

Dear Mexicayotl Academy, Inc. Families,

The new situation created by the Covid 19 pandemic, has required all of us to address necessary safety measures and an instructional plan in new ways. After gathering input from key stakeholders of our learning community and to consider key public health data from local governmental health agencies, our school's COVID Response Team successfully created a plan for reopening our school campus. Our Reopening Mitigation Plan has been designed in accordance with the recommendations for public health and safety from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Santa Cruz County Health Department, Pima County Health Department and the Arizona Department of Health. This document provides direction to our school personnel and informs our community of the steps we will take to provide a safe and secure learning environment for all those who will work, learn, and visit our school site. All of this is done willfully complying with all local, state, and federal requirements and guidelines provided by our elected officials and public health experts.

We appreciate all of the patience and support of all the members of our learning community. Our collective effort and plan are designed to prioritize the health and educational needs of our students while doing our collective part to help prevent the spread of COVID 19 on our campus and in the larger community. Please be aware that our plan is designed with the most up to date information available and that we reserve the right to make modifications as needed due to the ever arising needs of this unprecedented time.

Sincerely,

Ms. Veronika Garcia  
Principal,  
Mexicayotl Charter School  
Nogales, Arizona

Ms. Lynn Valenzuela  
Principal  
Mexicayotl Academy  
Tucson, Arizona

## **Guiding Principles**

Our Reopening Mitigation Plan is developed as a guidance for students, staff and families returning to school for the 2020-2021 school year. The information provided in this plan is based on guidance from local and state public health agencies. Mexicayotl Academy Inc. is committed to maximize the educational opportunities while keeping the safety and well being of our learning communities at the forefront.

## **Guiding Principles for Reopening our Mexicayotl Academy, Inc. Campuses:**

- Equitable outcomes for all students, staff, and faculty regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or their need to refrain from in-person activities due to concerns about COVID-19.
- Returning safely to in-person instruction decisions based on state and local public health guidance and school-specific information.
- Integration of emerging scientific based evidence in decision making.
- Ability to ensure appropriate isolation of symptomatic students/staff and protocols in place for transportation to location for quarantine or isolation.
- Protection of individuals in community, and their family members, who are vulnerable to severe COVID-19 disease, or to harassment or discrimination.
- Consideration of harmful effects due to school closure (e.g. social-emotional effects of quarantine/isolation; widening disparity in educational attainment; reduced access to meals; increase in substance misuse, domestic violence, anxiety/depression).

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## **Protective Measures for Staff & Students**

### **Enhanced Cleaning, & Safety Protocols**

Personal hygiene practices are extremely important and in an attempt to reduce the spread of the virus we have implemented various cleaning and safety measures.

- Prior to reopening, inspect water systems to ensure that they are safe for use after the prolonged shutdown.
- Arrange for daily cleaning and disinfecting of all frequently touched surfaces in work areas, such as door handles, sink handles, drinking fountains, desks, and learning tools.
- Playground, sports equipment, and any other shared items (if they are being used) must be cleaned between uses by groups of students.
- Staff are expected to clean and disinfect workspaces when they arrive at work and just before leaving work.
- Assign schedules to janitorial staff for increased cleaning of surfaces and bathrooms throughout the day.
- Plexiglas barriers have been installed in all high traffic areas.

- We have researched, found, and purchased 3 of the best disinfectants to combat the COVID-19 strain and have them available on the campus.
- All hand sanitizers will be vetted and purchased through approved vendors.
- All classrooms and site locations have adequate cleaning supplies.
- A schedule for types of cleaning to be done by custodial staff (e.g. number of times cleaning is done; disinfecting the classrooms/other locations after staff has left the building).
- Posters on mitigation strategies are posted in multiple areas, Spanish posters also provided.
- Schedules for restroom cleaning and disinfecting are posted throughout the sites.
- Hand washing with soap and water or hand sanitizer
  - Upon arrival in school
  - Before and after lunch
  - Prior to leaving school for home
  - After sneezing, coughing or blowing nose
- Scheduled distribution of PPE products to ensure an adequate supply for all sites

### **Daily Health Screening**

Conducting regular screening and ongoing self-monitoring throughout each school day can help reduce exposure. Mexicayotl Academy, Inc. has purchased digital thermometers that are housed in our administration office building in Nogales and Tucson to identify those who may be running a temperature.

- Daily screening of staff and student temperatures
- If students have a temperature of 100 degrees or more, isolate the child, ensure a mask is on and call the parent for pick up.
- Designate isolation room(s) for sick children waiting to be picked up.
- Designate the pick-up location(s) for parents picking up sick students, so they do not enter building--designate location for student check-out.
- Students may return to school once they are fever-free without medication for 72 hours.
- If a staff member has a temperature of 100 degrees or more, send the employee home--ensure the staff member is wearing a mask while at the site.

