

# *Tidewater Academy*

## *COVID Plan*

*2021-2022*



In accordance with recommendations and requirements as stipulated by the Virginia Council for Private Education (VCPE), Tidewater Academy has developed a COVID Plan with thoughtful consideration of our mission “to provide an engaging curriculum, encourage good citizenship and service to others, and empower students to be leaders in their communities.”

The 2021-22 school year operation will include modifications designed to ensure the safety and health of all students, faculty, and staff. Within those parameters, Tidewater Academy will aim to create a productive and nurturing learning environment.

This document presents a comprehensive approach to re-opening school’s COVID procedures and protocols with all faculty, staff, and students in attendance on-campus. Special accommodations will be provided for at-risk students and faculty on a case-by-case basis, at the discretion of the Head of School and the School Nurse.

## ***PLANNING TO RE-OPEN***

### **COVID Team:**

Lisa Francis, Head of School

Gail Ford-Westbrook, Director of Lower School

Walter Westbrook, Director of Transportation, Athletics and Facilities

Sandra Johnson, School Nurse

### **Local Health Department:**

Sussex County Health Department

20103 Princeton Rd.

Sussex, VA 23884

434-246-8611

Virginia Department of Health

111 South Street, First Floor

Farmville, VA 23901

(434) 392-3984

## ***1) Maintaining Healthy Environments***

### ***Plan for daily health screening questions of staff and students:***

- Students with an acceptable body temperature will be asked, or the parents of younger students will verify, if they have any of the following symptoms – Cough, shortness of breath, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell. They will also be required to confirm if they have traveled or been exposed to someone with COVID in the past fourteen (14) days.
- Any student with a temperature of 100.4° F or higher at any time during the day, will be directed to the sick room if they have ridden the bus or have driven themselves to school. A parent or guardian will be called to come to school and pick up the student. He or she must not return to school until fever-free for 24 hours.
- If any person with a fever also has another symptom of COVID-19, the school may require a negative COVID-19 test and/or physician's approval before the person may return to school. If the school is notified of a positive COVID-19 case, the protocol for case identification will go into effect.
- Faculty and staff will be asked to self-monitor for symptoms – a new fever (100.4° F or higher), cough, shortness of breath, chills, or a sore throat.
- Random temperature checks may occur if COVID cases begin to rise.
- Administration will continue to monitor the communities and surrounding areas for COVID cases. If at any time, the numbers pose a threat to our school community, mandatory temperature checks may be implemented

### ***Hygiene practices:***

- Create cleaning and disinfecting protocols that include frequently touched surfaces; transport vehicles; schedules for increased cleaning; routine cleaning and disinfecting; and ensuring adequate cleaning supplies and correct use/storage.
- When an area, such as a desk or table, will be vacated by one person and subsequently occupied by another person, that space will be disinfected.
- The school will maintain routine cleaning and disinfecting that includes cleaning bathroom facilities and mopping floors.
- All cleaning and disinfecting supplies will be kept locked in the custodian's closet.
- MS/US/Main Office will continue to be professionally cleaned once a week.

***Additional hand sanitizer/washing stations:***

- Hand sanitizing stations will be placed throughout the school facilities.
- Faculty, staff, and students will be encouraged to wash hands thoroughly at the sinks available in the bathrooms.
- Ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing to the extent possible (e.g., dedicated student supplies, lab equipment, computers, etc.)
- Equipment, such as computers, will be disinfected after use.

***Ventilation system will operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air:***

The ventilation will be inspected, and filters changed on a timely basis to help ensure virus-free air exchange.

***2. Plan for Health Monitoring***

Parents will be ***discouraged*** from entering the school building at arrival or dismissal times. Any visitor entering the school building must first register in the main office. ***Masks are required.***

Families will be ***required*** to notify the school if there is likelihood that someone in their family has been exposed to COVID. Close contact is defined by the CDC as, “any individual within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 2 days before the person became sick.”

***Communicating an Outbreak or Positive Cases at the School***

Given the small size of Tidewater Academy’s community, any information related to positive cases may quickly spread among faculty and students. The goal may, therefore, involve a mitigating influence to reduce undue concern. When the school is notified of a positive case for COVID, the person or persons will be given instruction not to return to the school campus for ten (10) days. He or she must be symptom-free to return to school.

Tidewater Academy’s COVID Team will meet to consider the potential risk to the school’s community. Attention will be focused on reducing any further spreading of the virus without creating a panic atmosphere and ***protecting the privacy*** of those infected individual(s). Communication will involve a letter and/or instant alert message to the school’s community. Once the individual(s) identified as being exposed to a COVID positive contact, the COVID Team will meet for contact tracing instructions to be given. Individuals that have been in contact with a COVID positive case will be required to quarantine for seven (7) days with a negative test result on the 5<sup>th</sup> day. If an exposed person does not want to be tested, they will be required to quarantine for ten (10) days. A positive COVID test is ten (10) days quarantined.

