



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Visitor Policy

At this time, a limited number of visitors will once again be welcomed into our buildings.

- Visitors during the school day will be required to check in at the main office, undergo a short questionnaire, wear a face covering, and adhere to social distancing rules as feasible.
- We will also begin to again provide opportunities for families to socialize in-person, such as at our Back to School Social, when feasible, but will still resort to online meetings when appropriate.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Arrival Procedures:

- The school secretary's office will remain where the Eagle's Nest was next to the side entrance of the main building. All students, staff, and visitors to the main building will use the side entrance.
- Arrival will occur between 7:15am and 7:40am daily for students.
- All students and staff will be asked to complete a self-assessment at home prior to coming to school. (*See the School Health- Symptoms section above for more details.*) If a student or staff member answers "Yes" to any of these questions, s/he may need to stay home. If unvaccinated, contact with a COVID-positive individual would mandate consultation with a health care provider prior to returning to school.
- All individuals will be required to wear a face covering before entering the buildings. Extra face masks will be provided if needed.

Early Dismissals & Late Arrivals:

- All early dismissals and late arrivals should be logged in the Online Dismissal System so that staff are aware and your child can be ready to leave when you arrive.

Main Building Procedure:

- If a student has an early dismissal or late arrival: Upon arrival, please proceed to the side door by the playground and buzz for pickup.

Early Learning Center (ELC) Building:

- If a student has an early dismissal or late arrival: Upon arrival, please proceed to the main doors of the Early Learning Center and buzz for pickup.

Dismissal Procedures:

- Dismissal Procedures will remain similar to last year, with bus students dismissed a few at a time followed by those students who are being picked up as "walkers."



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Monitoring Student and Staff Health

The Providence Heights Alpha School community are all in this together and as such we are relying on all of our staff, students, and families to do their very best to help us mitigate the spread of COVID-19. There is an expectation that our entire community will follow the guidelines of self-monitoring and be mindful and respectful of the health and safety of all individuals. As such, if a student is ill, it will be expected that the student will stay home. There is sometimes a temptation to give a student Tylenol or another fever reducing medication and send them to school. In today's current environment we implore all our families NOT to do this, but to always err on the side of caution and keep their child(ren) at home to protect the health and safety of our entire community. In addition, if you feel that your family has been put at risk for any reason, we ask that you immediately inform the school and quarantine if necessary. Adhering to the guidelines within this plan will help to minimize risk of exposure to COVID-19.

We understand that COVID-19 presents many challenges and that some of you will be concerned about attendance. We ask you to continue to err on the side of caution to ensure the health and safety of our entire community.

We also understand that students and staff will become sick at school. It may be a simple cold, stomach bug, or allergies, or it may be COVID-19 related. However, if a student or staff member presents any of the described symptoms of COVID-19, they may be isolated in an identified area. For the health and safety of our school community we will be again erring on the side of caution and in most cases will send these individuals home. Please be prepared for the possibility of a phone call asking you to pick up your child(ren). We realize this is an inconvenience, but we do feel that this is the best way to keep our community safe and ask that you understand and support this decision.

Students waiting to be picked up will be isolated from the other students in a designated area until a parent/guardian can arrive. A parent/guardian is then expected to monitor the child and call a physician who will be the one responsible for determining if testing is necessary. Families, staff members, and any essential personnel visiting the school campus must inform the school immediately of any positive test results by contacting the school principal. The Health Department will then collect information on possible exposures, and we will work in conjunction with the Health Department to provide information and inform families of possible exposure and the action required.

If a student or staff person is diagnosed with COVID-19, with or without a positive test and/or symptoms, the school will follow applicable protocol and guidance on contact tracing, quarantine, and/or isolation as directed by the Health Department. Staff or students confirmed to have COVID-19 must be cleared by their Primary Care Physician or the Health Department with written documentation before they are permitted to return to school.



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Exposure Guide

Schools will make efforts to monitor for COVID-19 related symptoms of students, faculty and staff. If a community, or specifically school, has cases of COVID-19, local health officials will be contacted to help identify those individuals and follow up on next steps. Below you will find some specific guidance related to situations involving the school, community and COVID-19. **All guidelines are subject to change due to updated public health guidance.**

Vaccinations:

- It is highly recommended that everyone who is eligible get vaccinated, and those who are not yet eligible, get vaccinated when it is their turn. We will inform you of any changes in public health guidance as they arise.

