



## *Ascension Lutheran School, TK-6th Grade*

### ***VCPH Waiver Application: School Reopening Plans, August 24, 2020***

Ascension Lutheran School reopening plans address the following procedures, and will be implemented consistently with guidance from the California Department of Public Health and the local health department. These plans are published on the Ascension School Website, with a link on the top of the Homepage: <https://alschool.org/>

Ascension School established a Covid Task Force in April 2020. This team is made up of professionals in the fields of health, scientific research/microbiology, public safety/emergency response, and education. The Task Force meets regularly (weekly or bi-weekly) to collaborate and plan for school safety, and continues to communicate frequently as situations, policies, and updates are published. The Task Force conducts research and stays informed of all communications about Covid-related events and media coverage, public safety, and health data for the county and state. This team continuously informs Ascension School staff of new developments to ensure the safety of those entering onto the school campus. The Task Force has been and continues to be instrumental in completing the school's remote learning and in-person learning plans, as well developing the waiver application. Ascension continues to hold regular meetings with its Covid Task Force team to refine and develop routines and procedures to ensure that all community members are educated and informed about safe practices and ensure that our students and staff are able to work in a Covid-free environment.

### **Cleaning and Disinfection**

Strict cleaning and disinfecting are in place currently with the use of EPA recommended products. This will be enhanced with the following as students, teachers and staff members return to campus:

- Continuously clean and disinfect the entire campus throughout the day using EPA recommended products, including surfaces in common areas and classrooms, bathrooms and handwashing stations.
- Professional cleaning will continue nightly in all areas used by staff and/or students.
  - There will be a focus on cleaning high traffic areas and surfaces (desks, doorknobs, cubbies, lockers, etc.)
  - Cleaning of playground structure after each cohort uses it. Specialized disinfecting equipment has been purchased to ensure clean surfaces in outdoor play areas.



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- These spaces will be aired out before arrival of the students and during the cleaning process.
- Students will no longer share common items in the classroom, such as writing tools, computer devices (iPads and/or Chromebook laptops).
  - Student technology devices are 1:1 for the year (one device per student).
    - Students will be taught how to clean and disinfect their devices (iPads/Chromebooks) and instructed to disinfect their devices daily after use.
    - Students will keep their supplies in their individual cubby or desk depending on their grade level (pencils, erasers, scissors, rulers, etc.).
  - Playground equipment (play structures and/or sports equipment) will be restricted for use by individual cohorts and disinfected after use.
  - All other equipment (balls, jump-ropes) will be kept in bags within each classroom/cohort and reserved solely for use by individual cohorts.
- The drinking fountain will be unavailable, but students will be able to bring reusable water bottles and use the refill stations at school.
- Regular changing and cleaning of heating and cooling filters will take place monthly.
- Open classroom doors and windows to circulate fresh air (weather permitting).
- We shall use products approved for use against COVID-19 on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved “N” list and train workers on chemical hazards, product instructions, ventilation requirements, Cal/OSHA requirements, the CDPH asthma safer cleaning methods, and as required by the Healthy Schools Act, as applicable.

### **Cohorting**

Students will remain in small groups throughout the school day based on their grade level. One adult (classroom teacher) will be present while using indoor homeroom spaces. Classroom groups, or cohorts, will stay together during recess, lunch and any extracurricular instruction.

- Staff contact with cohorts indoors will be restricted to the classroom teacher. Additional support staff and specialist teachers will instruct in outdoor areas only or via an online format.
  - Extracurricular subjects (PE, Music, Religion, Makerspace, and Outdoor Classroom) will be taught either outdoors with one cohort per staff member, or taught via an online format in their classroom.



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- Start/end times for all recesses and transitions into/out of classrooms and outdoor learning spaces will be coordinated to minimize contact between students from different cohorts. A school-wide schedule will inform staff and students when they are able to enter and exit their classrooms during transition times for recess, lunch, outdoor learning, or PE.

