



2023-24 SAFE RETURN PLAN

#LOVEYOURTRIBE

- ACA was founded on a desire to provide an educational opportunity where families agree to and expect a high level of academic rigor and achievement as well as a high degree of discipline (minimum behavioral disruption). As a community, we have established our #LoveYourTribe tenets to support a culture that supports these high expectations. These tenets are exceedingly important in times of crisis response.
 - **Contribute:** do your work in a way that you wish others would do their work for you.
 - **Be kind:** have consideration, concern and respect for others.
 - **Be patient:** give others the time you would like to be given. Stay calm!
 - **Be honest:** have truthful, meaningful, and productive conversations.
 - **Encourage people:** give confidence and support freely.
 - **Apologize and forgive:** say you are sorry and accept I'm sorry irrespective of the person you are saying it to or receiving it from.
 - **Thank people:** enjoy the work ... your work and the work of others. Show your gratitude.
- **Griffin Tribe:** The term “tribe” is not an assimilation of any group of people, population, ethnic group, or otherwise representative of any specific culture. Rather, the term is intended to represent a group of families that agree to depend on one another to create a successful environment for families to thrive. Our Griffin Tribe is representative of all the ACA families of various backgrounds, ethnicities, races, religions, and beliefs that come together under the idea of a great education system. We accomplish this when we, together, do our part in the tenets of our school culture.
 - The Griffin Tribe is best represented by a three-legged stool. The stool can only stand and support what it bears when all three legs: parents, students, and staff, do their part to support the learning of the student.
- The prevention and mitigation practices as originally adopted in response to COVID were designed to significantly reduce the likelihood that a coronavirus outbreak would occur on our campuses. The contents of the plan were decided based on review of current CDC, AAP, TEA, and Tarrant County Health guidance and ACA’s experience with COVID-19 mitigation this past year. ACA sought (and continues to seek) input from all stakeholders including:
 - ACA families
 - Campus teachers
 - Campus administration
 - Special Education staff
 - Other school leaders
 - Other educators
 - District administrators
 - Other school staff including those representing disadvantaged students

Stakeholder input was requested in multiple ways via advisory committee meetings, parent and staff surveys, and a public hearing held on June 29, 2023, and advertised in the local paper. Please note, this guidance may change based on directives or other decisions made in best interest of ACA's community at any time. While prevention and mitigation will be our goal, transmission is possible. Parents must stay informed and make the best decisions for their families. The considerations, policies, rules and procedures outlined here were created with the following guiding priorities:

- ACA's goal is to provide a healthy and safe environment in which to thrive and learn that aligns with ACA's commitment to high academic and behavioral standards. Thus, ACA will adopt protocols according to action taken by the Board of Directors that directs ACA administration to provide the amount of protocols necessary to support a healthy learning environment while enabling the instructional practices ACA is known for.
 - In addition to information from the CDC, AAP, and Tarrant County Health Department, protocols will be based on data related to COVID's spread at ACA and other schools across Texas and in line with rules ordered by the Governor of Texas and the Texas Education Agency,
 - We will continue to seek input and incorporate feedback and ideas from the ACA community: board, staff, students, and parents.
 - We will strive to identify and meet the needs of students while we implement the high academic standard ACA is known for
 - We will remain a learning community.
- At any time, local, state and other governmental officials have the authority to impose more restrictions. The policies and procedures in this document will yield to those directives. This plan will be reviewed at least every 6 months, as required, and edited if needed.**
- Planning considerations:
- Members of our community have valid thoughts and concerns about learning, safety and fulfilling the duty of their role
 - Students' needs are best met when the school, parent and student (three-legged stool) work together. Students' educational needs are best met on-campus.

ATTENDANCE AND ENROLLMENT

- Per Texas Education Code (TEC) 25.092, students must attend 90% of a course to be awarded credit for the course and/or to be promoted to the next grade. This requirement remains in force for the 23/24 school year.
- **ACA will not offer virtual or remote instruction.** All students enrolled at ACA will be expected to participate in on-campus, in-person learning and all attendance requirements will apply as stated in the student handbook.
 - Attendance and truancy procedures in place in the student handbook will apply. See *Students Who Have COVID-19* below.
 - *Remote Conferencing:* ACA strives to remain as flexible as possible to meet the unique demands of excellent instruction during this pandemic. To that end, in extenuating circumstances and rare cases, ACA campuses will work to provide remote conferencing when ACA can provide the staffing according to the requirements set out by TEA. ACA will always work to support students affected by COVID throughout this process.

