



CORNERSTONE
CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

2020-2021 RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN



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INTRODUCTION

On behalf of the Cornerstone Christian Academy Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, and staff, we want to thank the CyclONE FAMILY for your on-going prayers and support as we have navigated this very unique season in the life of our school, our community, our nation, and our world. We have certainly faced some significant challenges! But, we are so blessed to witness the school community's unwavering commitment to CCA's vision *to educate world changers* and mission *to challenge students to know Christ as Lord, to think biblically, and to grow in knowledge and skill that they may serve and influence the world in His name*. In these days when Satan would seek to overtake us with darkness, confusion, lack of reverence for life, and overwhelming circumstances, we must remember that JESUS WINS, and that He calls us to live in community as ONE FAMILY of believers who will commit to keeping our eyes fixed on Him.

As we prepare for the upcoming school year, we invite you to join us in praying that we will approach the year with gratitude for the opportunities ahead and faith that God will carry us through whatever challenges we may face. As we seek God's glory and the good of our students, we will strive together to remain positive and Christ-like in our attitudes, proactive and reasonable in our approach, and clear and consistent in our communication and implementation of new platforms and processes.

On June 23, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) issued joint guidance for the reopening of public and non-public schools for the 2020-2021 academic year. We have worked with legal counsel and other health and risk management professionals to understand our responsibilities to the guidance put forth in this document. Additionally, ISBE/IDPH released a comprehensive guidance document on July 23 providing further requirements and recommendations for the upcoming academic year. We are taking recommendations into consideration and determining what will work best in our school context. We are making plans and putting policies and procedures in place that will allow us to meet stated requirements. We recognize that, in a school community consisting of over 450 students and staff, we will have varying experiences, perspectives, and responses to some of the state-mandated requirements and some of the ways that the school determines it best to respond. Our challenge is to look to Christ, place our trust in Him, do our best with the information we have in front of us, and move forward in faith as ONE FAMILY committed to preserving the wonderful community God has established in this special place.

In order to promote a safe, successful, and sustainable return to school, several operational and procedural changes will need to be implemented to meet the state's five over-arching requirements related to **physical distancing, capacity limitations, personal protective equipment, sanitation, and symptom screening**. We believe that we can accomplish these things without compromising our mission, vision, or quality of instruction. So, we will plan to move forward with the plans as outlined in this document, unless we face a regional or state-wide mandated school closure. The details presented in this document outline plans that meet ISBE/IDPH requirements as of July 31, 2020, and are presented as a supplement to the CCA Parent/Student Handbook. Please take time to thoroughly review both documents.

Illinois Executive Order 2020-40 encourages schools to develop and execute plans for in-person instruction as part of Phase 4 of the *Restore Illinois* plan. It is essential to understand that this does not signify a complete return to pre-pandemic operations. In order to meet the non-negotiable requirements the state of Illinois has established as conditions for the re-opening of schools, significant adjustments and accommodations will be necessary to promote the health and safety of the school community. All public and non-public schools in Illinois that serve pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade students MUST:

- Require the use of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), including face coverings at all times in school buildings;
- Prohibit more than 50 individuals from gathering in one space;
- Observe 6 feet of physical distancing as much as possible;
- Require that schools conduct symptom screenings and temperature checks or require that individuals self-certify that they are free of symptoms before entering school buildings; and
- Increase school-wide cleaning and disinfection.

Additionally,

- Districts must prepare an alternative option for students with elevated health risks and for those who must practice quarantine protocols throughout the school year; and
- Districts must plan for return to remote instruction pending a resurgence or second wave of the virus.

INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY MODEL

In May 2020, Cornerstone Christian Academy established a task force to begin planning for a variety of scenarios for the Fall 2020 semester. We learned many valuable lessons from the Spring 2020 semester of remote learning, and we knew that improvements would be necessary if any form of remote instruction would need to be implemented in the future. The task force wrestled with the best ways to meet students' academic needs and streamline delivery to avoid student, teacher, and family burnout. The result of this team's efforts is a plan for the implementation of a "blended learning" model, which we believe will provide increased flexibility for addressing the unique challenges of our times, propelling CCA toward its preferred future, and promote greater levels of creativity and innovation.

