



## Infectious Illness Preparedness and Response Plan

COVID-19  
Updated March 11, 2020

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In February 2020, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released a statement advising communities to prepare for a domestic outbreak of COVID- 19, a new coronavirus strand. Academy of Arts & Knowledge (AAK) understands that our school is an essential educational and community institution that serves many members of our local population. AAK also acknowledges that an outbreak of any infectious illness, including COVID -19, would be detrimental to our community. To guide preparation, response, and recovery from any such potential outbreak, AAK has created this Infectious Illness Preparedness and Response Plan.

This document provides information about AAK's plans and responsibilities in the event of a local or regional outbreak of COVID- 19. It is intended to be supplemental to the information provided by the [Larimer County Department of Health and Environment, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment](#), and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). For the most current information about COVID-19 or any other public health concern, please access the information provided by these public health organizations.

AAK is working closely with local, state, and national health officials to monitor ongoing developments related to the global outbreak of COVID-19. As additional information becomes available, the school will continue to communicate with families and the community. The most current information available from AAK related to COVID-19 will always be posted on the AAK website [here](#).

## **PURPOSE**

AAK's Infectious Illness Preparedness and Response Plan will serve as a resource guide for planning for, responding to, and recovering from a pandemic that may impact or is impacting our school and community. Unlike most other disasters or crises, a pandemic is people-centric and will require a community and people-focused response. Although this document is specifically focused on outlining the school's response to COVID-19, the same or similar strategies may be used to address any highly infectious illness that may impact our community.

The primary goals of this plan are to:

- Prevent or minimize the spread of illness while preserving, to the extent possible, the continuity of essential school functions.
- Continue the essential operations of AAK, as possible, in the event of increased student or staff absences due to an outbreak of a highly infectious illness.
- Ensure effective, timely, and situation-sensitive decision-making related to any outbreak that is impacting or has the potential to impact the AAK community.
- Establish a clear communications plan that ensures that students, families, and staff receive timely and accurate information regarding illness prevention and infection control strategies as well as information about impacts to the school and available services.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION: COVID-19**

The 2020 outbreak of COVID-19, commonly referred to as “coronavirus,” originated in the Wuhan province of China. Symptoms of COVID-19 reportedly include mild to severe respiratory illness accompanied by fever, cough, and shortness of breath. The virus is spread person-to-person via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person sneezes or coughs. The droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby, within a distance of about six feet, where the droplets are then inhaled into the lungs. Transmission may also be possible through contact with contaminated surfaces, though this is not considered the primary method of transmission.

Symptoms typically appear within two to 14 days of exposure to the virus.

Those most at risk people for contracting the virus, as of early March 2020 per the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment, are those who have recently traveled to China or those who have been in close contact with people who have been diagnosed with COVID-19.

According to the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment, there are several strategies that can prevent the spread of germs and prevent the spread of this or other respiratory illnesses, including:

- Washing hands often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub
- Covering nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing
- Avoiding close contact with anyone with cold or flu-like symptoms
- Getting a flu shot if you have not gotten one this year
- Cleaning frequently touched surfaces and objects, and
- Keeping children home if they are sick or remaining home if you are sick.

If a child is sick, parents/guardians are encouraged to notify the school and share information about symptoms and whether the child has had a positive influenza or COVID-19 diagnosis. In accordance with the Family Educational Rights Protection Act, or FERPA, AAK will not identify the name, grade, or age the student(s) or staff member(s) confirmed to have tested positive for COVID19 in any communication.

AAK also follows guidelines provided by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, included in this plan as Appendix B, for use in evaluating whether a child or staff member is too sick to attend school for any illness. Parents/guardians and staff are encouraged to consult these guidelines.

## **AUTHORITIES**

In the United States, the State of Colorado, and Larimer County, various public officials have authorities related to the protection of public health and safety. During an outbreak of a highly infectious illness, the United States Government, specifically the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) along with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is the national leader for communication and coordination efforts. In some instances, the United States Government may also work in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO). The US Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are responsible for:

- Identifying, appointing, and leading the national response to highly infectious illness; for enacting or modifying legislation and policies required to sustain and optimize pandemic preparedness, capacity development, and response efforts across all sectors
- Leading national and domestic efforts to monitor and detect outbreaks while prioritizing and guiding the allocation and targeting of resources to achieve the goals outlined in the country's response.
- Providing additional resources for national pandemic preparedness, capacity development, and response measures, including supporting rapid containment of outbreaks and providing guidance to state level authorities on the use and timing of community infection control measures.
- Supporting biomedical research and development of new vaccines and medical countermeasures.
- Considering providing resources and technical assistance to countries experiencing outbreaks of the highly infectious illness.

