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# Spring 2022 Health & Safety Policies and Procedures

\* Updated 4-20-2022

Emerson is committed to promoting the safety and health of all staff, visitors, and students. In order to achieve this as safely as possible, we will be implementing the following policies for all children and adults planning to attend campus, whether they enter the building or not, even if for a brief amount of time. This document provides the guidelines as they relate to our on-campus activities for the start of the school year.

*Please note that while this document follows the current guidelines set forth by the Washtenaw County Health Department, this information could change and develop as the school receives new information from local, state, and federal sources. Emerson reserves the right to implement different or additional policies as it deems necessary, and modifications will be communicated to the Emerson community in a timely fashion.*

## 1. Arrival to campus

This year we will be asking families to conduct an at-home self-screening prior to arrival on campus.

**The at-home screening will include the following questions:**

- In the past 10 days, have you developed any two of the following symptoms? Runny nose, fever, sore throat, cough, shortness of breath, loss of taste or smell, chills, muscle or body aches
- Have you been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past week?
- If unvaccinated, have you been in contact with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the past week?

We kindly ask that should your child answer “yes” for any of these questions, that you keep them home until a negative COVID test is received (for unvaccinated students).

## 2. Arrival on campus and building entry

For this school year, we are encouraging volunteerism from our vaccinated parents and adults at the school. Parents may enter the building to support events and activities at the school, pick or drop their child (while remaining at the Main Office), or to drop off materials for your child and/or their classroom. We similarly ask that all adults planning to enter the building conduct the same at-home self-screening prior to arrival.

## 3. Masks

Based on the CDC’s analysis of community risk levels, the expiration of the MDHHS’s Public Health Advisory, the rescission of the WCHD’s COVID Health Orders, and other local factors (including Emerson vaccination percentage, COVID testing data, consultation with our Risk Task Force, etc.), Emerson highly recommends masks for students, staff and community members in all indoor spaces, but is no longer requiring them.

Masks are highly recommended, but optional, and a personal choice for all staff, students, guests, and visitors, unless otherwise required due to the School’s Quarantine Guidelines (see below). Please note that the School reserves the right to reinstate masks as necessary.

No one has the right to require, influence, pressure, harass, or bully anyone to wear or not wear a mask. Emerson faculty and staff will be educating students and staff of how to respectfully move to a phase where many people will be wearing masks and many people will not be wearing masks.

Every family that would like their child(ren) to wear a mask while in school will need to provide masks for students. While the school will provide a non-medical grade face covering for any individual requiring one to enter the building, we have a limited supply. Fabric designs should be appropriate per the dress code in our Family Handbook.

Anyone with questions regarding this requirement should contact the School Medical Assistant, [Francesca DiCesare](#) and/or Head of School, [Ed Hollinger](#).

#### **4. Hygiene**

Handwashing and/or hand sanitizing will be expected prior to arrival at school, before and after all visits to the playground, and after lavatory visits. The school will provide hand sanitizer for outdoor activities. Families are welcome to send a bottle of sanitizer for personal use by their students if they wish.

Restrooms will be supplied with soap and disposable paper towels. Everyone should wash their hands for at least 20 seconds. Everyone should refrain from touching their eyes or other parts of their face. Individuals should cough or sneeze into their elbows, or cover with a tissue, even if wearing a mask. Used tissues and paper towels should be disposed of in the trash.

Drinking fountains will not be in use. Students and staff should bring a personal labeled water bottle filled from home. For employees and those inside of the building, they may refill their bottles, if needed, from one of the many water coolers stationed throughout the school.

Individuals should not share personal items or supplies, and items should be stored separately from one another.

#### **5. Physical distancing and grouping**

As often as possible, we will work to ensure that students maintain a minimum of 3 feet of physical distance while at school (both inside and outside). Students will remain in their grade level groups throughout the majority of their day, and have limited opportunities to interact (while distancing) with members of other grade levels (i.e. recess, electives, and during transition times in the hallways).

