



**August 22, 2020**

**The Acorn School of Charleston's Return to School and Health & Safety Plan  
2020-2021**

This policy was developed in consideration of recommendations from the CDC and DHEC, and available data from MUSC. Further guidance has been provided by shared community resources from members within Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America (WECAN), Association of Waldorf Schools North American (AWSNA), National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), and our School Board and community of Acorn School families. The policy is subject to change at any time in accordance with the changing conditions of COVID-19.

**Enrollment Waiver:**

- Families and employees will sign a waiver acknowledging their understanding of the contagious nature of COVID-19 and potential consequences of infection.

**New Drop off and Pick up Procedures:**

- Specific drop-off and pick-up areas will be designated for kindergarten children and first grade students.
- Families should observe social distance measures at check in as demarcated by at least 6-ft. During yellow phase periods masks or other face coverings are encouraged.
- First grade students may be dropped off curbside – facing toward the school door (not exiting into the parking lot).
- In-person conversations with teachers and staff must take place with all adult parties wearing a face covering. No teacher is expected to communicate with a parent/adult without a face covering.

**Process for Monitoring Students and Staff for Symptoms and History of Exposure:**

- Employees and children will be temperature checked and symptom screened daily upon arrival. Parents and non-essential visitors will not be permitted in the outdoor classroom, inside the building, or in playground areas. Employees or children with temperature readings above 100 degrees will not be able to attend school or enter the building. Parents are expected to keep the child(ren) home if they are sick.



- Because of the unique situation of COVID-19 and requirements for entry, we are unable to accept children arriving after 9:00 a.m. unless teachers are notified in advance of a later arrival (i.e., scheduled medical appointment, etc.).
- Employees will also be expected to self-screen and to stay home if they are sick. The Acorn School will maintain a flexible attendance policy for students and staff. Parents must tell the school of the child's absence by 9:00 a.m. and also report the reason for the absence. If an employee is un-well, administration must be notified the night before or by 6:30 a.m. the day of absence.

**If a Staff Member or Child Becomes Ill at School:**

- The Acorn School has identified the yellow Sunday school room as the isolation room. It will be set up with a cot, personal protection equipment and screening tools. The child will stay in the room with a staff member until the parent arrives. It may be possible that more than one child will be in the room at the time and parents should be aware of this.
- Afterwards, there will be a complete cleaning and sanitization of the Sunday school room.
- A parent or authorized adult must pick the child up within an hour of being notified of the illness. A parent or authorized adult upon arrival must call the staff member who is monitoring the child and wait in the parking lot. A staff member will escort the child to the waiting adult. This minimizes the number of people in the building.
- The Acorn School will notify local health officials, staff and all Acorn families of exposure or confirmed Covid-19 cases while maintaining confidentiality.

**If a Staff Member or Student is Diagnosed with COVID-19:**

- The Acorn School will follow best practices in cooperation with DHEC for contact tracing if anyone within the school community is diagnosed with COVID-19. School dismissal or closure decisions will therefore be on a case-by-case basis.
- Contact tracing efforts will determine if some students, specific staff members, or cohorts/pods (i.e. smaller groups of children) would be dismissed or the entire school could close for several to 14 days.



- We will follow CDC guidelines which recommends at least 48 hours to reenter any area where the infected person has been—24 hours no entry; then disinfect the second day. Based on this the area could reopen on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day.

#### **Returning to School After a Positive or Presumptive Positive Case:**

- Children and employees may return to school when (both points must be true):
  - a. 24 hours have passed since recovery defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in respiratory symptoms  
AND
  - b. At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
- [CDC](#) and/or [DHEC](#) guidance on home isolation for quarantine and returning to work will be referenced and followed.

#### **Exposure to a Person who Tests Positive for COVID-19:**

- Exposure is defined as being within 6 feet of an individual who tests positive for 15 minutes or more. It also means coming into direct contact with droplets from a COVID-19 positive individual. Persons who test positive are considered infectious 48 hours before the onset of symptoms. Persons testing positive but do not have symptoms are considered infectious 2 days after exposure if known or starting 2 days before test if exposure is unknown. If a staff person, household member or a child is exposed to an individual who tests positive for Covid-19:
  - a) It is strongly recommended and highly encouraged that they self-quarantine for a period of 14 days. This may become required as information is updated.
  - b) It is strongly recommended that the person(s) exposed get tested if advised by a physician. This may be required in the future as information is updated.

#### **Guidelines for Hygiene Practices, Social Distancing, and Face Coverings:**

- The Acorn School will teach and reinforce good hygiene practices like washing hands and covering coughs and sneezes to employees and students.
- Immediately after arrival, students will be accompanied to a hand-washing station.
- A new sink will be installed in the outdoor classroom to accommodate the need for extra handwashing. Mandatory handwashing breaks will be scheduled for all students throughout the day.



