



Safe Return to In-Person Instruction Plan

Updated: May 3, 2022

The American Rescue Plan (ARP) – Education Stabilization Funds and the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) III funds require school districts to create a “Safe Return to In-Person Instruction Plan”. These requirements were announced by the United States Education Department on April 22, 2021 and must be met as a condition of receiving ESSER III funds.

The school district’s plan must be:

- In an understandable and uniform format
- To the extent practicable, written in a language that parents can understand or, if it is not practicable to provide written translations to a parent with limited English proficiency, be orally translated for such parent
- Upon request by a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by ADA, provided in an alternative format accessible to that parent
- Be made publically available on the school district’s website
- Updated at least every six months, or more depending on updates in Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidance through September 30, 2023 and public input must be sought when revisions are made

The school district’s plan must address the following sections:

- How it will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff and the extent to which it has adopted policies, and a description of any such policies, on each of the following safety recommendations established by the CDC:
 - Universal and correct wearing of masks
 - Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (use of cohorts, podding)
 - Handwashing and respiratory etiquette
 - Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation
 - Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments
 - Diagnostic and screening testing
 - Efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities
 - Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies
 - Coordination with State and local health officials.
- How it will ensure continuity of services, including but not limited to services to address students’ academic needs and students’ and staff social, emotional, mental health, and other needs, which may include student health and food services.

Table of Contents

Letter from the Superintendent.....	3
Universal and Correct Wearing of Masks.....	4
Modifying Facilities to Allow for Physical Distancing (use of cohorts, podding).....	4-6
Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette.....	6
Cleaning and Maintaining Healthy Facilities, Including Improving Ventilation.....	7
Contact Tracing in Combination with Isolation and Quarantine, in Collaboration with the State, Local, Territorial, or Tribal Health Departments.....	7-8
Diagnostic and Screening Testing.....	8
Efforts to Provide Vaccinations to School Communities.....	8
Appropriate Accommodations for Children with Disabilities with Respect to Health and Safety Policies.....	9
Coordination with State and Local Health Officials.....	9
Ensure Continuity of Services to Address Students’ Academic Needs.....	10
Ensure Continuity of Services for Students’ and Staff Social, Emotional, Mental Health.....	10-11
Ensure Continuity of Services Which May Include Student Health and Food Services.....	11-12
Revision of our District’s Safe Return to In-Person Instruction Plan.....	13
“Release from Quarantine and Isolation Flow Chart”	14

July 2021

Oracle Elementary School District Community,

I thank you for reviewing our Safe Return to In-Person Instruction Plan. In the following pages you will read about our District's efforts to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 as well as other viruses and communicable diseases. One of the most powerful, important things we can each do to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 is to stay home when we are sick or have symptoms. If we each stay home when we are sick, and keep our children home when they are sick, the mitigation efforts on the following pages are a safeguard for those who have been exposed but are unaware of their exposure or carry the virus but are asymptomatic.

The 2020-2021 school year was filled with unique challenges that our students, staff, and community tackled together. As the new school year is quickly approaching, your school district remains committed to make sure that our students have the opportunity to experience a traditional school year, receiving in-person instruction from their teachers, surrounded by their friends and peers, and in an environment that is enriching not only academically but socially as well. In order to provide this opportunity to our students, it is truly up to us as adults to be good role models, practice good hygiene and respiratory etiquette and do our part to keep our community healthy.

As I write this letter, our District does not have a face mask mandate. Likewise, our District does not have a COVID-19 vaccine mandate. We ask that our students, staff, and visitors stay home when they are sick and when they are on campus or on one of our school buses, they respect each of the mitigation procedures listed in this plan.

We can truly do anything as a community. So when we are each asked to stay home when we are sick, wash our hands, cover our sneeze, and follow mitigation procedures, I know we can do it and I know we will do it because it is our best chance to provide in-person instruction for our students. Please visit our website at www.osd2.org for updates, information, and to check our COVID-19 Dashboard that is updated daily.