### **Entrance, Egress, and Movement Within the School**

We are altering the arrival and dismissal procedures for safer transit to and from campus. Parents will provide transportation to and from school.

- Traffic flow will follow an established pattern and shared with families prior to reopening for in-person learning.
- Families will be directed to park in designated areas only with visual reminders to maintain safe distancing practices while walking students to the entrance of the school.
- Masks will be required at all times during drop off and pick up of students before and after school.
- Modified start times: The school will implement staggered arrival times in five-minute increments for each grade/cohort (siblings may be dropped off together)
- Dismissal/after school pick-up procedure: An organized process will be implemented to minimize crowding. Classes will be spaced in an outdoor field/grass area with a minimum of 10 feet between cohorts, and students spaced 6 feet or more from each other.
- To maintain the safety of our community, only students, faculty and staff will be allowed on campus while students are present. Parents are encouraged to call or email the school office anytime with questions or concerns. Arrangements will be made for deliveries and other vendor visits as required. At this time, volunteers will not be on campus during the school day.
- Traffic “flow” will be marked visually to direct students to enter and exit in the same direction throughout the day (stairs up/down, hallways, sidewalk areas)
  - Movement of students and teachers will be minimized as much as possible.
  - The school will have a detailed school-wide schedule that will minimize contact between cohorts/classes.
  - Directional indicators and signage will be placed throughout the campus to promote safe distancing when moving around the school, up and down stairs, through hallways, etc.



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### **Face Coverings and Other Essential Protective Gear**

Everyone on campus will be required to wear a cloth face covering and maintain physical distancing following CDPH guidelines. All students will be instructed in how to wear a face covering, ensuring that both mouth and nose are covered. (See “Staff Training and Family Education” below for instruction on proper disinfecting and use of PPEs)

- All staff and families will read and adhere to the CDPH Guidance for Use of Face Coverings protocols.
- Families will be taught how to properly use, remove and wash face coverings.
- We recommend all students have at least one extra face covering in their backpack.
- Face covering will not be required at recess, lunch and P.E. - these events will take place outside with distancing practices in place.
  - When a cloth face covering is temporarily removed for recess, lunch or P.E. it will be placed in a paper bag (marked with the student’s name and date) until it needs to be put on again.
- In order to comply with the CDPH Guidelines on the use of face coverings, the school will need to exclude students from campus if they are not exempt from wearing a face covering under CDPH guidelines and refuse to wear a face covering while on campus.
- The school will provide remote learning for students who are excluded from campus.

### **Health Screenings for Students and Staff**

Everyone entering the campus will have a mandated daily temperature check.

- Students will have their temperature checked at the entrance gate to the school campus, and teachers will check all students’ temperatures again before lunch.
  - If students exhibit any symptoms of sickness or temperature of 99.5 degrees or higher during the school day the teacher will take the student’s temperature again and inform the office immediately. Students will be sent to the nurse’s station (room next to the main office) and wait to be picked up.
  - Anyone with a temperature of 99.5 degrees or higher will be asked to return home until they are fever-free (without medication) for 3 days per the CDC and CDPH guidelines.



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- We will also monitor other symptoms, including but not limited to: cough, sore throat, chills, difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, loss of taste or smell or digestive issues.
  - It is recommended by the CDPH guidelines that if a staff member or student shows these symptoms they will be sent home and it is recommended that they be tested. The school and classroom will remain open.
- Additionally, parents will be educated about the health and safety procedures established by the school, and will be asked to cooperate and support all school safety procedures as recommended by the CDC, CDPH, and VCPH (see below).