"Blended Learning" Defined

Undoubtedly, you have been hearing districts speak of "blended learning" as they have introduced their return to learn plans. Some districts have used this terminology to refer to a school schedule that alternates days of in-person attendance with days of at-home learning. However, the essence of "blended learning" incorporates increased use of technology and digital platforms in the context of traditional classroom instruction while using the same platforms to increase accessibility to instructional materials and engaging learning experiences when students are away from school. For several years, Cornerstone teachers have implemented a "blended

learning” model when they have assigned students to complete virtual labs as part of their assigned homework so they can utilize classroom instructional time for engaging in follow-up discussions and group work related to the lab experience. This is just one example of how “blended learning” has already been successful in our school context. As we prepare for the upcoming school year, students and parents can expect to see these types of activities and strategies increase across the grade levels and content areas as the use of digital platforms increases.

At Cornerstone, “blended learning” refers to daily in-person instruction on campus (for most*) that blends the use of traditional classroom instructional strategies with more technologically-based, innovative instructional tools. Within this model, students will interact with devices and software that will enhance the curriculum and provide greater access to CCA’s excellent teachers and curriculum, enabling them to continue experiencing academic and spiritual growth and progress should they face a period of quarantine or school closure. Cornerstone’s curriculum and pedagogy (teaching methods) remain biblically based, missionally driven, and educationally sound.

** Early education students have some part-time attendance options as part of the regular EE enrollment offerings. Historically, CCA has worked with junior and senior high school homeschool students and their families to create pathways for earning a Cornerstone diploma and/or supplementing homeschool curriculum. As we are able to accommodate this within the “blended learning” structure, we will continue to make part-time enrollment opportunities available to junior and senior high school-aged homeschool students. Providing part-time options within the “blended learning” structure is much more challenging in the Kindergarten through fifth grade context, due to the varying order of content delivery from day to day and the different “specials” classes offered each day. Therefore, part-time enrollment for students in grades K-5 will not be offered during the 2020-2021 academic year.*

While the majority of the student body will be returning for daily on-campus instruction, there are some students and/or parents represented within the CyclONE FAMILY whose physicians have indicated that they should continue their schooling in a remote learning format, due to their current medical circumstances. Additionally, while we pray for a 0% infection rate among the Cornerstone community, we need to be prepared for the possibility that individuals or groups of students may need to quarantine for a period of time. The “blended learning” model supports the continuity of learning for students who find themselves in these situations.

Implementing the “Blended Learning” Model at CCA

Ideally, we will be able to begin the semester with on-campus, in-person instruction and sustain that model. Teachers have been issued upgraded devices, document/web cameras, and digital tablets that connect to their computers and simulate a whiteboard to enhance the screen sharing experience. Students will enjoy the benefits of instruction that incorporates this technology into the classroom experience. In the event that any members of a class need to attend school from home during a period of extended illness, quarantine, or at the guidance of their physician, they will be able to access certain aspects, though not all of, the regular classroom experience through applications such as Zoom, Loom, Teams, SeeSaw, and synchronous (livestreamed) instruction and activities.

Every CCA student will be enrolled in Microsoft Teams and will be provided with credentials for logging into his/her account. If you are not familiar with Microsoft Teams, it is very similar in functionality to Google Classroom. Many of our teachers utilized Teams during remote learning, and all of our chapels were delivered via Teams during remote learning in Spring 2020. Teams will be the launching point for every class/course during the 2020-2021 school year. From within Teams, teachers will connect students to other digital learning tools such as SeeSaw (EE-5), Moodle (6-12), Zoom, and other subject or textbook publisher-specific resources. Teachers

will publish a weekly learning plan to Teams by midnight on Sunday night so that the outline of the week's plan will be available to families as the school week begins on Monday morning. The weekly learning plan will include a schedule and instructions for connecting to synchronous learning activities (direct instruction, demonstrations, presentations, and lectures). Students who are on campus may utilize functions of these digital platforms in the context of their in-class activities. Most students will use these platforms outside the classroom in some manner as part of the "blended learning" model. Students who are engaged in remote learning will use these platforms daily to access their coursework and to participate in classroom activities as appropriate.

