



# Sage COVID-19 Handbook

## 2020-2021



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## The Team and Key Sources

As the school returns to operation, the health and safety of our community is our greatest concern. The Sage School has been reviewing CDC, Idaho, and local protocols throughout the summer as well as researching what other local and regional schools are doing. The school's response plan for 2020-2021 is consistent with safety and health information from the following sources:

- CDC Guidance for COVID-19 prevention in K-12 Schools
- Idaho State Dept. of Education - Back to School Guidance 2021-22
- South Central Public Health District (SCPHD) - Coronavirus School Resource Page

Our COVID-19 coordinator is Matt Leidecker, the school's Risk Manager. He will be our lead communicator regarding this issue in our school community. Contact information for Matt is:

- School phone - 208-788-0120
- Personal cell - 208-720-4712
- School email - matt@thesageschool.org

All community members will attend a session regarding safety procedures for returning to school, and they will receive and acknowledge these protocols and policies. The research, the teams, and the input is all directed towards one goal- how best to orient the school in relation to the ongoing pandemic. Our knowledge regarding COVID-19 and its impacts are well-informed from our experience last year, but new variants may dictate changes to these policies and protocols. Community members should expect continued communication from the school to update and supplement this text and conditions change throughout the year.

## Risk and COVID-19

We take risks every day. We climb in the car and drive. We go for mountain bike rides. We ski. Everyday, we also make choices to mitigate risks and limit unnecessary risks. We wear seatbelts and helmets. We carry cell phones, know to call 911, have health insurance, and bring necessary equipment. When the avalanche danger is high, we shift from downhill skiing to skate skiing in the meadows.

We are facing an ongoing challenge with this global pandemic. Coronavirus presents a risk we cannot completely eliminate from our lives as yet, nor can The Sage School guarantee complete protection from the virus, nor from the disease that the virus may cause, in your child's life at this school. What we can do is make wise choices to reduce and mitigate those risks. Some of these choices we will be asking you to make each day as you send your child to school- just as you would seatbelt him/her. Some we have already made, like the elimination of certain parts of our day that contain more risk, or the addition of safer outdoor classroom environments.

At the same time, it would be shortsighted to not recognize how our students were impacted last year by COVID-19 risk management policies. We eliminated many important elements of The Sage School experience like Community Action, All School Wellness, and Creativity Workshops. We recognize the impact wearing a mask all day can have on the social and emotional development of our students as well the draining impact it can have on staff members.

The Sage School is issuing this handbook to detail our current list of safety procedures in the face of this ongoing pandemic. But as we further know, the virus has a life of its own. The pandemic will continue to evolve. Based on what we learned last year, we plan to evolve with it, adapting our policies as conditions change (see Learning Modes) to keep your students safe, keep them in school, and to return to normal as quickly as conditions allow.

If necessary, we will email updates to our procedures and protocols, which will serve as an 'addenda' to this handbook. They may replace entire sections as new research on how best to protect us may change, and we will respond accordingly.

## Reducing Risk on Campus

After a year of dealing with the Coronavirus, one of the important lessons we learned was the importance of implementing a layered protection system. While one layer of risk mitigation/protection is good, a second or third is even better. The more protective layers one can build into a school community, the safer it will be. Starting at the community level, here are the layers of protection we are building into The Sage School environment- some are inherent, some have been added:

1. Vaccination - According to the CDC's back to school guidance, "*Vaccination is the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. People who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 are at low risk of symptomatic or severe infection. A [growing body of evidence](#) suggests that people who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 are less likely to become infected and develop symptoms and are at substantially reduced risk from severe illness and death from COVID-19 compared with unvaccinated people.*" Additional information about vaccines can be found [on the CDC website](#).

Additionally, people who are fully vaccinated follow a different decision matrix when contact tracing and, if asymptomatic, DO NOT have to quarantine if they are in close contact with a positive COVID-19 case. Overall school and band-level vaccination percentages will be one of several factors that will impact school decisions as we navigate this evolving pandemic.

