



# Sage COVID-19 Handbook

## 2020-2021



<b>The Team and Key Sources</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Risk and COVID-19</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Reducing Risk on Campus</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>School Culture and Value</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Learning Mode/Social Environment for Learning</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Daily Schedule and Reasoning</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Preparing the Environment</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>COVID-19 Screening Procedures</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Daily Protocols at School</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Field Studies</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Mountain Rides</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>If Your Child Gets Sick During the School Day</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>If a Case is Discovered on Campus</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Return to School Protocols</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Absences</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Teacher Absence</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Next Steps</b>	<b>16</b>

## 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 schools and colleges have been doing. We've also been part of a committee of local principals that includes Blaine County, Sun Valley Community School, Sage, Pioneer Montessori, and Syringa, comparing processes and sharing ideas.

Additionally, The Sage School has put together a COVID Working Group consisting of board members, parents, and teachers to review materials and make suggestions. We've also consulted and worked with NWAIS's lawyer, as well as our own school lawyer.

The school's response plan for 2020-2021 is consistent with safety and health information from the following sources:

- Idaho Rebounds - Guidelines for Opening Idaho
- Idaho Dept. of Health and Welfare - Back to School Framework 2020
- Idaho Public Health Districts - Covid-19 Guidance for Schools
- South Central Public Health District (SCPHD) - Covid-19 Regional Risk Level Plan
- CDC Guidelines

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 pandemic. Our knowledge regarding COVID-19 and its impacts are evolving rapidly, and these policies and protocols may also change. Community members should expect continued communication from the school to update and supplement this text.

## 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 a new challenge- a global pandemic. We are still learning about the novel Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2, or simply 'Coronavirus') and the disease that it causes, COVID-19. 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 outdoor space to increase social distancing.

The Sage School is issuing this handbook to detail our current list of safety procedures in the face of this crisis. But as we further know, the virus has a life of its own. The pandemic and our best knowledge of how to manage it will morph. We will email regular updates to our procedures and protocols, which will serve as an 'addenda' to this handbook. They may replace entire sections. Ideas of how best to protect us may change, and we will respond accordingly.

# Reducing Risk on Campus

One of the obvious challenges to managing COVID-19 is the simple fact that there is no cure. Even when a vaccine arrives, it may be some time before it can be adequately distributed throughout the population. As the scientific and public health community is still learning about the biology and mechanics of the disease, there are very few concrete and iron-clad answers on how to most effectively prevent transmission. The SCPHD's school coordinator has suggested a layered perspective when planning for and mitigating the risk of community transmission. While one layer of 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. This has been our process.

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. School Size - The simple fact that The Sage School population is intentionally limited with approximately 100 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.
2. Band Structure - Our ability to effectively isolate band level 'cohorts' (6/7, 8/9, etc.) 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.
3. Structural Adaptations - We have implemented important risk management tactics, such as adapting our physical campus to create outdoor classroom spaces, increasing ventilation indoors, planning for efficient movement on campus, and accommodating rooms for social distancing.
4. Parent Awareness/Involvement - We will work with and educate our parent community about personal and student health screening and appropriate isolation practices, with the intent to help prevent potential cases from reaching the Sage Campus.
5. County Conditions - We will use the South Central District Health Regions Risk Level definitions (Green, Yellow, Orange, and Red) to guide our awareness and planning of activities both on and off campus.
6. Student Health Screenings - We will work to stay up to date on the scientific evidence supporting the efficacy of at-school health screenings, which can be an effective tool to identify and isolate potential COVID-19 cases.
7. PPE/Face Masks - **Students and staff will be required to wear cloth masks** when indoors, on busses, or when we cannot ensure adequate social distancing.
8. Social Distancing - We are reorganizing our classrooms to spread students out more in the classroom. Our goal will be to get as close to 6 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. Adding a building for the seniors, to be completed in October, will add to this capacity.
9. 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.