Attendance will be taken and grading practices outlined in the CCA Parent/Student Handbook will be followed in both in-person and remote instructional settings.

We believe that this model will provide the most flexible, accessible, and authentic Cornerstone educational experience to address the broadest range of student needs while not expecting that our teachers attempt to plan for both in-person and fully on-line instruction. The "blended learning" model will, undoubtedly demand more of our students, teachers, and parents than is typically required of traditional instructional strategies. However, we believe that this model best fits our context and our promise to partner with parents.

If a family determines in consultation with their physician that it is best for their child(ren) to begin the 2020-2021 school year with remote learning, the student(s) may remain enrolled at CCA and will be assigned to class rosters as if they were attending in person. They will be assigned to the Student Care Coordinator's roster as well. In order to best support the student and family, the SCC will become the family's first point of contact for all school-related communication during the period of remote learning and will act as a liaison between the home, the classroom teacher, the Academic Support Office, the Spiritual Life Director, the School Nurse, and the division Principal. It should be understood that this remote learning option is designed for the purpose of temporarily providing continuity of learning and continued access to CCA's curriculum and instructors, and is not the same experience as enrolling in a 100% on-line course. There will be aspects of the classroom experience (hands-on activities, in-class discussions, socialization, and various other nuances) that simply cannot be shared through a computer screen. Especially at the Early Education and elementary grade levels, parents will be responsible for guiding students through their daily activities. It is important to recognize that the fully remote learning format is not best for some students' learning styles and/or family circumstances. This option should be reserved for those students whose medical conditions or that of an immediate family member require that they learn from home. Families who opt to have their students begin the school year remotely may transition back to the classroom at any point. Once they have returned to in-person learning, it is expected that they continue with daily in-person attendance, unless they are otherwise advised by their physician or the health department (see quarantine protocol in the Health & Safety section of this document for more information).

TUITION & FEES

It is essential to understand that the additional technology, training, planning, manpower, and financial resources needed to effectively execute remote learning result in a higher per-pupil cost than is covered by CCA's tuition. Therefore, all established tuition and fees remain in effect, regardless of the mode of instructional delivery. Tuition will not be reimbursed in the event that

a family selects a fully remote enrollment option or a class/grade level/division/school is required to pivot to remote learning for health and safety reasons.

DAILY SCHOOL SCHEDULES

Early Education & Lower School

The daily school schedule, including arrival, dismissal, and instructional time allotment for Early Education and Kindergarten through fifth grade students, will remain mostly unchanged for the upcoming school year. Instruction will occur on campus during regular school hours as published below. Some minor adjustments to non-instructional periods will help limit sustained periods of contact with students outside homeroom cohorts. For EE-5th grades, instruction in the use of technology will be integrated into the core subject areas to promote interdisciplinary learning and limit the sharing of devices. All other "specials" classes (art, music, PE, Spanish, and library/media) will continue to be part of the Early Education through fifth grade program in the upcoming year. Lower School students will eat lunch in homeroom cohorts and will be assigned to various parts of the playground/school lawn during recess on a rotating schedule to ensure proper sanitation and equal access to play equipment. Students will have the opportunity for corporate worship with their homeroom cohorts during Friday chapel services.

Upper School

Students in grades six through twelve will attend classes daily, following a modified collegiate block schedule (M/W/F and T/Th/F classes), with their classes running from 8:15 AM until 3:15 PM. Junior high enrichment classes (those courses previously taught during morning FLEX periods) will not be offered during the 2020-2021 school year. Taking these courses out of the rotation for this school year will allow us to focus more concentrated attention on the core subjects and will lighten the load in the event that remote instructional processes need to be implemented. Upper School students will eat lunch in homeroom cohorts and will have a 30-minute mid-day homeroom/study period each Monday through Thursday. The Friday bell schedule includes all eight class periods, chapel, and spiritual formation groups, but does not include the homeroom/study period.