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Universal and Correct Wearing of Masks

When our District's Safe Return to In-Person Instruction Plan was originally created in July 2021, schools in Arizona were not permitted by law to require students, staff, or visitors to wear a face mask while on campus or on a school bus. This law was found to be unconstitutional by the Arizona Supreme Court in September 2021. Our Governing Board and school leadership listened to concerns, both in support of and against mask mandates and decided to move forward without an official mask mandate but strongly encouraging our students, staff, and volunteers on campus to safely and correctly wear face masks while indoors or on a school bus.

We know it is not only important for a face mask to be worn correctly, but it is also important that we wear clean face masks. If a student, staff member or visitor needs a clean face mask to wear, one will be provided for them.

Mountain Vista K-8 School continues to include mini-lessons on morning announcements to teach and remind all students and staff how to universally and correctly wear their face mask. School administration found that these mini-lessons are not only a good opportunity to teach healthy habits and procedures to students, but a friendly reminder to staff that how they wear their face mask is observed by students and it is important for staff members to not only meet the expectations set for students but to also exceed those expectations as adults and role models on campus.

When the use of face masks were originally recommended then required by the State of Arizona, our Governing Board formally modified our Dress Code policies to require the universal and correct use of face masks of all students, staff, and visitors 5 years of age and older. Under advisement from legal counsel in July 2021, those policies were formally modified back to their original version that did not require the use of face masks on campus or on school buses.

District Policy JL outlines student wellness programs and procedures. District Policy GBGCA outlines general wellness programs. Lastly, District Policy GBGCB describes staff health and safety procedures specifically related to communicable diseases.

Update as of May 3, 2022 – The Oracle Elementary School District does not require students, staff, or visitors to wear face masks while on our campus or while on our school buses.

Modifying Facilities to Allow for Physical Distancing (use of cohorts, podding)

As of January 2022, strict cohorts and "podding" are not procedures followed by our District for the following reasons:

- Mountain Vista K-8 School is home to many family groups where one or more parents/guardians work at our school and their children attend our school with their siblings.
- When the majority of students were learning from home during the 2020-2021 school year and school districts were required to provide in-person support and access to technology for specific students, we practiced using cohorts as a mitigation procedure.

We found that cohorts by grade level were not a true mitigation procedure as an exposure from one family group could result in the quarantine and possible isolation of several grade level cohorts.

- We then reorganized our cohorts by family group instead of grade level. We found this cohort system was more effective than grade level cohorts, yet not a reasonable expectation or mitigation procedure once the majority of students returned to campus for in-person learning in March 2021.

When students returned to campus for in-person learning in March 2021 and when they return from summer break in August 2021, our facilities will allow for physical distancing in the following ways:

- Our Governing Board has approved maximum capacities for each grade level and class size. The acceptance of open enrollment students is based on current numbers in each grade level. These grade level capacities promote smaller class sizes.
- Until July 2021, classrooms at Mountain Vista K-8 School each contained a pod of four desktop computers and a printer. To allow more room for physical distancing, the pods of computers were modified to a single table with two desktop computers and a printer for classroom use.
- During the 2020-2021 school year, teachers were encouraged to evaluate the furniture, storage, and materials in their classroom. Any furniture, storage, or materials that were traditionally stored in the classroom but could be discarded or stored elsewhere were removed from the classroom to allow more space for physical distancing.
- Large picnic tables were purchased and arranged in outdoor common areas throughout campus. Teachers are encouraged to use outdoor spaces when adequate physical distancing in the classroom is not possible. During the 2021-2022 school year, many of our spacious areas of campus are fenced off for construction projects. This does not mean outdoor spaces are not an option, this only means that different outdoor spaces may need to be utilized. For example, the large field behind the school gym has traditionally not been used as a space for outdoor recreation during lunch time, but during the 2021-2022 school year it has been used for this purpose.
- Furniture from our school office and district office lobbies have been removed to maximize space for physical distancing and to not encourage the congregation of several people in small office lobbies.
- To allow physical distancing, our Maintenance department was moved from two small, populated offices to one much larger office with adequate space for employees to physically distance while working at their desks.
- Our library renovation and expansion project is scheduled for completion during Fall 2022. This project will more than double the amount of educational space available in our current library. It will also create separate study rooms, a reading intervention classroom, more restrooms, and a larger space to be used by staff for professional development and meetings.
- Our new classroom building for Grades 5-8 is scheduled for completion during Summer 2022. This project will add 10 classrooms to our campus. These classrooms will be larger

than the current classrooms used by Grades 7-8 in the Bateman Building. The student restrooms are designed to allow for more physical distancing and eliminate the accessibility for several students to congregate in small restroom spaces moving forward.