While the school recognizes the importance of vaccination, we also understand that our student and family population is drawn from a broad spectrum of the community with different perspectives on how to manage their individual health and well being. Families have a range of legal options in the state of Idaho when making decisions about vaccinating their students. While the state has yet to incorporate the COVID vaccine into their suite of required vaccinations for school attendance, families can typically opt out of vaccination for medical, religious, or philosophical reasons. Additionally, a small percentage of our student population in the 6/7 band simply does not have access to the vaccine. For these reasons, The Sage School will not mandate a COVID vaccine as a requirement for on-campus attendance.

2. School Size - The simple fact that The Sage School population is intentionally limited with approximately 120 students and faculty combined reduces the likelihood of a positive case showing up on campus. It also increases our ability to manage interactions in order to stay in-person for longer periods of time.
3. Band Structure/Cohorting - Our ability to effectively isolate band level 'cohorts' into their own buildings will allow each band to adapt to potential COVID-19 infections without exposing and/or disrupting others on campus. Our team teaching structure also provides us more adaptive flexibility to respond to outbreaks. We will continue to use a cohorting strategy at the band level (6/7, 8/9, and 10/11/12) to mitigate COVID risk. At the same

time, we recognize the loss of cross band interactions from our experience last year and will allow cross band interactions as conditions allow (e.g., outside or indoors when regional risk levels subside)

4. Structural Adaptations - We have implemented important risk management tactics, such as adapting our physical campus to create outdoor classroom spaces, increasing ventilation indoors, and accommodating rooms for social distancing.
5. Parent Awareness/Involvement - We will work with and educate our parent community about personal and student health screening and appropriate quarantine and isolation practices, with the intent to help prevent potential cases from reaching The Sage Campus.
6. County Conditions - We will use the South Central Regional Health District's 4-stage Risk Level definitions (Green, Yellow, Orange, and Red) to guide our awareness and planning of activities both on and off campus.
7. Daily Attestation - One of the "benefits" of COVID last year was an acute awareness of our students' health and overall symptom assessment. In an effort to limit potential COVID cases on campus, we also saw a significant decrease in the overall number of sick students on campus. We ask that families continue similar precautions as last year and keep their student home if sick. We will continue asking parents to submit a daily symptom attestation report via our google forms, but will consider removing that daily requirement as regional risk levels subside.
8. Face Masks - Over the summer, with the rapid expansion of the Delta Variant, the CDC updated their mask guidance for COVID prevention in K-12 schools to "*recommend indoor masking for all individuals age 2 years and older, including students, teachers, staff, and visitors, regardless of vaccination status.*" The CDC also recommends that schools consider local conditions when developing COVID risk management protocols.  
We recognize the impact to the social and emotional development of our students when required to attend school fully masked. We also recognize the balance required to protect students and staff from COVID when regional risk levels are elevated. **Students, staff, and visitors will be required to wear cloth masks** when indoors and on busses. We will consider an indoor "mask optional" policy if the SCPHD regional risk levels falls to green and we feel it is possible to provide a relatively safe space that allows for this important return to normalcy
9. Social Distancing - We will continue to reorganize our classrooms to spread students out more in the classroom. As per the CDC guidance, "*based on several studies from the 2020-2021 school year, CDC recommends schools maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms, combined with indoor mask wearing to reduce transmission risk.*" Our goal will be to get as close to 3 feet apart as space allows. Different class sizes, arrangements, and passing periods may not make this possible all the time, however, it will be our desire to create and maintain it regularly.
10. Personal Hygiene - We will have hand sanitizing stations for regular use and will encourage regular and consistent handwashing for the students, including at key moments of the day such as before and after lunch, or during wellness or special activities which may require it.

11. Education and Personal Behavior - We will educate students about behavioral changes that can help limit potential spread of COVID-19 such as limited hand to face contact, coughing into elbows, and quieter and less effusive communication.
12. Daily Cleaning - We will be reducing the furniture and trimmings in the building to allow for easier cleaning. We will be cleaning and sanitizing daily with a focus on high use surfaces.
13. Intentional Schedule Choices- As per our Learning Mode chart on page 5, we will be making choices about which parts of our day carry more risk and we will limit those first.
14. School Closures - In the event of evolving health scenarios and in consultation with SCPHD, we will consider closing different bands on campus (the 6/7 building for example) or the entire campus as necessary to prevent the spread of positive COVID-19 infections.

