

COVID-19 Operations Plan for Olympia Waldorf School 22/23

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CONTEXT

To be implemented until Washington State Regulatory agencies designate COVID-19 as no longer being a serious threat to public health.

Information can be found here:

<https://www.thurstoncountywa.gov/phss/Coronavirus/Pages/covid-19-dashboard.aspx>
<https://doh.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-03/821-165-K12SchoolsChildCare.pdf>

This policy will be amended as additional recommendations are considered from the US Center for Disease Control, WA and Thurston County Dept. of Health, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Governor of WA state, and the Health and Safety Committee of the Olympia Waldorf School.

INTRODUCTION

The Olympia Waldorf School recognizes that we are a critical community institution serving children, teachers, staff, and families. The threat of a highly infectious outbreak in our school poses a risk to community health. By following this COVID-19 Operation Plan, we are dedicated to reducing possible miscommunications, and establishing guidelines in advance for potential challenges.

This plan outlines Olympia Waldorf School's strategy in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from a highly infectious disease outbreak such as COVID-19 (coronavirus), with a collective, community approach.

For the 22/23 school year we will follow guidance from the WA Department of Health's Guidance for Schools. Which can be found here:

<https://doh.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-03/821-165-K12SchoolsChildCare.pdf>

PURPOSE

This plan establishes norms for responding to a disease outbreak, establishes our roles and capacities for keeping our students and staff safe, and streamlines the communication to our staff, students, and families in the event of an outbreak or a highly infectious disease. Highly infectious illnesses can have widespread impact on the Olympia Waldorf School. As such, this plan will serve as a resource guide for planning and responding to this pandemic within our Olympia Waldorf School.

The purpose of this plan is to achieve the following goals:

- Maximize the protection of lives by reducing health risks while minimizing disruption to education and social interaction.
- Enable Olympia Waldorf School to continue to operate and provide education as effectively as possible during an outbreak with minimal losses to finances, talent, enrolled students, and academic achievement.
- Establish a communication plan where students, parents, and staff receive timely and accurate information regarding disease prevention efforts and infection control strategies.

Schools tend to be affected by infectious disease outbreaks more than other settings. Children are at most risk for infectious disease spread. At Olympia Waldorf School, we play an important role in protecting the health of our students and staff from contagious diseases. This infectious disease plan provides guidance for reducing illness at school on a regular basis as well as procedures that will be implemented during infectious disease outbreaks and pandemic periods. It includes:

- 1) Strategies to prevent and reduce the spread of infectious diseases at our Olympia Waldorf Schools
- 2) Response to illness
- 3) Procedures for canceling Olympia Waldorf School due to an infectious disease outbreak
- 4) Considerations for reopening Olympia Waldorf School

STRATEGIES FOR PREVENTION

How Germs Spread: Illnesses such as the flu, COVID-19, and colds are caused by viruses that infect the nose, throat, lungs, and gastrointestinal tract. Often, viruses spread from person to person when an infected person coughs or sneezes and the virus is inhaled by another person. Other viruses are spread by infected persons passing germs through food or ineffective hand sanitizing. Germs are also spread by droplets when a person touches something that is contaminated with a virus and then touches their eyes, nose, or mouth. The length of time germs can live on certain surfaces depends on the actual virus.

Disease Prevention & Education: To help prevent the spread of any infectious disease, the Olympia Waldorf School has an opportunity to educate students, staff, and the community on social etiquette, good health and hygiene habits, and disease prevention. Olympia Waldorf School will provide hand sanitizing, coughing, and sneezing education before or during an outbreak. The office will have up to date illness/disease prevention information. During times of suspected or identified infectious disease outbreaks, the Olympia Waldorf School may coordinate with Public Health agencies to address the outbreak at the school level.

Our basic educational message is:

- Cover Your Cough
- Sanitize Your Hands Often
- Stay Home If You're Sick
- Wear appropriate PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) such as a KN94 mask or better

Cover Your Cough: We teach students coughing and sneezing etiquette through demonstrations. Always have an ample supply of tissues available in each classroom and school area. Give students time to sanitize their hands throughout the school day.

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze OR
- When tissues are unavailable, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.
- Sanitize your hands after you cough or sneeze.

Sanitize Your Hands Often: Handwashing with soap and warm water is the best option. Hand sanitizers can be effective when there is no access to water. Staff are encouraged to provide time and opportunities each day for students to practice washing their hands with soap and water: upon arrival at Olympia Waldorf School, after coughing and/or sneezing in hands, at the beginning of the snack/lunch before eating, after eating, after bathroom use, and after recess. The school will provide hand sanitizer with 60% alcohol in all outdoor covered spaces and will enforce frequent handwashing as the best means to prevent the spreading of germs. Soap and paper towels shall be provided at every sink on campus.