- Our school office is scheduled for renovation during Summer 2022. Upon completion, the renovation will double the current square footage of the school office and although not related to physical distancing, it must be noted that it will also provide a secure and specific entrance for all campus visitors.

At this time, does not have policy specifically dedicated to physical distancing. However, as mentioned above, we do have several practices in place as well as policy regarding maximum grade level and classroom sizes which support the ability to physically distance to the greatest extent possible in classrooms.

District Policy IIB states that it is the responsibility of the Governing Board to establish appropriate class sizes. District Policy JFB summarizes the admission of open enrollment students based on Governing Board approved class size and program capacity limits.

Update as of May 3, 2022 – Above and beyond our Board approved class sizes, the Oracle Elementary School District does not have policy specifically dedicated to physical distancing.

Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette

Handwashing and respiratory etiquette are two of the most powerful, universal, effective mitigation procedures against COVID-19 and other illnesses for students and staff. The reason is because good handwashing and proper respiratory etiquette are two things that all people can do to not only keep themselves healthy, but to contribute to the health of our school community. Good handwashing and proper respiratory etiquette does not depend if a person has received the COVID-19 vaccine and can be taught to young children.

Because of its great importance, this mitigation procedure was emphasized during the 2020-2021 school year and will continue to be emphasized throughout the 2021-2022 school year. The current practices are in place for the 2021-2022 school year:

- Signs with words and visuals are displayed in each student and staff restroom with the recommended procedure for good handwashing, provided by the Arizona Department of Health Services.
- Breaks will be scheduled throughout the school day so students and staff may wash their hands before and after a snack or a meal, after recess, and as needed.
- Students and staff are taught and reminded to cover their cough or sneeze with the inside of their elbow instead of with their hand.
- We are aware that it is best to wash our hands with warm water and soap. When it is not possible to wash with warm water and soap, a hand sanitizer gel is a good alternative. Hand sanitizer gel is available for students, staff, and visitors throughout campus.
- Disposable tissue is also available for students, staff, and visitors throughout campus.

District Policy GBGCB-E generally addresses the importance of good sanitation practices in relation to the prevention of the spread of communicable diseases. District Policy JL addresses student wellness programs and procedures.

Update as of May 3, 2022 – The Oracle Elementary School District continues to promote good sanitation practices as well as student and staff wellness.

Cleaning and Maintaining Healthy Facilities, Including Improving Ventilation

While the majority of students participated in distance learning during the fourth quarter of the 2019-2020 school year and the majority of the 2020-2021 school year, many staff members and some students continued to work and learn from the Mountain Vista K-8 School campus. To safely welcome students and staff to campus each day required meticulous cleaning, sanitation, and an evaluation of the cleaning products and procedures used on campus.

We immediately reviewed our current inventory of surface chemicals and explored chemicals not currently in our inventory that were recommended by custodial companies. Due to supply and demand, we shifted from using disinfectant wipes to a hydrogen peroxide spray that could be used with paper towels instead of wipes. We also created a procedure to sanitize school buses after each run, multiple times per day.

We replaced all of the restroom hardware that required students and staff to touch soap dispensers, paper towel dispensers, water faucets, etc. with hands-free hardware. This was a costly yet beneficial investment for the safety of students and staff while on campus. We displayed signs with illustrations and written explanations of how to safely and appropriately wash hands, according to the Arizona Department of Health Services in each restroom. We connected the signs with our common language of respectful, responsible, and honest conduct.

During our current 2021-2022 school year, like many businesses and organizations across the nation, our District was forced to adapt to staffing shortages. As of January 2022, we continue to have open positions in our custodial department. To meet our needs and provide a safe, clean, a disinfected campus for students to learn and staff to work, we are currently interviewing several janitorial companies to assist in the daily cleaning of our school.

