



## **Back to School Plan – 2020-2021 School Year**

Using guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, published May 19, 2020), state and county health officials, and parental survey data, Saddle Mountain Unified School District has prepared a comprehensive plan to mitigate risk of exposure to COVID-19 in our schools. This contains detailed information about Saddle Mountain's safety protocols for the 2020-21 school year. For areas where the CDC has provided specific guidance for schools, that guidance is included as a reference, for your convenience, so that you may see how Saddle Mountain's plans are aligned with CDC recommendations. In addition, each school has developed specific guidelines and protocols unique to each campus.

### **Bus Safety**

#### **CDC Guidelines:**

- Clean and disinfect frequently
- Maintain 6 feet of physical distancing if possible

#### **Saddle Mountain's Plan:**

- Social distancing on a school bus greatly decreases the number of students who can ride a bus, and reduces the District's ability to provide transportation services to students
- In order to provide transportation without social distancing masks will be required of all students riding a school bus
- Where possible, buses will be loaded back to front and unloaded front to back
- Drivers will require siblings to sit together
- All buses will have clearly visible signage communicating to parents that students should not enter the school bus with any of the identified symptoms (Visible symptoms include runny nose, cough, shortness of breath, or vomiting.)
- All bus drivers and monitors will be required to wear a mask. Drivers may remove masks while driving and keeping 6 foot distancing
- Students with special needs are strongly encouraged to wear cloth face coverings with limited exceptions:
  - Students with sensory challenges
  - Students with medical concerns that make wearing a face covering unsafe
- Windows may be open for increased air circulation during seasonal times of year
- Hand sanitizer will be available for use by staff and students
- All transportation vehicles will be cleaned once per day
- Additionally, a disinfection will occur twice daily on high touchpoint areas, including: Bus seats, Handrails, Door handles, Windows, Driver area
- Drivers will check student temperatures (non-contact) as they exit buses upon arrival at schools. Special needs students will be screened before entering the bus, with parents present at the bus stops

### **Bus Stops:**

- Communication will be sent to parents emphasizing expectations concerning 6 feet social distancing while gathering at the bus stop
- If possible students should wait in parent vehicle until bus arrival at the bus stop
- Students are asked to have masks available and ready to wear prior to getting on the bus

### **Containment/Cohorts**

#### **CDC Guidelines:**

- Ensure that student and staff groupings are as static as possible by having the same group of children stay with the same staff (all day for young children, and as much as possible for older children)
- Limit mixing between groups if possible

#### **Saddle Mountain's Plan:**

##### **Elementary School**

- Pre-K-3<sup>rd</sup> students will remain in cohorts
- 4-5<sup>th</sup> students will remain in limited cohorts, with minimal movement between classrooms
- Students will report directly to classrooms when they arrive at school
- To limit exposure to other students and staff, cohorts will stay together throughout the day, including for breakfast, lunch and recess and dismissal, as feasible
- Class sizes may be reduced due to participation in online and/or hybrid models

##### **Middle School**

- Middle school students (6-8<sup>th</sup>) will remain in limited cohorts, with restricted movement between classrooms, as feasible
- Class sizes may be reduced due to participation in online and/or hybrid models

##### **High School**

- High school students will have restricted movement between classes in hallways, as feasible
- Class sizes may be reduced due to participation in online and/or hybrid models
- Remote learning will be encouraged

##### **General**

- Special Education self-contained students will remain in cohorts
- Special Education resource students will have restricted movement between classes
- Staff meetings will be virtual if social distancing cannot be maintained

## **Events/Field Trips**

### **CDC Guidelines:**

- Pursue virtual group events, gatherings, or meetings, if possible, and promote social distancing of at least 6 feet between people if events are held. Limit group size to the extent possible
- Pursue virtual activities and events in lieu of field trips, student assemblies, special performances, school-wide parent meetings, and spirit nights, as possible

### **Saddle Mountain's Plan:**

- Field trips and events with large gatherings are canceled until state or county restrictions are lifted with improved health metrics
- Teachers will use virtual learning opportunities (such as virtual tours of museums) to enhance students' educational experiences
- School-wide assemblies will not be held with students assembled in the same physical location. As an alternative, Saddle Mountain schools will hold school-wide assemblies virtually, with student groups remaining in their classrooms
- Large-scale school events such as "Meet the Teacher Night" may be held virtually or reconfigured in order to maintain social distancing. Small-scale activities like parent-teacher conferences may take place over the phone or other electronic means. Other extracurricular activities will be cancelled unless the activity can be conducted in compliance with social distancing protocols
- AZ Interscholastic Association (AIA) guidelines will be followed for high school athletic events and practices. Middle school athletics will follow regional conference guidelines

