



## **COVID-19 RISK MANAGEMENT & COMMUNITY PLAN**

Please review the following information on how we can work together to minimize risk for all individuals in our community. It is critical that all community members intending to participate in any in-person instruction or activities are committed to upholding the guiding principles of this plan as we move into the fall term.

### **OVERVIEW**

As you read through this document, please keep the following in mind:

- This is a living document. Explorations Academy will update and adjust policies based on the evolving health situation and the evolving guidance from the CDC, state, and local health departments. We will keep families informed of any changes.
- Explorations Academy has established a COVID-19 Task Force whose members represent perspectives from the medical field, public health, teachers, and parents. The COVID-19 Task Force will continually monitor and suggest means of mitigating risk, particularly for those students who will be participating in in-person instruction at Explorations Academy. Metrics will be assessed on an ongoing basis and recommendations will be made based upon available data.
- The precautionary measures described in this document may catch people who display symptoms of COVID-19, but cannot eliminate the possibility of asymptomatic, yet potentially contagious, people present at the school or participating in an in-person school-sponsored activity.
- Explorations Academy continues to navigate policies and procedures of many different federal, state, and local entities that will impact our program season. This handbook outlines the policies and procedures within Explorations Academy's control and influence. We will reach out to parents and guardians if decisions are made outside of our control that prohibit us from running programs.

### **PHASED RE-OPENING OF IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION**

The following protocols are expected to change as we learn more and respond to emerging theories and best practices; however, to begin the school year we expect to offer educational opportunities based on the following metrics, which we have labeled as Red, Yellow, and Green Zones, for easy

identification. Online learning will continue to be offered in addition to in-person instruction regardless of the zone. Note: the “positivity rate” is calculated as the number of positive tests out of the total number of tests run in a given time frame.

**Red Zone:** If the positivity rate of COVID-19 tests in Whatcom county exceeds 5%, or if more than 150 confirmed diagnoses have been made in the previous two weeks:

No in-person classes. Advisors will organize weekly meetings on Friday afternoons in open-air spaces where social distancing can be maintained to go over any concerns/issues whether they be academic or social/emotional in nature. Outdoor activities will be planned for experiential activities.

**Yellow Zone:** If the positivity rate of COVID-19 tests in Whatcom county exceeds 2% but is less than 5% and if fewer than 150 cases have been confirmed in the county over the previous two weeks:

In-person instruction will take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays for high school students and Mondays and Wednesdays for middle school students. Fridays will continue to be open for advisor check-ins and individual tutoring. Days without in-person instruction will be a combination of online instruction and project-based learning. All windows will be open at all times with fans strategically placed to maximize airflow. We will also have a portable HEPA filter. Pending approval of a permit submitted to the City of Bellingham, we will also have an outdoor classroom that will be utilized when possible in the parking area immediately to the south of the school and reserved access at a nearby picnic shelter. Students should come to school dressed appropriately for the outside temperature. Whenever inside or when inside of the outdoor classroom masks will be required. Students may remove masks only in open air environments where more than six feet of social distance can be maintained at all times.

**Green Zone:** If the positivity rate of positive COVID-19 tests is below 2% and fewer than 50 people have received positive test results in the prior two weeks:

We will resume five day per week classes with all of the above in-school safety procedures in place. High school and middle school students will be isolated from one another.

For each of the above options, any changes will be announced a week in advance to allow families to prepare for changes unless there is an emergency event that we feel requires an immediate response.

## **INTERNAL SAFETY MEASURES TO MINIMIZE RISK**

Explorations Academy staff will, at a minimum, read and understand our comprehensive COVID-19 Risk Management Plan and undergo training prior to the school year on how to implement COVID-19-related safety protocols, some of which are outlined here:

- Take temperatures and track staff and student symptoms daily to attempt to catch potential infection of COVID-19.
- Provide programming for groups of 6 students or fewer.
- Remain with the same student group and staff when possible to minimize exposure for staff and students.
- Sanitize materials shared among students before, during, and after coursework.
- Follow and implement the below-mentioned pre- and in-school safety protocols.