We allocated over \$200,000 from our Federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds to replace HVAC systems on campus. By the end of the 2021-2022 school year, each HVAC unit on the Mountain Vista K-8 School campus will be new. Before purchasing new HVAC units, the District sought professional guidance from KC Mechanical Engineering to determine if replacing the current HVAC units would truly improve the ventilation in classrooms and enclosed areas across campus. The guidance and evaluation showed that replacing the existing HVAC units would not only improve heating and cooling on campus, it would greatly improve the quality of ventilation as well.

District Policy ECB establishes expectations related to Building and Grounds Maintenance.

Update as of May 3, 2022 – The Oracle Elementary School District has outsourced our custodial program to an out-of-district vendor. This decision was based solely on the District’s need to provide the best sanitation to our students and staff.

Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments

The Pinal County Health Department continues to hold weekly virtual meetings for public school officials to meet and receive up to date information directly from our local health department. Mountain Vista has consistently participated in these virtual meetings. The meetings are an important opportunity each week or bi-weekly (depending on the need of the public school officials) to ask questions and learn from the experiences of other school districts in our community.

Contact tracing has been and continues to be a topic discussed during the virtual meetings. Our District has established a contact tracing procedure that has been in effect since March 2020. Our procedure depends greatly on students, staff, and families communicating with school officials. From there, we trace attendance records, sign-in sheets, check seating charts, meet with staff, and connect with each individual that was exposed while on campus.

With support from Pinal County Health Department, we have created several versions of our exposure and possible exposure letters that include updated information. While doing our best to minimize the spread of COVID-19 and protect students and staff that had not been exposed, we also take pride in our best efforts to maintain confidentiality and privacy during this challenging time.

Our District does not have a policy specific to contact tracing. However, our District consistently follows guidance and directives regarding contact tracing from the Pinal County Health Department. District Policy KL addresses the District’s relations with government authorities such as state and local health officials.

Update as of May 3, 2022 – As necessary, the Oracle Elementary School District continues to work with Pinal County Health Department regarding contact tracing, quarantine, and isolation due to communicable diseases and viruses.

Diagnostic and Screening Testing

Pinal County Health Department continues to provide rapid tests for students, staff, and families at our school. These rapid tests take only 15 minutes and include two tests, one to take initially and a follow-up test to be administered 36 hours later. Since early 2020, the District has also referred all students, staff, and community members in need of a COVID-19 test to one of the many free locations recommended by the Pinal County Health Department as well as the Sun Life Clinic in Oracle on American Avenue.

Update as of May 3, 2022 – The Oracle Elementary School District encourages families to collect their free COVID-19 rapid tests from the federal government. We continue to provide rapid tests to students and staff as they are made available to us by the Pinal County Health Department.

Efforts to Provide Vaccinations to School Communities

District staff were given the opportunity to receive two rounds of the COVID-19 vaccine in early 2021. The vaccine was provided by our community partners at Sun Life Clinic. The vaccine was optional and remains optional at the time of this revision. Before Winter Break in 2021, we were also able to provide a Booster clinic for interested staff members.

We experienced a spike in positive cases of COVID-19 following Fall Break 2021. Shortly after, the COVID-19 vaccine was approved for children ages 5-11. We partnered with Sun Life Clinic and provided two vaccine clinics for children at our school and in our community to receive the vaccine before Winter Break.

District Policy GBGCA outlines general wellness programs and District Policy JLCB-E addresses expectations for the immunization of students.

Update as of May 3, 2022 – The Oracle Elementary School District does not have additional vaccination clinics scheduled at this time. However, we encourage our community to utilize resources available through Sun Life Clinic if they are in need of a COVID-19 vaccination or booster.

Appropriate Accommodations for Children with Disabilities with Respect to Health and Safety Policies

In November 2020, all Arizona public schools were required to mandate the use of face masks on school campuses as well as on school buses. The recommended age that children start to wear face masks was 2 years old. Our District considered the cognitive and sensory development of students in our preschool program that were 3 and 4 years old and required face masks to be worn by students 5 years of age and older. If a parent wanted their younger child to wear a face mask, they were welcome and encouraged to do what was best for their child and their family. This information is being shared because it is one of many examples of an appropriate accommodation for children both with and without disabilities with respect to health and safety policies as well as child development.

