



ARIZONA STATE SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND BLIND

COVID-19 MITIGATION PLAN

**OPENING AND OPERATING SCHOOLS DURING
COVID-19**

2021-2022

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INTRODUCTION

Mitigation and prevention is the first phase of emergency management. Prevention is the attempt to deflect a crisis before it can occur. Although the agency has no control over some hazards that may impact them by mitigating or reducing risks, such as COVID-19, the agency can take actions to minimize or mitigate the impact of such incidents or emergencies.

The mitigation plan for the Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind focuses on actions the agency will take to eliminate or reduce the loss of life, injuries, and property damage from an emergency event. Protections are provided as ongoing actions the agency will take to safeguard the schools, regional cooperatives and offices from an emergency event. The goal is to restore educational programming; the physical environment; business operations; and promote academic success supporting social and emotional learning.

DEFINITIONS

Mitigation: “Any sustained action taken to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to life and property from a hazard event.” (FEMA definition from Practical Information on Crisis Planning – A Guide for Schools and Communities – United States Department of Education – May 2003.)

Prevention: methods that are designed to prevent crime, violence, disruption, accidents and crisis situations, and used by school officials to reduce injury, death and damage to property at schools, school events and during school related transportation.

GENERAL INFORMATION

WHAT IS NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)?

COVID-19 is caused by a new coronavirus. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common in people and many different species of animals.

- As a new (novel) coronavirus, COVID-19 is very contagious for a few reasons:
 - It can be transmitted before a person has any symptoms.
 - COVID-19 is transmitted by droplets from an infected person’s cough, sneeze or basically anything that comes from the infected person’s mouth or bodily fluid. These droplets travel through the air to other people and to surfaces where the virus can remain alive.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF COVID -19

Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea

MULTISYSTEM INFLAMMATORY SYNDROME IN CHILDREN (MIS-C)

(Associated with COVID-19)

Although children apparently become ill less often with COVID-19 than adults, they may become ill with a rare condition: Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome. Children with this syndrome need immediate medical attention. Symptoms include:

- Fever
- Rashes, especially on the abdomen
- Itchy eyes
- Abdominal pain and/or diarrhea
- Skin discoloration, pale blue; may particularly affect the toes.

GOAL OF MITIGATION PLAN

The goal of planning for and managing infection during a pandemic is twofold:

1. Prevent the spread of infection
2. Keep students and staff safe

As schools reopen for the 2021-2022 school year, it is important to address all mitigation methods to decrease the possibility of infection and keep the students and staff safe from infection such as:

- Cleaning and Disinfecting
- School Rules and Practice to decrease the spread of infection
 - Preschool
 - Elementary School
 - Middle and High Schools
- Plans for School Operations should there be a case of COVID-19

PREVENTION PROTOCOLS

SOCIAL DISTANCING

All schools and offices will maintain as much social distancing as possible throughout the school/work day. This will require a review of classroom set-up, recess, passing periods and meals. Staff and Students will be expected to adhere to these requirements.

Front offices will have a plexi-glass barrier installed at their desks for further staff protection. Hand sanitizer will be placed for easy access by the public in order to sanitize their hands. Each public area should also be marked for proper social distancing as parents and students wait for assistance at the counter. Some parents/students may be required to line up outside the office in order to maintain social distancing in the office. These outdoor areas will also be marked for proper social distancing.

Because COVID-19 can become airborne by coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose; and possibly even through heavy breathing while under physical stress, it is required wherever possible that site employees practice distancing behaviors to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Employees shall practice safe distancing behaviors such as:

1. Maintain a minimum of 6 feet distance between site personnel.
 - a. Maintain a minimum distance of 3 feet between students.
2. “Stay to the right” in the hallways.
3. Space student desks and workstations to maintain 3 feet of distance.
4. Minimize in-person interaction with parents and outside the community.

5. Stagger arrival times when multiple crews or contractors exist on one project.
6. Meetings over 10 people will need to be approved by the facilities use coordinator.
7. Do not allow meetings/training of any size unless employees are able to maintain 6 feet of separation from all other employees while in attendance.