### **Healthy Hygiene Practices**

The Covid Task Force will continue to support the implementation of the Covid Safety Plan. Routines will be taught to staff by administration and Covid Task Force members. Routines for handwashing and disinfecting areas will include:

- Entering and exiting classroom spaces
- Before and after eating, after coughing or sneezing and after any class activities where they handle shared items (eg. playground equipment).
- Movement around campus, including proper handwashing after use of restrooms by students and staff.
- Signs and visual reminders will be posted in all classrooms and restrooms to ensure that students follow safety routines.
- Signs and visual reminders will be posted around walkways of the campus to remind staff and students to follow guidelines and routines for Covid safety.
- Hand sanitizing stations will be installed outside of each classroom near the door. Students and staff will practice regular hand washing/sanitizing throughout the day as stated above.
- Additional hand sanitizing units and handwashing stations will be installed on campus, and will be maintained with soap and water. Waste water will be transferred to sewage outlets regularly.
- All staff will provide educational materials to families on enhanced sanitation practices, physical distancing guidelines and their importance, proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings.
  - Teachers and school staff will also educate parents and students on how to wear a face covering to ensure that it covers both the mouth and nose.



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### **Identification and Tracing of Contacts**

Ascension's Principal, Nathan Ash, and Office Manager, Connie Angress, will be the contacts on-site for the local health department to contact about COVID-19.

Office Phone: (805) 496-2419.

Email for Nathan Ash: [nash@alschool.org](mailto:nash@alschool.org); Connie Angress: [cangress@alschool.org](mailto:cangress@alschool.org)

The following steps were adapted from the California Department of Public Health. Staff attendance will be kept daily, as well as student attendance.

- In the event that a staff member or student is in close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case, the following will take place:
  - Send home
  - Quarantine for 14 days from last exposure
  - Recommended testing (but will not shorten 14-day quarantine)
  - School/classroom will remain open
- In the event that a staff member or student has a confirmed COVID-19 case infection, the following will take place:
  - The school will notify the Ventura County Public Health Department
  - The staff member or student will isolate and be excluded from school for 14 days from symptom onset or test date
  - Identify contacts, quarantine and exclude exposed contacts for 14 days after the last date the staff member or student was present at school while infectious
  - Disinfection and cleaning of classroom and primary spaces where the staff member or student spent significant time
  - School remains open
- If staff member or student showed symptoms but tested negative, the following will take place:
  - May return to school 3 days after symptoms resolve
  - School/classroom will remain open

### **Physical Distancing**

Our classroom spaces will be set-up to maximize space between seating and desks, with student seating pre-arranged 6 feet or more apart.

- Desks and seating will be arranged in a way to minimize face-to-face contact.



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- Other desk arrangements (grouped closer than 6 feet) will not be utilized during in-person instruction until all Covid protocols/safety concerns have been reversed.
- During recess, students will remain with their cohort. Each cohort will have a designated area of the playground while out at recess.
  - Ascension has 3 play areas that will be marked with cones and other physical markings (e.g. Caution Tape) for students to remain in during recesses:
    - Grass field area
    - Equipment/jungle gym area
    - “Outdoor classroom” and foursquare area
  - A schedule for rotation will be created to allow students to trade places weekly. This rotation will *not take place daily* in order to minimize sharing of spaces between cohorts.
- Our school has access to various outdoor spaces available near classrooms. Teachers will use outdoor spaces to maximize physical distancing when appropriate. Specialist teachers will only interact with students from cohorts in outdoor spaces with a minimum physical distance of 6 feet between students, and more distance between the specialist teacher when possible.

### Staff Training and Family Education

Staff and teachers participated in a Covid safety training on August 20, 2020 to review all safety and health guidelines. Additional trainings will include the cleaning, use and disinfecting of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and first aide.