## **PRIOR TO DAY ONE OF TERM REQUIREMENTS FOR FAMILIES**

All students and/or parents/guardians opting into a in-person maximized cohort and/or attending an elective in-person field trip or group activity are required to read through this plan and acknowledge that they have read, understood, and agree to abide by safety protocols outlined.

Prior to the first day of any in-person activities, Explorations Academy staff will request that parent/guardians track student temperature and symptoms for the seven (7) days prior to program start. Parent/guardians will be provided with a Health Log to track this information.

On day one of in-person activity, Explorations Academy staff will ask parent/guardians if the student has had a fever or any of the symptoms listed on the health log in the seven (7) days prior to program start. Documentation is not required, but is recommended to help parent/guardians keep track of symptoms.

To keep our staff, students, and broader community safe, we reserve the right to turn students away if they are experiencing COVID-19-related symptoms and/or refuse to follow safety protocols as outlined here and communicated during programming.

In the event that a student cannot engage in program activities due to a confirmed or possible infection of COVID-19, full or prorated refund options will be made available for families. Refunds will not be offered for non-compliance with safety protocols unless they are health related.

## **IN-SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS**

Daily temperature and symptom tracking at home: Beginning on day one of programming, Explorations Academy staff will request parent/guardians take a daily temperature for students at home.

At the start of each day, staff will ask for the student's temperature that was taken at home during the previous 24 hours. Staff will also take the student's temperature each morning at drop-off as an extra layer of safety. Staff will use a daily log to record students' reported "at home temperatures," as well as the drop-off temperature, and to complete a daily health check, to consist of the following questions:

- Is anyone in your household unwell?
- Is a fever present (100.4 Fahrenheit or higher)? Take temp and follow disinfecting guidelines for the thermometer used.
- Do you currently have any of the following:
  - Chills?
  - A new or worsening cough not caused by another health condition?
  - New or worsening difficulty breathing not caused by another health condition?
  - Sore throat?
  - New or worsening muscle aches not caused by another health condition?
  - New or worsening headache that is not normal for you and not caused by another health condition?
  - New loss of sense of taste or smell?
- In the last two weeks, have you had close contact (within 6 feet for at least 10 minutes) with anyone who is unwell or has been diagnosed with COVID-19?
- If a participant has a fever or any symptoms identified in the health check, they will not be permitted to be present at Explorations Academy or participate in any in-person school-sponsored events, and staff will recommend they see a healthcare professional.
- If a student has spent time near someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past 14 days, they will not be permitted to engage in Explorations Academy in-person activities.
- If a participant has spent time near someone who has undiagnosed signs and symptoms of illness, they will not be permitted to engage in Explorations Academy in-person activities.

Staff will also use a health log to record any signs or symptoms that appear while on the program. Staff will aim to be as discreet as possible during these health checks and will only bring individual situations to the group's awareness as absolutely necessary. Response to all situations with a potentially symptomatic individual will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

## **DROP-OFF & PICK-UP**

Explorations Academy has implemented new drop-off policies for students to reduce risk. Drop-off and pick-up times will be staggered and assigned prior to the beginning of the school year. If you have

any requests to make regarding your family drop-off and pick-up schedule, please let the Head of School know as soon as possible.

Family members and students 6 years or older must wear a face covering and remain in their vehicles while an Explorations Academy staff member collects fever logs and asks about any changes to health before proceeding to an assigned location based on cluster. Please remain on site and wait in your vehicle until you receive a visual confirmation from Explorations Academy staff that your student has been cleared for in-person instruction.

Explorations Academy staff will guide you through the process in person as needed. To minimize social contact outside of our student group, we ask that non-students (parents/guardians/caregivers/siblings, etc.) remain in vehicles if possible. We also recommend that the same household members come to both drop-off and pick-up and that carpooling is minimized to reduce exposure risk. Please do not arrange car-pooling where cars will have mixed middle and high school students, unless they are from the same household.

At pick-up, please remain in your vehicle; your student will come directly to you at your designated pick-up time.

