



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## FAQ

SEPTEMBER 2020

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**RETURN TO DESERT CHRISTIAN SCHOOL  
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS  
September 2020**

Common questions and answers have been developed by the Staff and Leadership Team at Desert Christian Schools regarding students and employees returning to school and work for the 2020-2021 school year. We know our DCS community has many questions, and we will do our best to answer all promptly. We ask for your patience as our team continues to work through the many issues that must be addressed. Rest assured that we will update this list and communicate with you as often as information becomes available and as we seek additional guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Pima County Health Department, Arizona Department of Education, ACSI (Association of Christian Schools International), and government officials. We intend to minimize the risks related to COVID-19 on campus, as best as we can, while providing the exceptional education our DCS families expect for their children.

## **Decision-making Principles**

### **What decision-making principles will DCS follow in response to the COVID-19 virus?**

DCS will follow four guiding principles in our decision-making as we prepare for re-opening and remaining open.

- 1) To continue to advance the school's mission, ensuring the provision of sustained excellent Christian education primarily on-campus, with special contingencies for at-home schooling.
- 2) To maximize the health and well-being of our students, faculty, and staff, minimizing the risk to the community of contracting the virus while under DCS care.
- 3) To navigate as sure and reliable a course forward as is possible given the very uncertain and shifting circumstances of our times.

How DCS re-opens and remains operating will require careful consideration of the following factors:

- a. Government and state agency issued guidelines and executive orders (CDC, ADHS, etc.)

- b. Community confidence in health & safety measures and the way they are enforced
  - c. Financial strength and sustainability
  - d. The intensity of the virus' spread in our state and community; the introduction and availability of treatments, vaccines, etc.
- 4) To call upon our Lord and God to:
- a. Illuminate our path forward with wisdom and love
  - b. To keep the peace and unity of our community
  - c. To bless and protect our students, their families, faculty, and staff

Disclaimer: Desert Christian Schools reserves the right to modify these plans based on guidelines from the CDC, Pima County Health Department, or local officials. We will re-evaluate our protocols regularly.

## **Drop Off and Pick Up**

### **Will there be daily screenings for COVID-19 symptoms first thing in the morning & monitoring throughout the school day?**

**Yes.** DCS faculty and staff will be visually monitoring students for symptoms throughout the school day. Per CDC guidance, daily health checks/screenings are recommended when feasible and can include: visual symptom checks, temperature checks, as well as verbal/written confirmation from the parent that their student is symptom-free.

However, the home is the first point on the screening continuum. The diligence of our DCS parents and the exercise of their covenantal responsibility to self-monitor symptoms of illness is critical in creating a safe and healthy environment. DCS will educate and support families on identifying the symptoms that will indicate whether or not a student must stay at home.

### **What symptoms of the COVID-19 virus will the daily screening be focused upon?**

- Fever at or above 100.4
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath
- Muscle or body aches not related to exercise
- Recent contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19

In addition to the symptoms listed above, people with COVID-19 may also experience the following: difficulty breathing, fatigue, headache, a new loss of taste or smell, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and/or diarrhea.

### **What daily health screening system is DCS employing?**

DCS is adopting the Trust and Honor Process to indicate that faculty, staff, students, and all visitors have been screened and are cleared to enter school buildings. The details are as follows:

All members of the DCS community (including faculty, staff, students, and all visitors) will promise to abide by the Trust and Honor Process by signing a Covenantal Agreement. As it pertains to students, this agreement will be provided to you electronically to be signed by parents or legal guardians. Signers of this agreement are declaring that they will screen (themselves and/or their students) by asking the following questions:

- Have you been fever-free (temperature below 100.5) for the past 48 hours?
- Have you had a cough?
- Do you have a sore throat?
- Are you experiencing chills?
- Do you have a headache?
- Do you have a runny nose/congestion?
- Are you experiencing body aches, muscle soreness, or fatigue not related to exercise?
- Have you been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID in the past 10 days?
  - Close contact is defined as closer than 6 feet apart for more than 15 minutes without a mask.

### **Wrightstown Campus Trust and Honor Drop-Off Process**

PS-8 students will utilize three drop-off/walk-up areas in the morning. By bringing your child to school, you are communicating with us that you have “pre-screened” your child concerning the above questions. Students will then have their temperature taken, and, if below 100.4 degrees, will be allowed to enter the campus. To decrease congestion on campus, we are asking only parents of new students, Preschoolers, Kindergarteners, and those with special needs to walk their child directly to their classroom in the morning. All other parents are asked to return to their vehicles after their child has been assessed. Should you choose to use the North Gate Drop-off Zone, you and your children will need to remain in your vehicle until you reach the first two spots in line. At which point, your students may exit the vehicle and will have their temperature taken. We understand this protocol will take more time, so we ask for patience. We will do our best to keep the line moving as quickly as possible. This protocol, as with all of the protocols, will be reassessed each month.