## **Face Coverings**

### **CDC Guidelines:**

- Use of simple cloth face coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected but does not have symptoms
- Cloth face coverings are not surgical masks, respirators, or other medical personal protective equipment
- Teach and reinforce use of cloth face coverings
- Face coverings may be challenging for students (especially younger students) to wear
- Face coverings should be worn by staff and students (particularly older students) as feasible, and are most essential in times when physical distancing is difficult

### **Saddle Mountain's Plan:**

- Since social distancing cannot be guaranteed, particularly in classrooms, students will be required to wear cloth face coverings, subject to the health condition exception stated below\* until such time when state or county health officials rescind face covering requirements
- Parents are asked to supply their children with regularly cleaned face coverings/masks
- Pursuant to the Student Dress Code (Policy JICA), face coverings may not contain obscene, disruptive, offensive, or disrespectful messaging or representations

- Students will not be required to wear face coverings during physical activities and when social distancing is maintainable, though they may voluntarily wear face coverings at any time
- Students may remove face coverings while eating and during planned ‘mask breaks’ throughout the day
- Employees will be required to wear cloth face coverings or face shields during interactions with students or other employees when physical space does not allow for maintenance of 6 feet of space between individuals unless unable to do so for health reasons
- Employees will not be required to wear cloth face coverings when social distancing is maintainable, though they may voluntarily wear face coverings at any time

\*Any student who has difficulty breathing or who is incapable of physically removing the face covering on his/her own will not wear cloth face coverings, and alternate methods of protection will be discussed by parents and staff

## **Food Services**

### **CDC Guidelines:**

- Have children bring their own meals as feasible, or serve individually plated meals in classrooms instead of in a communal dining hall or cafeteria, while ensuring the safety of children with food allergies

### **Saddle Mountain's Plan:**

- Students will continue to receive meals through the District’s Food Services program or they may bring meals from home
- Students will eat in their classrooms, cafeteria or patio, physically distanced, depending on the weather and the school
- Saddle Mountain will follow the CDC's "No Sharing" guidelines with all food, drinks, devices, personal belongings, etc. until different guidance is issued

## **Hand Washing**

### **Saddle Mountain's Plan:**

- Require all students to wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol at the following times:
  - upon arrival at school (use hand sanitizer if there is no sink in the classroom)
  - after being outside for physical activity
  - before and after breakfast and lunch
  - prior to leaving school for home
  - after sneezing, coughing, or blowing nose

## **School Health Screenings**

### **CDC Guidelines:**

- If feasible, conduct daily health checks (e.g., temperature screening and/or or symptom checking) of staff and students
- Health checks should be conducted safely and respectfully, and in accordance with any applicable privacy laws and regulations

### **Saddle Mountain's Plan:**

- Staff will be instructed to stay home if ill and will be screened for a fever ( $>100.4^{\circ}$  F) upon arrival at school
- A staff member will visually check and conduct a temperature/fever ( $>100.4^{\circ}$  F) screening of each student upon arrival at school
- Anyone entering the campus will be screened for a fever ( $>100.4^{\circ}$  F) before admission
- Any student with visible symptoms of fever ( $>100.4^{\circ}$  F), runny nose, cough, shortness of breath or vomiting will be taken to the health office, where parents may be contacted for pick up, with the following exceptions:
  - If the student has a runny nose and no other observable symptoms, the nurse/health aide will contact a parent to determine if other symptoms are present or if there is exposure to COVID-19 in the home. If not, the student may return to class if deemed appropriate by health office staff
  - If the student has health information that confirms a diagnosis of asthma or other respiratory condition, the nurse/health aide will contact a parent to confirm that the student has no other symptoms or exposure to COVID-19 at home. If not, the student may return to class if deemed appropriate by health office staff

## **Intensify Cleaning & Disinfection**

### **CDC Guidelines:**

- Coronaviruses on surfaces and objects naturally die within hours to days. Warmer temperatures and exposure to sunlight will reduce the time the virus survives on surfaces and objects
- Normal routine cleaning with soap and water removes germs and dirt from surfaces. It lowers the risk of spreading COVID-19 infection
- Disinfectants kill germs on surfaces. By killing germs on a surface after cleaning, you can further lower the risk of spreading infection. EPA-approved disinfectants are an important part of reducing the risk of exposure to COVID-19

### **Saddle Mountain's Plan:**

- As part of daily cleaning regimen, disinfectant used on all touchpoint surfaces
- Classroom touchpoint areas will be disinfected daily and between changes in groups using the rooms
- Bathroom touchpoint areas will be disinfected twice daily

## **Playground Protocols**

### **CDC Guidelines:**

- Outdoor areas generally require normal routine cleaning and do not require disinfection. Spraying disinfectant on sidewalks and in parks is not an efficient use of disinfectant supplies and has not been proved to reduce the risk of COVID-19 to the public. You should maintain existing cleaning and hygiene practices for outdoor areas