School Hours

3/4-year-olds

- **2AM-3** 2 mornings (Tuesday and Friday - 8:30 to 11:00 AM)
- **2FD-3** 2 full days (Tuesday and Friday - 8:30 to 3:00 PM)

4/5-year-olds

- **3AM-4** 3 mornings (Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday - 8:30 to 11:00 AM)
- **3FD-4** 3 full days (Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday - 8:30 to 3:00 PM)
- **5FD-4** 5 full days (Monday through Friday - 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM)

5-year-olds

- **5FD-5 (Developmental Kindergarten)** 5 full-days (Monday through Friday - 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM)

Lower School (Kindergarten – 5th Grade)

- 8:20 AM – 3:10 PM

Upper School (6th – 12th Grade)

- 8:15 AM – 3:15 PM

EXTENDED CARE SERVICES

Cornerstone offers extended care for parents who must drop off or pick up their student outside of regular school hours. There is no pre-registration required for this service which is billed monthly to those parents who use it.

During the 2020-2021 school year, students participating in CCA's Before and After School Care programs will be assigned to small groups, or "cohorts." BSC and ASC staff will make every effort to maintain consistency of the cohort groupings to minimize exposure to COVID-19 and other communicable diseases. Frequently, "drop-in" attendance becomes necessary for various reasons. Therefore, it must be understood that participating in BSC and/or ASC may pose risk of increased exposure to illness. ASC staff will strive to maintain the same physical distancing, wearing of personal protective equipment, and sanitation protocols implemented during the school day. All students participating in BSC/ASC must wear face coverings at all times, except when they are in an outdoor environment where physical distancing can still be maintained.

Beginning at 7:15 AM, students may be dropped off at the front entrance where they will be greeted by a CCA staff member and signed in, recording the time of arrival. All Early Education through 12th grade students arriving prior to 8:00 AM must be signed into Before School Care and report to the designated locations. Signage and school personnel will direct students to assigned rooms. Students will not be allowed to wait in the airlock or congregate in the hallways.

Junior high and high school students (6th-12th grade) may arrive as early as 7:15 AM, and must go directly to the Forum Room after they gather the necessary items from their lockers. Students must sign in, noting the time of their arrival. Appropriate physical distancing must be maintained, and face coverings must be worn. Students may not congregate in the hallways or report to classrooms, unless they have pre-arranged appointments with faculty members or scheduled organizational meetings to attend. Upper School students are not invoiced for before school care.

At 3:30 PM, all Early Ed-8th grade students who have not been picked up will be checked into After School Care. (In order to promote the safety and protection of all students at all times, we respectfully ask that parents not instruct their children to wait outside or in another part of the building instead of going to After School Care.) After School Care is available until 5:30 PM. Students must be signed out, recording the time of departure. Billable in fifteen (15) minute increments beginning at 3:30 PM, the cost for care is \$10/hour for 1 child, and \$12/hour for two or more children. There is a \$1 per minute fee for every minute past 5:30 PM.

Parents/caregivers arriving to pick up students from After School Care must display the name placard provided by the school in the passenger-side window. They will pull into the circle drive on the north side of the school building near the main entrance, and will call the phone number displayed on the sign located near the driveway to notify ASC personnel of their arrival. A member of the ASC team will sign the student out of ASC and will escort the student to their vehicle.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR & CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Extra-Curricular Activities & Athletics

Cornerstone Christian Academy is a member of the Association of Christian Schools International, the Illinois Elementary School Association, and the Illinois High School Association. Each of these organizations will make determinations about the viability of their respective activities and athletics in accordance with CDC, IDPH, and McLean County Health Department guidelines. As of July 31, 2020, ACSI has moved many of their 2020-2021 student activities to virtual platforms, and the IESA has announced the cancellation of all junior high fall sports that were scheduled to begin practice and contests in early August. The IESA will make a determination about junior high girls' basketball by the end of August. CCA Athletic Director Davis Dossett will be informing coaches and athletes of IHSA's decisions regarding high school athletic seasons as we receive that information throughout the school year. Additionally, the Illinois Music Educators' Association has announced that all fall auditions for district honor ensembles will be conducted virtually.

School-sponsored social activities will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, and decisions related to their feasibility will be announced one month in advance.