SIGNAGE

On the first day of school, students will be instructed to maintain social distancing and to not congregate in groups. Signs will be posted in each classroom and around the school reminding students about social distancing.

FACE COVERINGS

“Face Covering” refers to a well-fitting reusable or disposable face covering that fully covers a person’s nose and mouth. CDC does not recommend the use of face shields as a substitute for cloth face coverings, but can be worn in addition to a face covering.

Use of simple cloth face coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected but does not have symptoms.

Staff and students will be encouraged to wear face coverings at all times. We strongly encourage those staff and students that are not vaccinated to continue to wear a face covering. We also encourage those staff and students who feel comfortable wearing face covering, even if vaccinated, to continue to do so. Each individual is responsible for providing their own face covering. Staff and students with additional disabilities and/or physical/health limitations will be reviewed on a case by case basis. Students will be required to have their face covered during daily health checks.

CONSIDERATIONS

- **Cloth Face Coverings**
 - Ideally, cloth face coverings should be washed when they become wet or visibly soiled and at least daily. Have a bag or bin available to keep your cloth face coverings in until you can wash them. Launder the face coverings with detergent and hot water and dry 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.
 - 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.
- **Humanity Shields**
 - The humanity shield is not considered PPE but is an approved “Face Covering” per ADOA Risk Management.
 - The humanity shield is intended to assist in preserving communication for ASDB’s student population as an ADA accommodation.
 - Staff are responsible for providing their own humanity shields if they desire one.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

(Nursing and Janitorial)

This project utilizes personal protective equipment (PPE) specific to COVID-19. ASDB will utilize preferred mitigation and exposure control practices to reduce the risk of exposure prior to issuing PPE. The exposure control practices are Administrative and Engineering Controls. If critical PPE is not available to employees, the jobsite shall be shut down, or distancing shall be practiced, until the necessary PPE becomes available. PPE that will be utilized on this project to help prevent the spread of COVID-19:

1. Gloves:
 - a. Vinyl reusable gloves
 - b. Nitrile type gloves
 - c. Latex gloves
2. Face and Eye protection:
 - a. ANSI approved Safety Glasses or Goggles
 - b. Full Face Shields
3. Respiratory Protection:
 - a. Face coverings for staff who are able to socially distance themselves
 - b. Surgical masks with the appropriate FDA clearance
 - c. N95 mask
4. Work clothing:
 - a. Reusable gowns for Nursing staff
 - b. Disposable gowns for Nursing staff

HEALTH AND CLEANLINESS

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

Before school begins, all school classrooms will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. This includes, but not limited to cupboards, flat surfaces, desks, and chairs. All disinfecting products used will kill most, if not all bacteria, fungi, and viruses.

Cleaning will be performed frequently throughout the day by wiping down hard surfaces with soap and water or a sanitizer. This will clean dirt and many bacteria that are on the surface. Cleaning or sanitizing of door handles and push bars will also be performed throughout the day. At a minimum cleaning will occur during the lunch period and end of the school day.

Disinfecting needs to be done less often, but will be performed at least once at the end of each day. This includes wiping down hard surfaces with a disinfectant provided by the school operations.

All cleaning supplies used at individual campuses will be reviewed to assure they have adequate cleaning and disinfecting power. The goal is to effectively remove most or all microbes during cleaning/disinfecting.

ON A DAILY BASIS CLASSROOMS WILL BE CLEANED AND DISINFECTED, INCLUDING:

- Desk chairs
- Desk tops
- Cupboard handles
- Door handles
- Vacuuming or Wet mopping will be completed as needed.
- Frequently touched surfaces

ADDITIONAL MEASURES FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

- Preschool, kindergarten, MDSSI, and all rooms used for medically fragile students will have additional cleaning as needed.