### **High School Trust and Honor Process**

Students arriving at campus each morning will be screened at multiple entrances. They will be required to answer the above questions and have their temperature taken.

Students will be asked to physically distance as they await screening by a DCHS staff member.

We are installing some directional indicators to keep student traffic flowing and minimize congregating in tighter spaces. They will be similar to the arrows and signage at many stores. Be on the lookout for these.

### **What does pick up at the end of the day look like?**

Both campuses: At the end of the school day, students who are not participating in an official after school activity must promptly leave campus.

- PS: Preschool parents will be asked to enter through the Preschool Gate and wait in the breezeway until invited in the doors to retrieve their child. All parents must be masked to enter the campus and use social distancing as appropriate. You will be asked to leave campus quickly after picking up your child. Parents picking up children from After Care may proceed directly to the After Care room.
- K-8 Pick Up:
  - Parents may not enter the campus until the large, brightly colored banner is hung out by the front gate.
  - Parents with children in only K-5 are asked to use the walk-in option for pick-up.
  - 6-8 grade students with no siblings in younger grades are asked to use the drive-up option at the north gate (2:50-3:10 pm). It is helpful for traffic flow that not all drive-up parents show up at 2:50 pm. Feel free to come anytime up until 3:10 pm.
  - Parents who have multiple children across PS-8 may choose walk-in or drive-up. Please inform the homeroom teachers which option you will use.
  - Homeroom teachers will supervise each cohort.
  - The grass area will have spaced out posts with signs, indicating Kinder, 1<sup>st</sup> grade, etc. (2:40-3 pm).
  - Kinder-2<sup>nd</sup> grade will walk to their sign at 2:40 pm. Grades 3-5 will walk to their sign at 2:45 pm. Grades 6-8 will walk to their sign when the bell rings at 2:50 pm.
  - Each parent will pick-up at the sign then move to the next sign, if they have multiple students, and exit the campus immediately.
  - Mr. Jansen and Mrs. Alday will kindly monitor the immediate exit of families at the end of the day.
- HS: Students are asked to conduct their school business and leave campus promptly. There will be multiple exits for your child at the end of the school day.

## **During the School Day**

\*\*\*At DCS cloth face coverings signify love for one's neighbor and respect for the consideration of others. Cloth face coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected but does not have symptoms. Cloth face

coverings should be washed routinely depending on the frequency of use. A washing machine should suffice to adequately clean cloth face coverings.\*\*\*

### **Will cloth face coverings or plastic face shields be required at DCS in high congestion areas?**

**Yes.** ALL students, staff, faculty, and visitors/volunteers (including parents, grandparents, and guardians) will be required to enter and leave the campus with a mask. Special circumstances, only as approved by the appropriate campus Administrator, will be considered based on the unique needs of the student.

#### **Masks will be required for students:**

- PS-K: Masks will not be required for preschool-aged children.
- 1-12: Masks will temporarily be required for the first 30 days of school. This policy will be re-evaluated at that time.

#### **Masks will not be required:**

All campuses: While eating; or during P.E./Athletics. Arizona Interscholastic Association is permitting the resumption of fall sports beginning August 31 with an optional mask-wearing policy.

### **Will DCS practice physical distancing during the school day, when feasible?**

**Yes.**

#### **Has classroom seating been modified for physical distancing?**

**Yes.** Where feasible, classroom seating and desks have been configured with physical distancing in mind, to mitigate the risk of infection. Also, seats will be assigned. Students will spend the majority of their instructional day in cohorts, not moving from room to room. A cohort is defined as a group of students with similar age/grade level that spend a significant amount of time together.

High School Cohorts: Grade-level cohorts at the HS level are difficult to construct; students are rarely in classes with students of only one grade level (Bible is the notable exception). However, homerooms will be used as a way to cohort students when the need arises.

#### **When might a student leave the classroom/cohort?**

K-8: To use the restroom, recess, lunch, middle school Math, PE, and Discipleship. Other circumstances may arise that make it necessary to leave the classroom/cohort.

#### **How will DCS transportation services be adapted?**

In the case of a required activity trip (i.e., transportation to an athletic event), DCS will require the driver and all passengers to wear cloth face coverings for the duration of the trip. Buses and vans will be disinfected and sanitized after every ride.

#### **Did DCS look at class sizes?**

**Yes.** DCS classes are already relatively small, and every attempt will be made to maintain our average class capacity of 20 students. When larger rooms are used, the class capacity might exceed 20.