### **Campus Entry/Exit Protocols**

- Designate entry/exit points for temperature checks.
- Electronic check in and check out for parents checking students in or out during the school day or use a kiosk at the entrance of the site for checking out electronically--monitored so items are wiped down after each use.
- Require parents to drop off/pick up students without getting out of the car, unless express permission from a site administrator is provided for good cause.
- If a parent has permission to get out of the car during drop-off/pick-up, have the student arrive at/leave school before or after assigned times for the majority of students.
- Place markers ensuring social distancing in the lunch line and other places where students are lined up.

### **Classrooms, Playground, Common Areas**

Staff will review proper hand-washing techniques with students and encourage regular hand washing throughout the day as well as review and remind students of safety protocols.

- Ensure areas are properly marked to encourage social distancing.
- Provide adult monitoring to ensure students are following safety protocols.
- If playground equipment is used, allow no more than one class at a time on playground equipment. Assign classes a specific time slot, with time slots to be scheduled such that there is sufficient time between classroom use that playground equipment can be disinfected before the next group uses it.
- Post reminders about wearing masks.
- Students will be socially distanced.
- Students will be required to have backpacks for their belongings.
- Clearly designate student work and seating areas.
- Limit transitions.

### **Use of Masks**

Facemasks are most essential when physical distancing is difficult and are meant to protect other people and ourselves as we may unknowingly be infected. Facemasks should cover both the nose and mouth when worn. Reminders of these recommendations have been posted throughout all of our buildings.

- All students and staff will be required to wear masks when interacting with others and when moving or in communal spaces.
- Students and staff must bring their own masks.
- The schools will encourage anyone in a vulnerable population, who is a student (or parents on behalf of students) or school staff member, or who may not be able to purchase a mask to contact our school office for a mask placement order. The schools will contact and place an order with the Arizona School Facilities Board to ensure every student and staff member has access to face masks.
- Schools will provide a mask only when absolutely necessary.

### **Hand Washing**

Adequate supplies will be provided to support healthy hand hygiene throughout the day. Staff will review proper hand washing techniques that include washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Everyone is encouraged to sneeze and cough in their elbow or to cover with a tissue. Students will be encouraged to wash their hands:

- Washing or hand sanitizer upon arrival at school
- After being outside for student physical activity
- Before and after lunch
- Prior to leaving school for home
- After sneezing, coughing or blowing nose
- Multiple times during the day
- Portable handwashing have been made and bought for the campus

### **Transitions**

- Student movement and transitions will be minimized as much as possible
- Where possible, mark outdoor hallways as one way

- Where possible, students will be scheduled in cohort groups to minimize interactions
- Designated restrooms will be opened during transitions and these will need to be monitored

### **Restrooms & Drinking Fountains**

Proper hand-washing is encouraged and adequate supplies will be provided to support healthy hygiene behaviors.

- Cleaning routines are posted
- Limit the number entering bathrooms at any one time
- Wear mask when flushing the toilet after use
- Post hand-washing reminders in bathrooms
- All traditional drinking fountains (indoor & outdoor) have been shut off
- Students and staff must bring their own water from home

### **Protocols for Adults on Campus**

- Each employee will need to take his/her temperature at home prior to arriving at work.
- Once the employee arrives at work, there will be a designated staff member who will do a temperature check.
- Employees will be required to wash their hands upon arrival at school, after being outside, before/after lunch, after sneezing, coughing, or blowing their nose; and after physical contact with other staff or students.
- Employees will be required to wear face masks during interaction with students or other staff. Teachers will be provided with face shields.
- Plexiglass dividers will be installed in offices where social distancing is difficult.

### **Campus Visitors**

- Nonessential visitors and volunteers will not be allowed on campus.
- Parent volunteers will not be allowed in the classroom during this time.
- Parents will report to the front office if they need to be on campus for any reason.

## **Food Service**

NUSD #1 Food Services will cater high-quality nutritious meals for Mexicayotl Charter School in Nogales and TUSD for Mexicayotl Academy in Tucson to provide students using a redesigned service model that supports appropriate physical distancing and the safety of staff and students. Federal meal program compliance will be maintained along with all USDA and ADE regulations and guidance. Additionally, our service models will reflect the most current guidance provided by the local Santa Cruz and Pima County Health Department recommendations and requirements for food service establishments.

- The Food Services model will fully support the needs of both the students physically on site and the online learner by making meals convenient and readily available while adhering to CDC, USDA, ADE, and Santa Cruz and Pima County Health Department guidelines and recommendations for schools.

## **Mexicayotl Academy, Inc. has selected the following options for meal service:**

Meals available for pickup at all school sites using a drive-thru model in conjunction with a mobile route providing service at designated locations for online students.