Co-Curricular Activities

Chapel - The corporate worship experience is a critical element of Christian growth and community. Chapels are designed with students' developmental, spiritual, and social-emotional needs in mind. CCA's weekly chapel services are celebrated in homeroom "family" groups each Friday and can also be accessed by the extended CCA family using on-line platforms.

Class Trips – Whenever possible, CCA staff will strive to preserve the spirit of traditions associated with each grade level. While travel may be limited, our creative faculty and staff have already begun making plans for bringing fun and memorable activities to the classroom to allow students to engage in hands-on developmental and relational experiences.

Concerts & Performances – Assemblies and gatherings of groups larger than 50 are not allowed at this time. The faculty members responsible for the direction of each musical ensemble and theatrical production will provide more information about the format for sharing students' talents in the context of this school year. In some cases, ensembles may be able to perform for small groups or, weather permitting, performances may be held outdoors.

Family Events – Many events that are informational in nature will be presented in a digital or virtual format this year. Those events that are specifically designed for community building may be offered in a recurring format for smaller group participation.

Field Experiences - Most non-essential travel will be suspended during the 2020-2021 school year. Field experiences will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and will be dependent upon the ability to provide reasonable safety measures while in a vehicle and in the community.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Academic Support

The Academic Support Office exists to provide support for students identified as at-risk or struggling due to a diagnosed disability or recognized skill gap. Support may come in the form of providing classroom strategies for the teacher, academic support personnel working directly with a student or small group of students, and when necessary, developing an academic support plan that incorporates accommodations as outlined in a plan constructed jointly by academic support personnel, teacher(s), principal, and parents. The overarching goal in providing support is to enable students to reach a level of independent functioning within the classroom, particularly at the high school level. Mrs. Laura Witt serves as the coordinator of Academic Support, and Mr. Sean Larsen provides English language and academic support to students participating in CCA's International Student Program.

Students who have an active Academic Support Plan will receive services as scheduled during in-person instruction and will receive therapies and services virtually during periods of remote learning.

After-School Tutoring Groups

Tutoring groups are held each week in accordance with a published schedule with sessions beginning in late September. Groups are facilitated by faculty members and qualified volunteers. After-school tutoring groups are primarily designed to address skill gaps in a particular subject area. Therefore, the completion of daily homework assignments will not be emphasized during these sessions. Support and priority will be given to students who have been identified as at-risk, struggling, those who have an ASP (Academic Support Plan), and/or those who demonstrate difficulty in maintaining a "C" average in the related subject area.

Faculty Office Hours

Upper School teachers maintain weekly office hours from 3:30 – 4:30 PM on a day that they designate on their course syllabus at the beginning of the school year (typically a Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday). These office hours will be maintained during periods of remote learning, unless the teacher is absent due to illness. In such cases, students and parents will be notified of alternate arrangements for the week.

Guidance Services

Calling, college, and career guidance services are available to all 8th -12th grade students. Mrs. Sondgeroth will continue overseeing this program during the 2020-2021 school year. Students and parents may contact her directly with questions related to college entrance testing; post-secondary application and admissions processes; scholarship opportunities; and securing school counselor recommendations and official school transcripts. Students will receive training in the use of CCA's virtual guidance counseling platform, Naviance, throughout the school year.

Lexia Reading System

Lexia Reading System is a supplementary software program designed to help students acquire and improve basic reading skills. This is just one of the strategies employed by the Academic Support Office. It is designed to provide independent practice in phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and language structure. This program will be made available for at-home use to qualifying students. A member of the Academic Support staff will monitor student use and progress.

Speech & Language Support and Therapy

Cornerstone is pleased to welcome Mrs. Haley Courtney as our new Speech/Language Pathologist. Mrs. Courtney is certified through the state of Illinois as well as through the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. She will work cooperatively with Cornerstone's Academic Support Office, Tri-County Special Education Services, students, and families to coordinate services in accordance with students' Academic Support Plans and/or Individualized Education Plans. Students who are receiving instruction remotely will receive speech/language services virtually for the duration of their remote learning period.

Spiritual Growth & Development

Our Spiritual Life Director, Mr. Austin Parker, has been working tirelessly over the summer months to prepare unique chapel experiences and spiritual formation activities for the upcoming school year. All of the first semester's chapel services will be available via Teams.