**Will DCS post reminder signs?**

**Yes.** Signs will be posted throughout both campuses in highly visible locations (i.e., school entrances, restrooms) to promote everyday protective measures and describe how to stop the spread of germs, such as practicing proper washing of hands and properly wearing a cloth face covering.

**Will DCS provide the means and opportunity for students to wash and/or sanitize their hands throughout the school day?**

**Yes.** DCS will be constantly emphasizing and reinforcing the essential practice of handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds throughout the school day. As much as possible, faculty and staff will monitor to ensure adherence among students and staff. If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol will be available throughout campuses.

**What are the 'BIG 5' Reminders & Practices for health & safety that parents can reinforce at home?**

- Regularly wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water or use hand sanitizer.
- Cover your cough and sneeze with a tissue, dispose of the tissue properly, and then wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water or hand sanitizer.
- Maintain a physical distance of at least 6 feet apart, whenever appropriate, when running errands or making visits.
- If social distancing is not possible, wear face coverings, when appropriate, as well as while running errands and making visits.
- Stay home if you have any symptoms until all symptoms have cleared or with a doctor's note.

**Will DCS staff & faculty be instructed and trained in these new protocols and practices?**

**Yes.** All faculty and staff are returning early to be thoroughly prepared for the beginning of the school year. They will be instructed and trained to identify a wide range of symptoms – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. They will also be instructed and trained on cleaning protocols within their classrooms and in general.

**Will DCS teachers be encouraged to personally add extra safety measures in their classrooms?**

**Yes.** Teachers will be encouraged to employ additional personal safeguards and precautions in their classrooms for their comfort and safety and/or to send students who appear symptomatic to be screened at the school office.

### Is DCS going to special scheduling?

Yes.

- K-5: Students will stay in their homeroom cohort throughout the day. "Specials" teachers (Art, Spanish, Computers, Library) will come to the homeroom. PE and Music will remain outside, in the BOB, or spread out in the music classroom. After an adjustment period on campus (2 weeks) the school administration will decide whether 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> grades and 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> grades will implement Walk to Read/Math, best practice for meeting the individual needs of students. This would involve some movement between 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> graders and 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> graders.
- 6-8: Students will spend the majority of their instructional day in one classroom with a cohort of students. The schedule modification will also reduce student movement in hallways and mitigate possible contagion. Some movement may be required for mathematics, PE, and Discipleship.
- HS: Students will follow their course schedule.

### Will lunch procedures be modified for safeguards against the virus?

**Yes.** DCS is introducing new safety features and following specific guidelines to minimize the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Cafeterias will adhere to strict CDC guidelines and Pima County Health Department Food Safety Rules. Following are some of the changes being made:

- We will encourage families to pack their own lunch, however, the regular hot lunch program will still be an option.
- The snack bar will be **closed** for the foreseeable future.
- Hand sanitizer will be available.
- Facilities will be routinely disinfected, ensuring continual cleaning in between students' use.
- Access to the kitchen/Diner will be limited to DCS staff, and lunch volunteers.
- Masks or visors and gloves will be worn by lunch volunteers.

### How will lunches and snacks be served and eaten?

- PS: Preschoolers are required to bring their snacks and lunch from home. No food service will be provided. Students will eat with their classmates.
- K-5: K-2 will eat in their classrooms while 3-5 play outside. 3-5 will eat in their classrooms, while K-2 play outside.
- 6-8: Under the supervision of faculty and staff, students will be directed to eat in designated areas that include the BOB, the north porch, and the baseball grass. Students will eat with their grade level and rotate locations weekly.
- HS: The Desert Diner will be closed for student seating. Food from our restaurant partners will be distributed through the window of the Desert Diner. Students will line up and maintain physical distance while waiting. Students will have a designated eating area.

**\*No students will be allowed off-campus for lunch. Uber Eats, Grubhub and other food delivery services may not be used.**

### **How will recess take place?**

K-5 recess will be staggered to limit the number of students on the field at any given time. Hand washing will be required before and after each recess.

### **What will K-8 After Care look like?**

We will utilize physical distancing by having some students inside and some students outside. We will also set up tables that are MS-specific, 3-5 specific, and K-2 specific. Understand that the cohorts that take place during the school day are not feasible during After Care. Therefore, if this concerns you, please pick up your child at the end of the day and do not send them to After Care. This is an optional service mostly provided for parents who must work.

### **Will personal belongings be monitored against 'sharing'?**

**Yes.** DCS is discouraging the sharing of all items. We will strive to keep each child's belongings separated from others and in individually labeled containers, cubbies, or areas. Students will not be allowed to share electronic devices, toys, books, and other games or learning aids.