At the state level, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) is guided by the US Department of Health and Human Services and the CDC. At the local level, Larimer County Department of Health and Environment takes guidance from the CDPHE. National, state, and local authorities are charged with collaborating in highly infectious illness preparedness and response efforts. Poudre School District cooperates with these authorities to raise awareness and take necessary actions in response to reported illness. **AAK's response to any outbreak of COVID-19 will be guided by the recommendations of the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.**

In the event of reports of an infectious illness, such as COVID-19, AAK will:

- Remain in session until advised by health local authorities of the need to close schools.
  - The School Leader has the authority to close school for emergency reasons in accordance with applicable board policy and state law.
  - The School Leader will work closely with all state and local officials, specifically with the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment, to make all decisions related to possible school closure in response to an infectious illness, such as COVID-19.
    - The Director of the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment will make a recommendation about whether to close school.
- Develop and deliver comprehensive communications for students, families, staff, and community members regarding the infectious illness and the school's planned response.
- The school nurse will continue to educate the school community about strategies for the prevention of illness including vaccinations, proper hand washing techniques, community mitigation, and social mitigation as well as any other strategies deemed necessary or appropriate for preventing illness transmission.
- The school nurse and school administration will continue to utilize and update plans to be enacted in the event that a child must be sent home from school due to illness.
- Continue to collaborate with the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment to monitor health data and update the school, staff, and families regarding potential changes that may occur or new and pertinent information related to the extent or spread of the illness.

## **ASSUMPTIONS**

In the event of a pandemic illness that results in a public health emergency, the Colorado Governor may declare a state of emergency. In the event that a state of emergency is declared, response to the outbreak will be coordinated across all levels of government, including the school. In a state of emergency:

- CDPHE will take the role of Lead State Agency for emergency support and will coordinate with Colorado Emergency Management, the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, and other state and local agencies as part of a unified command structure.
- Effective prevention and therapeutic measures, including vaccine and antiviral medications could be delayed, in short supply, or be unavailable.
- Substantial public education regarding the need to target priority groups for vaccination and antiviral/antibiotic medication and the allocation of limited supplies, will be crucial to avert public panic.
- Non-pharmaceutical interventions, travel restrictions, cancellation of public events, isolation and/or quarantine may be required to slow the spread of an outbreak.
- Secondary bacterial infections, following the outbreak, may result in shortages in antibiotic supplies.
- Larimer County Department of Health and Environment will work with health care providers to coordinate distribution of vaccines, antivirals, and other medications and/or medical supplies as necessary.
- There may be a need for alternate care sites to be used as temporary health facilities.
- Healthcare workers, firefighters, police officers, and other emergency services personnel may be at higher risk of exposure and illness than the general population, which may strain outbreak response.
- Widespread illness could increase the likelihood of sudden and potentially significant shortages of personnel in other sectors that provide critical public safety and necessary services.
- It may be necessary to expand mortuary service capacity including Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Teams (DMORT) through CDPHE.
- It is possible that there may be waves of illness. In the case of pandemic influenza, for example, there may be up to two months of little or no flu activity, but there may be up to 18 months where there is ongoing risk to the public.

As additional assumptions or information about COVID-19 are identified or become available, these assumptions may be updated.

## **PREPARATION**

Preparedness includes the actions and measures taken before an event to better handle that event when it arises. In this case, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) plays a significant role in ensuring that states and local health departments are prepared for public health emergencies. At the state and local levels, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) and the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment collaborate with AAK to prepare the school prior to, during, and after exposure to a highly infectious illness.

Prior to or in the early stages of an outbreak or pandemic, public health officials encourage the practice of every day good health habits and implementation of non-pharmaceutical interventions

to prevent and protect the population from the spread of highly infectious illness. These habits include:

- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick.
- When you are sick, stay away from others to prevent passing on your illness to others.
- Cover your mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing with a tissue and then throw away the tissue.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
  - The [CDC](#) offers free handwashing resources to encourage proper handwashing technique and that include tips for families to help children develop good hand washing habits.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth to prevent the spread of germs.
- Practice other good health strategies, including cleaning and disinfecting surfaces especially when someone is ill; get plenty of sleep, manage stress, and be physically active.