10. 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.
11. 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.
12. 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 (doing community service vs in a small math class, for instance), and we will limit those first.
13. 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

*Things will be different.* Students may have daily health check-ins and 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 we may eventually be forced to adopt a distance learning model yet again.

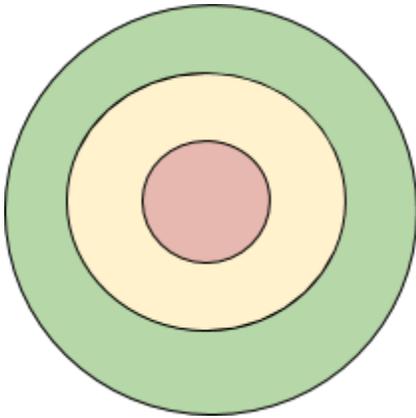
*The culture and the values that drive Sage, however, will remain.* The hands-on, relevant curriculum, the study of our relationship with the natural world, the connections between students and teachers, the relationships between students- these are still central in our design. All of our changes are 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 2020/21 year. 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 learned a lot through our distance learning experience in the spring and are confident we can transition to a rich Sage School online experience if that is deemed necessary.

Operating with an abundance of caution and considering the new COVID procedures and policies being implemented this year, we plan to start school as **Sage in Bands (Yellow)** regardless of the Idaho Back to School Level or the SCPHD Blaine County 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 as long as health and safety conditions allow.

<b>Idaho Back to School Level</b>	Category 1: No Community Transition	Category 2: Minimal to Moderate Community Transition	Category 3: Substantial Community Transition
<b>SCPHD Risk Level System</b>	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 at Home:</b> Digital School Interactions
<b>School Day</b>	Full or close to full day schedule	School day limited, potential stagger start	Hours in synchronous computer classes limited
<b>Human Ecology</b>	In person	In person	Online
<b>Math</b>	In person, students move between classes	In person with teachers moving between classes or online	Online
<b>Spanish/ Writing</b>	In person, potential for a shared Spanish room between bands	In person, classes contained in their buildings	Online
<b>Wellness</b>	Some cross-band wellness allowed	Bands separated for wellness or limited wellness on campus	At Home
<b>Lunch</b>	Bands can mix for lunch, socially distanced	Bands separated for lunch or no lunch on campus	At home
<b>Community Action</b>	Potential for local, small group, or at school service	Plan for service at home	On own
<b>Transport</b>	Use of buses with greater density of seating, masks on	Use of buses with limited seating capacity, masks on to no use of school buses	None
<b>Field Studies</b>	Regional modified Field Studies	Limited, modified, more localized and shortened Field Studies	None, or digital versions
<b>Health check ins</b>	At home done by parent	At home done by parent with documentation or band check-in process	Managed at home



**Another way of thinking about it:** Each level- Sage at Home (red), Sage in Bands (yellow), and Sage at School (green)- represents an increasingly wider social circle that our students may reasonably engage in and learn in-person from. At our most restrictive, students will be on-line for the school day, as we were in the spring. Then, when conditions allow, we may allow students to interact in bands, and eventually as a full school.

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, drawn from public health and Idaho back to school framework-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. There is another bubble around this circle- 'true green' which would imply travel and social interaction without restrictions. This is not in our handbook as it is not possible in the current pandemic. Therefore, our year will be proceeding with various levels of caution.

## 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.

As such, we believe we can reasonably have students on campus almost every day, tend to the majority of their academic courses in a shortened schedule, and then have students home for part of each day. We are doing this by cutting certain higher risk parts of our day and week: traveling weekly in vehicles to do group-oriented community service, mixed band wellness periods, and mixed band lunch periods. While these are important parts of The Sage experience, and parts we long to return to, we will take a temporary break from these activities until it is safe to return to them. 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 are looking to start the year. The schedule will also change as we move through the year and through different levels of risk. This is a cautious start which is in the Sage in Bands (yellow) category.