It is not possible to always have each layer of protection fully engaged, especially when balancing the various needs and goals of daily school activities. It is important then to consider the efficacy of each layer or combination of layers in risk mitigation when making decisions about school activities.

## School Culture and Value

After a year of operating during a COVID pandemic, we have learned a lot about the importance and management of in-person learning. *Though things will continue to be different*, our hope is to slowly transition back to as much of a “normal” experience for our students as possible. Families will be asked to continue a daily health attestation and students and staff will be required to wear cloth masks while inside. We will likely be restricting students from wandering through the buildings in order to keep the different bands apart. Students will have more outdoor classroom experiences while the weather allows. Field studies will have to be modified to better fit safety protocols, and there is the possibility, however limited, that we may be forced to adopt a distance learning model yet again.

*The culture and the values that drive Sage, however, will remain.* The hands-on, relevant curriculum, the study of our relationship with the natural world, the connections between students and teachers, the relationships between students- these are still central in our design. All of our changes are being made to pay attention to the student experience of their education, and to ensure that their social, emotional, cognitive, and academic skills continue to develop in a way that is sustainable for students and teachers, while slowing and/or minimizing the spread of this pandemic.

## Learning Mode/Social Environment for Learning

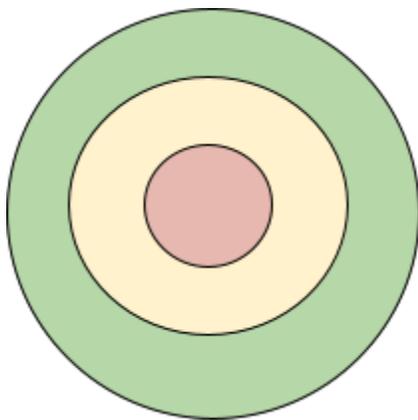
Presented below is a chart outlining the various “Learning Modes” in planning that will allow the school to adapt throughout the 2021/22 year with a focus on returning to normal as conditions allow. Band teachers are working to design a curriculum that can easily transition between the various modes as health and safety conditions evolve in the community. We are confident we

won't have to transition to an online experience. However, if that is deemed necessary by local, regional, or state mandate, based on our distance learning experience in the spring of 2020, we are confident in our ability to create a rich Sage School online experience.

Operating with an abundance of caution and considering the new COVID procedures and policies being implemented this year, we plan to base our learning modes on the SCPHD 4-stage risk level classification. As we review the implementation of new protocols, we will consider changes in either direction and communicate our plan accordingly. Our goal is to maintain students on campus with direct teacher interaction and consider policies that will allow a "return to normal" as local and regional conditions allow.

SCPHD Risk Level System	Green	Yellow or Orange	Red
<b>Sage Learning Mode</b>	<b>Sage at School:</b> In-person All School Level Interactions	<b>Sage in Bands:</b> In-person Band Level Interactions	<b>Sage in Bands</b> In person Band-Level interaction with heightened awareness.
<b>Mask/Face Coverings</b>	Masks optional	Masks required indoors, masks optional outdoors.	Mask required indoors, re-evaluate outdoors based on local conditions
<b>Mon - Thurs</b>	Full school day schedule	Full school day schedule	Full school day schedule, Online only if mandated by city, county, or state government.
<b>Friday</b>	Full school day schedule	Reduced Friday hours (ie. no Creativity Workshop)	Reduced Friday hours - adapt to conditions and COVID absences.
<b>Human Ecology</b>	In person	In person	In Person
<b>Math</b>	In person, consider cross-band scheduling	In person, classes organized by band	In Person, classes organized by band.
<b>Spanish/ Writing</b>	In person, potential for a shared Spanish room between bands	In person, classes contained in their buildings	In person, classes contained in their buildings
<b>Wellness</b>	Cross band wellness allowed at all levels.	Cross band wellness allowed at all levels outdoors.	Consider limiting cross-band wellness outdoors.
<b>Lunch</b>	Bands can mix for lunch, socially distanced.	Bands can mix for lunch, socially distanced outdoors only.	Consider limiting lunch interactions to band level.