Recognizing that this season holds many challenges that many of us have never faced before, Mr. Parker is available to provide pastoral care to students by providing a safe space for them to share their burdens and to receive prayer support. Our amazing faculty and staff are also here to listen, pray, and support our students and their families.

Student Care

As previously noted, we have established a new staff position to specifically address the needs of students who will be participating in remote instruction throughout the school year. Mrs. Joy Carrington is a Registered Nurse and an excellent teacher with a heart for helping others. She has agreed to serve in the role of Student Care Coordinator for K-12 students this year. The Student Care Coordinator will be the connecting point between health services, spiritual life, academic support, classroom teachers, and remote learners and their parents. During periods of individual or small group quarantine or extended illness, parents should direct all school-related communications to Mrs. Carrington who will coordinate with school personnel to provide support to students and families. Mrs. Mary Walker will work alongside Mrs. Carrington to provide similar services to our youngest learners and their families.

HEALTH & SAFETY PROTOCOLS

SCHOOL DAY PROCEDURES

Arrival & Dismissal

Students who are not participating in Before School Care (see below) should plan to arrive 10 minutes prior to the scheduled start of their school day. During the 2020-2021 school year, students will need to self-certify that they are illness free prior to their arrival on campus by completing the COVID Tracker questionnaire on the Cornerstone.Christian.Academy web application. (This application is currently under development. Instructions for downloading and using the app will be e-mailed to families in the coming weeks.) This step should be completed no later than 7:45 AM daily, or by 7:00 AM for those who will be participating in any portion of Before School Care or other before-school activities (lessons, meetings, detention, etc.). Students who are unable to complete the self-certification process before arrival on campus will need to undergo symptoms screening and temperature checks at the door before entering the building.

Those students who are being dropped off by a parent or caregiver will be greeted in the circle driveway and will enter through the main (north) school entrance. High school drivers and their siblings/carpool riders who arrive between 8:00 and 8:15 AM will park in the south parking lot and enter through the south airlock doors.

In accordance with ISBE/IDPH requirements, all persons entering a school building must wear a face covering and keep the nose and mouth covered at all times, unless a medical contraindication is verified and documented by a physician licensed to practice in all branches of medicine in the state of Illinois and such documentation is presented to and reviewed by the School Nurse. Face coverings must meet the Appearance Code guidelines relative to imaging and messaging as stated in the CCA Parent/Student Handbook.

All students being picked up by parents and caregivers between 3:10 and 3:30 PM will remain in their homeroom classrooms or other designated areas until their names are called. Parents/caregivers arriving for pick up must display the name placard provided by the school in the passenger-side window in order to promote a smooth pick-up process. If a name placard is not prominently displayed or the driver indicates that he/she is planning to pick up students other than their own children and these arrangements have not been previously communicated to CCA personnel, the driver may be asked to park and report to the school office.

When parents/caregivers enter the parking lot, CCA staff will identify their vehicle and radio in to the school building for the student to come out and line up for pick-up. Drivers will be directed to "stacking lanes" in the parking lot where they will wait to be instructed to pull through the circle driveway to meet their children.

Student drivers and those with parental permission to ride home with them will exit the building through the south doors and will proceed with caution as they exit the parking lot, yielding to inbound traffic where the lanes meet near the main parking lot entrance.

Classroom Procedures

Classroom seating will be configured with maximum allowable space between students, with all desks facing the same direction. Every effort has been made to reduce class sizes and to limit mixing between groups of students by assigning them to homeroom cohorts. It must be understood that junior and senior high school students will have some classes with students outside their homeroom cohort. The implementation of the modified collegiate block schedule will minimize the number of contacts that students have outside their cohorts on most school days. Sharing of instructional materials and devices will be minimized. Desks and other surfaces will be sanitized throughout the day and between Upper School classes. Deep cleaning will be conducted regularly, and spaces will be sprayed with electrostatic cleaner daily. Additionally, some upgrades have been made to the school's HVAC system to promote its overall improved function and cleanliness.

