ACES WHITNEY ACADEMY FALL RE-OPENING PLAN

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Version 1.0  
8-3-20
ACES Whitney Academy Fall Reopening Plan

Below you will find the Health and Safety protocols that will be implemented by ACES Whitney Academy to support the continued health and safety of students and staff who return to in-person instruction for the 2020-2021 school year. The protocols below are consistent with CDC, State, and local guidelines and are designed to minimize the risk of transmission of the virus. The protocols are also intended to support containment and tracing in the event of an incident at any ACES school or program. Please keep in mind that guidance from the State of Connecticut or CDC may change as we move closer to the reopening of school, and therefore, influence the answers provided at this time.

Health Screening:

ACES requires that staff and students stay home if they have tested positive for or are showing COVID-19 symptoms, including fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or above) chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, the new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea. Staff and students who have recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19 should also stay home and monitor their health.

The first day faculty and staff are in session; they will be required to fill out a form that will ask them to respond to several questions and acknowledgments about their health. After the initial completion of the form, faculty and staff (this includes interns and student teachers) will be asked the same questions. Some questions will be asked weekly and others daily. Going forward from the first day faculty and staff are in session, all faculty and staff will continue to attest to their initial responses each day they log in to work. ACES will ask the following questions.

Questions to be asked weekly (via Paycom for employees; via form completion for interns and student teachers):

- Have you knowingly had contact (Contact is defined as being within 6 feet (2 meters) for more than 15 minutes with a person, or having direct contact with infectious fluids from a person with confirmed COVID-19 - for example being coughed or sneezed on) with a person known to be infected, potentially infected, or exposed to someone infected with COVID-19 within the previous 14 days? (Y/N)
- Have you or someone you have been in contact with traveled domestically or internationally in the last 14 days? (Y/N)
- Have you or someone you have been in contact with traveled to a state designated as a "hotspot" by the State of Connecticut within the last 14 days? (Y/N)
- Have you or someone you have been in contact with attended a gathering where proper social distancing protocol was not followed in the past 14 days? (Y/N)
**Question to be asked daily** (for employees by signing into Paycom every day you are answering "No" to this question; for interns/student teachers when you sign in you are responding "No" to this question):

- Have you had a fever, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell that cannot be attributed to another health condition in the past 2-14 days? (Y/N)

**Please acknowledge the following** (for employees by signing into paycom every day you are answering "Yes" to all of these statements; for interns/student teachers when you sign-in you are responding "Yes" to all of these statements):

- I certify, I will follow my employer's COVID-19 policy.
- I certify that all answers are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.
- I certify that I will contact my direct supervisor immediately should any health concerns arise.

If an employee or intern/student-teacher answers "yes" to any of the questions, ACES will

- Not let the employee, intern/student teacher enter the workplace.
- Immediately separate the employee from other people and arrange transport for home or to a medical facility if indicated.
- Strongly recommend timely testing. If they had close contact with a person with COVID-19, Employees should be tested no sooner than 48 hours after exposure. The employee will contact HR for testing site identification support.
- Not have the employee return to work until the person completed their quarantine or isolation period.
- **Staff or students who are sent home or stay home for any of these symptoms will be required to submit a note from their health care provider before returning.** Staff or students with negative COVID test should remain home until 48 hours after symptom-free. Staff or students with positive COVID test results should stay at home for 14 days and 48 hours after symptom-free.
Health Screening Students

Protocols for health screening at school are in place, but the most critical screening will be done by parents/guardians. By placing a student with symptoms on the bus or bringing them to school, you are risking the health of all faculty, staff, and students your child comes into contact with. **Parents/Guardians, please NOTE that when you put your child on the bus each morning, you are certifying that:**

- Your student has **NOT** knowingly had contact (Contact is defined as being within 6 feet (2 meters) for more than 15 minutes with a person, or having direct contact with infectious fluids from a person with confirmed COVID-19 - for example being coughed or sneezed on) with a person known to be infected, potentially infected, or exposed to someone infected with COVID-19 within the previous 14 days.
- You or someone your student has been in contact with has **NOT** traveled domestically or internationally in the last 14 days.
- You or someone your student been in contact with has **NOT** traveled to a state designated as a "hotspot" by the state of Connecticut within the last 14 days.
- Your student has **NOT** had a fever, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell that cannot be attributed to another health condition in the past 2-14 days.
- You will follow ACES COVID-19 policies.
- All answers are true and correct to the best of your knowledge.
- You will contact the school immediately should any health concerns arise.

*The health screening at home will put the school in the best position to minimize the risk of transmission and allow us to educate students’ in-person as safely as possible.*
Health Screening continued...

When conducting the screening, ACES schools will use the following protocols:

- Use touchless thermometers to take temperature (If the temperature is 100 degrees or above, staff will be required to leave the building immediately. For students, parent/guardian will be contacted to pick up the student as soon as possible.)
- The health screener will wear a face covering and a face shield while performing screening for illnesses.
- ACES schools will implement a sick plan for students and staff who develop an elevated temperature or who may become ill during the school day. The primary components are listed below.
  - Students or staff will be isolated in a room designated for symptomatic people.
  - The areas used by a staff member or student with symptoms will be closed off and will not be used until the area is deep cleaned and disinfected by facilities or designated personnel.
  - Students will never be left unattended in an isolation room.
  - Parents and/or guardians will be called to pick students up from school immediately.
  - If a parent/guardian cannot pick up the student promptly, the school will contact individuals on the student's contact list until a pick-up person is confirmed. If a student is showing severe signs of illness and school is unable to reach a parent, guardian, or person on the contact list, emergency medical technicians will be contacted.
  - The school nurse or designee will identify all students and staff who were exposed to the student/staff member and make information available for the health department if necessary.
  - The building administrator or designee will notify a member of the central office compliance team.
  - Notification to all ACES staff and families impacted will be communicated from the Executive Director's office.
  - If the school gets information indicating the staff member or students tested positive for COVID-19, school administrators will notify local health officials, staff, and families immediately of any case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and HIPPA.
  - ACES will inform those who have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay home, self-monitor for symptoms, and follow CDC guidance if symptoms develop.
Suspected COVID 19 incident:

The health and safety of students, faculty and administrators have been and continues to be the highest priority at ACES.

