



ELEMENTARY REOPENING PLANS 2020-2021

Victory Christian Academy



ELEMENTARY RE-OPENING PLAN FOR 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR

MISSION

To reopen Victory Christian Academy's TK-6th grade elementary school in fall of 2020-2021 for on campus learning, as safely and fully as possible.

PURPOSE

To partner with families in providing a nurturing and challenging educational experience in a Christ-centered community. We hope to do this for the 2020-21 school year, as an in-person gathered community of teachers, administrators, staff, parents and students to God's glory, our joy and for the benefit of all connected with Victory Christian Academy.

INTRODUCTION

The goal of Victory Christian Academy's limited reopening plan is to provide re-entry that fosters the overall health of children, staff, and community that we serve. The plan is based on evidence that is currently available and will be monitored as new information or situations arise, and as we communicate with our local and state officials. Based upon updated guidance from the California Department of Public Health in **August of 2020**, we are offering a TK-6th grade on-campus day program with modifications for student and staff safety.

There are many federal, state and local guidelines available when it comes to making decisions on how to best mitigate the risk and protect our school and community. Victory Christian Academy has carefully considered a many of the available guidelines and will lean most heavily on the directives and medical advice from our county public health department, the California Department of Health Services and Centers for Disease Control. We also meet and receive helpful guidance from the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) and utilize them as a helpful source of information specifically for private schools.

ONGOING MONITORING OF OUR PLAN

Victory Christian Academy recognizes that COVID-19 is constantly changing, and has assembled a Reopening Task Force that will continue to meet in order to develop and agree on school policies and procedures, monitor outbreaks within the school, communication with the families we serve, and our community as a whole. This team is made up of the school administrator, board members, a member of our office staff, 2 teachers and 3 parent representatives. They make recommendations to the administration and the board of directors for any alterations that may be needed.

This team will follow the key principles as outlined by the American Academy of Pediatrics:

- *School policies must be flexible and nimble in responding to new information, and the VCA board and administration must be willing to refine approaches when specific policies are not working.*
- *It is critically important to develop strategies that can be revised and adapted depending on the level of viral transmission in the school and throughout the community and done with close communication with state and/or local public health authorities and recognizing the differences between school districts, including urban, suburban, and rural districts.*
- *Policies should be practical, feasible, and appropriate for child and adolescent's developmental stage.*
- *Special considerations and accommodations to account for the diversity of youth should be made, especially for our vulnerable populations, including those who are medically fragile, live in poverty, have developmental challenges, or have special health care needs or disabilities, with the goal of safe return to school.*
- *No child or adolescent should be excluded from school unless required in order to adhere to local public health mandates or because of unique medical needs. Pediatricians, families, and schools should partner together to collaboratively identify and develop accommodations, when needed.*
- *School policies should be guided by supporting the overall health and well-being of all children, adolescents, their families, and their communities. These policies should be consistently communicated in languages other than English, if needed, based on the languages spoken in the community, to avoid marginalization of parents/guardians who are of limited English proficiency or do not speak English at all.*

Any questions or comments that you have can be directed to the Reopening Task Force at principal@victoryca.org

THE FAMILY'S RESPONSIBILITY

While medical experts agree that the risk to the individual child is very low and reasonable precautions are being taken, there is risk that a child could become infected while attending Victory Christian Academy and infect others.

No one knows the interactions of their child better than the parents. **We are asking that the parents make the ultimate decision and accept the responsibility that sending their child to on-campus learning entails.** Please prayerfully consider whether or not you would like to have your child attend our school, and that the steps that we are taking as a community are in the best interest of your family.

VCA'S 11 STEP PLAN FOR TK-6th Grade REOPENING

The following summarizes our current plan for school reopening, organized into the categories below:

1. **Health Screening** (*Procedures if student/staff are ill*)
2. **Hand hygiene**
3. **Facial Coverings**
4. **Physical Distancing**
5. **Cohorts**
6. **Environmental Cleaning**
7. **Ventilation**
8. **Mitigation of Risk** for Students at Higher Risk for Severe Disease
9. **Triggers for Distance Learning**
10. **COVID Testing/Contact Tracing**
11. **Communicating about COVID-19** to Children, Youth, Parents/Caregivers and Staff

Adapted from the university of Toronto, hospital for sick kids

1. HEALTH SCREENING

In order to prevent the spread of infection, students, teachers and other employees who have signs/ symptoms of COVID-19 (according to CDC, California DPH and local Public Health guidance) should stay home and decisions about testing and return to school should be guided by CDC and California DPH in consultation with local Public Health protocols. In addition, return to school decisions for those who have had an exposure to SARS-CoV-2 should be in accordance with local Public Health recommendations. Teachers and staff will be provided with information on signs and symptoms of COVID-19 in children, so that appropriate action can be taken if children develop symptoms during the day.