Common Area Use

No more than 50 individuals will assemble in one space during larger group activities such as lunch, PE, and recess. Junior and senior high school students enrolled in PE classes will keep their belongings in their own lockers and will take turns in the locker and restroom areas when class activities deem it is necessary to change into PE uniforms.

Hallway Traffic & Restroom Use

Early Education and Lower School teachers will coordinate the schedule restroom breaks in order to minimize the number of students in the hallways and restrooms at one time.

Upper School teachers will build breaks into their 90-minute class blocks during which time students may use the restroom, take outdoor breaks, and visit their lockers. Students will be encouraged to carry materials for both two class periods at a time, reducing the number of locker visits needed during the day and minimizing the potential for congregating near lockers between classes. Students will be allowed to carry backpacks with them from class to class as needed.

Hand Hygiene

Proper and regular hand hygiene is critical to preventing the spread of many types of viruses. Students will be afforded several opportunities throughout the day to wash their hands with soap and water. Hand sanitizer will be available in classrooms and at stations throughout the building. In addition, Upper School students are encouraged to keep a personal travel-sized bottle of hand sanitizer in their locker or backpack.

Lunch Period Protocols

Most lunch periods will be hosted in homeroom classrooms. If a homeroom cohort needs a larger space in order to ensure proper physical distancing during a lunch period, some groups may be assigned to the forum room or the upper tiered seating area. Students will be allowed to remove face coverings while eating and may keep them off during outdoor recess activities.

Weather permitting, lunch/recess and lunch/homeroom periods will be held outside to allow for a longer break from mask wearing.

Catered lunches will be offered during the 2020-2021 school year. All lunch items will be pre-packaged and delivered to designated eating areas.

In order to limit exposure to illness and to promote health and safety, visitors will not be permitted to join student cohorts during lunch periods.

Nap/Rest Time Protocol (Early Education)

As long as a minimum of a six-foot radius can be maintained during nap/rest time and students remain in their assigned rest spot, masks may be removed to prevent breathing difficulty and/or suffocation.

Recess & Outdoor Activity Protocol

Face coverings are not required outdoors, as long as 6 feet of physical distancing can be maintained. Classes/grade levels will be assigned to outdoor spaces in which to conduct instruction, lunch, recess, and physical education classes, weather permitting.

Transportation Protocol

Due to the suspension of several activities and non-essential travel, use of the school's multi-function student activity bus will likely be minimal. If its use is deemed necessary, students will be seated one to a seat, and the bus will be sprayed with an electrostatic cleaner between uses. Students will not be transported by parent volunteers to school-sponsored activities during the Fall 2020 semester.

Visitor Screening Process

Visits by external groups will require administrative approval, and guests will be limited to prospective students and pre-approved volunteers and guest speakers. In order to facilitate the adjustments being made to lunch periods and to minimize exposure, lunch time visits are discouraged. All visitors will undergo symptom screening and temperature checks and will be required to wear a mask at all times while in the school building. Visitors who remain in the entry vestibule/airlock (for example, those needing to deliver or pick up a student or instructional materials or vendors making deliveries) will not be required to undergo symptom screenings and temperature checks.

PROCEDURES FOR ADDRESSING SUSPECTED OR POSITIVE COVID-19 CASES

The School Nurse's office has been relocated to the northeast corner of the school building, and a separate space has been designated for isolating students and staff members presenting with COVID-19 symptoms until they can be picked up or arrangements for coverage of duties can be made. The isolation space will be sanitized after each use and deep cleaned daily. The School Nurse has been provided with additional personal protective equipment and another licensed nurse is on staff and available to assist as needed.

Those presenting with COVID-19 symptoms will be encouraged to consult with their physician and must be 72 hours fever free without the aid of fever-reducing medications prior to their return to school. In addition, the CDC and IDPH recommend that a period of 10 days elapse from the onset of symptoms prior to returning to school. Generally speaking, Cornerstone will follow this recommendation in evaluating student and staff health and fitness to return to campus. As a general operating procedure, written authorization from a licensed physician should accompany any individual returning to campus following COVID-related illness.