<b>Community Action</b>	Community action	Community Action	Re-evaluate based on conditions and community organization guidelines.
<b>Transport</b>	Use of buses with greater density of seating, masks on	Use of buses with greater density of seating, masks on.	Consider limiting the density of busses, masks on.
<b>Field Studies</b>	Regular Field Studies	Limited, modified, and potentially shortened Field Studies	Consider local conditions and adapt according to other organization guidelines.
<b>Daily Attestation</b>	At home done by parent	Daily attestation required, based on local conditions	Daily attestation required.



**Another way of thinking about it:** Each level represents an increasingly wider social circle that our students may reasonably engage in and learn in-person from. We do not anticipate a scenario where online learning becomes necessary, but will follow local, regional or state mandates. At our most restrictive, students will be limited to band-level interactions and required to wear masks indoors when social distancing is not possible. It is our goal to return to normal as local conditions allow so we can provide the fully immersive Sage School experience we know to be so valuable for our students.

Ultimately, at Sage, we believe there is one vital mode of learning- experiential. And there are a host of important experiences students should have and will have at Sage. Our school is designed to provide a rich set of experiences for adolescents, but this pandemic cuts at the heart of many of those experiences we design- social, in the field, with mentors, in the community, etc. However, with each widening circle, we can widen their experiences, and that is the design. Most schools seem to approach teaching through a binary system- teaching in person or teaching online (or a mix). However, at Sage, the set of experiences creates a more complex system of schedules and ranges of learning opportunities. We must then look at a sliding scale of the experiences we can offer students safely, depending on the COVID levels. We are constantly considering what the quality of our student experience is, and this system allows us the capacity to make decisions for that end.

A word of caution- the colors of this image imply those of a stoplight: go, proceed with caution, and stop. However, the green level is not a simple 'go'. It is ultimately 'pandemic green', which means proceed with caution. While we have learned a lot from operating last year under this system, and the additional protection provided by vaccines does create the potential for a "return to normal", we will continue to let caution guide our decisions about how and when to dial back our COVID risk management practices.

# Daily Schedule and Reasoning

Our primary desire is to get students together as safely and reasonably as we can. We are doing this in a way that, as our mission points out, honors adolescence and creates a thriving environment. As our vision points out, we are looking to create a sustainable community in the face of this crisis. We are building a schedule and a school that tends to the whole student - one that looks at the child's experience of the day.

Based on our experience last year, we know we can reasonably have students on campus every day, and tend to the majority of their academic courses with a shortened schedule. One of the important lessons we carried forward from last year is the importance and effectiveness of a later start for our students. While the effectiveness of an later start varied between bands (obviously being more important for the upper grades), we opted for a compromise that created a consistent school-wide schedule that begins at 9:00 am.

Last year we chose to cut out certain higher risk parts of our day and week: traveling weekly in vehicles to do group-oriented community service, mixed band wellness lunch periods and Creativity Workshops. These are important parts of The Sage experience, and we are building a schedule that allows us to incorporate those activities back into the daily experience as conditions allow. A sample schedule may look like this (see below). The order of classes may differ between bands, but this should give an example of how we plan to start the year.

<b>Monday-Thursday</b>	
8:20 - 9:00	Teachers on campus, and available for extra help in person by request, or for online assistance if necessary.
Bus arrives 8:45 <b>Students Arrive 9:00</b>	
9:00 - 9:50	Human Ecology
9:55 - 10:45	Human Ecology
10:55 - 11:45	Skills (e.g., Spanish)
11:45 - 1:05	Lunch/Wellness/Community Meeting - This is intentionally planned at the same time to incorporate cross-band and all-school wellness when COVID conditions allow
1:05 - 1:55	Skills (e.g., Writing)/Community Action
2:05 - 2:55	Skills (ie.g., e Math)/Community Action

2:55 - 3:01	Clean up
<b>Students dismissed 3:10</b> Bus arrives 3:13	
<b>Friday</b> Due to increased transmission linked to the Delta Variant, we opted to remove Creativity Workshops from the Friday schedule for the fall as it would be impossible to start these classes mid-trimester. Additionally, we will NOT require students to do an independent study during the fall trimester	
9:00 - 10:45	Bands make up missed Human Ecology/Skills due to their Community Action calendar.
10:55 - 11:45	Extra Block - Bands can use as they see fit based on needs. This is a partial reinstatement of the "coaching" block.
11:45 - 1:00	Lunch/Wellness
1:00 - 1:10	Clean up
<b>Students dismissed 1:10</b> Bus arrives 1:13	