VCA Screening is a two-part process:

Part 1, HOME CHECK: Parents and caregivers are ultimately responsible for the screening of their children, daily, at home, prior to entering campus.

- **Students and parents** who plan to be on campus must, *before coming to school*, go to Family Portal in FACTs and complete the COVID Response Form- family.
- **Staff** who plan to be on campus must, *before coming to school*, go to Family Portal in FACTs and complete the COVID Response Form- Staff.

Part 2, SCHOOL HEALTH SCREENING: We will ask all families to arrive and pull up in their cars, where they will be directed to stop for a curbside **temperature check** for temperature **under 100°F**, and a **brief confirmation** that the home check has been completed. **Students and parents may not enter the school prior to the completion of this screening.** If you arrive late, please contact the office from your car at 707-539-1486 and a VCA staff member will come out and screen you/your student.

****Please allow extra time in the mornings for this screening to occur. As we all adjust to this new normal for now, teachers will be flexible early in the reopening process with tardies for the first 5 minutes.***

***IF A STUDENT/STAFF MEMBER BECOMES ILL DURING THE SCHOOL DAY:**

- In the event a student or staff member begins to feel ill, they will receive a temperature check in their classroom (or in the office if that is the nearest location with a thermometer). VCA staff will wear gloves and a face covering when screening someone who is feeling unwell.
- **If a student presents** with a fever of 100°F or above, other symptoms of COVID-19 such as shortness of breath, nausea (including vomiting and/or diarrhea), heavy coughing or congestion, etc.,
 - they will be taken to room 28 (which adjoins to the school office) to isolate them from other students and staff and their parents will be called for immediate pick-up. Room 28 has a window into the office and the student will have a quiet, calm place to rest while they wait.
 - *If emergency signs of illness occur, such as shortness of breath, blue lips, etc., VCA staff will call 911 and then the child's parents.*
- **If a staff member presents** with a fever of 100°F or above, other COVID-19 symptoms listed above,
 - Staff member will be asked to leave campus or wait in room 28 for someone to pick them up.
 - An administrator or office staff member will take their class outside or to the gym to continue instruction or quiet work until the end of the class period out of an abundance of caution.
 - *If emergency signs of illness occur, VCA staff will call 911 and family emergency contact of staff.*
- **Upon confirmation of a positive COVID-19 test result:**
 - VCA's contact tracing coordinator, Dr. Josh Hammer, will work with VCA administration and office staff to begin the process of contact tracing. They will also work directly with the Sonoma County Department of Health to report the case and contact tracing efforts.
 - VCA will follow any recommendations from the department of health for disinfection, relocation of students and/or discussions around **classroom or campus closure**. These results will be communicated with families, with the utmost efforts made to preserve privacy laws and respect for anyone who has fallen ill.

**Virtual learning (VCA@Home) or other forms of structured learning may be implemented on an as-needed basis for children who are required to stay home because they are sick or in isolation due to SARS-CoV-2 infection or exposure. Victory Christian Academy will identify and implement available options for students who have limited internet availability or other barriers to online learning.*

2. HAND HYGIENE

SARS-CoV-2 and other respiratory viruses are almost exclusively spread by respiratory droplet transmission. As a result, and because virus shedding may occur prior to symptom onset or in the absence of symptoms, routine, frequent and proper hand hygiene (soap and water or hand sanitizer) is critical to limit transmission. In fact, **proper hand hygiene is one of the most effective strategies to prevent the spread of most respiratory viruses** including SARS-CoV-2, particularly during the pre-symptomatic phase of illness.