The school day, one will note, starts later, ends earlier and students are not on campus for Friday. This helps reduce higher risk exposure for the students and builds in extra time for teachers to tend to the more complicated tasks of teaching in the COVID era which include supporting students with COVID-related absences, and managing the additional health and safety protocols. The later start time has the added benefit of allowing for the natural adolescent sleeping patterns of heavy sleep in the morning. It is also adjusted to account for new Mountain Rides bus arrival times.

<b>Monday-Thursday</b>	
8:20 - 9:40	Teachers on campus, NO STUDENTS on campus. Teachers available for extra help in person by request, for online assistance, for planning the many changes to keep up with the demand of COVID
Bus arrives 9:40 <b>Students Arrive 9:45</b>	
9:45- 11:10	Human Ecology
11:10-11:25	Quick wellness/community meeting
11:25- 12:05	Skills (ie Spanish)
12:05- 12:35	Lunch
12:40 - 1:20	Skills (ie Writing)
1:25 - 2:05	Skills (ie Math)
2:05- 2:10	Students Gather materials, tidy, clean personal area
<b>Students dismissed 2:10</b> Bus arrives 2:13	
<b>Friday</b> Students at home, working independently. Staff mentoring students as needed, meeting together to plan curricular changes, cleaning building	

# Preparing the Environment

Prior to the start of the school year, The Sage School staff has been planning and preparing for a very different 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, which should allow limited cohort closures in the case of a positive case on campus and help limit the potential for wider community spread.
- We are planning classroom layouts to accommodate social distancing requirements.
- We are purchasing and installing tents and shade canopies so each band will have outdoor class space.
- We are purchasing and installing (by mid-October) a third portable classroom so that each band can have their own building- this will allow more separation by bands and provide for easier contact tracing should a positive case be identified on campus.
- We are moving unnecessary furniture out of the building and into storage. Note: the school will host a work day during which we invite parents to help us move extra furniture (unneeded chairs, bookshelves, cubbies, etc) into a storage bin on campus to be secured until we can reasonably return them to the classroom.
- We are securing the wellness closet so students will no longer have free access to materials as well as giving consideration to the use of communal items such as laptops, and certain school supplies.

## **Other Preparations**

- We have established 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.
- Matt attended the NWAIS Pandemic Coordinator Pre-Flight Check: Preparing for 2020-21 workshop
- We will establish a flow of campus traffic for each band cohort to help limit congestion.
- We are working to establish a protocol for daily student health assessments and recording.
- We have purchased a new sanitizing system for cleaning wipes.
- We have purchased a supply of cloth masks for classroom use.
- We are preparing to set up multiple hand-sanitization stations throughout the school.
- We are disabling school drinking fountains

# 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. This CDC “Return to School Planning” checklist will prepare for these new and evolving circumstances. Here is the link to the checklist:

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/parent-checklist.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/parent-checklist.html)

Parents will inevitably be faced with the decision as to whether or not send a sick child to school. Here are The Sage School’s guidelines on sick students, COVID screening, and in person attendance for 2020/21.

**Sick students:** If students feel ill, they **MUST** stay home from school. (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.
- 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 at least 15 minutes.”

**Parental Screening/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 are providing a specific COVID-19 Symptom Attestation Form (Appendix A).

**\*\*\* Parents will be required to complete this form (available online) every day their child attends school in person. \*\*\***

Specific procedures for submitting the Attestation Form will be communicated from lead teachers. We understand that this is a new and challenging 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.

**In School Screening:** The current guidance from the CDC does not recommend COVID screening be performed by teachers and staff at school for a number of reasons; because the quality and severity of symptoms exhibited by children differs from adults, because symptoms often overlap with other common viral illnesses, and because of the limitations of the screening procedures and the *“consequences of excluding students from essential educational and developmental experiences (CDC website)”*.