## Preparing the Environment

Prior to the start of the school year, The Sage School staff has been planning and preparing for the year. The following changes or adaptations are what we have completed or set in motion to complete before the school year begins:

### Structural Preparations

- We have identified indoor and outdoor physical spaces specific to each band cohort, and planned a schedule that allows for general cohort isolation as COVID conditions dictate. We are planning classroom layouts to accommodate a 3 foot social distancing requirement.
- We are purchasing and installing tents and shade canopies so each band will have outdoor class space.
- We are moving unnecessary furniture out of the building and into storage. We are creating an additional classroom space in the Greenhouse to accommodate larger Human Ecology classroom spaces.

### Other Preparations

- We have continued communication with the SCPHD’s school advisor to review COVID-19 protocols and advise the school in the event of suspected or positive cases on campus.
- We will continue to use our sanitizing system for cleaning wipes.
- We continue to stock a back-up supply of cloth masks in each classroom..
- We will maintain multiple hand-sanitizing stations throughout the school.
- We are disabling school drinking fountains when the local risk level is elevated.

## COVID-19 Screening Procedures

One of the primary risk-mitigation layers built into our COVID prevention plan this year is *Parent Awareness and Involvement*. Parents are our first line of defence in helping prevent a positive case of COVID-19 arriving on campus. Parents will inevitably be faced with the decision whether or not to send a sick child to school. Here are The Sage School’s guidelines on sick students, COVID screening, and in person attendance for 2021/22.

**Sick students:** If students feel ill, they **MUST** stay home from school, regardless of their vaccination status. (This applies to staff as well.) For the benefit of The Sage School community, parents must be judicious when making the decision to keep a sick child at home. Please contact Matt, our COVID-19 coordinator, if your student is staying home due to an illness. According to the CDC, symptoms of COVID-19 include:

<a href="https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html">https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html</a> This link includes an online “self checker” tool.		
Fever or chills	Cough	Shortness of breath
Difficulty breathing	Fatigue	Muscle or body aches
Headache	New loss of taste/smell	Sore throat
Congestion or runny nose	Nausea or vomiting	Diarrhea

**Additionally, students MUST stay home if:**

- They have been diagnosed with COVID-19.
- They have had a COVID-19 test and are waiting on results.
  - This does not apply to vaccinated students who are taking a precautionary test after a close contact.
- They have knowingly been in “close contact” with an individual with a known case of COVID-19.
  - CDC currently defines “close contact” as *“someone who was within six feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.”*
  - According to the CDC, *“the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student if both the infected student and the exposed student wore masks the entire time.”*

- Vaccinated students may continue to attend school if they have been in close contact as long as they remain asymptomatic.

**Parental Health Attestation /In Person Attendance:** Because of the overlap of symptoms with other common childhood ailments, we understand that assessing student health will be a potentially difficult daily challenge. To that end we will provide a convenient daily attestation Google Form that parents can fill out online and submit directly via their computer or phone.

**\*\*\* While our regional risk level remains elevated, Parents will be required to complete this daily attestation (available online) every day their child attends school in person. \*\*\***

We understand that this is an additional daily task, but encourage parents to develop a ritual at home that allows time for this daily health screening and subsequent reporting to school. See the Absences Section for information on how teachers will support COVID-related student absences.

## Daily Protocols at School

**Teachers & Staff:** Teachers and staff are also required to complete a daily COVID-19 Symptom Attestation Form and report to the COVID-19 coordinator.

**Visitors & Parents:** Parents and visitors who plan to enter the school are advised to call in advance and give the school the opportunity to manage visitors and entry.

- All visitors and parents are required to wear a mask and physically distance on campus
- All individuals should wash or sanitize their hands after entering the building
- Parents, and visitors must enter through the main reception area and all visitors must contact the main office prior to being screened and admitted.
- When we are in Critical and High risk levels, Parents and visitors may also be required to complete a COVID-19 Symptom Attestation questionnaire, and have their temperature checked.

**Arrival and Pick up:** Parents and students should maintain appropriate distancing during arrival and pick up, consistent with the requirements detailed below.