- No stuffed animals or any other soft or porous items in the classroom, unless previously approved with Health Services and/or the site principal will be used at any school since they cannot be disinfected. Toys must be disinfected between student use. Best practice is for only one student to use a toy during a school day and for that toy to be disinfected at the end of the school day.
- Preschool students who use blankets for naptime will use their one blanket throughout the week, with the students' blankets stored separately in their cubbies. Blankets may not be shared amongst students. At the end of each week the blankets will be sent home for laundering.

DISINFECTING AFTER COVID-19 IN SCHOOL

If there is a COVID-19 diagnosis of a student or staff member, the classrooms affected will be closed for disinfecting.

- The room(s) affected will be kept closed for as long as possible, but 24 hours would be optimal before disinfecting to prevent any droplets from infecting the cleaners.
- All areas will be cleaned and disinfected.
- Other areas or the school will also be assessed for the need to clean and disinfect more frequently.

INFECTION CONTROL

Each classroom and office will have the following items to maintain a clean and safe area: ASDB will maintain a sufficient supply of each item so schools can order items and they can be readily replenished.

- EPA approved spray disinfectant
- Paper towels

HANDWASHING

- All schools will require staff and students to wash their hands with soap and water or to disinfect their hands with hand sanitizer before and after food, after recesses and restroom visits.
 - Staff/students will wipe down all instructional areas (e.g., tables, desks, etc.)

- Students will wash their hands/use hand sanitizer.

Hand sanitizer will be available at the entrance of each building. Placement will depend on the specific set-up of each building so the sanitizer is readily available for all students. If students' hands are visibly dirty, they will be asked to wash their hands with soap and water.

Office staff will be required to sanitize or wash their hands when they arrive at their work station. This includes leaving their work area for a few minutes and returning to the work area.

Staff and students will be required to wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds after using the bathroom and before eating any food.

VENTILATION

- HVAC filters are changed per HVAC manufacturer's recommendation and CDC guidelines.
- HVAC outside air dampers have been adjusted to meet CDC guidelines for outside air exchanges.
- ASDB will utilize HEPA filtration in the Student Health Centers.

COVID-19 HEALTH SCREENINGS AND STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

All students will have a daily temperature check prior to boarding the school bus in the morning. Students with a temperature with a 100.4 degree F. or above will not be allowed to board the school bus. The parents/guardian will be required to take the student back home.

For students that are dropped off by parents, they will be temperature checked before leaving their vehicle and entering a campus building. Students with a temperature with a 100.4 degree F. or above will not be allowed on campus and must be returned back home.

STUDENTS WHO SELF TRANSPORT TO SCHOOL

Students who walk, drive, or ride the city bus or the light rail will require a student health check prior to entering the campus.

- If the student has a fever of 100.4 degrees F. or more, they will not be permitted to stay on campus.
- If the student does not have a face covering, they will not be permitted to stay on campus.

LATE ARRIVALS - AFTER 8:15 a.m.

Students arriving late by parent drop off or self-transport will require a student health check prior to entering the campus. This procedure also applies to students returning to school after appointments. Late drop offs/arrivals will require additional wait time and patience. Please stay in your vehicle and call the front office for further instruction.

STUDENT PICK UP MID-DAY/END OF DAY

Students being picked up by their parents mid-day will require advance notice to the front office and will be required to provide identification at time of pick-up. End of day pick-up will require advance notice to the front office and parents are required to stay in their vehicle.

- The return to campus will require a student health check.

BUS DEPARTURE

- Teachers will escort their class to the bus loading zone.
- Teachers and students will line up starting at the bus loading zone gates.
- Teachers will lead their class to the front of the loading zone and release their students to board the bus (one class at a time). The line will continue until all students have boarded the bus.

STUDENT ABSENCES AND ATTENDANCE

- Call the Student Health Center by 8:30 a.m. on the day of our child's absence. Provide detailed information regarding the absence.
- Do not send a child to school sick. Excessive absences will be reviewed case by case basis.

- The campus principal shall keep an attendance roster for all students to track illness.