Based on guidance from the American Association of Pediatrics, “Children with medical conditions that interfere with cognitive or lung function may have a hard time tolerating a face mask. For these children, special precautions may be needed.” Therefore, our district practices and procedures allowed flexibility for students with medical conditions that might not be capable of safely wearing a face mask all day while at school. These students were encouraged to wear a face shield, take “mask breaks” and in some specific cases, abstain from wearing a face mask in general. This discretion was given to the Superintendent by the Governing Board.

At this time, our District does not require face masks to be worn by students or staff. However, students and staff are encouraged to wear a face mask while indoors if they are not fully vaccinated or if they believe it is best for the child, self, or family. Should this change and should mask mandates be reestablished in Arizona or in our District, appropriate accommodations for children will continue to be made.

District Policy IHBA outlines special instructional programs and accommodations for disabled students. District Policy IHB outlines special instructional programs for all students in need.

Update as of May 3, 2022 – Student safety and student achievement continue to be our top two goals for the students of the Oracle Elementary School District. Although we do not currently require students, staff, community to wear face masks, we know that many students, staff, and members of our community need to wear a face mask for health reasons. No student, staff, or community member will ever be prohibited from wearing a mask while at our school.

Coordination with State and local health officials

District and school staff has established a close working relationship with the Pinal County Health Department as well as the Arizona Department of Public Health. This relationship has resulted in clear communication from the District to State and local health officials but also from State and local health officials back to the District.

Communications, updates, and information from State and local health officials are shared with school staff on a regular basis.

District Policy KL addresses the District’s relations with government authorities such as state and local health officials.

Update as of May 3, 2022 – The Oracle Elementary School District continues to stay current with the ever-changing laws, recommendations, and guidelines from local and state officials.

Ensure Continuity of Services to Address Students’ Academic Needs

Mountain Vista K-8 School started the 2021-2022 school entirely in-person. We created an Instructional Time Model based on guidance and instruction from the Arizona Department of Education. Our Instructional Time Model is available for review on our District website at www.osd2.org. In the event that the Arizona Department of Education and Arizona Department of Public Health were to require schools to transition to distance learning for health and safety reasons, we are prepared to do so. We have 1:1 tablets and Chromebooks for all students in Grades K-8, internet hot spots for families in need of internet at home, research based curriculum with a digital component, and procedures for in-person services as needed.

One of the most important mitigation procedures is that students, staff, and visitors stay home when they are sick or have symptoms of COVID-19 or any other communicable disease or virus. Because the District is encouraging students, staff, and visitors to stay home when they are sick, this also means that we are committed to meeting the academic needs of students while they are home.

No child will be denied access to their education or special services while at home. This is not only a requirement established by the State of Arizona, this is what is best for kids and therefore a priority of the Oracle Elementary School District. Additional details are outlined in our Instructional Time Model.

District Policy JLCC outlines District expectations and procedures regarding communicable and infectious diseases. It is important to remember that COVID-19 is not the only virus that impacts a child or staff member's attendance at school.

District Policy IHB outlines our District's expectations for Special Instructional Programs. Whether at home for exposure to COVID-19, at home due to a chronic illness, away from campus while on an educational field trip, or away from campus on a recreational trip with family, students need to have access to their education and educational programs. Our District remains committed to providing each student with the educational experience they are entitled to receive.

Update as of May 3, 2022 – As mentioned above, student safety and student achievement are the top two goals of the Oracle Elementary School District for students. We have several programs in place to make sure students receive the support they need while they are in the classroom and while they are at home for illness related reasons. We have experienced a large decrease in student attendance this school year. We will continue to address the delicate balance between the need to stay home when a student is sick or been exposed to a communicable disease or virus and the need to be present and active in school.

Ensure Continuity of Services for Students' and Staff Social, Emotional, Mental Health

The unintended isolation of students during distance learning has led to a great need for additional social, emotional, and mental health resources for students. Likewise, the pandemic was also isolating and traumatic for teachers and staff members who were either required to reinvent how they teach, continue to work in-person with students with special needs, or even teach students both online and in-person simultaneously. Many students and staff alike experienced the loss of family and friends.