**Face coverings:** Everyone must wear a face covering while indoors on campus. All outdoor activities will be “mask optional.” Students are expected to provide their own face coverings, though the school has a supply on hand. According to public health officials, individuals can spread COVID-19 to others even if they do not feel sick. The use of face coverings is an important way that we, as a community, can protect each other by mitigating the spread of COVID-19. If local and regional risk levels fall into the green level we will consider lifting this mask requirement in consideration for the social and emotional well being of our students and staff.

Exceptions may be made with consideration for medical reasons and age and to accommodate eating and drinking, and instructional time when physical distancing can be maintained and additional preventative measures are in place.

- CDC guidelines for face coverings including the following:
  - The mouth and nose are fully covered
  - The covering fits snugly against the sides of the face so there are no gaps
  - The wearer does not have any difficulty breathing while wearing the covering
  - The face covering can be tied or otherwise secured to prevent slipping
- Students should have two (2) clean face coverings available each day at school
- All indoor meetings with colleagues, students, and visitors shall be conducted with masks and physical distancing.
- Faculty may remove their masks for brief periods of time to perform an instructional task that requires removal of the mask. Physical distancing will be strictly maintained and the mask must be replaced immediately upon completion of the instructional task.
- Face coverings do not have to be worn by employees when they are alone in their classroom or office.

**Distancing:** All individuals will maintain a safe physical distance of three feet as feasible including during class, during transit, at meal time, and in meetings and all other instances. Signage throughout the School will reinforce physical distancing. The School will operate in bands indoors to minimize crossover among children and adults on campus.

**Hygiene:** Frequent handwashing is critical in preventing the spread of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases. Hand sanitizer dispensers are at entrances and other locations throughout the school. Students, employees, parents, and visitors should wash or sanitize their hands after entering the building. Everyone is instructed to frequently wash their hands throughout the day for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, but especially at the beginning and end of their time on campus, before and after mealtimes, and after using the restroom. Other hygiene considerations:

- Students and staff should practice cough/sneeze etiquette: Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, throw the tissue in the trash, and then wash your hands.
- Students and staff should avoid touching their face, door handles, and stairway railings whenever possible.
- Students should bring personal water bottles since water fountains will be closed. Students are not permitted to share water bottles or any personal items or equipment.

**Classroom Protocols:** We have developed an outdoor classroom space for each band to use when weather and instructional planning permits. The following protocols will be followed with regard to indoor or outdoor classroom environment:

- As weather permits, staff will prop open exterior doors to reduce frequent touch points and increase ventilation.

- As much as possible, students will be designated a specific chair and/or portion of a table each day and separated by approximately three feet of space.
- If a student needs a chromebook, one will be issued to the student for the year rather than taking one from a communal supply. The student will be responsible for returning it in the condition it was loaned.
- The existence of our band structure already provides 'pods' or 'cohorts' for students to naturally limit their interactions daily. Each band has between 24 - 32 students plus 3-4 teachers that form its core.

### **Moving classrooms:**

- To the extent possible, if students need to change to different classrooms (for Math and Spanish, for instance), our protocol will be to have the teacher come to the class rather than the class go to the teacher. This will allow for limiting social interactions and easier contact tracing, should it be needed.

### **Lunch:**

- Students will be encouraged to wash or sanitize hands before and after lunch.
- Students will, naturally, have to take masks off during lunch in order to eat. Students will be expected to maintain six foot distances when eating indoors.
- Eating outside, socially distanced, will be encouraged when the weather allows.
- If choosing to eat outdoors, students may engage in cross-band lunch.
- If choosing to eat indoors, students must stay within their band groups within their specific band buildings.
- We will communicate any changes to the lunch policies based on the SCPDH risk level and Sage Learning Mode as conditions allow.

### **Wellness:**

- Wellness is an important component of The Sage School daily curriculum and has been fully incorporated into the schedule again this year.
- While engaging in wellness outdoors, masks are optional.
- During SCPHD Critical Risk levels, we will consider limiting cross-band and all-school wellness.

### **Community Action:**

- Community Action has been reinstated as a regular part of The Sage School curriculum. We will work with our local partner organizations to adapt and follow appropriate COVID precautions while engaging in Community Action.