- Wet hands, apply soap, and scrub for at least 20 seconds.
- Thoroughly rinse under warm, running water.
- Dry hands completely with paper towels. Use the paper towel to turn off faucet handles and open restroom doors.

Stay Home if You Are Sick: Students, staff and volunteers are encouraged to stay home if they are sick or have symptoms of COVID-19. A primary strategy against the spread of illness is for sick people to stay home from school as well as testing to determine which disease they are infected with. In times of suspected or identified infectious disease outbreaks, sick leave policies for staff and students suspected to be ill or who become ill at Olympia Waldorf School will be identified and possibly modified, clearly communicated and consistently enforced.

PEOPLE - Response Team (Team members may change as additional staff are added)

Health and Safety Committee (health@olympiawaldorf.org):

Kelly Hanson, Administrator
Tiffany Korn, Facilities Manager
Sigrun Giannetti, Front Desk Coordinator
Anna Sayre, Business Manager

Health and Safety Advisory Committee (healthadvisory@olympiawaldorf.org):

Erin Brewster, MPA TESC COVID Response Manager
Bonnie Burlington, Epidemiologist WA Dept. of Health
Lucina Strandjord, Early Childhood Faculty
Sami Brisson, Grade Faculty
Dr. Justin Wheeler, MD
Dr. Christy Boehmer, DPT

COVID Response Team Leader/Incident Commander:

Leader: Tiffany Korn

Backup 2: Anna Sayre

Backup 3: Kelly Hanson

Facilities Leader: Facilities Manager - Tiffany Korn

Contact Tracing Leader:

Health Department Liaison: Thurston County Public Health Director

Contact Tracing Team Members: Health and Safety Committee Members and Health Coordinator

Health Coordinator: Sigrun Gianetti

Backup: Anna Sayre

Decisions for exceptions to these guidelines must be made by Health and Safety Committee Members

For changes and updates: Health and Safety Committee Members and Advisors with the OWS Board

PEOPLE - Faculty and Staff

- As per Washington State Guidelines, all employees of the Olympia Waldorf school must be fully vaccinated and submit proof of vaccination to the Health Coordinator
 - The Health Coordinator, EC attendance tracker, or designated staff will track daily attendance. Faculty, staff, and visitors will sign in and out everyday in the Main Office.
- PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)
 - Masks may be required depending on outbreaks or guidance from the Dept. of Health. Masks must be a KN94 style mask or better and fit over the nose and chin.
 - If masks are required they may only be removed following the below guidelines:
 - Outside during activities that require the removal of masks (eating, flute playing) while at a physical distance of 6 feet or more to be maintained at all times. Alone in a room or alone outdoors. (Except for the Faculty Office, Business Office, and Main Office due to the fact that so many different people pass in and out of these spaces.)
 - Gloves may be used by choice, but are not provided unless for cleaning purposes. Gloves, if not used appropriately, can increase risk of transmission. If an employee chooses to use gloves, they must be changed regularly. At minimum, they should be exchanged for clean gloves upon changing rooms, eating, or using the bathroom.
- Employment requirements/expectations
 - Checking in/health screen: All employees must screen themselves daily. Employees showing symptoms must stay home or will be sent home and follow guidelines for when to return to work. If an employee obtains a positive COVID-19 test, they must report it to the office immediately.
 - The following flow chart from the Thurston County Department of Health gives guidelines on how to process different symptoms and possible exposures.
<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/820-229-SymptomDecisionTreeCTChecklistSchools.pdf>
 - Substitute teachers: Must follow the same screening and PPE protocols as regular teachers. If a substitute is filling in for a specialist, sanitizing hands should take place upon entering each classroom.
 - Points of contact for reports and questions/concerns: reports of attendance tracking will be maintained in the main office. The Incident Commander should be advised of any concerns and respond to questions. Cases of COVID-19 should immediately be reported to Thurston County Public Health.

COVID ILLNESS

When a student, faculty, or staff on campus becomes sick during school day:

- The person will be assessed by the Health Coordinator.
 - Students with COVID-19 symptoms will be quarantined in a designated space (also known as isolation) in the main office, where they can be supervised. The student's emergency contacts will be called to pick up the student. After the student leaves, the isolation area will be sanitized.
 - It is recommended that families test all students exhibiting symptoms for COVID-19 immediately using an antigen test.
 - Faculty or staff who develop symptoms at school should take a COVID-19 antigen test then leave school immediately

When the school is informed that a person with a confirmed case of COVID-19 has been on campus or that a student or staff needs to be quarantined because of possible exposure, the school will do the following....