- *Students should be taught* how to clean their hands properly (with age appropriate material) and to try and avoid touching their face, eyes, nose and mouth as much as possible. Students who have symptoms of a respiratory tract infection should stay home and students should be reminded to sneeze or cough into their elbow/sleeve. **Teachers will also be teaching and reinforcing proper hand hygiene at school.**
- *Age-appropriate signage* will be placed at Victory Christian Academy to remind students to perform hand hygiene. A regular schedule for routine hand hygiene, above and beyond what is usually recommended will be encouraged. For practical reasons and to avoid excess traffic in the hallways, the preferred strategy for some of these extra hand hygiene moments may be hand sanitizer using the classroom dispensers.
- *Access to hand hygiene facilities* (hand sanitizer dispensers and sinks/soap) is critical with consideration for ensuring accessibility for those with disabilities or other accommodation needs. Hand sanitizer (60-90% USP grade alcohol, not technical grade alcohol) will be available at the entry point for each classroom, along with sinks in classrooms and bathrooms for washing. No-touch waste receptacles will be available for disposal of materials. Disposable disinfectant wipes and other EPA approved, COVID-rated disinfectant cleaners will be readily available so that commonly used surfaces can be disinfected by individuals in-between uses.

3. CLOTH FACIAL COVERINGS

Non-medical masks may reduce transmission from individuals who are shedding the virus. The state of California has issued an order requiring that cloth facial coverings be worn by students and staff at school while indoors (classrooms, bathrooms) or while outdoors when maintaining 6 feet of social distancing is not possible (locker halls).

- **VCA students in TK-2nd grade** are *strongly encouraged* to wear cloth facial coverings if possible, or a face shield.
- **VCA Staff and any adult on campus indoors** will be required to wear a cloth facial covering or when less than 6 ft. apart.
- **If a student/staff member/adult on campus arrives without a proper face covering**, they may use a disposable face covering from the VCA office or be billed for a VCA logowear buff, or they will not be allowed to stay on campus. (Unless medical clearance has been given by their doctor in writing to VCA)

We recognize there are strong, differing opinions on the wearing of masks and their efficacy in preventing viral spread. While we sympathize with the different opinions and concerns around the matter, VCA will honor the mandates set forth by our local and state authorities, as we strive to acknowledge biblical direction to honor those God has placed in authority over us. We also recognize this is a way to communicate love and compassion to those around us, as wearing a mask is meant to protect others from us and our germs, not the other way around. We believe this is an important teaching opportunity and our students are watching us to be an example.

Notes on cloth facial coverings (from the CDC):

- A cloth face covering is a material that **covers the nose and mouth**. It can be secured to the head with ties or straps or simply wrapped around the lower face. It can be made of a variety of materials, such as cotton, silk, or linen.
- Cloth face coverings are not a substitute for physical distancing, washing hands, and staying home when ill, but they may be helpful when combined with these primary interventions.
- It's a good idea to wash your cloth face covering frequently, ideally after each use, or at least daily. Have a bag or bin to keep cloth face coverings in until they can be laundered with detergent and hot water and dried on a hot cycle. If you must re-wear your cloth face covering before washing, wash your hands immediately after putting it back on and avoid touching your face.
- **Important:** Discard cloth face coverings that: • No longer cover the nose and mouth • Have stretched out or damaged ties or straps • Cannot stay on the face • Have holes or tears in the fabric
- **VCA will not allow masks** which have venting mechanisms or valves, as these can allow droplets to escape the masks, thus rendering them unsafe for the purposes the CDC has directed.
- **If your student forgets a mask** or their masks breaks/is deemed unusable for school, we have a supply of disposable masks that we can give to your student. Once that supply is gone, we will provide a buff (described below) and bill your family account.
- **ABOVE ALL-** choose a facial covering that will require the least amount of adjustment by your child.

4. PHYSICAL DISTANCING

The objective of physical distancing is to reduce the likelihood of contact that may lead to transmission and has been a widely used strategy during the pandemic. We realize, as do county, state and ACSI entities, that perfect social distancing among children- particularly very young children- will not occur 100% of the time. However, VCA is committed to honoring this mandate indoors and outdoors to the best of our ability.

- **When students are in the classroom**, VCA will arrange the classroom furniture to leave as much space as possible between students. Classrooms and desks have been measured to ensure six feet of distance between students. VCA has also limited class sizes for the 2020-2021 school year to ensure that we can maintain proper social distancing.
- **Large gatherings/assemblies** will not take place for the immediate future. Choir practices/ performances and band practices/performance involving wind instruments are temporarily discontinued. The performing arts are a high priority to VCA and we will do everything we can to build them into our program once again.
- **Lunch breaks/recess** and times will be staggered, when necessary, to limit the possibility of mixing cohorts of students (classes, in our case, due to our smaller class size). When we are able to use different play areas, we will do so. When classes must use the same play structure at different times, cleanings will take place in-between uses, and each classroom (cohort) will have their own playground equipment (balls, jump ropes, etc.), where applicable.