Before the pandemic and distance learning, our District received one of the Arizona Department of Education's School Safety Grants. This grant was written to pay for the salary of a much needed school counselor. What we then saw was an example of supply and demand. Suddenly, school districts from across the state, like the Oracle Elementary School District had funding to hire school counselors. However, there were only so many school counselors available to be hired. In fact, because for many years school districts did not have funding to hire school counselors, many educators opted to obtain degrees and certifications outside of school counseling.

Eager to hire a school counselor, our District reached out to several employment agencies that specialize in contract employment for schools including school counselors, school nurses, therapists, etc. Then, the pandemic hit. We quickly changed our scope of work and searched for a school counselor that could work with individual and small groups of students online. We went through multiple employment agency school counselors during the 2019-2020 school year. At the time this plan was written, the District continues to search for a school counselor that will meet the needs of our student body and serve our community.

While we continue to search for a school counselor, we continue to refer families as needed to Horizon Behavioral Health. We also recently shared information in Cat Tracks, our monthly newsletter about grief counseling available both in-person and online through Tu Nidito in Tucson. For staff, our HR/Payroll Office regularly sends email reminders regarding free counseling that is available to employees.

District Policy JLD outlines expectations and goals for guidance and counseling of students in the Oracle Elementary School District.

Update as of May 3, 2022 – The Oracle Elementary School District continues to search for a qualified, full-time school counselor for the students at Mt. Vista K-8 School. Meanwhile, we have partnered with E-Therapy for school counseling services. We continue to seek support from Horizon Behavioral Health in our community.

Insure Continuity of Services Which May Include Student Health and Food Services

The Oracle Elementary School District consistently delivered free “grab and go” breakfast and lunches for all children, 18 years of age and younger throughout the entire 2020-2021 school year at Mountain Vista K-8 School bus stops. During the current 2021-2022 school year, we will continue to provide free breakfast and lunch for all students at Mountain Vista K-8 School, regardless of whether they would traditionally qualify for free, reduced price, or full price meals. With great support from the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) we will be able to provide nutritious meals and snacks for our students.

Our District has maintained a strong working relationship with the Pinal County Health Department as well as Sun Life Clinic. Our staff has referred students and families to both Pinal County Health Department and Sun Life Clinic for immunizations for many years. Through recent efforts and advocacy by Mountain Vista K-8 School staff, the Pinal County Health Department will now be open in Oracle each Thursday and Friday. This will be a great benefit to families that would typically need to drive to Mammoth, San Manuel, or Florence for regular immunizations.

Each school year our District partners with the University of Arizona and the Lion’s Club to provide vision and hearing screenings for students. This is a service that will continue through the 2021-2022 school year. Likewise, permitting availability, we will continue to offer routine dental cleanings once each school year for interested families.

We understand that in order for a student to do their best in school, their basic needs must be met. We take pride in our commitment to work with families to make sure students are fed, clothed, have access to free immunizations, and quality health care services. Our District is open and interested to expand the services we provide to families and is always looking to build beneficial working relationships in our community.

District Policy JLCB-E outlines Arizona School Immunization Requirements. District Policy GBGC-E outlines immunization requirements for District staff. At this time, the COVID-19 vaccine is not required for students or staff. District Policy EF outlines Food Service requirements.

Update as of May 3, 2022 – The Oracle Elementary School District continues to provide free breakfast and lunch for all students through the Federal Seamless Summer Food Option.

Revision of our District’s Safe Return to In-Person Instruction Plan

As we continue to learn more about COVID-19, as new guidance and expectations are shared by the State and local level, and as schools become more and more aware of the specific things we can do to keep our students, staff, and community safe, school districts will need to revise and edit their Safe Return to In-Person Instruction Plans.

This plan will be revisited on a monthly basis. Should the plan need to be revised or edited, any changes will be shared with our community on our district website at www.osd2.org as well as shared in Cat Tracks, our monthly newsletter and during Governing Board meetings.

Arizona COVID-19 Guidance 'Release from Quarantine & Isolation' Flow Chart