If a member of Tidewater Academy’s community tests positive for COVID, the COVID Team will meet and determine which individuals and/or groups need to be quarantined for ten (10) days before returning to school. Once the individual(s) identified as being exposed to a COVID positive contact, the COVID Team will meet for contact tracing, and instructions will be given.

Individuals that have been in contact with a COVID positive case will be required to quarantine for seven (7) days with a negative test result on the 5<sup>th</sup> day. If an exposed person does not want to be tested, they will be required to quarantine for ten (10) days. A positive COVID test is ten (10) days quarantined.

During this time of quarantine, individuals will have access to virtual instruction and be required to participate when they have recovered.

### **Participate in Community Response Efforts**

Tidewater officials will remain in contact with the local health department and participate in whatever is deemed appropriate in reducing the spread of COVID. Every effort will be made to notify local officials of COVID cases within the school's community.

### **Student Health Services**

- In anticipation of the need for increased focus on health concerns during the pandemic, Tidewater Academy has designated a "sick room" for anyone in the school's community who displays symptoms associated with COVID.
- All staff members will be provided with gloves, masks, face shields, and cleaning supplies for their classrooms.
- All health services will be provided concurrent to the extra focus placed on reducing the spread of COVID. This includes careful monitoring of students for symptoms and potential illness and/or injury. Protocols for notifying parents and emergency personnel as needed will continue unchanged.

### **Mental Health Services**

The Head of School will monitor all referrals for mental health concerns related to the COVID pandemic and the stress and anxiety experienced by student populations as well as faculty and staff.

The goal will be to reduce interference in daily instruction while also promoting a healthy and safe environment for the entire Tidewater Academy community. Special attention will be given to minimizing the focus on pandemic-related issues and the potential for bullying and/or social isolation. It is the goal of Tidewater Academy to reduce stress related to the pandemic by carrying out the educational mission within the "new-normal" parameters.

If a member of the school's community is known to have COVID, every effort will be made to protect the privacy of the individual and his or her family members in accordance with HIPAA laws that prohibit the disclosure of a case-positive individual's identity. Dissemination of risk potential will be conducted with special emphasis on reducing the stress level for all involved.

### **3. Promoting Behaviors that Reduce Spread of COVID**

#### **Education/Training Plan for Staff, Students, and Families**

##### ***Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette:***

In accordance with CDC guidelines, the school community will be trained in the following protocols to reduce the spread of COVID:

- Wash hands often, for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Hand sanitizers will be provided at several stations within the school and within each classroom. Instruction will be given to cover all surfaces of hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Emphasis will be placed on avoiding touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Covering the mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing or using the inside of the elbow will be required.

##### ***Use of Masks:***

- In areas where close contact of less than six (6) feet may be unavoidable (hallways and bathrooms, for example), faculty, staff, and students will be required, to use face coverings.
- Students, faculty, and staff, whose medical status puts them in a high-risk category for COVID, may choose to wear a face covering at any time while on the school's campus.

##### ***Staying Home When Sick:***

- Pursuant to current Tidewater Academy guidelines for individuals who are sick, anyone with a fever (100.4° F or greater) is required to remain at home until he or she has not had a fever for 24 hours ***without taking medicine specifically for lowering fever.***
- Students, faculty, and staff will be encouraged to remain home if he or she does not have a fever but does have two or more symptoms associated with COVID.

##### ***Maintain Adequate Supplies to Promote Health Hygiene:***

Tidewater Academy has supplies that are specifically directed toward reducing the spread of COVID.

- Ongoing disinfecting and cleaning procedures will continue.
- Hand sanitizer stations will be positioned in the school, and hand sanitizer will be available in each classroom.
- Other supplies, such as disinfectant wipes, will also be supplied for use throughout the school.
- Water fountains have been replaced with water filling stations.

### ***Signs and Messaging to Promote Healthy Hygiene:***

- On the front entrances of each office a door sign will be placed indicating that anyone entering the school building must first register in the office. ***Masks will be required.***
- Within the school building, signs will be placed in hallways and bulletin boards to promote awareness of ways to reduce risk.
- Signs in the bathrooms will promote thorough handwashing.
- In each classroom, there will be reminders to wash hands/use hand sanitizer and practice social distancing.
- After school begins, floor markings will help promote accurate social distancing of four-six (4-6) feet.

### ***Requirements for the Classroom and Beyond the Classroom:***

- Modify layouts of classrooms, communal areas and buses to ensure social distancing is maintained.
- All classrooms will have desks placed four-six (4-6) feet apart, and students at all grade levels will have their own desks for the year.
- All books and other materials will be kept at the student's desk or in their locker.
- One person at a time will be allowed in the bathroom. Once a student enters, the door is locked. If another student arrives to the bathroom, social distancing stickers will be placed for them to wait until it is their turn.
- Faculty, staff, and students will be required to use a mask when entering spaces where social distancing presents a challenge.
- Physical education courses will be re-aligned to allow for physical activity within requisite social distancing requirements. For example, physical education classes may include lesson plans geared toward individual activities that require minimal equipment.
- Recess periods for younger students in the Lower School will include more structured and organized physical activities. These activities will also include some free play time, especially for the youngest students for whom constant social distancing would prove difficult and unduly stressful.
- All students will be encouraged to use appropriate hygiene when sneezing or coughing, encouraged not to touch their faces, and wash hands or use hand sanitizer when returning from physical education classes or the playground.