### **Saddle Mountain's Plan:**

- No more than one grade level at a time will be allowed on playground equipment
- Classes will be assigned 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
- Disinfectant will be used multiple times per day on playground equipment
- High touchpoint areas include:
  - Swings
  - Climbing structures
  - Sliding structures

## **Reported Cases**

### **CDC Guidelines:**

- Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use these areas until after cleaning and disinfecting
- Wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible. Ensure safe and correct use and storage of cleaning and disinfection products, including storing products securely away from children
- In accordance with state and local laws and regulations, school administrators should notify local health officials, staff, and families immediately of any case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Inform those who have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay home and self-monitor for symptoms, and follow CDC guidance if symptoms develop

### **Saddle Mountain's Plan:**

- Saddle Mountain is following Maricopa County Health protocols for reporting positive cases involving staff and students
- In addition to following CDC guidelines for protocols regarding reported cases, Saddle Mountain is working with Maricopa County Health officials, who will provide specific guidance on a case-by-case basis, including notification protocols
- Saddle Mountain will follow state and county health department guidance regarding school closures and measures not specifically outlined in this plan

## **Shared Belongings**

### **CDC Guidelines:**

- Discourage sharing of items that are difficult to clean or disinfect
- Keep each child 's belongings separated from others' and in individually labeled containers, cubbies, or areas
- Ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high touch materials to the extent possible (e.g., assigning each student their own art supplies, equipment) or limit use of supplies and equipment by one group of children at a time and clean and disinfect between use
- Avoid sharing electronic devices, toys, books, and other games or learning aids

### **Saddle Mountain's Plan:**

- For younger grades and where possible, student belongings to be kept in individual bins or cubbies labeled with each student's name
- When feasible, sharing of school supplies among students to be restricted. If a school supply or piece of equipment must be shared by students (for instance, a pencil sharpener or blocks/toys), staff should wipe down the item with disinfectant after each use

## **Signs and Messages**

### **CDC Guidelines:**

- Post signs in highly visible locations (e.g., school entrances, restrooms) that promote everyday protective measures and describe how to stop the spread of germs (such as by properly washing hands and properly wearing a cloth face covering)
- Broadcast regular announcements on reducing the spread of COVID-19 on PA systems.
- Include messages about behaviors that prevent the spread of COVID-19 when communicating with staff and families (such as on school websites, in emails, and on school social media accounts.)

### **Saddle Mountain's Plan:**

- Post signage to promote social distancing
- Post handwashing signs in school bathrooms, to promote proper handwashing by students
- Post signs to promote health and safety protocols
- Create videos to illustrate proper handwashing, to be shown to students
- Use Remind App for primary parent communication medium
- Provide communication via letters, website, and social media

## **Social/Physical Distancing**

### **CDC Guidelines:**

- The CDC "encourages" but does not mandate social/physical distancing

### **Saddle Mountain's Plan:**

- Have students remain static with the same groupings and the same staff throughout the day and limit mixing between groups as much as possible (Cohorting)
- Reduce class sizes, when feasible to allow for 6 feet between students
- Organize classroom layout to allow for social distancing as much as possible
- Social distancing protocols will be used outside of the classroom along with limited use of common areas, when feasible
- For employees, social distancing protocols will be used outside of the classroom along with limited use of common areas, when feasible
- If an emergency situation arises that requires a staff member to touch a student or another staff member, resume social distancing as soon as safely possible, wash hands, and disinfect any surfaces touched

### **Training Employees**

#### **Saddle Mountain's Plan:**

- Develop online training modules regarding the health and safety protocols:
  - Report to Work Checklist
  - Hand Washing
  - Social Distancing
  - Face Covering
  - Sanitizing
- Require staff take the online modules during the mandatory talent management training window at the start of year

### **Ventilation Systems**

#### **CDC Guidelines:**

- Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible such as by opening windows and doors
- Do not open windows and doors if they pose a safety or health risk to children using the facility (e.g. allowing pollens in or exacerbating asthma symptoms)

#### **Saddle Mountain's Plan:**

- Continue changing air filters on a regular schedule
- Exploring where improved filtration can be used without damaging HVAC equipment
- Exploring options for additional supplemental air filtration including HEPA, ozonification and UV light air sterilization
- Currently cleaning interval HVAC system components to reduce trapped dust which may harbor germs



## **Volunteers/Visitors**

### **CDC Guidelines:**

- Limit any nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations as possible - especially with individuals who are not from the local geographic area (e.g., community, town, city, county)

### **Saddle Mountain's Plan:**

- Visitors will be prohibited on school campuses. Volunteers on campus will be postponed until further notice
- Saddle Mountain will require facility renters to follow these guidelines plus county/municipal requirements and will be assessed COVID-19 cleaning surcharges for additional disinfecting