RETURNING TO SCHOOL AND WORK

- ASDB Staff and Students will work directly with local health authorities and human resources to determine safe reentry to work or school regarding COVID-19 illness or known exposure to a positive case.
- **Previously Infected Persons (that are not fully vaccinated)**

Staff:

Staff are encouraged to complete a daily health self check before leaving their homes for work. If a staff member has a fever of 100.4 degrees or any additional COVID-19 symptoms, the staff member shall stay home and follow Human Resource guidelines.

Self-check temperature stations are set up in several locations on campus for staff who wish to check their temperature while at work. If the staff member has a fever of 100.4 degrees and/or other COVID-19 symptoms, the staff member shall follow the “Screening Results” guidelines in this mitigation manual.

If a staff member begins to experience COVID-19 like symptoms while at work, the employee shall contact their supervisor and determine next steps. During this time, the individual will be asked to communicate the results of a COVID-19 test, if administered.

Students:

When a student has been required to stay home from school:

- following a positive test for COVID-19;
- after showing symptoms of COVID-19; or
- after recent close contact (closer than six feet distance for 15 minutes or more) with a person with a confirmed positive COVID-19, the School will follow recommendations of the local health authorities related to re-entry on the School campus. If a student begins to experience COVID-19 like symptoms while at school, the individual should be sent to the Student Health Center (SHC) immediately. The SHC will evaluate the symptoms and communicate with the parent and principal. The student may be sent home to seek medical care from their provider. The student may have to self-quarantine. During this time, the parents will be asked to communicate results of a COVID-19 test if administered. Please note that a separate “sick room” has been established on

the ASDB and PDSB campus in order to separate students displaying COVID-19 symptoms with those that need regular services from the SHC. This room will not be used for any other purposes.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

CLASSROOM SET-UP

Classrooms will be set up to best maintain social distancing. Guidelines are, whenever possible, desks should be at least 3 feet apart or as far apart as possible within the space available. How this is accomplished will be decided by individual classroom teachers in conjunction with the site principal.

MEALS

Breakfast and lunch will be served in a socially distanced manner to include the following:

- Meals served in a socially distanced food service building that maintains at least 3 feet of distance between students.
- Meals may also be served in the classrooms per campus plan.
- Meals served in buildings other than the food service building will have additional trash receptacles for waste disposal.
- Students will be required to wash their hands prior and after eating
- Assigned individuals will distribute food per the individual campus plan.

PLAYGROUNDS AND RECESS

- Students in grades K-5 and Life Skills will be scheduled a 20 minute recess time daily.
- Only one class will be assigned for each area at a time.
- Teachers will be required to stand/sit near the play area and actively supervise the class.
- Teachers are responsible to ensure that social distancing guidelines are being maintained with each other and that the students make an effort to stay 3 feet away from their classmates while playing.
- If recess items are used (i.e., balls) each item needs to be assigned to one student for that time period. Students will not be permitted to share play items. The item will be cleaned after use and put back in the bag for the next group to play with.

SPECIAL AREAS

ART

- All projects and their execution need to consider Infection Control as part of the lesson planning process.

MUSIC

- There will be no use of any wind instruments.
- All items used in the class will be disinfected before use by another student.

COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY

- Students will be assigned their own device for classroom work and for learned technology. Minimally, the computer keyboard and mouse will be sanitized at the end of the school day.

SCIENCE

- Glassware and equipment will be sanitized between classes.
- Goggles will not be shared by students in class. At the end of class goggles will be disinfected.
- Hands will be washed or sanitized before and after using shared equipment.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Gym/Physical Education (P.E)/Athletics

- Physical Education classes need to have the maximum space that can be provided for these classes.
- Lessons should be adjusted depending on the amount of space available in order to provide for maximum social distancing.
- Students should NOT wear masks while exercising since this could compromise their breathing and oxygenation.
- Contact sports will follow AIA's guidelines regarding COVID Mitigation.

- All Athletics will follow the Arizona Interscholastic Associations's (AIA's) "Recommended Guidelines for Returning to Athletic Activity."