In addition to these good health habits, other non-pharmaceutical interventions that can help to mitigate the spread of illness in the community include:

- Social distancing or creating ways to provide distance between people in close contact areas including at work and at school.
- Closures or cancellations of non-urgent events and avoidance of scheduling community events during an outbreak or pandemic in Larimer County or neighboring regions.
- Being prepared and informed about the pandemic and appropriate steps to prevent the spread of illness.
- Communication with students, families, employees, and community members that informs and provides updates on the status of an outbreak or pandemic and provides information on good hygiene methods that may help mitigate the spread of illness.
- Ongoing monitoring of the outbreak or pandemic.
- Maintaining clean and disinfected environments.
- Encouraging those who are sick, including students and staff, to stay home.

As AAK continues its preparation efforts, the school is also implementing the following preparedness measures in accordance with guidance from the CDC and the Larimer County Department of Public Health and Environment:

- **Planning:**
  - Reviewing, updating, and implementing emergency operations plans in collaboration with the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment.
  - Monitoring and planning for absenteeism in school.
    - AAK has adopted guidelines that dictate that daily absence rates exceeding 15% of staff or students in the building due to illness of any form must be reported to AAK Board of Directors and the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment. Please see Appendix A for complete guidelines.
  - Review of attendance and sick leave policies. Encouraging students and staff to stay home when sick.
    - The CDC and the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment have developed [guidelines](#) for businesses managing employee leave and sick time. The school will reference these guidelines as needed.
  - Identifying critical job functions and positions and planning for alternative coverage of these positions as needed.
  - Developing plans for remote learning for students and for remote work for staff in the event of extended closures.

- Encouraging staff to prepare for potential absence or closure by preparing lesson plans ahead of time, bringing materials home as needed to allow for remote work, etc.
  - Determining what level of absenteeism will disrupt continuity of teaching and learning.
  - Creating communications plans to ensure that students, families, staff, and the community receive information necessary to prepare for and respond to an outbreak.
- **Education and Prevention:**
  - Encouraging all students, families, and staff to follow the good health habits and encouraging implementation of measures that prevent the spread of illness.
  - Sharing resources with families to help them understand when to keep children home. AAK will continue to share the resources published by the [CDC](#) and the [Larimer County Department of Health and Environment](#). Information about evaluating whether students are too sick to attend school can be found in Appendix B.
  - Following procedures to ensure students and staff who become sick at school or arrive at school sick are sent home as soon as possible and ensuring that sick students and staff are separated from well students and staff until they can leave.
  - Performing routine environmental cleaning of the school including cleaning of frequently touched surfaces (i.e. doorknobs, light switches, countertops, door frames, handicap push buttons, tabletops, backs of chairs, pencil sharpeners, keyboards, mice, monitors, portions of walls, etc.) with cleaning products according to the directions on the label.
    - AAK is following cleaning protocols for norovirus and influenza. This protocol includes daily disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces like those outlined above. Additionally, AAK is using disinfectant instead of sanitizer. Disinfectant kills illnesses such as pertussis and norovirus whereas sanitizers do not.
    - In times of more prevalent illness, the Custodial department works closely with the Larimer County Health Department regarding cleaning and disinfection protocols.

The school will continue to adopt and implement additional preparedness measures as they are identified.

## **RESPONSE**

If local health officials report that there are cases of COVID-19 in Larimer County or along the Front Range, AAK will transition into a response phase. The first step of any response phase will be consultation with local health officials from the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment. The second step of response will be the convening of the school's Incident Command team.

Once it is determined that transition to a response phase is necessary, AAK, via the Incident Command team, will consider the circumstances and determine the most appropriate response. The potential response options and phases outlined herein are based on current knowledge of COVID19. As additional information becomes available about the virus, how it spreads, and how severe it is,

this response protocol may be updated in accordance with recommendations provided by the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment and the CDC.

### **Immediate and Temporary AAK Closure**

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, temporarily dismissing childcare programs and K-12 schools is a strategy to stop or slow the spread of COVID-19 in communities. Local health officials may recommend temporary school closures in instances where a student or staff member attended school or work prior to being confirmed as a COVID-19 case. In such instances, local health officials with the Larimer County Department of Public Health and Environment will make recommendations related to the scope of the closure (i.e. a single school, an entire district). The duration of closures will be determined on a case-by-case basis using the most up-to-date information available about COVID-19 and the specific case(s) in the community.