PERSONAL PREVENTION: TRAINING AND MESSAGING













- ACA teaches personal responsibility and contributing to our community through our academic program. We believe supporting the following personal mitigation and prevention practices aligns to our culture and mission. Parents are encouraged to begin now practicing these healthy habits with students of ALL ages:
 - Stay home if the student/staff member is:
 - Feverish (running a fever of 100.0 degrees without medication)
 - Vomiting
 - Diarrhea
 - Frequent handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty, ACA will provide an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol in each classroom and throughout the buildings.
 - [CDC Handwashing: A family Activity](#)
 - Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue or sleeve
 - Clean frequently touched surfaces (as appropriate for age)
 - The board of directors have approved an exception to the dress code to allow the wearing of masks. Please see mask policy below. Note: Masks are not required, but students and staff will have an option to wear masks.
- All staff will be trained on safety and health protocols regarding COVID19 and **all students will be taught appropriate hygiene practices** consistent with the mitigation practices described here. Staff and **students will receive multiple reminders of protocols** through daily announcements and/or strategic messaging.
- Vaccines: ACA does not require a COVID vaccine for staff or students. Governor Greg Abbott's Executive Order GA-39 suspends the Texas Health & Safety Code "to the extent necessary to ensure that no governmental entity can compel any individual to receive a COVID-9 vaccine."
- Masks are optional: Governor Abbott's Executive Order GA-36 (May 18, 2021) directs that no governmental entity, including a school district, and no governmental official may require any person to wear a face covering. The imposition of any such face-covering requirement by a local governmental entity or official (including charters) constitutes a failure to comply and is subject to a fine up to \$1,000. The ACA board of directors took action to amend the dress code to allow the use of masks **for the sake of COVID mitigation** if a person chooses to do so, but cannot be compelled to do so. ACA monitors guidance from TEA, CDC, AAP and Tarrant County Health Department.
 - All masks (and anything used to secure a mask or face shield) must be school appropriate (masks cannot display profane, obscene or otherwise inappropriate language and/or symbols like drug or alcohol references, sexual references, etc. Gang-type symbols, even if just perceived, or patently offensive symbols or otherwise any design that distracts or interrupts the educational environment, are prohibited.) While masks will not be required to match approved uniform colors, ACA highly recommends simple, solid color or patterned materials.

- ACA teachers or staff will not be responsible for student masks. Staff will not monitor masks, even at parent request, so that the teachers can dedicate their time and energy for caring for, designing instruction for, and teaching ACA students. This includes requests by parents for students to be seated close to or away from students with or without masks.

For the purposes of this document and ACA applications, masks include non-medical and medical grade disposable face masks and cloth face coverings (over the nose and the mouth). Full face shields may be used in place of a mask to protect eyes, nose, and mouth whenever a mask is not feasible or whenever the education context may benefit from the ability to see an individual’s face.

For more information regarding masks, please visit the CDC website:

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

Recommended	Not Recommended
 <p>Medical procedure masks (sometimes referred to as surgical masks or disposable face masks)</p>	 <p>Masks that do not fit properly (large gaps, too loose or too tight)</p>
 <p>Masks that fit properly (snugly around the nose and chin with no large gaps around the sides of the face)</p>	 <p>Masks made from materials that are hard to breathe through (such as plastic or leather)</p>
 <p>Masks made with breathable fabric (such as cotton)</p>	 <p>Masks made from fabric that is loosely woven or knitted, such as fabrics that let light pass through</p>
 <p>Masks made with tightly woven fabric (i.e., fabrics that do not let light pass through when held up to a light source)</p>	 <p>Masks with one layer</p>
 <p>Masks with two or three layers</p>	 <p>Masks with exhalation valves or vents</p>
 <p>Masks with inner filter pockets</p>	 <p>Wearing a scarf/ski mask</p>

CLEANING & SANITIZING

- It is important to note that CDC guidance regarding surface related transmission states that, [“Current evidence strongly suggests transmission from contaminated surfaces does not contribute substantially to new infections.”](#) Still, ACA is committed to providing routine cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces and objects that are frequently touched with green, health conscious, EPA-approved disinfectants.
- ACA will contract with a professional cleaning company to assist in the nightly cleaning and sanitizing of facilities as well as continue to employ cleaning staff throughout the day at each campus.
- ACA will utilize electrostatic disinfectant sprayers to disperse disinfectant into classrooms when students/staff are not present in the designated space. Guidance from health authorities advise that we must balance the use of aerosol disinfectants with the consideration of air quality for staff and students. Therefore, ACA will use this strategy on an as-needed basis.
- ACA will provide hand sanitizer in each classroom as well as stations throughout each building.

OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Prevention Protocols:
 - Supervised routine handwashing schedules will be established (as age appropriate) by each campus.
 - ACA recommends that parents ensure their student has a reusable water bottle. The water bottle must go home for cleaning each day.
- ACA reviewed, researched and installed air scrubbing technology in our HVAC systems and/or our classrooms to improve the air quality of all three campuses.
- Meals: Families who need assistance with meals must apply for the National School Lunch Program. Applications are available at each campus or at the district administration office.
- Dress Code: All uniform dress requirements will be in force for the 2023-24 school year with the exception of the allowance of a mask as defined in this document.
 - ✓ If a family is struggling with finding ACA uniform shirt or spirit shirt, please contact the administration office for resources at 817-987-1819.