The following is a summary of COVID-19 incident protocols for reference. Please refer to the ACES Reopening Plan for detailed information.

Building/Program Administration:

- If a staff or student is exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms, the person will be immediately isolated per established procedures set up by the Nursing Department at the facility. If you have any questions, please contact Meg Birmingham at mbirmingham@aces.org.
- Contact your direct supervisor immediately.
- Communicate the situation to the Emergency@ACES.org email; this will initiate a response from all departments (e.g., Executive Leadership Council, Head Nurse, Facilities, Transportation, & Security).
- Prepare staff and family notifications and wait for approval from Central Office prior to sending out information via Parent Square.
- Recommend that the person communicate with their health care provider and be tested for COVID-19. Maintain confidentiality throughout all communication.
- Anyone who has close contact with someone with COVID-19 should stay home for 14 days after exposure based on the time it takes to develop the illness. COVID-19 testing is recommended.

ACES Transportation Department Response:

- Students will be dismissed from the facility as quickly as possible with their devices. Staff will be dismissed immediately after students and prepare to transition into distance learning the next day.
- The ACES transportation department will coordinate the transporting of non-exposed students to their homes. Students in the same cohort as the suspected student or staff member must be picked up by a parent or guardian.
ACES Facilities Department Response:

- The building will be locked down once everyone has exited the facility.
- **Building is Closed Do not Enter** signs will be posted at all entrances.
- The building areas the person came into contact with will be cleaned and disinfected by ACES facilities or other designated personnel per the CDC/Department of Health guidelines.
- Additional actions will be taken based on guidance from the health department and the outcome of the staff or student's COVID 19 test results.

Positive COVID-19 Test Result

If the suspected case is **Positive** or there are **No Test Results** available, (ACES will operate, as test result is positive in this case):
The following actions will occur:

- The school will transition immediately to distance learning.
- Students and staff will not return to school until notified by the Executive Director.

**Building/Program Administration:**

- will send any information they receive about the results of the COVID 19 test to the Compliance Team via Emergency@ACES.org
- will forward copies of the COVID 19 tracing logs to security, facilities, nursing, and human resources via Emergency@ACES.org

**Building/Program Nurse or designee:**

- will report the situation to the Local and State Health Department
ACES Security:

- will review tracing logs and begin contact-tracing notifications.

ACES Facilities:

- will close the building.
- will complete deep building disinfection.
- will notify everyone when the facility has been disinfected and available for occupancy.

ACES Executive Leadership:

- within 48 hours will review the incident and the contact tracing information with the local health department to determine which students and/or staff will be required to self-quarantine for 14 days and when the school can reopen safely for in-person instruction.
- will communicate with sending districts, ACES staff, school/program staff, and families throughout the process and provide regular updates on decisions made.

**Negative COVID-19 Test Result**

If the suspected case is **Negative**, The following actions will occur:

- The school will transition immediately to distance learning.
- Students and staff will not return to school until notified by the Executive Director.

Building/Program Administration:

- will send any information they receive about the results of the COVID 19 test to the Compliance Team via Emergency@ACES.org
- will forward copies of the COVID 19 tracing logs to security, facilities, nursing, and human resources via Emergency@ACES.org
Building/Program Nurse or designee:

- will report the situation to the Local and State Health Department

ACES Security:

- will review tracing logs and begin contact-tracing notifications.

ACES Facilities:

- will close the building.
- will complete deep building disinfection.
- will notify everyone when the facility has been disinfected and available for occupancy.

ACES Executive Leadership:

- within 48 hours will review the incident and the contact tracing information with the local health department to determine when the school can reopen safely for in-person instruction as quickly as possible.
- will communicate with sending districts, ACES staff, school/program staff, and families throughout the process and provide regular updates on decisions made.
Health, Safety, and Hygiene

Hand Washing

- All ACES schools will have scheduled hand washing several times per day.
- At minimum students will have the opportunity to wash their hands:
  - Upon arrival at school
  - After using the bathroom
  - After breakfast or lunch
  - After participating in outdoor activities
  - After any physical activities
  - After blowing their nose, coughing or sneezing
  - At dismissal before entering the transportation

- **Hand Hygiene Protocols:**
  - Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
  - Wash hands using a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol and be sure to cover all surfaces of their hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
  - Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
Face Coverings

CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are challenging to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies, schools), especially in areas of significant community-based transmission.

Staff and students will wear face coverings in school, on transportation, while they are in class or at a worksite and anywhere else where social distancing cannot be maintained.

The following individuals are exempt from this requirement per CDC guidelines:

- Anyone for whom the use of a face covering would be contrary to his or her health or safety because of a medical condition (must submit documentation to school nurse);
- A child whose parent, guardian, or person responsible for the child is unable to remove the face covering safely on their face.

The CSDE’s Adapt, Advance, Achieve plan dated June 29, 2020 states: For anyone who has trouble breathing, or anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance, face coverings and masks should not be required, per CDC guidance. For anyone who has a medical reason making it unsafe to wear a face covering, masks should not be required (page 21) AND exceptions may be necessary for certain special education students or other special populations (page 22).