Modified cafeteria service which promotes line speed and maintains appropriate physical distancing during meal distribution and consumption

- Grab and Go Meals available to be picked up in the cafeteria and taken back to the classroom as needed.
- Additional mobilized points of service to be made available as needed to expedite speed of service during meal times and assist in the maintenance of proper social distancing.
- In order to effectively accomplish effective and safe meal distribution in all venues, Food Services will initiate the following action steps:
  - Adhere to the most current safety protocols, guidelines, and requirements as provided by the CDC, ADE, and Santa Cruz and Pima County Health Department.
  - Face coverings and gloves will be worn during meal service.
  - Face coverings will be worn during interactions with students, staff, and parents and when working in the kitchen and not able to maintain 6 feet of social distancing.
  - Execute meal service in the safest, most efficient manner possible.

## **Transportation Option:**

- Routing practices will remain the same with deadlines according to current schedules except for route capacities to meet no more than two passengers per seat.



- Plan and execute guidelines and recommendations regarding COVID-19, particularly as it pertains to loading and unloading of students, social distancing recommendations, disinfecting of high touch areas and recommended face coverings.
- Would require express routes with limited stops for regular education students.

### **High Risk Employees & Students**

- Additional students who do not currently qualify under 15806: Chronic Illness/Homebound, may now qualify in light of COVID.
- A Chronic Illness form must be signed by a doctor, who has determined that the threat of COVID-19 increases the health risk for the student.
- Students who qualify under Chronic Illness are entitled to at least 5 hours per week of instruction (fully funded).
- Staff with underlying medical conditions, diagnosed, particularly if not well controlled will have the option to work from home.

### **Air Quality**

Ventilation and filtration provided by heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems can reduce the airborne concentration of COVID-19 and thus reduce the risk of transmission through the air.

- Mexicayotl Academy, Inc. follows ASHRAE's (American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers) new guidance for operating during COVID-19.
- Run the HVAC system at maximum outside airflow for 2 hours before and after occupied times, in accordance with industry standards.
- Diluting the air in the space with clean and filtered outdoor air. Increased outdoor air ventilation; with a lower population in the building, this increases the effective dilution ventilation per person.
- Increase the rate of exchange with fresh air from outside the building to reduce recirculation. Adjusting the settings may also help. Instead of shutting down overnight or on weekends, for instance, the HVAC system could run without interruption to increase the replacement of air and minimize airflow speeds by lowering the unoccupied setpoints.
- Consistent Preventative Maintenance on all HVAC units improves air filtration with installation of high MERV filters, belt replacements, cleaned coils where required and assured outdoor fresh air dampers and actuators are operating properly.

### **Possible COVID-19 Exposure Guidelines for Employees**

- If an employee has been diagnosed, evaluated for, or exposed to, they will immediately contact their Principal or Superintendent and stay home.
- The Principal or Superintendent will contact the employee, for the employee to provide the details of their situation and describe the symptoms (if any) they may be experiencing, and will provide the employee with direction on next steps.

### **Possible COVID-19 Exposure Guidelines for Principals/Department Leaders**

Principals/Supervisors should take the following steps upon learning that an employee, volunteer, contractor, or other onsite individual may have been diagnosed, exposed to, or has symptoms of COVID-19. (Fever/chills, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, vomiting or nausea, diarrhea – CDC identified symptoms of COVID-19)

- Send the individual home immediately.
- The Principal will gather the details of the employee's situation so far, including how they learned about the situation and what symptoms (if any) the employee is experiencing. Also discuss if the employee can work from home.
- The Principal will request the employee to provide the information via email once the telephone call has been made.
- The Principal will not disclose information to other employees, volunteers, contractors or onsite individuals until pertinent to do so to safeguard other employees' health.
- The employee will wait for notification from the Principal on whether the employee's site will need to be disinfected. The notification will come in an email.

### **Contact Tracing**

After gathering all of the information above, the Principal or Superintendent will provide notice of potential COVID-19 exposure to all individuals identified to have close contact\* with the individual who has tested positive for COVID-19.

- The notification should not disclose the name of the employee, volunteer, contractor or onsite individuals causing the notification to be made unless the individual has given permission to disclose.
- The interest in giving important details to protect others versus the interest of keeping the individual's identity confidential will be considered.

- Additional Considerations:
  - Without disclosing the name of the employee (unless the employee has given permission), the location of the exposure may be disclosed.
  - Individuals who are notified about possible exposure will be asked to self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19, follow the Santa Cruz and Pima County Health Department guidance for the general public and will be assigned to their home. Also, they will be asked to inform their Principal or the Superintendent if they begin to develop symptoms.
  - Based on the facts, the decision may be made to lock down parts of a building or the entire building temporarily so that the area(s) may be deeply cleaned and disinfected.
  - \*Close contact is defined by the CDC as, “being within 6 feet of the person for 15 minutes or more”.