WEIGHT ROOM

- While in the weight room, students will practice social distancing and remain 3 feet apart.
- Students will wipe down equipment after each use.
- The weight room will be cleaned, mopped and equipment disinfected daily after closure.
- Hand sanitizer and disinfectant will be dispersed throughout the room.

STAFF RELATED PROCEDURES FOR SICK LEAVE AND ATTENDANCE

SICK EMPLOYEE POLICY

During the threat of COVID-19, all employees shall follow the sick employee policy. The sick employee policy requires the following:

- Employees self-identify symptoms before and during each shift, looking for signs of cough, fever, shortness of breath, fatigue, body aches, vomiting and diarrhea, symptoms consistent with the CDC and DOH guidelines.
- Any employee who believes they are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, has been exposed to COVID-19, or exposed to an individual who tested positive for COVID-19 shall remain home and notify their supervisor. They shall NOT report to the jobsite.
- If an employee reports experiencing COVID-19 symptoms while on the jobsite or is notified that they were exposed to a person who tested positive, they shall report their illness to their supervisor who will notify Human Resources for the next steps per ADOA guidelines. Any employees working in close proximity shall also be notified and work with Human Resources on next steps which may include being sent home. Either Human Resources or the Operations Department will initiate the disinfection process. Depending on the extent of the exposure, a third party cleaning company may be used.
- The sick employee shall be notified of the return to work policy in coordination with Human Resources.
- Human Resources will maintain a confidential potential exposure list of employee tracking reports.

EMPLOYEE ATTENDANCE

- The employee will coordinate with Human Resources regarding a return to work after a positive COVID-19 case.
- At minimum, the employee shall wait 24 hours after all signs and symptoms have cleared before returning to work, without the use of medication to reduce symptoms.
- If an employee seeks medical evaluation for their illness, they may need to provide a doctor note which allows them to return to work.

ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES

STUDENT HEALTH CENTER OPERATIONS

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Student Health Center must establish some parameters in order to properly separate sick children from healthy children. SHC operations include:

- Teachers will be given a packet of bandages and small gauze pads in order to wash small cuts or scrapes and put on a band aide instead of sending students to the SHC.
- Students who need to be examined following an altercation, will wait in the disciplinary area until SHC staff are free to do the examination, unless emergent.
- Staff will notify SHC prior to sending a student to the SHC to prevent overcrowding and to allow for disinfection between students.
- Due to health concerns. The SHC bathroom may be used only by:
 - Students in the SHC,
 - Students who have had a toileting accident
 - Any student who has special permission to use this bathroom on an ongoing basis.
 - Visitors and students waiting for transport after school must use another public restroom.
- The SHC door will remain closed throughout the day.
- Children with diabetes, asthma, or other serious diagnoses may go immediately to the SHC.
- SHC staff will give the student medications at the SHC entrance, asking students to wait outside.

BUS SAFETY

Bus Operations, Cleaning, and Disinfecting

- When possible students will be seated one to a seat. Family members can be seated together.
- After each route is completed, all buses will be cleaned and disinfected.
- When cleaning and disinfecting a bus, high touch surfaces including but not limited to seats, windows, and step rails will be a priority.

VEHICLE SAFETY

- After each trip the vehicle will be cleaned and disinfected.
- When cleaning and disinfecting a vehicle, high touch surfaces including but not limited to seats, windows, steering wheel, door handles, seat belts, and dash will be a priority.

VISITORS

- Visitors will be allowed as long as they have a scheduled time and have a specified purpose.
- All visitors will need to have a temperature check upon entering the building.

POSTING SIGNS AND DIRECTIONS

- Signs will be posted in high traffic areas throughout the schools to promote safety.
- Signs will be posted in the parking lots, bus loops and building entrances to allow safe arrival for students and staff.
- Signs will be posted throughout the school to promote social distancing.
- Posters will be made for each school site to promote hand washing and other hygiene practices.