Providing Face Coverings

ACES will provide the appropriate face covering to any student or staff member who does not have one. Face covering includes cloth face covering or face masks. (See below on guidance for face coverings.)

- **Face masks.** Surgical or procedure masks should be reserved for healthcare professionals (HCP), such as the school nurse or school medical advisor, or staff providing direct support to students with special healthcare needs or disabilities.
- **N95 respirators.** N95 respirators should be primarily reserved for school nurses who may be involved in aerosol-generating procedures such as, provision of oxygen via high-flow nasal cannula, nebulizer treatments, and open suctioning. Staff not engaged in providing such procedures may wear cloth face coverings (or procedure mask if available).
• **Face Shields.** Face shields protect the eyes, nose, and mouth from contamination from respiratory droplets, along with masks or respirators.
  
  o Face shields should be used by staff (such as school nurses) who are involved in aerosol-generating procedures such as the provision of oxygen via high-flow nasal cannula, nebulizer treatments, and open suctioning.
  
  o Face shields worn with face masks may also be used by staff who support students with special healthcare needs (who are not able to wear masks and who may need assistance with activities of daily living, such as toileting, eating).
  
  o Face shields may also be worn by students during speech and language exercises when face coverings/masks are not appropriate for the activity.

Protecting high-risk students/educators:

**ACES will** provide educators with surgical masks and face shields in cases where close contact between educators and students is highly likely (such as when interacting with individual students with disabilities who cannot socially distance independently).

**Social Distancing:**

Limiting face-to-face contact with others is the best way to reduce the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Social distancing also called "physical distancing," means keeping space between yourself and other people outside of your home.

ACES will ensure that students are maintaining social distancing to the maximum extent possible. Where distancing is not possible, appropriate face coverings and other protection (such as face shields) will be available.

Social distancing may not be possible to maximum extent possible should be when staff members are:

- Accommodating students with special health care needs or disabilities who may require direct contact (e.g., assisting with toileting or ambulation).

- Conducting health assessments or screenings (e.g., taking a temperature or listening to lung sounds by the school nurse). In these circumstances, appropriate face coverings and other protection will be available and utilized.
All ACES classroom and community spaces are set up to promote social distancing to the maximum extent possible.

Markings are located throughout the school to identify that students and staff are always practicing social distancing.

In situations where social distancing cannot be maintained, the students and staff members will wear face coverings (disposable masks, cloth masks, or face shields).

**Group sizes**

- Individual student needs will determine the exact student to teacher ratio.
- ACES will adjust the group size based on the size of the classroom to ensure that the instructional area is large enough to allow for social distancing to the greatest extent possible.

**Mixing of Groups**

When more than one adult is required in a classroom, staff will work with consistent teams to minimize cross-contamination of student groups.

- Groupings will be assigned at the start of each day.
- Staff will stay with the same group of students throughout the day as much as possible.
- Students will stay with the same group of students throughout the day as much as possible.
- Staff will keep a log of any mixing that may occur throughout the day. In the absence of a log, ACES will assume that the staff has come into contact with every classroom and respond accordingly.

**Distancing in the bathroom:**

ACES will:

- designate a separate bathroom for any student that becomes ill
- tape off some stalls or sinks and place a sign indicating they should not be used in bathrooms, where distancing to the maximum extent possible is not feasible
• assign bathrooms by students or classes by zone wherever possible
• determine bathroom occupancy by the number of persons who can use the bathroom while maintaining social distance to the maximum extent possible; therefore, it will vary based on the size and layout of each bathroom
• not allow personal items should be stored within the bathroom (including staff bathrooms)
• attempt to minimize the time in the bathroom
• encourage staff and students to close the lid when flushing in those bathrooms where the toilets have covers

Material Sharing:

ACES will restrict the sharing of educational materials between individuals. These materials include, but are not limited to, books, computers, calculators, writing utensils, and art supplies.

• Material sharing will be monitored closely. Those materials that need to be used by more than one student during the day must be cleaned and sanitized between uses.
• All materials will be appropriately cleaned, disinfected, or sanitized materials at the end of each school day with approved cleaning supplies.

Storage:

• ACES will provide each student with a specific cubby or locker to store their personal belongings where possible.

Facilities:

As much as possible, ACES will adjust facilities to minimize the risk of infection:

ACES will:

• Adjust indoor air ventilation to the extent possible with the current HVAC system.
• Use outdoor instruction where safety, weather conditions, and physical space allow.
• Ensure that all water and ventilation systems are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown.
**ACES Bus Transportation:**

- Where there is low transmission risk (Green) in the community, and some restrictions are in place in schools, ACES buses and vans will be available to operate up to full capacity.
- All students and staff on the van will be required to wear a face mask or cloth face covering that completely covers the nose and mouth during transit unless the student or staff member has a documented exemption from wearing a mask. In the event of an exception, the student and/or staff member will be offered the option to wear a face shield.
- The students or staff face covering must be in place before boarding the bus and must be kept in place until they are completely off the bus.
- Students should load into the bus from the back row to the front (where the first passengers onto the bus sit in the back row). This will reduce the number of people passengers walk by as they get on the bus and will prevent crowding in the center aisle when the bus arrives for unloading.
- Passenger density will be reduced significantly when there is moderate spread (Yellow) because schools will be employing a hybrid-learning model when in this status. During moderate spread (Yellow), bus passengers will be spaced with family members sitting together, and non-family members should be spaced 6 feet apart utilizing alternating diagonal seating.
- Students must not change seats during the route.
- ACES will employ **temporary monitors** on student transportation at the beginning of the school year to facilitate successful compliance with school health policies on the bus.
- ACES will provide back-up masks if students do not have face coverings when boarding the bus or van.
- ACES asks that parents place face covering on the student before the student enters the transportation. The temporary monitor will assist when necessary, but the employee is there to encourage students to keep their face covering on not to assist because assisting the students will place the temporary monitor in close contact with the student.
- ACES transportation will communicate cleaning protocols to staff including disinfecting procedures after each use.
Healthy Hygiene Practices

ACES will promote healthy hygiene practices by posting signs on how to "Stop the Spread" in all school buildings in easily seen locations.