### **Universal Mitigation Steps**

Source: Arizona Health Department

- Hand washing/sanitizing conducted throughout the day
- No sharing of items
- Cleaning of high-touch surfaces throughout the day
- Enhanced nightly cleaning protocols

Mexicayotl Academy Inc, has submitted a plan to the Arizona Charter Board that its hybrid model will be available after December 2020. The Return to School decision, whether brick and mortar or hybrid model, will be based on the meeting of the 3 measures in the Santa Cruz and Pima County Health Department Benchmarks after December 2020.

### **Isolation Guidance + COVID19 Isolation Decision Matrix**

**Source: Pima County Health Department**

- Students/staff with symptoms who TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID-19 will not be allowed back on campus for 10 days after their last positive test and 24 hours of fever free without medication, and improving symptoms (20 days if immunocompromised)
- Close Contact to a Case with symptoms should receive a COVID-19 test; 14 days of quarantine is recommended, combined with 24 hours of fever free without medication, and improving symptoms.
- Close Contact to a case without symptoms will quarantine for 14 days with the last 24 hours fever free without medication, and improving symptoms.

## **Online Learning Options**

- The start of the 2020-21 academic year began on August 5, 2020 completely through our Online Learning (at home) synchronous model with expectations for independent learning experiences.
- Online learning will take place five days per week
- Students will be expected to be logged in to their device everyday and interact live with their teacher(s) at certain times as a regular class time 5 days per week.
- Expectations for student attendance and engagement will be in place and feedback/grades will be provided to assess student progress
- Students will virtually attend class sessions with their teachers in addition to learning tasks off-line
- Online Learning allows for students to be connected to their teachers, peers, and curriculum remotely as per the Governor's Executive Order
- Mexicayotl Academy, Inc. teachers will facilitate online learning utilizing Mexicayotl Academy, Inc.'s curriculum which will provide the same rigorous curriculum that would have been offered in person
- Chromebooks will be available for students without a proper technology device for participating in remote learning
- Each campus will communicate the procedure for picking up devices with families
- Accommodations and supports based on student needs will be provided (IEPs, 504s, ELLs, etc.)
- Manipulatives and additional supplies needed for remote learning may be provided
- Social and emotional learning and the needs and concerns of students and families will be prioritized

## **Parent Support for Online Learning**

We have developed a comprehensive parent support system that includes parent phone call check-ins 2 times per week and the access to phone calls and/or text messages through google voice, Class Dojo and Remind. All the resources parents will need to help their students navigate the remote learning environment, are also accessible through emails, Class Dojo and Remind text messages.

### **Online Learning Schedule**

Students will log into their classrooms Monday - Friday in the morning and again in the afternoon after a technology break, where they will interact live with their teachers and classmates and access online resources and receive assignments. Attendance will be taken during the login times.

The Online Learning Schedule is as follows:

### **School Schedule**

Starting August 17th the schedule will increase a half hour every one to two weeks:

|                              |                              |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| August 5th - 7th             | 9:00 - 11:15                 |
| August 10th - 14th           | 9:00 - 11:45                 |
| August 17th - 21st           | 8:30 - 11:45                 |
| August 24th - 28th           | 8:30 - 11:45 and 1:30 - 2:00 |
| August 31st - September 11th | 8:30 - 12:15 and 1:30 - 2:00 |
| September 14th - 18th        | 8:00 - 12:15 and 1:30 - 2:00 |
| September 21st - May 21st    | 8:00 - 12:15 and 1:30 - 2:30 |

When deemed safe to return to campus, students will be offered a hybrid model of instruction. During this model, students will continue to attend real-time, virtual core instruction on campus twice per week from 8:00 - 12:15 p.m. on an A/B schedule. Students will return home and log in to their afternoon classes from 1:30 - 2:30 Monday - Thursday. Students and families who opt out of the hybrid model will continue to engage academically via the distance learning option.

### **Social Emotional Learning (SEL)**

Our Parent Liaison, Teachers and instructional assistants will be in close contact with students and their family via telephone calls and messages to identify and discuss their current situation with regard to resources and educational challenges. Staff will speak with the student to elicit intrinsic motivation for overcoming academic challenges and barriers that they may be facing. Students who are identified as benefiting from a higher level of support will be referred to the school psychologist or an independently contracted licensed counselor for additional support with parent/ guardian permission. Twice per month, virtual parent training and support groups will be held virtually to bolster the school-home partnership that has proven to promote student success.

Our LEA is committed to the following strategies for this critical area:

- Provide professional development on SEL to all school administrators and school leadership teams.

- Intentionally emphasize specific connections between academics and social emotional learning.
- Review SEL with the school's contracted counselor and develop plans for individual students or small groups.
- Implement the school counseling program via remote direct interaction, webcasts, and also via email and phone.