### **Creativity Workshop:**

- Creativity Workshop requires the consistent cross-band mixing of students for the duration of a trimester. For that reason, we have decided to remove it from the curriculum for the Fall Trimester so we can assess the evolution of COVID, vaccinations, and the Delta Variant on return to in-person education.
- We will consider reinstating Creativity Workshops at the beginning of each trimester throughout the year.

**Clean Up:**

- Students will engage in cleaning within their own cohort/band buildings and outdoor space.

**Transportation:**

Building social distancing requirements into our transportation policies last year significantly limited our ability to engage in many of the hands-on community building elements of The Sage School curriculum. Considering the additional layer of protection afforded by vaccines in conjunction with masking, sanitation, and ventilation, we will utilize our school vehicles at full capacity this year.

- Face coverings are required for the driver and all passengers..
- Weather permitting, windows will be open to increase ventilation.
- In SCPHD Critical (red) risk level conditions we will assess the conditions on campus and consider limiting vehicle use and/or increasing spacing in the vehicles.

## Field Studies

The proposed Sage School Learning Modes and current health and safety conditions will have an impact on our Field Studies program that range from potentially limiting our ability to schedule site visits with local and regional organizations, addressing tenting capacity, and managing health issues while on the road. The use of outdoor spaces, however, is generally considered a lower risk activity and we plan to leverage our ability to create students' experience safely in the outdoor environment. Some specific COVID-related adjustments to our field studies program include:

- Increased availability of sanitation in the kitchen environment.
- Addition of daily health screening while on the road.
- Limitation of tenting to two students per three-person tents, including the option for solo sleeping arrangements.
- Inclusion of additional tents to accommodate any necessary COVID isolation.
- As we transition to full-capacity transportation, our ability to provide a COVID-isolation vehicle is limited. Parents should be prepared to retrieve a student from the field in the event their child becomes sick while on the trip.

## Mountain Rides

Mountain Rides, a consistent partner of the school, has provided an eco-friendly mode of transportation to and from school. We look forward to maintaining that partnership. As of now, all Mountain Rides transportation is FREE (no Sage School bus pass is needed) until further notice. Masks are required on the bus. If Mountain Ride COVID-transportation policies result in a student being late to school we would consider it an excused absence. See their website for updates and changes throughout the year <https://www.mountainrides.org/>.

## If Your Child Gets Sick During the School Day

COVID-19 symptoms take many forms - from headache to fatigue to nausea. Students experience these symptoms regularly at school with or without a global pandemic. However, extra precaution will continue to be taken this year. Once on campus, if a student is reporting any sign of feeling ill that could possibly be a symptom of COVID-19, that student will be isolated from the group, a teacher will call home, and parents will be expected to pick up the student immediately (as immediately as possible).

## If a Case is Discovered on Campus

If a case is known to have been on campus, The Sage School will work with the SCPHD to determine the best course of action and may be different depending on the circumstance. That may mean individuals, small groups, or entire bands isolating at home for a few days or more.

Contact tracing is part of the process of mitigating the spread of infection. The School has a plan to work with SCPHD officials if a community member tests positive for COVID-19. The School and/or local public health officials will work with the infected person to identify close contacts and will notify community members who may be close contacts. This is a small community and we can get distracted by the 'who was it' game. The school will protect the individual's privacy, and we ask that parents and students follow that lead.

## Return to School Protocols

Throughout the year we will inevitably be faced with positive COVID-19 cases, close contact occurrences, possible symptoms, and run-of-the-mill sick students. In any of these situations, please contact Matt, our COVID-19 coordinator, or Kristal in the front office to discuss your child's health situation. How and when it is appropriate to return to school is outlined clearly below and in the COVID-19 Return to School Flowchart available on the front page of the website. The following guidelines **MUST** be followed for students and Sage employees **BEFORE** they return to school in the following cases:

### **You child stayed home or was sent home from school due to COVID-19 symptoms -**

- SCPHD Green Risk Level - At the minimal risk level, we are able to handle these individual cases with a little more leniency. For a student presenting COVID-19 symptoms with no history of exposure to the virus (as identified on the Sage Attestation Form), they can return when ALL the following conditions have been met:
  - No fever of 100.4 F (38 C) or above for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications
  - Cough and other symptoms have subsided for at least 24 hours
  - Parents have completed the daily attestation form confirming symptoms have subsided and the student has not been exposed to the virus.