Hand hygiene:

ACES will:
- reinforce to staff and children, regular handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds should be done regularly.
- provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer at every school entrance and in every classroom, kept secured in classrooms where children can safely use sanitizer without supervision.

Respiratory hygiene:

ACES will encourage all staff and children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or the corner of the elbow.

Training:

ACES will provide training that covers social distancing, cleaning protocols, PPE application, and hygiene practices for all students and staff.

Cleaning & Disinfection

Cleaning logs: ACES will implement the use of cleaning logs to track cleaning frequency at each school.

Bathroom cleaning:

ACES will ensure that bathrooms are sanitized at least twice a day or as needed.
ACES will designate separate bathrooms for different classes where possible. Where not possible, schools will set up schedules for classes to use the bathroom (and thus avoid mixing of classes).
Cleaning practices:

ACES will ensure that bathrooms are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected at least twice a day or as needed and will follow CDC disinfecting and cleansing protocols.

Specifically, ACES will:

- use disinfectants correctly
- clean surfaces before use (disinfectants cannot penetrate the dirt barrier)
- use green products (green products are certified by an independent third-party)
- conduct disinfection in the absence of children or periods of lowest occupancy
- use the least amount of disinfectant recommended

In addition, to full cleaning and disinfection at least twice daily or as needed, ACES staff will spot-disinfect high-touch surfaces throughout the day. ACES will place signs near sinks reminding students and staff to wash hands before and after using the restroom.

School Closure and Reopening:

The decision to suspend or close a school program for some or all participants will be made by the Executive Director or designee in consultation with the Department of Public Health that supports the town where the school resides. Any ACES school will implement short-term closure procedures regardless of community spread if an infected person has been in a school building. In the event a situation occurs at an ACES school, the programming will convert to distance learning, and the building will be closed to all students and staff for five days. The initial short-term dismissal allows time for ACES and the local health officials to gain a better understanding of the COVID-19 situation influencing the school. This will enable the Executive Director, in consultation with the local health department, to determine appropriate next steps, including whether an extended dismissal duration is needed to stop or slow the further spread of COVID-19. The Executive Director will send out a communication to all ACES staff, families, and school districts affected regularly to keep all stakeholders updated on the situation.

- Schools will initiate recommended CDC cleaning procedures following a confirmed COVID-19 case. Decisions on which, if any, staff should be allowed in the school will be made in collaboration with the local health department and school medical advisor, if applicable.
• ACES administrators will work with their local health department following a temporary closure to determine when students and staff can safely return to schools.

**Mandated Reporting**

All ACES staff work under the mandated reporting requirements set forth by the CSDE at all times, regardless of the instructional delivery model. Therefore, all staff are mandated by law to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect.

**General Questions**

For general and/or non-emergent questions about safety and security, contact any member of the Compliance Liaison Team below or email us **SAFETY@aces.org**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meg Birmingham</td>
<td>Nursing Coordinator/Health Advisor</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mbirmingham@aces.org">mbirmingham@aces.org</a>, 203-498-6800</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tim Gunn</td>
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<tr>
<td>William A. Rice</td>
<td>Assistant Executive of Schools and Curriculum</td>
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</tr>
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## Orientation Protocols

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Plan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent Orientation</td>
<td>ACES Whitney Academy’s Reopening Plan will be shared with parents prior to students returning to school. ACES Whitney Academy Administration will provide a pre-recorded video presentation reviewing the plan. This information will be shared with families via Parent Square. Parents will have the opportunity to send in any questions as a follow-up to the video.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff Orientation</td>
<td>All ACES Whitney Academy staff will be trained on reopening procedures as specified in the plan prior to students returning to school. Additional trainings will be scheduled periodically on Wednesday afternoons or on an as need basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Orientation</td>
<td>Students will receive instruction on their plan at the individual classroom level. Guidelines will also be provided on an individual basis for areas such as Humanities, therapies and job center. Staff will review important points and prompt as appropriate based on student need. Orientation Days for students will be held as follows from 8:30-1:00: Thursday, September 3, 2020 - Group A Friday, September 4, 2020 - Group B (cont’d) Further information will be sent via mail regarding student group assignment and day to attend. School will begin for all students on Tuesday, September 8, 2020.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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For families who choose remote learning rather than in-person, Whitney Academy staff will contact those families by September 4, 2020 to provide information on how to access learning materials. At that time, staff will also assess if a student has access to technology. Should a student not have an appropriate device to access educational materials, ACES will lend a device to support remote learning.
Pick Up and Drop Off Protocols

In order to reduce the number of visitors to the building, any parents who are either dropping off or picking up their child will not be allowed to enter the building.

School hours are as follows:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday: 8:30 am - 2:30 pm
Wednesday: 8:30 am - 1:00 pm

**Drop Off:** Parent/Guardian will drop off students at the Front entrance of the building. If there is a line of cars upon arrival, the parent/guardian must remain in line as no passing is allowed for safety reasons. Parent/guardian should follow the instructions of staff directing vehicles at transportation for parking in an area in the front circle by the main entrance. If drop off time is outside of regular morning arrival time (after 8:45 am), the parent/guardian should ring the bell to let staff know of the student’s arrival. A staff member will come to the front entrance to receive the student. Parent/Guardian will need to sign the student in on the Whitney Academy entry log at the front door.