#### **6. Ventilation in the school**

As often as possible, exterior doors and windows will be open to allow rooms to stay well ventilated with outside air. In addition, all school HVAC systems are equipped with MERV-13 filters, the highest grade possible with our current units. Each indoor classroom is also equipped with a portable HEPA filter that will run throughout the day.

Finally, we have increased the mobility of students throughout their day, by allowing them to move from homerooms (in Lower School) and classrooms (in Middle School) to other classrooms in the school. We have ensured that our Specials classrooms, Science Labs, and other shared spaces have all of the same mitigations as our other classrooms. Additionally, we will allow for some period of time between when one group leaves and another group enters a shared space. This additional mobility will allow for homerooms and classrooms to "air out" periodically throughout the day.

## **7. Cleaning and disinfecting**

Surfaces touched during the course of a given day will undergo cleaning and disinfecting daily.

## **8. Eating on campus**

As often as possible, students will be eating outside. Should students need to eat indoors, we have provided plexiglass dividers for each student in each classroom, and we will also work to ensure the greatest spacing possible in the classrooms. Students may use these dividers as needed while eating indoors, although the dividers are not required during periods of optional indoor masking. Plexiglass will be disinfected daily and prior to any repeated use. Middle school students will travel to the MS Commons area to eat lunch together as a grade level.

## **9. Illness response**

A general acknowledgment of risk is assumed as no environment can be guaranteed COVID-free. Anyone who is or becomes symptomatic will be isolated and sent home immediately. Our Medical Assistant will provide an isolated space adjacent to her office for anyone who is symptomatic. It will be kept distant from other workspaces.

Symptoms of note include runny nose, fever, sore throat, cough, shortness of breath, loss of taste or smell, chills, muscle or body aches.

Depending on the symptoms, symptomatic students will be required to take a rapid antigen test upon return. This test can be administered at school or at home prior to arrival. Results should be shared directly with the school prior to the start of the school day.

In the event of a positive COVID-19 diagnosis in our community, we will immediately contact the Washtenaw County Health Department, and we will coordinate with them, as well as our Risk Task Force regarding return to school, contact tracing, and extent of school closure. Classroom close contacts are determined by school administration, our Risk Task Force and the Washtenaw County Health Department. As a result of this guidance, we will make a determination as to the school's response, in order to ensure the safety of our community and communicate that response as appropriate (see "Community Practices and Expectations" below). We will follow all protocols relating to cleaning and disinfecting the affected areas of the school after a COVID-19 exposure/incident.

## **10. Communication Practices and Expectations**

The School will actively communicate with families if and when there is risk of in-school exposure.

The School will communicate the results of our on-site COVID testing in the weekly "COVID Update," typically shared within 24 hours of the completion of test results. This may include separate communications to specific grade levels impacted by positive diagnoses (see below).

In the event of a positive diagnosis, the School will:

- Communicate with the family to determine when the test was administered and/or when the onset of symptoms occurred.
- Contact trace back 48 hours from the test date and/or onset of symptoms to determine the potential of in-school exposure.
- If in-school exposure is determined, the School will communicate directly with the respective grade level(s) impacted, informing them of the positive diagnosis and making appropriate recommendations.

In some instances, positive diagnoses will be determined through outside testing done by the family. In these situations, the School relies on families to communicate directly with the School, and we will follow the procedures outlined above. The School will communicate the requirements for students to return to school (outlined below in Quarantine Guidelines) directly with the family, and confirm that those requirements are met before the student returns to school.

## 11. Vaccination Expectations

Our priority this year is to keep our community healthy, both physically and social-emotionally. In order to do so, we are asking that all community members receive their COVID-19 vaccine as soon as they are age-eligible. All individuals will be asked to complete a Vaccination Status form. Through this form you will be asked to either attest to your child's vaccination or request an exemption based on any medical, closely held religious or conscientious belief. Parents can contact Head of School, [Ed Hollinger](#) with any questions regarding these expectations.