- At the Acorn School's back to school meetings and training we will teach and reinforce use of face coverings for all employees.
- We ask that all staff members have a one-week supply of face coverings available to them at all times. If a staff member has run out of face coverings, the school will provide one.
- While outdoors, students do not have to wear a face covering. If a parent wants their child(ren) to wear a face covering, the teachers will accommodate the request.
- Teachers are not required to wear face coverings in the Outdoor Classroom. However, when in close contact with children outdoors, teachers are strongly encouraged to wear face coverings. Teachers are required to wear face coverings indoors in the common areas.
- All children will be asked to wear a face covering while indoors in the common areas except while napping on a cot or eating. Children are not required to wear face coverings outdoors.
- Parents will provide day packs with full water bottles, extra clothing, hats, and any necessities to be stored separately in cubbies or containers and taken home each day.
- First Grade enrollment will be limited to ten students. Desks will be organized to provide three- six feet of space between students. All students will face in the same direction while seated at their desks.
- Kindergarten children will be organized into pods/cohorts, (i.e. smaller groups that are kept together with the same teacher). The interaction of the groups will be kept to a minimum.
- Kindergarten children will use the downstairs bathroom.
- First Grade students will use the upstairs bathroom.
- Efforts will be made to avoid sharing of toys and materials. When sharing materials is necessary, the materials will be cleaned and disinfected between uses.
- Student belongings will be kept in separate cubbies or in marked containers outside.
- Kindergarten teachers will develop age-appropriate systems to encourage social distancing during story time, circle time and during meals that still maintain daily rhythms.
- First Grade specialty classes (i.e., foreign language, recorder, handwork, etc.) will take place outdoors whenever possible.



**Procedures for Cleaning, Sanitizing, Disinfecting and Ventilating:**

- Frequently touched surfaces and objects will be cleaned at least daily including door handles and sink handles. Cleaning products will be available to employees so areas may be cleaned more frequently. Toys that have been played with will be cleaned daily.
- Windows and doors in restrooms, hallways, and classrooms will remain open to increase air circulation whenever possible.
- Drinking faucets will not be used and filtered water for water bottle refills will be available to all students and staff.
- Children who attend the full day program will have their own cot (supplied) and bedding (brought from home). The cots will be set up during nap time with at least 6 feet of distance from the other students. Cots will be cleaned daily. Parents must take bedding home for cleaning weekly at the end of their child's week and return with laundered bedding for the following week.

**Food Preparation:**

- All students who attend the full day program are asked to bring their own lunch and a snack.
- Children in the kindergarten will be provided snacks daily.
- Food preparation will be done by staff members wearing face coverings. Hand washing will take place before preparing food and before serving/eating the food.
- There will no sharing of food or utensils.

**General Information:**

1. The Acorn School's Health and Safety Plan will be posted on the school's website.
2. The Acorn School will provide regular updated information on the website and as necessary in announcements.
3. Caregivers and families will be encouraged to practice and reinforce good prevention habits at home and within their families.
4. The Acorn School will discourage students and families from gathering on Church/school property at drop off and pickup times.



### **Learning During Times When Children May be at Home Due to School Closure:**

- The Acorn School is developing plans to provide “distance” learning activities for families during times when the children may be dismissed due to school closure. This will serve as an empowerment tool for parents and provide continuity for children.
- Examples for Kindergarten activities include prerecorded circles time and circle games, menus and recipes, and an outline of our daily and weekly rhythm. Materials may be prepared to serve as the monthly craft project that children and families can work on together at home.
- This way of teaching and learning is new to us and will evolve over time. Kindergarten teachers will continue to develop curriculum.
- First Grade main lesson and specialty teachers will provide project-based activities and remote learning opportunities up to 5 days per week.
- In the event a teacher(s) is too ill to provide distance learning, missed days when the entire school is closed will be added to the school year calendar.

### **A Three-Tiered Approach:**

The distancing plan will be reviewed every 3 months and/or as needed with significant changes in COVID-19 rates in Charleston, SC. Decisions will be based on metrics from public health experts and data available from the CDC, DHEC, and MUSC to evaluate mitigating factors.

“Green-Minimal Distancing” Plan: Proposed benchmark < 5% local infection rate.

- All Universal Safety Procedures are observed.
- Students and staff are not required to wear masks.
- Some indoor classes may take place with normal ventilation procedures.
- 6’ spacing for social distancing may be relaxed.

“Yellow-Moderate Distancing” Plan: Proposed Benchmark > 5% local infection rate

- All Universal Safety Procedures are observed.
- Masks are required in all indoor common areas.
- Masks may be required for some outdoor activities.
- Doors and windows will be opened when possible.
- Indoor groups will be limited in number to allow for 6’ minimum spacing.



“Red-Remote Distancing” Plan - Proposed benchmark > 20 % local infection rate and/or if schools in South Carolina are closed by the Governor and/or when our staff and families are experiencing significant infections such that we are closing school for weeks at a time.

- Curriculum will be prepared in advance with content, activities, stories, and projects in the event that COVID-19 conditions make it necessary to move to remote learning.