**Pick Up:** Parent/Guardian will ring the bell at the Front entrance of the building to let the main office know of their arrival to pick up a student. A staff member will go to the Front entrance where they will check the ID of the person picking up the child and have them sign the student out on the Whitney Academy log. The student will then be released to the parent/guardian.
**Student School Entry Protocols**

Students will exit transportation vehicles, one vehicle at a time, upon direction of Whitney Academy staff. Each student will enter the building with a staff member following directional signage as posted. Upon entry, students and staff will sanitize hands before proceeding to classrooms. After unpacking belongings into designated lockers, students will wash their hands.

Per Addendum 3 of the CSDE’s Adapt, Advance, Achieve guidelines dated July 28, 2020, medical screening of students will:
- * Plan for all students who do not wear masks due to an exemption to have a daily temperature check upon arrival (Note: this may change with evolving guidance).
- * Plan to observe all students upon arrival and throughout the day for signs or symptoms of illness.

**Student Dismissal Protocols**

At dismissal time, staff at designated exits will call transportation vehicles one at a time. Students will leave their classrooms when their names are called and continue to follow social distancing guidelines while departing the building. Whitney Academy staff will monitor students throughout the hallways as they exit to their vehicles.

**Social Distancing Protocols**

All classroom and learning spaces have been set up to maximize social distancing in accordance with the CSDE “Adapt, Advance, Achieve” plan dated June 29, 2020. Classrooms are arranged in order to provide each student with their own individual learning space that is spaced as far apart as possible while allowing all students to be in the learning environment.
Use of Outdoor Spaces Protocols

Outdoor spaces will be specifically assigned for physical education classes and classroom use. A Physical Education class schedule and classroom use schedule will be set up in order to maximize outdoor space while allowing classrooms to have designated access at least once per day. All classes will be assigned a specific time and location daily weather permitting.

Staff will position themselves accordingly while using outdoor spaces to ensure supervision and monitoring of social distancing by students. Immediately before accessing outdoor space, students will wash hands thoroughly following provided guidelines. Students will again wash hands immediately following outdoor activities. All equipment will be cleaned after each use.

School Movement Protocols - (How students will move around the school)

All movement in the hallways will be on a limited and as required basis. Movement through high traffic areas are marked with one-way direction arrows. Students who must move to a location other than their classroom will be required to have an adult with them. Staff and students should move through the hallways remaining as far to the right hand side of the hallway as possible to allow for two-way flow in areas where there is no alternative. There are “X” marks on the floors of the hallways as reminders of appropriate spacing for physical distancing.

Classroom Set-up Protocols to Maximize Social Distancing

All classroom and learning spaces have been set up to maximize social distancing in accordance with the CSDE “Adapt, Advance, Achieve” plan dated June 29, 2020. Classrooms are arranged in order to provide each student with their own individual learning space that is spaced as far apart as possible while allowing all students to be in the learning environment. All desks/learning areas are facing in the same direction.

Maximum occupancy signs are posted on each classroom door. The maximum occupancy has been determined based on student need as well as space available in each classroom.

When required to move into a different phase or reduced capacity per the governor’s orders, learning spaces will be adjusted as appropriate.
Breakfast/Lunch Protocols

All students will eat breakfast and lunch in their classrooms. Classroom staff will pick up meals from the cafeteria and bring them back to the classroom. Students will wash their hands immediately before and after eating. Each student will remain in his or her designated seating area for both meals.

Lavatory Usage Protocols

All students and staff members will be assigned to a designated bathroom. In the case of classrooms that have bathrooms, those students will utilize that classroom bathroom.

Any visitors will utilize the Male or Female restroom located in the main hallway on the first floor (Rooms 151A/151B). This should be minimal due to the limitations of visitors in the building.

Only patients in the Health Office will be allowed to use the bathroom in that location.

Bathroom Cleaning Procedures:

Each bathroom will be cleaned 2 times per day. Cleaning will comply with DPH guidance for cleaning and disinfecting schools during COVID-19 as well as the DCD disinfecting and cleaning guidelines.

Bathroom Cleaning Logs will be placed in each bathroom to document the cleaning occurring. The principal or a designee will periodically check the cleaning logs to ensure cleaning is occurring as required.
Nursing Protocols

Staff need to call the Health Office to ensure a nurse is in the office before coming down with a student. If no nurse is available, a phone message is to be left. If there is an emergency, staff will call the main office immediately.

Standardized first-aid supplies (for example, Band-Aids) are provided to each classroom.

Medications will be administered in the classroom.

After first speaking with a nurse, a student coming to the Health Office will wait in the designated waiting area. All students must be accompanied by a staff member who will remain to supervise the student.

Mask Break Protocols

Whitney Academy understands that face coverings may be challenging our students to wear all day. Face coverings will be worn by students and enforced except in the case of those students exempt per CDC and ACES guidelines. Students will be given multiple opportunities for mask breaks throughout the day as scheduled and on an as-need basis. Staff will make every effort to utilize outdoor space to ensure mask breaks occur in and out of the classroom when supervision and CDC guidelines can be ensured.