The Sage School has decided not to physically screen students as a requirement for entry and will instead rely on the required parent reporting procedures outlined above. If this guidance changes OR if the SCPHD declares an ORANGE risk level, The Sage School may consider implementing an on-campus screening program that follows CDC protocols. More information on screening is available here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/symptom-screening.html>

## 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.

- Parents, and visitors must enter through the main reception area and all visitors must contact the main office prior to being screened and admitted.
- Parents will not be allowed on campus once school begins unless they have an appointment or have received a communication that states otherwise.
- Parents and visitors will also be required to complete a COVID-19 Symptom Attestation questionnaire, and have their temperature checked. No one will enter the school without screening.
- 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

**Arrival and Pick up:** Parents and students must maintain appropriate six foot distancing and wear masks during arrival and pick up, consistent with the requirements detailed below. We will develop a specific arrival/departure and campus flow plan and communicate those procedures through lead teachers of each band.

**Face coverings:** Everyone must wear a face covering while on campus—including during drop-off and pickup—and provide their own face coverings. According to public health officials, individuals can spread COVID-19 to others even if they do not feel sick. While not a substitute for physical distancing, 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.

Exceptions may be made with consideration for medical reasons and age and to accommodate eating and drinking; outdoor and physical activities, 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 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 six 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 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 (that use sanitizers of greater than 60 percent alcohol) 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 six feet of space. At the end of the day, they will be responsible for disinfecting their site with wipes provided by the school.
- Students will not be permitted to share or borrow materials from their friends, and they must come to school with all of their personal supplies such as pens, pencils, etc.
- 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 12 and 24 students plus 3-4 teachers that form its core. Our separation into bands and work to keep the bands apart on a daily basis.

**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.
- NO MICROWAVES, WATER HEATERS, UTENSILS OR OTHER SUPPLIES will be provided for student use during lunches this year.
- Students will, naturally, have to take masks off during lunch in order to eat. Students will be expected to maintain six foot distances.
- Students will eat lunch in their band groups in order to minimize the number of daily interactions students have. This limitation is good for COVID-19 safety, but may wear thin in terms of social connections for adolescents.
- Eating outside, socially distanced, will be encouraged when the weather allows.
- The Sage School is working with KB’s and Jersey Girl to see how and if lunch delivery options will be available.
- We will communicate any changes to the lunch policies based on the SCPDH risk level and Sage Learning Mode as conditions allow.

**Wellness:**

- There will be brief breaks in the day for students to go outside and move for 10-15 minutes in order to encourage healthy habits, reduce 'seat time', and change environments for the sake of ventilation.
- We may, on occasion, play a game together for a wellness break. Activities will be chosen that either encourage the maintenance of social distancing or may allow for brief and fleeting interactions of less than 6 feet- such as a kickball game in which a runner passes another player.
- Will we communicate any changes to the wellness program based on the SCPDH risk level and Sage Learning Mode as conditions allow.

### **Community Action and Creativity Workshop:**

- Under the Sage in Bands Learning Mode, these activities will not occur as part of on-campus school days. We will encourage students to maintain connections to service and creative projects, but that will happen independently. More information will come from the school as the year proceeds.
- The Sage School will we communicate any changes to the Community Action & Creativity Workshop programs based on the SCPDH risk level and Sage Learning Mode as conditions allow.

### **Clean Up:**

- Students may engage in certain parts of our typical school clean up: vacuuming, raking, sweeping outdoors, window washing. However, student cleaning of bathrooms and surfaces they haven't immediately used will not be done during the COVID-19 crisis.

### **Transportation:**

- For the Sage in Bands learning mode, the school has reduced the events that would require student travel in school vehicles during the day.
- Any necessary travel in school vehicles will consider social distancing requirements. Students will be seated as follows:
  - Buses: One student per two seats (7 total students)
  - Expeditions: Front row - passenger seat. Middle and back rows - two students on the outside of the rows (5 total students)
- Face coverings are required for the driver and all passengers.
- Vehicles will be cleaned and disinfected after each use.
- Weather permitting, windows will be open to increase ventilation.
- In SCPHD Green risk level conditions, the school will consider more densely packed transportation as needed to meet the needs of the curriculum. Masks will still be required and ventilation employed to reduce the risk of transmission as much as possible.
- We will communicate any changes to the COVID transportation policies if necessary to accommodate curricular activities.