Movement around campus

- **Elementary School Arrival:**
 - Families will pull up to the carline entrance and stop by the health check station while ***remaining in their car with windows open.***
 - Upon completion of their health screening(s) elementary families will pull forward to the elementary hallway and students may exit the car at this time. **We ask elementary students to wear facial coverings until they arrive at the classroom/playground (particularly in hallways).**
 - **If a young child needs a parent to walk them in** that parent must also complete a health check at home and have their temperature taken before they may enter campus. *Parents must wear facial coverings.*
- **Elementary Line-Up:** From recess, elementary students will line up at their marked locations, which are measured for social distancing. Students will be trained by VCA staff in standing 6 feet apart in line. A staff member will be out on the yard monitoring social distancing. Classes will be dismissed to walk to their class one line at a time.
- **General movement around campus:** Much training will take place in the early weeks of school reinforcing with students of all ages proper social distancing.
 - TK-2nd grades will enter school through the first hallway- watch for signage and arrows.
 - 3rd-6th grades will check in and enter through the second outdoor hallway- watch for signage and arrows.
- **Visiting the Office:** all visitors to the office- students and adults- will be asked to wear a face covering and use hand sanitizer from the receptacle upon entry to the office. ***No more than two people will be allowed at the front counter at a time.*** Others will be asked to wait outside on marked spots on the sidewalk. ***Teachers using the office*** will be asked to return at a later time if they observe two other teachers or visitors in the office.
- **Using restrooms:** Students will be directed to put on facial coverings when using the restroom. Upon entry if stalls are full, students will be asked to wait in line outside of the doors, which will remain open during the school day. Students will be asked not to use a sink directly next to someone else using a sink. If a sink is not available, students will be asked to wait on a marked spot in the restroom until a sink is available.
- **Elementary School Dismissal:** At the end of the school day, teachers will ask students to line up, socially distanced, to walk out to carline. Classes will move single-file, waiting for the class ahead of them to be 6 or more feet ahead of them before they walk forward. ***Students will be asked to put on facial coverings upon reaching the hallway and waiting in carline.*** Classes will exit to carline through the hallways by which they entered.

5. COHORTS

The purpose of cohorts is to limit the mixing of students and staff so that if a child or employee develops infection, the number of exposures would be reduced. Our classrooms have been measured and limited to a certain enrollment, which allows social distancing in the classroom, and students will stay in their separate rooms for all instructions until further guidance is given by our county and state. Current guidance on our limited school offerings require that a cohort consists of **no more than 16 students total, with no more than the same 2 adults regularly supervising the same cohort.**

6. ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANING

SARS-CoV-2 has been detected on a variety of surfaces, and it is possible that infection can be transmitted by touching contaminated surfaces and then touching mucous membranes (i.e. mouth, nose, eyes). As a matter of utmost importance, Victory Christian Academy will utilize the SRBC facility team to regularly clean the school rooms, and VCA staff will, in addition, more frequently disinfect classrooms to mitigate the possibility of transmission infection on school surfaces. Commonly used/touched surfaces in each classroom will be disinfected daily with an EPA approved cleaning agent. Outdoor surfaces such as picnic tables and play structure will be daily cleaned as well using COVID-rated, EPA approved products sprayed on those surfaces daily and in-between uses when needed (after eating, when another class uses the structure, etc.).

Maximum efforts will be made to reduce the need to touch objects/doors, and VCA staff will regularly reinforce “no sharing” of food, water bottles or cutlery policies. To the greatest extent possible, classroom materials and equipment will be made of materials that can be cleaned and disinfected. **Please send your child to school with their own personal water bottle**, as drinking fountains will not be available for use for the foreseeable future. Teachers will include items in recommended student supply lists which will allow each student to have items needed in class to minimize sharing.