In the event of exposure within the AAK community, the following steps will be taken:

- AAK will confer with local health officials, primarily the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment, to obtain a recommendation regarding school closure, timing, scope, and duration.
- AAK will communicate the possible exposure to the community, which includes students, families, staff, and community members. In accordance with the Family Educational Rights Protection Act, or FERPA, AAK will not identify the name, grade, or age the student(s) or staff member(s) confirmed to have tested positive for COVID-19.
- AAK will communicate plans for school and office closures and event/group activity cancellations as appropriate and in as timely a fashion as possible.

If local health officials recommend closure of a AAK, the following protocols will be followed:

- **Building Closure and Cleaning**
  - The school will be closed beginning on the date/time collaboratively determined in collaboration with local health officials
  - The extent of closure will be determined in partnership with local health officials.
  - Only identified essential personnel and building administrators will have access to school buildings during closure.
    - **AAK will clearly communicate that staff, with the exception of those designated as essential personnel by their supervisor, and students are not to enter AAK during a closure.**
  - The school will evaluate options to provide a meal program, if feasible, or to connect community resources where available. Per World Health Organization (WHO) guidance, cafeterias will not be open during building closures.
  - All regularly scheduled events, including athletic and extracurricular activities, performances, etc. will be cancelled or postponed until further notice.
  - All facility rentals will be cancelled or postponed until further notice.
  - Before and after school childcare in AAK (i.e. Extended Day Program) will be cancelled.
  - Signs will be posted at school indicating playground closures for the duration of the school closure or unless otherwise determined. Playgrounds and school grounds with fencing will be secured/locked and no access will be permitted.
  - Students will be asked to take all necessary learning technology and curricular materials home with them for use in e-learning for the duration of the closure as directed by their teachers.

- Staff will be required to take all work-related technology and tools home with them for use in support of e-learning or telecommuting for the duration of the closure as directed by their supervisor.
- Cleaning of affected AAK will be completed in accordance with current protocols and in accordance with recommendations from the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment. All cleaning will be completed prior to implementation of any student or staff building re-entry.
  - Cleaning protocols in response to a closure would include removing trash and recycling from the building, vacuuming all floor surfaces, sweeping, mopping, scrubbing all desks, counters, sinks, and tabletops. Restrooms, and health offices would be cleaned and disinfected. All high touch surfaces would be disinfected, including wiping all surfaces with towels that have been soaked in disinfectant. Surfaces with cracks or corners will be wiped and sprayed with disinfectant. All Extended Day Program and classroom toys will be disinfected. All carpet will be sprayed with disinfectant and all kitchens, including floors, prep areas, serving tables, and equipment, and restrooms would be disinfected.
- **Communication:** Information about the closure will be shared as soon as possible after closure determinations are made via:
  - School website and social media presence;
  - School Swift emails, phone calls, and text messages to families and staff;
  - Signage on the doors at the school building and
  - School outgoing voicemail recordings.

Information about closures will be updated daily to ensure that the community has the most current information available.

- **Continuity of Education and School Services:** In the event of a closure, the school will implement tele-education and telecommute plans for students and staff, where appropriate.
  - To prepare to support continuity of education and school services, AAK is currently exploring and developing comprehensive plans for the following:
    - E-learning for students that includes digital and distance learning options, such as access to digital textbook resources, online classroom collaboration tools, etc.
      - Google Classroom could be used, for example, to assign lessons, grade student work, and provide feedback on student work.
      - Clear expectations for e-learning will be defined as part of this planning effort. Plans for supporting students without regular access to the internet to support e-learning will also be developed.
    - Providing training to teachers to support e-learning for students including preparation of online lessons, use of online learning tools, etc.
      - Clear expectations for supporting e-learning will be defined as part of this planning effort.
    - Collaborating with the Charter School Institute regarding any necessary waivers to state requirements for in-person instructional hours, school days, or seat time. As of March 2, 2020, decisions regarding waivers will be made on an as-needed basis by the Colorado Department of Education.
    - Collaborating and receiving guidance from the Charter School Institute regarding state assessment requirements.