## 12. Quarantine Guidelines

In the event of a positive COVID-19 diagnosis in our community, we will immediately contact the Washtenaw County Health Department, and we will coordinate with them, as well as our Risk Task Force regarding any necessary steps to be taken as a school. As a result of this guidance, we will make a determination as to the level of quarantine required (individuals, full classroom, full grade level, multiple grade levels, or the school), in order to ensure the safety of our community. We will follow all protocols relating to cleaning and disinfecting the affected areas of the school after a COVID-19 exposure/incident.

The need to quarantine as the result of a positive COVID-19 diagnosis or confirmed exposure to an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 (for an unvaccinated individual) still exists as a recommended practice by the Washtenaw County Health Department. In addition, as a school, we may choose to be more conservative than those recommendations, in order to protect the health and safety of our students and community.

Based on this, we will follow the guidelines and protocols below for those scenarios:

### A positive diagnosis of COVID-19:

- Any individual (vaccinated or unvaccinated) who tests positive for COVID-19 must isolate for 5 days before returning to school. Day Zero in this case is the date of the test that determined the positive diagnosis.
- An individual (vaccinated or unvaccinated) may return to school on Day 6 under the following conditions:
  - All symptoms have resolved, including being fever-free for at least 24 hours (without the use of fever reducing medication).
  - The individual has tested negative on a rapid antigen test conducted by a lab or at school (at-home rapid antigen tests are not acceptable for re-entry to school). That result must be provided to the school prior to their return.
  - The individual can ensure that they remain masked indoors from day 6-10, and for the duration of their time at school, except when outside, during lunch and snack times.

### A confirmed exposure to an individual with COVID-19:

1. Household contacts (a member of your household tests positive for COVID)
  - Fully vaccinated household close contacts who have no symptoms may return to school, participate in the "test to stay" program, and be fully masked indoors during this period (10 days post-exposure if able to isolate from positive individual; 15 days post-exposure if not able to isolate from positive individual).
    - If the positive individual is able to isolate (in or out of the home), away from the students, then the student's testing period begins the day after their last exposure. For 5 days after

the household exposure, students will take a rapid antigen test in the morning before joining their respective classroom. Tests will be administered in the Main Office by the Medical Assistant. Families should continue to monitor symptoms of exposed individuals for 10 days after the exposure.

- If the positive individual is NOT able to isolate, away from the students, the student's testing period extends for 5 days after the positive individual clears their isolation period. Each day, students will take a rapid antigen test in the morning before joining their respective classroom. Tests will be administered in the Main Office by the Medical Assistant. Families should continue to monitor symptoms of exposed individuals for 10 days after the last exposure.
  - Unvaccinated individuals exposed at home need to be isolated for 5 days, and may return to school under the conditions listed above (under "**A positive diagnosis of COVID-19**"). Families should continue to monitor symptoms of exposed individuals for 10 days after the exposure.
2. Classroom close contacts (considered low risk)
- All vaccinated individuals are allowed to return to school and must monitor symptoms for 10 days.
  - All unvaccinated individuals must participate in the "test to stay" program and remain fully masked indoors during school during this period of quarantine (10 days).
  - Classrooms in which there are multiple positive cases, and the school determines that there is the risk of in-school transmission, the entire classroom of students and faculty are required to wear a mask until after the next testing cycle.

### **13. Accountability and quality control**

The above policies will be monitored and reinforced through the use of checklists, daily data, reminders, signage, observations, and spot checks.

We will work closely with the Washtenaw County Health Department and maintain weekly contact at a minimum.

The prime COVID-19 contacts at Emerson are Medical Assistant [Francesca DiCesare](#), Head of School [Ed Hollinger](#) and Assistant Head of School [Andy Zimmer](#). We will use multiple platforms for communicating, including the Head of School's letter, the weekly Newsletter, the school's website, and RenWeb alerts.

Emerson School will provide for a culture of care and accountability for its members.