- All staff complete First Aid and CPR training annually as part of their contractual obligations and staff development.
- Staff were encouraged to begin conversations with students and their families about when they should stay home and when they can return to school.
- Parent training sessions will take place via Zoom/online format with the Principal and Covid Task Force during the first weeks of September to ensure adequate instruction and provide parents with the opportunity to participate in a question/answer session with staff.
- Staff will receive hands-on training and provide educational materials to families including:
  - Enhanced sanitation practices
  - Physical distancing guidelines and their importance
  - Proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings
  - Screening practices, COVID-19 symptoms and transmission



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- How to prevent COVID-19 spread and when to seek medical attention
- Plan and procedures to follow when someone becomes sick at school
- Plan and procedures to protect workers from COVID-19 illness
- Staff was also informed about self-quarantining and encouraging students who are sick or have recently had a close contact with a person with COVID-19 to stay home.
- Supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors, including soap, tissues, no-touch trash cans and hand sanitizers with at least 60 percent ethyl alcohol for staff and students who can safely use hand sanitizer will be purchased in the next 2 weeks.
- The school's Covid Task Force met on August 20, August 24, August 28 and September 1 to review and update the In-Person Learning Waiver and complete the application following state and county guidelines.
  - The Covid Task Force met Monday 8/24/20 to establish protocols and routines for staff and teachers. On Monday 8/31/20 and Tuesday 9/1/20 teachers discussed the requirements for reopening.
  - Staff will be trained on September 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> on safety procedures as outlined in this document.
  - Staff will practice all safety routines in the days leading up to reopening for in-person instruction.
  - Teachers will refine routines and collaborate to develop procedures to ensure students and parents will have opportunities to learn Covid safety measures prior to students returning to school/classrooms.
  - Teachers will instruct their students in age-appropriate ways to learn safety routines when they return in person to Ascension. Teachers will begin this instruction during their remote learning times.
  - Teachers will continue teaching Covid safety measures and provide time for students to practice safety routines after returning to in-person learning.

Topics for teachers and family education about Covid safety routines for in-person learning will include:

1. Teach and reinforce washing hands, avoiding contact with one's eyes, nose, and mouth, and covering coughs and sneezes among students and staff.
2. Teach students to use tissue to wipe their nose and to cough/sneeze inside a tissue or their elbow.
3. Students and staff should wash their hands before and after eating; after coughing or sneezing; after being outside; and before and after using the restroom.



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4. Students and staff should wash their hands for 20 seconds with soap, rubbing thoroughly after application, and use paper towels (or single use cloth towels) to dry hands thoroughly.
5. Staff should model and practice handwashing. For example, for younger students, use bathroom time as an opportunity to reinforce healthy habits and monitor proper handwashing.
6. Students and staff should use fragrance-free hand sanitizer when handwashing is not practicable. Sanitizer must be rubbed into hands until completely dry.
7. Note: frequent handwashing is more effective than the use of hand sanitizers.
8. Children under age 9 should use hand sanitizer under adult supervision. Call Poison Control if consumed: 1-800-222-1222.
9. Ethyl alcohol-based hand sanitizers are preferred and should be used when there is the potential of unsupervised use by children. Isopropyl hand sanitizers are more toxic and can be absorbed through the skin.

### **Testing of Students and Staff.**

#### Students:

- In the event that a student comes in close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case or presents with symptoms of COVID-19 it is recommended that they be tested.

#### Staff:

- All staff will be tested periodically. 25% of the staff will be tested every two weeks. This will continue until all staff has been tested and then the process will repeat.
- If there is an increase in cases in our county, we may need to increase the frequency of testing among our staff.

### **Triggers for Switching to Distance Learning**

The school may need to close based on the number of positive cases, the percentage of positive cases among staff members and students, and following consultation with the Local Health Officer. The following may result in school closure and result in the school switching to remote learning:

- Multiple cases in multiple cohorts
- 5% or more of the total number of staff members and students test positive in a 14-day period
- It is deemed necessary by the Local Health Officer



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In the event that the school must close, we will switch to our Remote Learning Plan and Schoolwide Schedule for instruction.

The school may be allowed to reopen after 14 days and after the following has taken place:

- Cleaning and disinfection
- Public Health Investigation
- Consultation with the Ventura County Health Department

### **Communication Plans**

The school will continue to provide regular communication with our school community. The Principal, Nathan Ash, will communicate with students, staff, and parents in writing via email about cases and exposures at the school consistent with privacy requirements such as FERPA and HIPAA.