Typically, when an individual tests positive, the McLean County Health Department is notified by the physician or testing center, and the School Nurse is contacted by the MCHD director as part of the contact tracing effort. Sometimes, it may be the case that a student or family member informs us of a positive case before the result has been received by the health department. Regardless of the sequence of communication, the health department will direct school administrators in the appropriate quarantine follow up. We will adhere to their guidance regarding quarantine of close contacts, which may include individuals or whole groups of students and staff. The CDC, IDPH, and MCHD define "close contact" as being within 6 feet of the COVID-positive person for more than 15 minutes. The "close contact" radius increases when individuals have been unmasked.

In order to sustain in-person instruction for the most students and staff for the longest period of time, it is essential that we follow the physical distancing and face covering requirements. If we adhere to these protocols consistently, not only will we help to prevent the spread of viral infections, we will also reduce the number of people who may need to be quarantined in the event that we experience positive cases of COVID-19 at Cornerstone. In *theory*, if we keep our faces covered, are diligent in our hygiene and sanitation practices, and maintain proper physical distancing, very few – if any – incidents of "close contact" should occur during the course of regular school operations.

In the event of a positive case, parents of students in the representative cohort/class/grade level/division will be notified. (The extent of notification will be determined by the extent of potential exposure.). If the health department determines that other students and staff have been in close contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19, a class, grade level, division, or the entire school may have to be quarantined for a minimum of 14 days requiring a pivot to remote teaching and learning. Therefore, we must make every effort to stay healthy, to prevent the spread of infection, and to adhere to the requirements that provide the best opportunity for the school to remain open.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

If Cornerstone is an independent school, why do we have to follow state guidelines?

ACSI and local legal counsel as well as our insurance agents, the McLean County Health Department, the Regional Office of Education, and several state and regional legislators with whom the Head of School has interacted directly, have all sent the consistent message that, to go out on our own and refuse to follow a mandate put forth by an entity with which we are affiliated (in this case, ISBE) could render our insurance coverage void, put us in a precarious legal/liability position, and worse, have the potential to present a poor witness. As a state recognized school, if we do not follow ISBE's requirements for non-public schools as put forth in the Illinois School Code or any executive orders pertaining to the operation of non-public schools, we will lose our recognition, which has the following impacts: immediate termination of our certification with the Department of Homeland Security, ending our SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Identification System) I-20 approval abilities and shutting down our international program; loss of membership with the Illinois Elementary School Association and Illinois High School Association, bringing an end to our ability to participate in activities (academic and musical) and athletics sponsored by these organizations; complications for our graduating seniors with things like the ACT, SAT, scholarship eligibility, and admission to some institutions of higher learning; and probable loss of licensure for any faculty and staff members whose licenses are issued by the state of Illinois.

Is the Illinois State Board of Education's guidance law?

All recognized public and non-public schools are subject to the law set forth in the Illinois School Code. Executive Orders that directly relate to the functioning of Illinois schools are legally considered extensions of the Illinois School Code. The Illinois State Board of Education is not part of the legislative branch of Illinois state government. Therefore, their guidance is not law. However, all portions of their guidance documents that reference *requirements* of the Illinois School Code or Executive Orders are considered legally binding.

Why is Cornerstone requiring face coverings?

The wearing of face coverings is explicitly stated as a non-negotiable requirement of the *Restore Illinois Phase 4 Return to School Plan*, which is an extension of an Executive Order. Any school resuming in-person on-campus instruction during Phase 4 must require the wearing of face coverings at all times in school buildings as a condition of reopening.

Are face shields allowed in lieu of face masks?

Face shields are only allowed in lieu of face masks for teachers when they are engaged in direct instruction and/or therapy pertaining to speech and English or foreign language acquisition or when instructing students who suffer from hearing loss who rely on reading lips. Face shields are only permitted for students during speech/language therapy sessions or when a physician has provided documentation stating that the shield is medically necessary for the student to function in the school setting and such documentation is presented to the School Nurse.

Will the school restrict family travel out of state?

While there are certainly best practices regarding travel and recreation during this unique season, the school is not in a position to make blanket endorsements or restrictions on where or when a family decides to travel. We will trust our families to avoid non-essential travel to “hotspot” destinations and to exercise caution and good judgement. Cornerstone’s general approach to policy making will be to focus our attention on developing procedures and practices related to school-day operations.