PPE & Work Area Protocols

Per Addendum 3 of the CSDE’s Adapt, Advance, Achieve guidelines dated July 28, 2020, staff will be garbed in appropriate levels of PPE, depending on the tasks being performed. Staff will begin each day with sufficient PPE for each person in the classroom to minimize traffic throughout the building. Staff will follow Table 1: Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) Recommendations for Service Provider (SP) as outlined in the addendum regarding Fall reopening resources for students with high needs.
**Educational Programming**

Each Whitney Academy classroom has an independent schedule to address student-specific learning needs. For those students utilizing remote learning, Zoom or another ACES approved application will be used to facilitate live classroom instruction and/or activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Color (Based on Guidance from Governor or Designee)</th>
<th>In-Person</th>
<th>Remote Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Green - Full In Person</strong></td>
<td>Students in school building for full instructional learning.</td>
<td>Remote learning for those families opting to keep students home. More details will be provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yellow - Hybrid Model</strong></td>
<td>Students will have a combination of in-person and remote learning based on the following schedule. All students will be assigned to either Group A or B. More information to follow.</td>
<td>*Note: Families choosing all remote learning will continue as such</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group A In-person: Monday, Tuesday</td>
<td>Group A Remote: Wednesday, Thursday, Friday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group B In-person: Thursday, Friday</td>
<td>Group B Remote: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Frequently Asked Questions
Regarding Reopening of Schools

Below you will find a list of frequently asked questions from parents regarding what the opening of schools will look like for the 2020-2021 school year. Please keep in mind that guidance from the State of Connecticut may change as we move closer to the reopening of school, and therefore, impact the answers provided at this time. Feel free to reach out to us with any additional questions.

Cohorting Questions

What is cohorting?
Cohorting is the concept of isolating students to small groups. This enables more effective contact tracing in the event a student or someone in his or her family should become ill. Cohorting also reduces the threat of exposure to the virus by reducing the number of students any one student interacts with.

Who is in my child’s “cohort”?
Your child’s cohort consists of the students and staff in his or her assigned classroom. Students will remain in their cohorts throughout the day including lunch.

How will cohorting be maintained when students are on the bus?
Parents are encouraged, if able, to drive students to and from school. This will allow for social distancing of students on the bus who cannot rely on someone from home to drive them to school. Cohorting will not be observed on the bus.

Educational Format Questions

What educational options do I have for my child for the 20-21 school year?
At this time, parents can elect to have their child attend school on site or engage with remote learning.

At what point do I need to decide if my child will attend school in person or remotely?
An ACES survey was sent out via ParentSquare on July 15, 2020. We will review the responses and contact the families who have not responded. At any time parents can decide to move their child from in person learning to remote learning or back to in person learning again by informing the school what they are choosing to do at any given timeframe.
If I decide to have my child begin the year with remote learning, will I be able to change my decision and have them attend school in person? Yes, you will be able to change your mind throughout the year. The new learning status for a student would start on a date and time mutually agreed upon by parent(s) and school officials. This will ensure a smooth transition.

What will the phases look like? The state is requiring districts to create three phases for the 2020-2021 school year so that we are prepared for whatever scenario we may encounter. These three phases consist of:

- **Green** - Fulltime in school (parents may choose to engage in a learning from home option)
- **Yellow** - Hybrid learning (blend of in-school and remote learning)
- **Red** - Remote learning - 5 days a week

*see ACES Whitney Academy Reopening Plan for more details*

Will my child have the opportunity to attend school 5-days a week? At this time, for Fall--Yes, if you elect to send your child to school, he or she will attend 5 days a week, fulltime. However, school may transition to remote learning for 14 days at any given moment (depending on exposure).

When will ACES schools release reopening plans? Over the next few weeks, ACES will share the elements of our reopening plan that have been developed. While we are waiting on further information from the State Department of Education, some elements will be shared on our website, and through ParentSquare communications. The ACES Governing Board will vote on the reopening plan on August 13, 2020.

**Positive COVID-19 Case Questions**

If a child or their teacher is diagnosed with COVID-19 will the entire school be on remote learning or just that classroom? The classroom cohort of the diagnosed child will pivot to distance learning for 14 days. The district will also consult with local and state health officials who will review cases to determine additional impacts and safety measures. In addition, if someone is sick at home, they should contact that person's health care provider (HCP) and discuss whether COVID testing is indicated for the individual who is sick.
- If COVID is suspected - staff will ideally be tested too. Unfortunately, testing is less available than it was in June and test results are slower.
- If COVID is not suspected (as confirmed by HCP) students/staff can return to school or follow instructions of HCP.
- If COVID is suspected or proven, household members stay home for 14 days. This is extended if the student/staff member is diagnosed with COVID during the ensuing days at home with a note from the HCP once negative results are confirmed in order to return to school.

**How will families be informed if a child or teacher is diagnosed with COVID-19?**
The families of the students in the classroom cohort where a positive case of COVID-19 has been diagnosed will be informed through ParentSquare and hard copy letter home. Please keep in mind that the privacy of staff and students will be honored and names of anyone who has contracted the virus will not be shared.

**What would happen if a student in the class travels to a hotspot?**
Per Governor Lamont’s guidance, the student would need to quarantine at home, while remote learning, for 14 days. This protocol will take effect if the trip took place within 14 days of the school opening or during the school year.

**What if a child’s parent or other family member living in the same household tests positive - how can the school ensure that the child doesn’t come to school?**
Ensuring cooperation will depend on communication and partnership between ACES employees, families, and health care providers.
Any person diagnosed with COVID-19 should be instructed by their provider that household members and close contacts should quarantine for 14 days (or longer if warranted if household member becomes symptomatic or tests positive for COVID-19.) The school will provide instructions about COVID-19 symptoms and individual responsibility to staff and student families prior to starting school, and periodically during the school year, including reinforcement and updates.