Isolation and Quarantine

- **Students and their Parents/Guardians understand and agree that anyone who contracts COVID-19 or becomes exposed to someone with COVID-19 will need to be isolated or quarantined pursuant to CDC guidelines before returning to School premises.**

If a student, faculty or staff member has a suspected case of COVID-19 or is demonstrating symptoms, the following steps will be taken:

No COVID Test:

- i. Alternate Diagnosis:
 1. Documentation of an alternative diagnosis from individual's health care provider; and
 2. Fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication; and
 3. Symptoms have improved.
- ii. No Alternate Diagnosis:
 1. 10 days out from start of symptoms; and
 2. Fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication; and
 3. Symptoms have improved.

COVID Test:

Negative COVID test:

1. Documentation of a negative COVID test from the individual's healthcare provider; and
2. Fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication; and
3. Symptoms have improved.



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Positive COVID test:

1. 10 days out from the start of symptoms; and
2. Fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication, and
3. Symptoms have improved.

If a staff member or volunteer has a confirmed case of COVID-19:

1. Notify the local health officials to ask for guidance.
2. Send the staff member or volunteer home while local health officials determine next steps.
3. Quarantine close contacts, related to the suspected case of COVID-19, according to health official guidance as set forth herein..
 - a. A person is close contact if they were within 6 feet of an infected person for 15 consecutive minutes or more in an indoor setting with or without a mask.
 - b. EXCEPTION: In the K–12 indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student if both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time.
4. Communicate to staff and families that there was a confirmed case – without using the name of the person(s) involved.
5. Clean and sanitize the areas that may have been infected by the identified case of COVID-19.
6. Evaluate if any other cases related to the case were identified and decide to extend or end the quarantines of close contacts.
7. The COVID-positive staff/volunteer can return after the following conditions have been met:
 - 10 days out from the start of symptoms; and
 - Fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication, and
 - Symptoms have improved.

If a student has a confirmed case of COVID-19, the following steps will be taken:

- Notify local health officials to ask for guidance.
- Send the student(s) home while health officials determine next steps
- Quarantine close contacts related to the suspected case of COVID-19 using health official guidance for this.
- Communicate to staff and families that there was a confirmed case. Name or identifying information of the student with COVID-19 is not permitted.
- Clean and sanitize areas related to the identified case of COVID-19.
- Evaluate if any other cases related to the case were identified and decide to extend or end the quarantine of close contacts.
- The COVID-positive student can return after the following conditions have been met:
 - 10 days out from the start of symptoms; and



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- Fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication, and
- symptoms have improved.

If a student/staff member has an exposure to a confirmed case of COVID-19, she/he can return after the following conditions have been met:

1. Quarantine Duration if experiencing **No Symptoms:**
 - a. Quarantine 10 days from date of exposure; and Return on day 11, wearing a mask on days 11-14.
 - b. **EXCEPTIONS:**
 - i. **COVID Test:** Quarantine can end after 7 days if the person does not develop symptoms and tests negative 5 days after exposure or later.
 - ii. **Masked, Socially Distanced Unvaccinated Students:**
 - Unvaccinated students who were 3-6 feet from an infected person and both masked consistently and correctly do not need to take any action so long as they do not experience symptoms.
 - iii. **Vaccinated:**
 - **Staff:** Close contacts who are fully vaccinated do not need to be quarantined unless they have symptoms; however, they should get tested 2-5 days after exposure and wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until their test result is negative.
 - **Students:**
 - Vaccinated students who were **3-6 feet** from an infected person and both **masked** do not need to take any action unless they develop symptoms.
 - Vaccinated students who were **closer** or either was **unmasked** need to wear a mask and get tested 2-5 days after exposure.
 - ii. **Previously confirmed COVID:** Close contacts who were diagnosed with COVID within the past three months of exposure, recovered, and do not develop symptoms do not need to quarantine; however, they should get tested 2-5 days after exposure and wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until their test result is negative.
 - iii. **Exposure to COVID by member of household:**
 - If close contact is vaccinated, there is no need to quarantine.
 - If close contact is not vaccinated:
 - Quarantine through isolation period of household member; and
 - Quarantine 10 days from end of isolation period; and
 - Return on day 11, wearing a mask on days 11-14.
2. Quarantine Duration if experiencing **Symptoms:**
 - a. If a Close Contact develops symptoms, see above protocol for individuals with a suspected case of COVID-19 or is demonstrating symptoms.