- Inform the county (if not already done) and other local health authorities as required.
- Begin contact tracing, in coordination with health authorities by determining which other students were in close contact with the COVID positive person.
- Inform the appropriate parents, faculty, and staff. We will follow Health Privacy Guidelines by not identifying the individual.
- Work with the infected individual and the counties/state contact tracing authority to identify individuals who were most at risk of infections.

(Note: this section is very dependent upon health authorities recommendations for each incident, but these protocols are designed to give direction when no contradicting or alternative steps are offered by health authorities.)

Quarantine, Testing, Returning and Masking Guidelines

The Health and Safety Committee along with the Advisory Committee will frequently review guidance from the CDC, WA State DOH, OSPI as well as Thurston County DOH to determine appropriate time frames for quarantine and testing as well as masking requirements. Our current school specific guidelines include:

- Request that families stay home past Day 10 if they still test positive with an antigen test.
- If a student or staff returns on Day 6 but are still testing positive, they continue to wear a KN94 mask after Day 11 if they are still testing positive for COVID.
- The school will make accommodations for outside eating until the total case count over one week for Thurston county is below 50 for two weeks.

COVID-19 Outbreaks in School

The Thurston County Department of Health will make the determination of when outbreaks occur. The definition of an outbreak has changed overtime. They may require testing of exposed students to remain at school or close a particular class or the whole school for 5 days. The school will make some lessons available online in the case of a class or entire school closure.

Weather Related Masking Issues

The Facilities Manager along with the Administrator may choose to close or modify the school day for a variety of weather conditions. Notifications will be made on the school's voice messaging system, to the website, to FlashAlert and/or via email. Some weather related closures may occur during the school day and parents will be notified to pick up their children.

- Wildfire smoke: Smoke in the vicinity of the school that has an Air Quality Index of 150 or higher may necessitate a closure or increased indoor time for all students. Families who do not want their children to be unmasked at school should keep them home. COVID positive students (Day 6 and beyond) will need to stay home as well.
- Wind: Wind events with predicted gusts of over 18 mph may necessitate a closure or increased indoor time for all students. Families who do not want their children to be unmasked at school should keep them home. COVID positive students (Day 6 and beyond) will need to stay home as well.
- Snow: Snow accumulation greater than 1 in. may necessitate a closure or increased indoor time for all students. Families who do not want their children to be unmasked at school should keep them home. COVID positive students (Day 6 and beyond) will need to stay home as well.

RESOURCES

Government Recommendations and Resources:

COVID-19 Vaccination Mandate for Schools:

<https://www.governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/proclamations/21-14.1%20-%20COVID-19%20Vax%20Washington%20Amendment.pdf>

Thurston County COVID Testing Sites:

<https://www.thurstoncountywa.gov/phss/phssdocuments/COVID-19%20Testing%20Locations%20FINAL.pdf>

Lewis County COVID Testing Sites:

https://lewiscountywa.gov/media/documents/7-14-22_LC_COVID_testing_sites.pdf

Mason County COVID Testing Sites:

<https://www.masoncountywa.gov/COVID-19/index.php>

Pierce County COVID Testing Sites:

<https://www.tpchd.org/healthy-people/diseases/covid-19/testing-information#testing>

Thurston County Public Health Corona Virus (COVID-19) Information:

<https://www.thurstoncountywa.gov/phss/Pages/coronavirus.aspx>

WA Dept of Health COVID-19 Resources:

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/COVID19>

CDC Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html>

WA State Mandate for School Vaccination Info:

<https://www.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/communications/2021docs/FAQ-COVID-19-Vaccine-Requirement-for-K-12-School-Employees.pdf>

WA State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Guidance and Resources:
<https://www.k12.wa.us/about-ospi/press-releases/novel-coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-resources>

Cleaning:

Safer Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting to Reduce COVID-19 Transmission:

https://osha.washington.edu/sites/default/files/documents/FactSheet_Cleaning_Final_UWDEOHS_0.pdf

Toilet Flushing Safety:

Flushing May Release Corona Virus

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2020/06/16/coronavirus-toilet-flushing/>

CDC Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>

Other Resources:

WA DOH Guidance on Masks:

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/ClothFacemasks.pdf>

CDC Considerations for Face Masks:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

Transmission Information:

Article How Corona Virus Spreads through the Air

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-coronavirus-spreads-through-the-air-what-we-know-so-far1/>

Asymptomatic Transmission:

CDC Evidence Supporting Transmission of Acute Respiratory Syndrome

https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/26/7/20-1595_article