



# 2021-22 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 in this document are designed to significantly reduce the likelihood that a coronavirus outbreak would occur on our campuses. The contents of this 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 17, 2021 and advertised in the Star Telegram. 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 minimum 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 lack of 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 21/22 school year.
- **The exception allowing remote instruction expired with the 20/21 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* and *Students Who Are Close Contacts* 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, 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 showing the following symptoms that are not normal for them:
    - Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than 100.0 degrees
    - Cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
    - chills or repeated shaking with chills or fatigue
    - congestion or runny nose
    - muscle pain, headache, or sore throat
    - new loss of smell or taste
    - 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."
- Transparent Desk Shields: While ACA will no longer provide desk shields, parents may request through the campus principal that their student be allowed to use a desk shield that is provided by the parent. Desk shields must be transparent so that the student can see and participate in instruction. Desk shields cannot be used if it disrupts the ability of the student or other students to access the learning taking place. If the request is granted, the placement or seating of the student may be altered (ie: to the













perimeter of the classroom) by the teacher in order to ensure that the learning environment of the classroom is not hindered.

- 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 if a person chooses to do so, but cannot be compelled to do so. ACA monitors guidance from CDC, AAP and Tarrant County Health Department. The CDC recommends masks should be worn indoors by all individuals (age 2 and older). Consistent and correct mask use by people, regardless of vaccination status, is especially important indoors and in crowded settings, when physical distancing cannot be maintained.
  - 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 recent 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:
  - Additional 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.

- When and wherever feasible, fresh air from outside is recommended. ACA will encourage the use of outside spaces and the integration of fresh air into buildings. As part of the available federal stimulus funding needs assessment, ACA is currently reviewing and researching new technology that can be added to our HVAC systems or our classrooms to improve the air quality of all three campuses.
- Meals: The Texas Department of Agriculture, in coordination with the US Department of Agriculture, are providing free breakfast and free lunch to all students, despite program eligibility. All students will be able to participate if you choose to do so. Campuses will work to minimize the number of students congregated inside the cafeteria at a time through staggered schedules that include eating in the cafeteria, classrooms, and outside spaces, depending on the campus and available space.
- Dress Code: All uniform dress requirements will be in force for the 2021-22 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 multi-campus 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
    - Hire additional counselor so each campus has a dedicated counselor
    - Adopt schoolwide program at MS: SOAR
  - 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 over 20 years.

## COMMUNITY COMMUNICATION & RESPONSE

- Communication: (8/20/21) ACA will notify parents and staff of students in classrooms where students have been identified as COVID positive\* based on their home room assignment in grades K through 5, and based on the class schedules of students in grades 6-8 (as noted on the last day the positive case was on campus). There is potential for duplicate notices as we work on this reporting procedure. The notification letters will be sent to the email address provided by the parent during registration. The new notification will identify the grade level, the home room, and the last date the student was on campus. In order to minimize the number of alerts that a parent might receive in a day, ACA will attempt to report multiple cases, if applicable, in a single alert. Also, we will replace the campus-wide notification. Instead, parent can stay informed about campus cases through the dashboard at [www.acaedu.net/2022guide](http://www.acaedu.net/2022guide). If a student is in a classroom (as defined above) with multiple (3 or more) positive cases within a 5 day period, ACA (to the best of our ability) will inform parents and stress the need for added caution and awareness. In this case, ACA will treat all students identified in that space as close contacts for purposes defined in this document. If parents opt for the close contact isolation period, absences will be excused and students may continue learning while in isolation by coordinating lessons and materials with the assigned campus (see guide). If cases increase rapidly in a class setting, ACA will address the unique circumstances of that classroom individually. (\*subject to a 48 hour rule for on-campus notifications)
- 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 clean the areas used by the individual who shows COVID-19 symptoms while at school (student, teacher, or staff) as soon as is feasible.
  - 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*
  - As provided in this [Department of State Health Services \(DSHS\) Rule](#), school systems **must** exclude students from attending school in person who are actively sick with COVID-19 or who have received a positive test result for 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, until the conditions for re-entry are met.

- If symptomatic, the student must remain off campus until at least 10 days have passed since symptom onset, and fever free\*, and other symptoms have improved. Children who test positive for COVID-19 but do not have any symptoms must stay home until at least 10 days after the day they were tested.
  - \*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). Additionally, the school will notify parents that a positive case was confirmed on campus (similar to last year) as soon as realistically possible and according to laws protecting privacy.
- Upon receipt of information that any teacher, staff member, student, or visitor at a school is test-confirmed to have COVID-19, the school must submit a report to the Texas Department of State Health Services via an online form. The report must be submitted each Monday for the prior seven days (Monday-Sunday).

\*Note: This guidance is subject to change as we continue to experience an evolving response at the local, state and national level.

□ *Students Who Are Close Contacts*

- As a reference, close contact determinations are generally based on [guidance outlined by the CDC](#), which notes that individuals who are vaccinated are not considered close contacts.
- According to TEA guidance, school systems are not required to conduct COVID-19 contact tracing and **cannot exclude a student due to close contact status**. ACA will work to share information regarding close contacts with parents of affected students if the school is made aware that a student is deemed a close contact of a test confirmed, COVID positive case.
- Parents of students who are determined to be close contacts of an individual with COVID-19 may opt to keep their students at home during the recommended stay-at-home period. For individuals who are determined to be close contacts, a 10-day stay-at-home period can end for students experiencing no symptoms on Day 10 after close contact exposure, if no subsequent COVID-19 testing is performed. Alternately, students can end the stay-at-home period if they receive a negative result from a PCR acute infection test after the close contact exposure ends (clarification pending).
- 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 close contact, an attendance committee will convene and review the student’s case for credit per handbook guidelines.

□ *Staff Who Have COVID-19 or Symptomatic for COVID-19 or Who Are Close Contacts*

- Similar to students, school systems must exclude staff from attending school in person who are actively sick with COVID-19, who are suspected of being actively sick with COVID-19, or who



have received a positive test result for COVID-19. Based on recent updates from the CDC, staff may return when:

- If symptomatic, at least 5 days have passed since symptom onset, and fever free\*, and other symptoms have improved.
- For those with no symptoms, at least 5 days after the day they tested positive.
- \*Fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever suppressing medications. Fever is a temperature of 100° Fahrenheit (37.8° Celsius) or higher.
- Staff who meet the close contact threshold with a COVID-19 positive individual and are in one of the following groups, do not need to stay at home.
  - Ages 18 or older and have received all recommended vaccine doses, including boosters and additional primary shots for some immunocompromised people.
  - Was confirmed COVID-19 positive within the last 90 days and has fully recovered.
- For staff who meet the close contact threshold with a COVID-19 positive individual who are not in one of the above groups, staff may continue to work on campus if rapid testing demonstrates a negative test result (at least on the 5<sup>th</sup> day or if symptoms occur).

## 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
- Close Contact:** [see guidance from CDC](#)
- 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 Denise DeWalt 817-274-2008	Nurse Jordan Gardenhire 817-303-1553	Nurse Kimberly 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 2021-2022 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.