- Continuing service to students on Individual Education Plans (IEP) and 504 Plans as well as providing mental health support to students remotely.
  - Providing training to non-instructional staff to support telecommute options, including training on remote use of key school software and information management systems.
  - Exploring and identifying the resources that may be needed to support tele-education and telecommute options, including but not limited to conferencing and collaboration tools for teams, etc. Determinations about the resources the school will provide will be made on a case-by-case basis.
  - The school administration will develop guidelines associated with expectations for staff as related to working remotely. These guidelines will be communicated to staff by their supervisors.
  - Planning for necessary technical support of e-learning and telecommute efforts via the Information Technology department.
  - Planning for ongoing maintenance of school building as needed.
  - Planning for ensuring ongoing security of the school as needed.
- **Other Considerations**
    - **Extended Closures:** In the event of extended school closure, AAK is also exploring the following:
      - The potential need to modify the school schedule as a result of extended closures (i.e. adding days to the end of the school year etc.).
      - Modifying contracts with employees, as needed, to accommodate for extended closures. This consideration will be informed by decisions made by the Colorado Department of Education regarding requirements to make up days/class time missed and will be considered in the context of the PSD Employee Agreement. School administration will collaborate with employees should extended closures be necessary.
      - Long-term financial planning to meet the school's financial obligations (i.e. payroll, etc.).

More information related to the specifics of extended closures will be shared as the need for such closures are identified.

## RECOVERY

In the event of school closures related to COVID-19, AAK administration will communicate when AAK staff and Larimer County Department of Health and Environment officials have conferred and determined that it is safe to return to school as well as what steps and precautions will need to be followed at that time.

The entire school facility will be cleaned and sterilized, as appropriate, prior to reopening of school. As school is reopened, a process for cleaning and disinfecting equipment (i.e. laptops, cell phones, etc.) and materials brought home during closure will also be implemented. Cleaning and sterilization practices will be guided by recommendations from the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment.

Communications platforms that will be utilized to share information about the reopening of school and the reentry process will include but are not limited to the school website and social media platforms, voicemail recordings, emails, phone calls, and text messages to staff and families.

AAK will also develop and implement a plan for return to the classroom for students who may have missed an extended period of instruction during a school closure.

AAK will make every effort to return to “business as usual” following any necessary closures. Concurrently, the school’s Mental Health Team will evaluate the need for additional support and resources for our students, families, and staff, and will provide these supports to the extent possible.

The school will also continue to partner with local health officials to monitor the illness on an ongoing basis and will continue to communicate with the community.

Debriefing among local health officials and school administration will also occur after any closures to ensure that successes and challenges are identified to inform planning for any future pandemic events.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Academy of Arts & Knowledge**

#### **Guidance for prevention of infection and illness at school and school activities**

School site and health staff will communicate with the AAK Board and Larimer County Department of Health and Environment (LCDHE), when a directive or Health Alert is issued by health department officials, or when illness or absence data are in one of the following categories:

- A daily absence rate that exceeds 15% or more of the school population, due to illness.
- Five or more students absent/reporting illness from the same group (for example--classroom, etc)
- Staff illness/absenteeism of 15% or more due to illness

Some examples of target illnesses: Pertussis, Norovirus, Influenza, Enterovirus, other communicable diseases

#### **1. Health Services**

- a. The School Nurse will communicate with Larimer County Department of Health and Environment, Environmental Health Division to verify case diagnoses and information, and facilitate that notifications are distributed to the school community.

#### **2. Custodial Services**

- a. Will follow proper cleaning procedures and product use. They will determine if additional interventions are necessary.

#### **3. School Administration**

- a. Provide that recommended communication be sent to the school community- written or electronically
- b. Support attendance restrictions of involved students and staff as determined by the health department and school policy.
- c. Provide that prevention strategies are implemented at school, activities, and field trips
  - i. Hands should be washed frequently using soap and water and drying with disposable towels. Ensure that hand sinks are stocked with soap and towels at all times. Hand sanitizers should not replace hand washing.
  - ii. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
  - iii. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
  - iv. Avoid close contact with sick people – no kissing, hugging, handshakes
  - v. Do not share drinks, utensils, water bottles, or food
  - vi. Staff and students that are ill with disruptive cough, vomiting or diarrhea should not attend school and should remain home until at least 24-48 hours after symptoms have resolved, including Field Trips.
  - vii. If you are sick with flu-like illness, stay home from school for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.)

Sites for state and local health information, updates, and alerts:

[www.larimer.org/health](http://www.larimer.org/health)

[www.colorado.gov/cdphe](http://www.colorado.gov/cdphe)