DCS will ensure adequate supplies are available to minimize sharing of high touch materials to the fullest extent possible (i.e., assigning each student their own art supplies, equipment), or limit the use of supplies and equipment by one group of children at a time and clean and disinfect them between use.

### **What safeguards are being taken for chapel and special events?**

- Elementary chapel will be held in each classroom. Chapel attire will not be required.
- Middle School chapel and assemblies will now be held in homerooms. MS chapel attire will not be required.
- High School chapel will not be held together in the Upper Room. However, we intend to stream into rooms.
- Details of special activities or traditions are still being worked out for creative, meaningful alternatives, depending on the situation at the time.

### **What changes are in store for Middle School Trips (May) this year?**

More information to follow on these trips.

### **Will there be a High School Fall Retreat?**

No, however, we are working to preserve what is great about the Retreat in new ways.

### **Are you taking special precautions during P.E.?**

**Yes.** On both campuses, P.E. equipment will be regularly disinfected and sanitized professionally, as well as wiped down by students after every use.

- K-5: P.E. will still occur. There will be more individualized activities and fewer activities that require a group.

- 6-12: Locker rooms and uniform changes will not be required. All equipment will be wiped down at the end of class.

### **Will visitors to school campuses be limited during the school week?**

**Yes.** DCS will limit any nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations as much as possible. Visitors, including parents and grandparents, must be masked at all times.

## **Facilities/Cleaning**

### **Will classroom desks and chairs, and high-touch areas like doorknobs and light switches, be sanitized and disinfected?**

**Yes.** This will occur when there are transitions by students from room to room.

### **Will DCS clean and disinfect high-touch, high-traffic, and common areas throughout the school day?**

**Yes.** DCS custodial staff and teachers will clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces (i.e., playground equipment, door handles, sink handles, drinking fountains) within the school at least daily or between use as much as possible. DCS uses only CDC/EPA approved disinfectant and cleaning protocols.

### **What about lockers and bathrooms?**

- Locker access and bathroom access will be restricted by the number of students.
- One-way traffic lanes in hallways, exits & entrances, and between buildings may be created with directional arrows and signs to keep traffic flowing properly and smoothly.

## **Getting Sick**

### **Are special protections for students at higher risk for illness from COVID-19 being considered?**

**Yes.** DCS will provide online educational options for students with documented IEP and 504 plans.

### **Will there be an online option for students that do not have a documented IEP or 504?**

Online offerings are under consideration right now. Please contact your campus Administrator for more details.

### **Will DCS accommodate students with one or more symptoms who must stay home?**

**Yes.** Students, like all faculty and staff, who have one or more symptoms, are required to stay home. In the event of students needing to remain at home due to being symptomatic, students will not be penalized with absences of this kind. With excused

extended absences, DCS will provide alternatives to students through close partnerships with teachers and Administrators to redeem the time away from class.

**What if a staff member shows symptoms of or contracts COVID-19?**

The staff member will be required to remain home until they are symptom-free for at least 48 hours without symptoms. If a COVID-19 test is taken, the staff member must remain home until test results are received. The infected staff member will be quarantined until they receive a negative COVID-19 test.

**If a staff member contracts COVID-19, do you have a plan on how things are going to be cleaned?**

**Yes.** If a staff member gets infected with COVID-19, that staff member's area will be shut down for 48 hours. Before the start of the next school day, the custodial staff will wear PPE, sanitize that room, and seal it off. We will sanitize all affected surfaces with CDC and EPA approved cleaners, of which we are well stocked.

**What if my child begins to show symptoms at school?**

We will sequester your child in a designated area, place a mask on him or her, notify you immediately, and arrange for you to collect your child within 1 hour.

**How long will my child have to stay at home?**

According to state authorities, a person with the symptoms of COVID-19 needs to remain home until they have been symptom-free for at least 48 hours without medication. Please contact your physician for further advice. You will need a note from your doctor to return to school.

**What if my child tests positive for the COVID-19 virus?**

Your child should remain in self-isolation for at least 10 days after the positive COVID-19 test, or 48 hours after their symptoms have subsided (without the use of medication), whichever is greater.

**Will Health Officials be notified?**

**Yes.** Following state and local laws and regulations, school Administrators should immediately notify local health officials, staff, and families of any case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

**When will my child be allowed to return to school?**

Provided you have followed the above protocol, your child will be allowed to return to school after you have received a "return to school" release from your medical provider and have checked with our Student Health Coordinator, Mrs. Alexa Bathe, and your Administrator, Aaron Jansen (K-8), Angie Alday (PS), or Kevin Kehl (HS).