**If a cohort has to quarantine because a member of it tests positive for COVID-19, do the siblings of any of the students in that cohort have to stay home/ quarantine as well?**
Creating cohorts (groups of students and staff that stay together throughout the day) is one effective way of limiting the spread of the disease. Cohorting also makes it easier to identify close contacts (contact tracing) if somebody in a school tests positive for COVID-19. Testing and quarantine are recommended for anyone who has come in close contact (< 6 feet) for ≥15 minutes in the period from 2 days before symptom onset) with a person diagnosed with COVID-19. People who have had contact with a close contact (but not with the person who has or is suspected of having COVID-19) are not required to quarantine.
If a parent of a student tests positive for COVID-19 does that mean that the entire classroom cohort has to quarantine? Anyone who came in close contact with a person who tested positive for COVID-19, including household members, are instructed to quarantine, self-monitor, and consult with health care provider. The cohort would not need to quarantine unless they came in close contact with the person who tested positive.

What if a parent works in a hot zone or hospital? With regard to school attendance, the guidelines for family members of people who work in hospitals are the same as for the rest of the population: Stay home if sick, or if exposed to someone who has tested positive for, or is presumed to have COVID-19. Consult with health care provider.

If a family has more than one child attending school will all of them have to stay home if one of them exhibits COVID-like symptoms? Yes, all household members and close contacts of a person with presumed COVID-19 or positive COVID-19 test are expected to quarantine for 14 days following the last day of exposure to the person with COVID-19, to ensure that they don’t get sick themselves and spread the virus to others.

What if the teacher has been exposed, but does not have symptoms or positive test results? Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. The teacher would be expected to quarantine for 14 days following the last day of exposure to the person with COVID-19 to ensure that they don’t get sick themselves and spread the virus to others.

**Face Mask Questions**

Is it a requirement for my child to wear a mask at school? Yes, per Governor Lamont’s reopening plan, it is a requirement for students and staff to wear masks at school.

What if my child has a medical/other condition that does not permit him/her to wear a mask?

1. Mask Exemption will be based on documented, diagnosed health issue including physical, physiological, behavioral, and mental health issues.

2. Exemption decision will be made by the appropriate school professional:
   - School Nurse
   - School Social Worker, psychologist, or guidance counselor
   - BCBA
• School Principal or Assistant Principal  OR
• Student’s Health Care Provider (HCP)

3. The Student’s parent/guardian and HCP will be informed of mask exemption.

4. Tech Services will create a system of noting and tracking mask exempt status in Power School, including an alert that will appear next to student’s name if mask exempt (Circle with M in the middle and slash through it.)

5. School nurse will briefly document reason for mask exemption in Nurse’s Log in Power School. The person making the decision about exemption (as above) will be responsible for informing nurse of exemption and reason so it can be documented in Power School. (This can be one sentence: “Student exempt from wearing face mask due to ______.”)

Rationale:
The CT Reopening Plan doesn’t define any of the exceptions mentioned. We will make every effort to consider each case professionally and objectively, keeping the guidelines in mind. Trouble breathing could be asthma; incapacitated could be based on cognitive ability; medical reason could include autism or anxiety. Many special education students fall into one or more of these categories.

The CT Reopening plan states:
For anyone who has trouble breathing, or anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance, face coverings and masks should not be required, per CDC guidance.

For anyone who has a medical reason making it unsafe to wear a face covering, masks should not be required. P 21

AND

Exceptions may also be necessary for certain special education students or other special populations. P22

Can my child wear a mask from home?
It is recommended that parents provide cloth masks to their children. These masks will also allow for easy washing and drying to sanitize. Please be sure that any wording or graphics on face masks are appropriate for school.

Should I start having my child get used to wearing a mask for periods of time?
Yes, we encourage parents to begin to help their child become comfortable wearing a mask, by gradually building up their comfort level. Practicing removing masks properly and encouraging children not to touch their masks will also help them become comfortable with these new routines.
Will my child get breaks during the day when he/she doesn’t have to wear the mask?
Yes, under controlled conditions your child will be provided safe breaks while in school including during lunch. In addition, when possible, increased distancing will allow for masks to be removed during physical education class. These procedures will be reviewed with students. This will also include a student’s ability to advocate for themselves when a break is needed. Additionally, the classroom teacher will periodically schedule mask breaks throughout the day to provide opportunities for students to take mask breaks as needed.

What if my child forgets their mask or it breaks?
The school will have extra adult and child sized surgical masks available if a student does not have one or if their mask breaks. Extra masks will also be on all buses in the event a student does not have one. We encourage all children to have an extra mask sent to school each day, if possible, to ensure that each child has a mask that fits them properly and they feel comfortable with if a replacement is necessary.

Where will my child store their mask when they are not wearing it?
Masks will be stored in paper bags clearly marked with the child’s name.

Instructional Day Questions

Will my child stay in their classroom all day?
All students will stay with their cohort of students in their assigned classroom for all instructional subjects unless otherwise specified.

Where will they eat breakfast and lunch?
Students will eat breakfast and lunch in their classrooms with their classroom cohort. Students will wash their hands immediately before and after eating. Each student will remain in his or her designated seating area for both meals.

Can we still buy breakfast and from the cafeteria?
Yes, the cafeteria staff will package lunches and classroom staff will pick up meals from the cafeteria and bring them back to the classroom.

How will Physical Education classes work?
Students will participate in physical education activities with their classroom cohort. In addition, students will be given motor breaks as appropriate.

*see ACES Whitney Academy Reopening Plan
**How will the equipment be cleaned/shared?**
Students will wash their hands before and after physical education classes. The equipment will be cleaned after each use.

**Will my child still have art and music?**
Art and music classes will be provided to all students. Protocols will be developed to best support the cohort model.