## **IN-SCHOOL SUPPLY NEEDS & CONSIDERATIONS**

Supplies: All students opting into the maximized in-person cluster or attending any in-person school activity should now bring:

- A cloth face covering that meets the below-mentioned guidelines
- Personal hand sanitizer
- All items labeled as is possible (masking tape and permanent marker is fine) to reduce possibility of students touching other students' materials

Handwashing: All students and staff will wash hands as directed by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Due to the nature of any outdoor learning opportunities, there may be times when it makes more sense to use hand sanitizer rather than soap and water. Each student and staff member will carry their own hand sanitizer, labeled with the student or staff name. Staff will also carry backup hand sanitizer along with other safety materials.

At a minimum, appropriate hand cleaning will occur:

- Every morning as soon as students and staff arrive.
- Before and after all snack and meal times.
- Before and after going to the bathroom (including changing menstrual products).
- After blowing nose, sneezing, coughing, or touching eyes.

- After touching high-touch surfaces (railings, doorknobs, counters, etc.).

Face coverings: All staff and students participating in any in-person activities will be required to wear appropriate face coverings for the duration of the school day or activity. Face coverings will only be removed by students for eating, drinking, and hygiene.

Families are asked to provide their own masks for students, but if families cannot provide their own masks, Explorations Academy will loan the student a face covering. Below are the requirements for appropriate face coverings, who should not wear face coverings, and instructions for expected mask sanitation:

Cloth face coverings should:

- Cover the mouth and nose,
- Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face,
- Be secured with ties or ear loops,
- Include multiple layers of fabric,
- Allow for breathing without restriction, and
- Be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to Shape.
- Not have any valves (which increase air being expelled from the user).

To comply with proper mask sanitation, staff and students are expected to wear a clean mask each day of in-person activity.

Staff and students can either wash their cloth face covering between days of in-person activity OR use a different clean mask each day. Wash masks with detergent and hot water and dry on a hot cycle.

## **STUDENT OR STAFF SHOWING COVID-19 SYMPTOMS WHILE AT SCHOOL**

Explorations Academy will have a response and communication plan in place that includes communication with staff, families, and DOH in the event that a student or staff member exhibits COVID-19 symptoms while at school. Explorations Academy will work with the Whatcom County Department of Health to determine appropriate potential school closure, testing, and quarantine measures that should be taken. Explorations Academy will make sure that teachers and students stay home or immediately go home if they feel or appear sick.

Students or staff who have been ill will be required to quarantine and obtain a COVID-19 test. Students or staff may return to school when at least 24 hours have passed without fever and without

fever lowering medication AND there has been improvement in other symptoms AND at least ten days have passed since the first symptoms were noted. For people who tested positive but never developed symptoms, they can return to school ten days after their test date.

In the event that a student or teacher in a given cluster tests positive for COVID-19, we will return to online instruction for at least one week, regardless of our phase of reopening. All students will need to clear the above requirements before returning to in-person instruction.

In the event of a positive test result, contact tracing will be performed by the Whatcom County Health Department. Please see the Department of Health's website on Contact Tracing to learn more about the process and how it helps the community.

### **COVID-19 TESTING**

We require that all students participating in the maximized in-person instruction cluster receive a COVID-19 test during the week prior to the first day of school on September 8th. In addition, those students opting for online instruction who join us for outdoor activities will also need a COVID-19 test prior to any in-person event. Regular testing will be required to continue participation with in-person instruction. We expect the frequency of testing to change as different tests become available and are more easily accessed. As of today, we will require testing within one week of October 1st and again on November 1st.

### **AGREEMENT OF RISK AND LIABILITY RELEASE FOR IN-PERSON SCHOOL AND ACTIVITIES/EVENTS**

Explorations Academy provides a Community Handbook annually for new and returning families. As part of the process this year, for our in-person programs, you will be required to sign that you have read, understood, and agree to adhere to the above-mentioned protocols.

### **COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY**

All students and families in the maximized in-person cohort will be required to commit, in writing, to following CDC recommendations both inside and outside of school and abiding by Washington's Safe Start guidelines for whatever phase is implemented in a given county.

### **QUESTIONS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to the Head of School or any member of the COVID-19 Task Force, whose information is available on the Explorations Academy website.