**What if a member of the home (i.e., sibling, parent) tests positive for COVID, will my child have to stay home from school?**

Students will be expected to stay at home for 10 days and remain isolated from the infected family.

**If a student tests positive, what is the school's obligation for reporting?**

The school is obligated to inform the families of the class/cohort in which the positive test occurred that someone has tested positive. We will not report the name of the child.

**Under what circumstances might the school shutdown?**

- 1) If the governor mandates a stay-at-home order, similar to March, the campuses would close and transition to distance learning for all students.
- 2) If a significant outbreak of the virus occurs on one or both of the campuses.

**Who is the designated COVID-19 point of contact for each campus?**

- Wrightstown: Alexa Bathe, Health Services Coordinator at 520-885-4800
- Speedway: Carol McKee, HS Office Manager at 520-298-5817

**Is there someone I can contact if I have additional questions?**

**Yes.**

- HS: Julie Fowler, 520-298-5817
- K-8: Jesse Hauser, 520-885-4800
- Early Education/Preschool: Pam Leslie, 520-795-7161

## **Athletics**

**Who are the designated COVID-19 points of contact for all sports & athletics programs?**

- Middle School: Angie Espenson, Athletic Director or Jill Dalrymple, 520-885-4800
- High School: Iram Alday, Athletic Director or Kat Droban, Assistant to the Athletic Director 520-298-5817

**What general safeguards are you taking at DCS for sports & athletics?**

- 1) Drinking fountains will be used ONLY to fill water bottles.
- 2) Parents will not be permitted to come inside any facility, including the gym or onto athletic fields, and will need to drop off and pick up from their cars only.
- 3) Clean clothes and water bottles are required for each session.
- 4) Any equipment used will need to be sanitized when completed for the day.
- 5) After using the restroom, a thorough 20-second hand washing/sanitizing before practicing or training is required.
- 6) Athletes should not show up earlier than five minutes before their scheduled activity and must be off campus no later than 10 minutes after practice. Please be on time to pick up your athlete.

- 7) All athletes, coaches, and support staff who are a member of a high-risk group or live at home with a member of a high-risk group shall only attend training sessions virtually.

### **Is there a 'return to use' plan for phasing in the use of the gym and field at the High School and Middle School?**

Yes, by following CDC and AIA recommendations. Please, see below:

#### **Phase One**

##### **Groups of 10, including coaches**

##### **For skill development and conditioning with no contact drills or scrimmages.**

- 1) Players and coaches will be screened before every practice and must fill out a sheet or phone app
- 2) All participants should be symptom-free for 14 days
- 3) No locker room or shower use
- 4) No water fountains or water stations
- 5) No parents allowed in the practice area
- 6) Athletes must bring their own water bottle and towel
- 7) All equipment will be cleaned before and after use of equipment (ball, weights, etc.) by the athlete
- 8) Practicing in pairs with social distancing, with one ball may occur (example basketball person can rebound for another and return the ball, volleyball can bump pass with the same partner). The ball must be the same one and wiped down after use. Athletes must sanitize after use. Minimize this option as much as possible. The passing of balls should not be multiple players.
- 9) Athletes should be kept in the same training group (cohort)
- 10) Social distancing should be adhered to at all times
- 11) At least 15 minutes should be scheduled between groups to allow for disinfecting the facility

#### **Phase Two**

##### **Groups of 50, including coaches, where permitted, and follow all rules listed above.**

#### **Phase Three**

##### **All sports, with and without contact, may resume with usual activity. Equipment will still be cleaned before and after practice.**

##### **For Athletic Fields and Gyms**

CDC-approved disinfectant wipes will be provided by the school and used on all equipment and surfaces before and after all training sessions by coaches or staff. Hand sanitizer stations will be available at all training locations. All athletes will use hand sanitizer before and after practice/workouts. Handwashing is recommended and encouraged before leaving the practice/training session.

### **How will sports seasons, practices, competitions, venues, etc., possibly be affected at the High School?**

AIA and the Governor's office will provide continuous guidance and DCS will follow AIA standards with a range of possibilities:

- Cancellation of games
- Cancellation of seasons
- Holding contests without fans

### **How will sports seasons, practices, competitions, venues, etc., possibly be affected at the Middle School?**

The middle school will partner with the high school and, at a minimum, follow the standards set by the high school. As of August 12, it is the intention of DCS to begin fall sports in some capacity beginning Tuesday, September 8. Parents will be updated regarding any changes.

***DCS would like to extend a special thank you to Pusch Ridge Christian Academy for their collaboration with this document.***