7. VENTILATION

It is expected that environmental conditions and airflow influence the transmissibility of SARS-CoV-2. Adequately ventilated classroom environments (e.g. open windows with air flow) are associated with less likelihood of transmission compared with poorly ventilated settings. VCA is committed to increasing the proportion of outside air brought in through our ventilation system, where possible, and to utilizing open doors and windows to aid this. The placement of our classroom windows (high on wall under overhang) allows us to keep windows open even in wet weather. Our walkways and locker halls are outdoors with overhangs, which allow students in passing to do this in a well-ventilated area.

8. MITIGATION OF RISK FOR STUDENTS AT HIGHER RISK FOR SEVERE DISEASE

Students with underlying conditions may attend school as they would per usual. However, it is important for parents to work with their child’s health-care providers so that an informed decision can be made. This is particularly relevant for children with newly diagnosed illnesses requiring the first-time use of new or augmented immunosuppression. In the event that such children have a documented exposure to the virus, in addition to involvement of the local public health unit, it is recommended that the child’s parent/caregiver(s) contact the child’s health-care provider for further management. VCA will work together with these families to determine best options for their student(s).

9. TRIGGERS FOR REMOTE LEARNING

First and foremost, VCA will highly prioritize the health and well-being of our families and staff. We also believe that we are challenged biblically to honor the authorities that God has allowed to lead us. Where local and state officials give clear mandates regarding school opening, VCA will honor these mandates. Should questions or concerns arise regarding directives from the state or county, VCA will carefully discuss these concerns on the board level, weighing heavily advice from legal counsel, and the Association of Christian Schools International. VCA administration will work closely with Sonoma County Health Department on a case-by-case basis regarding the need to close campus for distance learning through VCA@Home.

- **A student/staff member may be required to switch to remote learning/teaching** if they have had direct contact (within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes) with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.
- **A student/staff member WILL be required to switch to remote learning/teaching** if they have been tested for COVID-19 and are awaiting results OR if they have tested positive for having COVID-19.
- **A CLASS of students may switch to remote learning** upon VCA contact tracing determination and/or advice from health department if a student in that class has been tested positive, depending upon the level of direct contact.
- **A SECTION OF VCA or the ENTIRE SCHOOL may switch to remote learning** upon advice from health department if a certain percentage (5%) of positive cases arise within the campus at large or if cohorts mix and a positive case is confirmed and direct contact has been clearly established.

10. COVID TESTING/CONTACT TRACING

- **Testing-** VCA will require that its staff undergo COVID-19 testing. 50% of VCA staff (*office staff and elementary staff*) will complete COVID-19 testing by October 16th. The remaining 50% (*secondary staff*) will complete testing no later than November 13, 2020. VCA will continue to monitor and follow county and state guidance regarding any future testing of staff or students.
- **Contact tracing** at VCA will be directed by Dr. Josh Hammer, a school board member who has been certified in contact tracing training. Mr. Hammer will work with VCA administration and office staff, as well as the county health department, to conduct interviews and determine the extent of exposure potentially in the VCA community.

11. COMMUNICATING ABOUT COVID-19 TO CHILDREN, YOUTH AND PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

VCA will be sharing important guidance regarding COVID-19 with our families at back-to-school virtual events, in newsletters and on our website at www.victoryca.org. VCA staff will be reviewing these guidelines at teacher meetings and will be teaching students all of these procedures and reinforcing them in creative and fun ways to make the process less stressful for our students. VCA will use multiple methods of communication with our families including emails, newsletters, our website, our Facebook page and FACTS SIS Parent Alert texts.

****We ask that you carefully check your family's emergency contact info and emails in FACTs to ensure that any Parent Alert texts, calls home or school emails reach the correct contact in a timely manner.****

SUMMARY

This document provides guidance surrounding the reopening Victory Christian Academy as it relates to the measures to mitigate risks. As discussed, the risks of infection and transmission in children need to be balanced with the harms of school closure which is impacting their spiritual, emotional, physical, and mental health. We want to reiterate however, that the health and safety of our families and staff are of utmost importance.

Finally, it is important to note that these recommendations reflect the evidence available at the present time and may evolve as new evidence emerges and as information is gathered from other jurisdictions that have opened schools already.

REFERENCES (partial):

- *Association of Christian Schools International*
- *American Academy of Pediatrics*
- *University of Toronto, Hospital for Sick Kids*
- *ChurchWest Insurance Services*
- *Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company*
- *Church & Tax Law*
- *National Association of Independent Schools*
- *Western Association of School and Colleges*
- *California State Department of Education*
- *California State Department of Public Health*
- *Center for Disease Control*