- SCPHD Yellow Risk Level - At the moderate risk level, please contact Matt Leidecker to determine whether a COVID test will be required in addition to the conditions mentioned above.
- SCPHD Orange or Red Risk Level - At the High to Critical risk level a negative COVID-19 test will be required in addition to the conditions mentioned above.

**If your child has tested positive for COVID-19**, they can return when the following conditions have been met:

- No fever of 100.4 F (38 C) or above for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications
- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms onset (defined as the date on which symptoms first began, including non-respiratory symptoms)

**If your child has had close contact with a positive COVID-19 patient.** Close contact is defined as “*someone who was within six feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.*” The CDC outlines three possible quarantine options:

- \*\*\* Fully vaccinated asymptomatic individuals DO NOT need to quarantine \*\*\*
- 14 days from the date of contact.
- 10 days from date of contact
- 7 days from date of contact + a negative COVID test after the 5th day

**Previous COVID illness exceptions:** Anyone who has had close contact with someone with COVID-19 and who:

- Developed COVID-19 illness within the previous 3 months AND
- has recovered AND
- remains without COVID-19 symptoms (for example, cough, shortness of breath) AND
- Can submit a doctor’s note/medical verification of the previous COVID-19 diagnosis does not need to stay home.

## Absences

Clearly, more than ever, if your child is feeling ill, keep them home. As we enact all of the above, it seems clear that we will have a significantly higher rate of absences than usual. Parents may be keeping their kids home on suspicion of a COVID-19 symptom. We may ask you to pick your child up for a symptom which could be interpreted as COVID-19. Students may be asked to quarantine at different parts of the year. Under normal circumstances, this level of absences may make parents uneasy. This year, let us call it a ‘wise safety measure’. We want to build systems that acknowledge that and not add to the stress of students or parents, making us all more likely to follow the protocols and keep each other healthier, longer.

This heightened absence rate will be part of the reason why a shortened daily schedule will be important for sustainability of seeing students each day. The shortened schedule puts time in the teacher’s day to tend to absent students, reach out, do a quick Zoom meeting, send follow up work, or check in. This should allow everyone to take a deep breath and know that if

students miss a day, or a few days, it will be ok. We can work together to keep students connected and engaged.

## Teacher Absence

Clearly, a teacher's absence- or even the potential of an extended absence- has a different effect on the classroom experience. Even as we follow protocols, the likelihood of an increased teacher absence rate is also possible. In many ways, The Sage School has built in redundancies to handle this issue. Because we teach in a band structure, it will be easy to absorb a short-term teacher absence. Teachers may Zoom in if they are feeling well enough, they may leave work for other band-level teachers to coordinate, or they may give students time to work on any and all projects they have. An extended teacher absence may require a different solution- from turning that period from an in-person to an online course for an extended period, even if all other courses are meeting on campus. It may require a long-term substitute or other solutions, but we will work that out on an individual basis and communicate accordingly.

## Next Steps

This plan is our 'best foot forward' approach to begin the school year. We are intentionally starting in the Sage in Bands Learning Mode with adjustments based on what we learned last year. Most importantly, we are looking forward to having students on campus again and don't anticipate the need to transition to an online school model. However, the pandemic seems far from over, and our capacity to engage in long-term planning is challenged- no one can tell us what October looks like in the valley, let alone February. We intend to start the year with a conservative approach and hopefully peel back the precautions if the SCPHD Regional Risk levels subside as outlined in our Learning Mode chart above.

The Sage School staff will be ready to shift from one plan to the next. However, a day or two of inservice may be needed to finalize transitions. We will stay in close communication about any changes to the schedule or needs from a staff perspective.

Our goal remains the same- to provide a meaningful and rich educational experience for our students that fulfills as much of our mission as this virus will safely allow. We want to do this in partnership with our parents, as we are all united in the healthy development of our children. These pages, and our capacity to follow the procedures laid out, are our best bet at our ability to achieve those ends.

Thank you, again, for your trust in working with your most precious resource. We continue, especially so at times like these, to be humbled by that honor and responsibility.

The Sage School Staff