ACADEMIC CONSIDERATIONS

- **ACADEMIC PROGRESS:** ACA recognizes the potential long lasting effects of instructional interruption due to COVID-19 and will strive to mitigate those affects through intentional, accelerated learning. It is important to note that many of the research-based strategies to overcome the impact of COVID-19 have been previously implemented by ACA through our commitment to individualized and personalized learning. To this end, ACA will:
 - Increase the amount of time and/or repurposing time dedicated to personalized learning, intervention and enrichment/extension in the regular learning day
 - Provide tutoring plans for students identified
 - Provide additional academic supports for designated students
 - Employ dyslexia teacher
 - Employ additional interventionists (math and reading)
 - Provide additional progress monitoring tools to track growth
 - Provide additional support for developing student mental health and resilience, executive function and academic discipline
 - Staff a counselor on each campus
 - Adopt schoolwide program for executive function (MS)
 - Provide staff development for both mental health supports and academic acceleration in real-time (facilitated coaching)
 - Supporting parents as they support their children’s learning and encouraging parental involvement
 - Providing resources to continue the learning at home
 - Providing Parent Universities that assist parents in supporting their children
 - Communicating student progress
 - Providing parent resources for strategies that strengthen student executive function and academic discipline.
- ACA must ensure that we:

- Take daily attendance (the 90% compulsory attendance rules apply)
- Meet the minimum 75,600 minutes per year requirement of operating time for funding (academic calendar)
- Address the required curriculum according to TEC 28.002
- Remain dedicated to the enriched experience ACA students have been benefiting from for 25 years.

COMMUNITY COMMUNICATION & RESPONSE

- Communication: Any concerns regarding COVID response or protocols should be directed first to the campus administration and then to the Executive Director, Craig Sims.
- Stakeholder input: ACA values the input of our community. Multiple surveys to parents and staff along with informational meetings provide input to inform our planning. In addition, ACA is consistently open to input through the Executive Director with requests to email or call any time with questions, concerns, or recommendations. All information received has been shared with appropriate staff and considered during discussions for the development of this plan.
- *Identifying Possible COVID-19 Cases on Campus*
 - ACA will immediately separate any student who shows COVID-19 symptoms while at school if the student has a fever until the student can be picked up by a parent or guardian. Parents or guardians should be prepared to pick up a student with 30 minutes and no later than 1 hour from the time the campus contacts the parent.
 - ACA will ensure that those who report feeling feverish should be given an immediate temperature check to determine if they are symptomatic for COVID-19.
- *Students Who Have COVID-19 or Suspected to Have COVID-19*
 - **Parents must ensure they do not send a child to school on campus** if the child has COVID-19 symptoms or is test-confirmed with COVID-19.
 - If symptomatic, the student must remain off campus **until fever free*, and other symptoms have improved.**
 - *Fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever suppressing medications. Fever is a temperature of 100° Fahrenheit (37.8° Celsius) or higher.
 - During the exclusion period, the student may continue to work through the curriculum and receive support from ACA; however, the student will be counted absent for these days. If the student drops below the 90% required attendance due to COVID-19, an attendance committee will convene and review the student's case for credit per handbook guidelines.
 - If an individual who has been in a school is test-confirmed to have COVID-19, the school must notify its local health department, in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations, including confidentiality requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

*Note: This guidance is subject to change as we continue to experience an evolving response at the local, state and national level.
- *Staff Who Have COVID-19 or Symptomatic for COVID-19*

- Staff will follow the same rules as for students.

IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS, COVID-19 CONTACTS AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Masks:** for the purposes of this plan, masks include non-medical grade disposable face masks, cloth face coverings (over the nose and mouth), or full-face shields to protect eyes, nose, and mouth
- More information about COVID-19 available in several languages can be found at [Tarrant County Health Department](#).**
- COVID-19 Contacts

Primary Campus	Intermediate Campus	Middle School Campus
Nurse Moore 817-274-2008	Nurse Everett 817-303-1553	Nurse Simpson 817-987-1909

POLICY EXCEPTIONS OR ACCOMMODATIONS

- This document amends, where applicable, adopted board policies, any handbook, rule or procedure otherwise previously adopted and approved by the board of directors or administration for the duration of the 2023-2024 school year or until the Texas Education Agency or other applicable agency otherwise withdraws the authority of these exceptions. If a conflict arises between a policy, rule, procedure (etc) listed within this document and previously adopted policy, rule, procedure (etc), then this document will take precedence.**