## **Field Studies**

The proposed Sage School Learning Modes and current health and safety conditions will have an impact on our Field Studies program. 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. We are developing a COVID-specific field studies protocol that will be implemented across all trips throughout the year. These protocol and specific band-level field studies programming information will come from band lead teachers.

## 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 as in no Sage School bus pass is needed. However, it has the following limitations:

- Only 20 people will be allowed on the bus at a time. It is possible that a student may be turned away under these circumstances. They would then need to wait another hour for the next bus. If this were to occur on the way to school, we would consider it an excused absence.
- If we see that over 20 students are consistently using the bus (or if students are getting consistently asked to wait for the next bus), we will consider staggering our start and end times to make it less stressful on students and families.
- Students must wear masks and enter at the rear of the bus. Schedules and more info is available on the Mountain Rides website. <https://www.mountainrides.org/>
- NOTE: The bus has changed its arrival time from last year (from 8:20 to 8:40), and our schedule has changed accordingly.

## If Your Child Gets Sick During the School Day

COVID-19 symptoms take many forms - from headache to fatigue and nausea. Students experience these symptoms regularly at school with or without a global pandemic. However, extra precaution must 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, to discuss your child's health situation. How and when it is appropriate to return to school is outlined clearly below. The following guidelines **MUST** be followed for students and Sage employees **BEFORE** they return to school in the following cases:

**You child stayed home due to sickness** - Colds, Flu, and other common illnesses can present as potential COVID-19 cases. If, however, we quarantine every possible case for the required 14 days, it can put a substantial social and emotional burden on our students and on the families members caring for them. If your student stayed home for a non-COVID-19 related illness, 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
- Parents have completed and signed the COVID-19 Symptom Attestation Form
  - \*\*\* Online submission of the form does not apply in this instance.

**If your child has tested positive for COVID-19 and exhibited symptoms**, 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) **OR** parents have provided a health care provider note indicating that there is no suspected or confirmed COVID-19

**If your child has tested positive for COVID-19 and is ASYMPTOMATIC**

- 14 days from the date of positive test

**If your child has had close contact with a positive COVID-19 patient.** Close contact is defined as 15 minutes of contact within six feet of a confirmed COVID-19 case.

- 14 days from the date of contact.

**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 in order to work in our new protocols and procedures, and are looking forward to having students on campus again. 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. As such, we see that we have 3 possibilities for moving forward:

1. Keep it Steady, Keep it Conservative- Maintain Sage in Bands (Yellow)
  - a. If this system is working and tending to the health (social, emotional, mental, and physical) of our community, we will proceed with this system. We will make any necessary changes of course as we proceed, checking in with students, staff, and parents regularly.
2. Add a layer- move more into the Sage at School (Green)
  - a. If this system is working (and if the Federal, State, or Local guidelines deem it safe), we have the capacity to extend our day back to more 'normal' hours, adding in courses such as wellness, creativity workshop, or community action. We may add these one at a time to 'test the waters' or we may deem it better to add them all in at once.
3. Shift to Sage at Home (Red)
  - a. Should the situation demand it- either by Federal, State, or Local guidelines- the school could return to a schedule similar to the one we ran in the spring during the school 'soft' closure mandated by the State of Idaho. During that period, our students attended classes, completed projects, and handled the shift beautifully. While it is not our ideal scenario (and certainly not the students' ideal scenario either), it allowed the school to connect to the students and continue instruction. More information would certainly be handed out prior to this shift. This shift may also occur temporarily on a band-level if a case is found on campus.

The Sage School staff will be working on constantly being 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