### ***Requirements for Lunch:***

- Approximately 40 percent of all students order lunch. Orders will be placed in homerooms first thing in the morning.
- To meet social distancing requirements, students will eat in their classrooms at all grade levels. Extra trash cans and cleaning supplies will be provided in classrooms.
- Students will have water filling stations around school to use.

### ***Requirements for Athletics:***

- Follow relevant Virginia Phase [I] for Schools and CDC guidance for recreational sports, school-related sports, and other recreational activities.
- Tidewater Academy will conform to all requirements for Virginia Colonial Conference (VCC) athletic competition to include the Virginia Phases [I], [II], and subsequent Phases for Schools as well as CDC guidance.

### ***4) Transportation***

- Transportation Employees will be trained on cleaning processes of buses, social distancing protocols for students and wearing of PPE equipment
- Transportation Employees will be supplied with proper PPE equipment.
- Transportation Employees will disinfect the bus after every run has been completed.
- Parents will be required to wait at the bus stop until the child is cleared to get on the bus.
- Social Distancing protocols, in accordance with guidance from the CDC, will be implemented on each bus.
- Assigned seating will be used on each bus.

### ***5) Maintaining Health Operations***

#### ***Sick Leave Policies and Practices that Enable Faculty, Staff, and Students to Stay Home or Self-Isolate when they are Sick or have been Exposed to COVID:***

- Once identified as sick or at risk due to exposure, an individualized plan will be implemented based on the person's needs. Greater decision-making in these instances will be given to the person and his or her physician. The Head of School and COVID Team will seek to create opportunities for individuals to continue their participation in the school's community based on whatever limits are required.
- If sick and unable to work, no member of the faculty/staff, or student will be penalized in any way due to COVID. Every effort will be made to re-integrate individuals, either on-campus or at home, once recovered from the virus.

### ***Absentee Monitoring***

Student absences are documented in PraxiPower (Tidewater Academy's online record system). PraxiPower allows for multiple daily attendance reports. Any repeat days of student absence will be investigated with sensitivity to confidentiality and HIPAA laws. A message will be sent to member returns within two (2) days, regular monitoring for COVID will occur. However, if a student or faculty/staff member is absent for three (3) or more days, a physician's release clearing the person for entering school will be required.

***Policies for return to class/work after COVID illness***

- After ten (10) days of isolation, full recovery from COVID, faculty, staff, and students may return to the school's campus and resume activities without restriction. Every effort will be made to minimize attention and undue scrutiny of the individual(s) to facilitate a normal routine for all involved.

***7) Preparing for When Someone Gets Sick***

***Separate and Isolate Those Who Present Symptoms***

- Students who present symptoms will be immediately taken to the designated sick room and then COVID safety processes will be followed.

***Facilitate Safe Transportation of Those Students/Faculty/Staff that are Sick to Home or Healthcare Facility***

- Safe transportation home or to a healthcare facility will follow present guidelines in place. However, due to the greater risk presented by COVID, a person potentially infected will be strictly isolated from the rest of the school population.
- Once a person is identified as sick and isolated in the sick room, a decision will be made by the Head of School and/or COVID team, whether the person can safely drive home (faculty/staff or student driver). A parent or guardian will be contacted and required to come to school and pick up their student.
- If a member of the faculty/staff cannot drive safely, his or her emergency contact will be notified to come and drive him or her home or to a healthcare facility.
- If the person is experiencing an emergency, the local EMT will be contacted to transport the person to a hospital or designated healthcare facility.

***Cleaning and Disinfecting Procedures of Areas used by Sick Individuals.***

- The sick room and any other areas used by a sick individual will be thoroughly disinfected.

***8) Closing School, if Necessary, Due to Severe Conditions***

***Conditions that will Trigger a Reduction in Face-to-Face Classes***

- If the school experiences a confirmed localized outbreak, during which it is determined that a substantial number of the school's community have become sick or exposed to COVID, the school will temporarily close and will implement virtual instruction. Once the isolation period is complete, in-person instruction will resume

- If a smaller confirmed outbreak occurs among a select group, such as a grade level or the pre-kindergarten class, more limited isolation with virtual instruction will allow for continuing operation in-school for individuals not at risk.

***Conditions that will Trigger a Complete School Closure***

- Complete school closure will only occur upon the Executive Order of the Governor, the Virginia Counsel of Public Education, or the recommendation and/or requirement of the Virginia Department of Health.
- Once such a recommendation has been made, the COVID Team, the Head of School, and the Board of Directors will determine the virtual instruction implementation and timeline needed to ensure the health and safety of the school's community.