**My child has an individualized education plan (IEP), what will his/her support services look like?**
The support services are determined by the IEP. It is our full intention to implement the IEP while we are in-person using mitigating measures. Should remote learning be necessary, we will implement the IEP to the greatest extent possible under remote instruction.

Students with IEPs will receive FAPE regardless of whether their learning takes place in a school building or from home. If the PPT determines a student requires distance learning due to health reasons, the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) will develop a remote learning plan to ensure equitable access to learning opportunities.

The school-based team will communicate with families. The school nurse and/or mental health staff will have individual conversations with families of students with medical challenges to talk about the available learning options and their preferences. We encourage parents to reach out to their child's health care provider for precautions to follow for attending classes in school buildings and to share any concerns with the school-based team.

**Will Planning and Placement Team meetings be in person?**
We encourage these meetings to take place in a virtual format, however in-person attendance will be permitted to external members of the PPT per CSDE guidelines.

**How far apart will my child’s desk be from another student?**
The ACES Facilities Department and Reopening Crews have worked to adjust classroom layouts to meet CSDE guidelines regarding social distancing.
Facilities Questions

What are the ventilation requirements? Are our schools up to the requirements?
Area Cooperative Educational Services or ACES is addressing all school ventilation and air filtering systems in accordance with guidance from the CT Reopening School Adapt, Advance, Achieve document sent to all school districts for school reopening planning purposes. Below are several action items that will be addressed at all buildings:

- Classroom univent systems thoroughly cleaned and filters replaced
- Cleaning of the interior surface of the supply and return ducting associated with the HVAC system. This includes cleaning all diffusers and grilles as well as bathroom exhaust registers
- Commissioning of all building mechanical systems to ensure they are working to their fullest capabilities.
  - Inspection of all building ventilation systems both automated and manual.
  - Includes visual inspection of dampers and all of the controllers and actuators.

How will the building/my child’s class be cleaned each day?
Following guidance from the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health, we are currently conducting deep cleaning of our schools during the summer months. We are also developing cleaning protocols for identifying which areas will require routine daily cleaning and which will require cleaning, followed by disinfection.
Building plans for cleaning and disinfecting high touch surfaces will include:

- Door handles
- Handrails
- Sinks, toilets and fixtures
- Light switches and cover plates
All efforts will be made to minimize contact with common surfaces.

- All building restrooms will be sanitized multiple times daily. Soap and/or sanitizer will be available in the bathroom and throughout the school buildings.
- Frequently touched surfaces and other equipment will be cleaned throughout the day.
- Hand sanitizing stations installed at school entrances and throughout the building.
- Continue the training and Implementation of cleaning and disinfecting procedures recommended by the CDC and Department of Public Health.
- Third party training of custodial staff for enhanced cleaning & disinfecting procedures in schools.

Areas requiring routine daily cleaning include:

- Outdoor areas such as benches, tables, railings, and play equipment. Do not spray disinfectants on these surfaces, as it is a waste of disinfection products, unnecessarily exposes children using equipment to disinfectants, and is not shown to provide any additional protection above routine cleaning alone. Cleaning of wooden surfaces outdoors is not recommended.
- Areas or items located indoors that are not touched or used frequently, such as floors, walls, windows, carpeting, light fixtures, and air vents.

Areas requiring routine daily cleaning, followed by disinfection include:

“High-touch areas”, which refers to hard surfaces indoors that are routinely touched by different individuals. Examples may include (but not limited to) desks and chairs, doorknobs, countertops, bathroom surfaces, copiers/scanners/fax machines, computer equipment, shared laptops, Chromebooks, or tablets, physical education equipment, locker rooms (benches, showers, and toileting areas), shared break room appliances, handrails, door knobs, and light switches.

Schedules will be developed at each school to complete this cleaning during and after school hours daily.
Transition Questions

How will my child learn the new procedures for school so that they are not encountering it on the first day for the first time?
Students will receive instruction on their plan at the individual classroom level. Guidelines will also be provided on an individual basis for areas such as Humanities, therapies and job center. Staff will review important points and prompt as appropriate based on student need.

We will communicate these routines and procedures during our Student Orientation days on September 3 and 4, 2020. More information will be shared in the coming weeks.
*see ACES Whitney Academy Reopening Plan

What are the arrival and dismissal procedures for my child’s school?
Your child’s principal will communicate these routines with families in September. Initial information can be found in the ACES Whitney Academy Reopening Plan.

Health and Wellness Questions

How will I know if I should keep my child home from school because they are ill?
Please review the following document from the CDC on what to do if you suspect you are ill with COVID-19. For other illnesses such as the flu, etc. it is good practice that students remain home if they have a fever and/or experiencing vomiting or diarrhea within 24 hours. Students may return if they remain fever free without the administration acetaminophen or ibuprofen. ACES will communicate further guidelines at a later time. If it is determined by the school nurse that a child is experiencing COVID-19 like symptoms while in the school building, both the school nurse and the parent will work together in quarantining the child safely and together plan next steps for the proper care of the child and those students and staff that remain in the school.

Will my child’s temperature be taken at school?
ACES is working with local health officials to make a final determination on this. We ask that parents take temperatures at home before sending a child to school each day.
Per Addendum 3 of the CSDE’s Adapt, Advance, Achieve guidelines dated July 28, 2020, medical screening of students will: Plan for all students who do not wear masks due to an exemption to have a daily temperature check upon arrival. (Note: this may change with evolving guidance).
Substitute Questions

How are substitutes trained and vetted in the reopening procedures and protocols?
Substitutes (former ACES employees), will be required to review and sign off on the safety procedures outlined in our reopening plan.