



A charter school for today's leaders.

# **COVID-19 Operations & Continuity of Learning Plan**

July 15, 2021

# Introduction

The Village Leadership Academy continues to work with the Central District Health and other trusted sources to put together guidance for the safe and effective operation of the school. This guide reflects our best ability to follow current guidance to ensure the health and safety of our students, staff, and community while also maintaining continuity of learning in the event of a local outbreak. These guidelines are subject to change as federal, state, and local guidance changes.

VLA recognizes that even with the best prevention strategies and responses in place, there is still a likelihood of the presence of COVID-19 on campus. The intent of these practices and guidelines is to prevent the spread of coronavirus to the greatest extent possible and to respond quickly and effectively to stop the spread should it occur. VLA will continue to provide in person learning to the greatest extent possible at all levels of transmission.

This plan makes the assumption that implementing layered preventions strategies that do not shift frequently will increase the likelihood that mitigation strategies become habit and are more likely to be implemented with consistency by all stakeholders. While VLA will plan for all categories of transmission, the following guidance will reflect the Category 2, or “yellow”, level of community transmission.

## Reputable Sources of Information

- [US Department of Education Re-Opening Guidance](#)
- [Idaho Back to School Framework 2020](#)
- Parent Surveys and Feedback
- [Central District Health](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [Governor Little's Coronavirus Website](#)

# Levels of Community Spread

The following levels of community spread will be monitored by school administration, with support from Central District Health. School administration will monitor the levels of community transmission, vaccination rates, and local outbreaks to determine when the school will move between categories.

## Definitions of Levels of Community Spread

Central District Health Determination Criteria (Consistent with CDC guidelines):

<https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>

VLA will use CDH designations along with local data of student/staff case numbers within the school to determine movement between categories.

As community levels shift, the following guidance changes will come into effect.

### Category 1 - Green - No Community Transmission

- Masks are recommended for all unvaccinated individuals.
- Physical distance not required for unvaccinated individuals.

### Category 2 - Yellow - Minimal to Moderate Community Transmission

- Masks recommended for unvaccinated individuals indoors.
- Physical distance recommended for unvaccinated individuals.

### Category 3 - Orange - High Community Transmission

- Masks strongly recommended for unvaccinated individuals indoors.
- Physical distance strongly recommended for all individuals.
- In person events are limited or provided virtually.

### Category 4 - Red - Critical Community Transmission

- Masks required for all unvaccinated individuals indoors and outdoors.
- Physical distance required for all individuals.
- Possible screening testing for Covid for all non-vaccinated individuals.
- Non-essential visitors and volunteers are limited in the school.
- In person events are canceled or provided virtually.

## Ensuring Equity for Students/Staff

VLA recognizes that some individuals and families may be disproportionately affected by COVID-19 and related guidance. To ensure that all individuals have adequate access to resources to prevent and respond to Covid-19, the following may be employed by the school.

- Share clear and accurate information with the community.
- Model appropriate CDC guidance of mitigation strategies in the community.
- Provide assistance in finding physical and mental health care providers.
- Provide resources such as masks, vaccinations, hand sanitizer, and PPE as needed.
- Connect families with resources related to housing, food, transportation, etc.
- Communicate updated guidance tailored to multiple languages, literacy levels, and cultures.
- Provide access to connectivity and devices.

[CDC Guidance for Promoting Health Equity](#)

## Preventions Strategies

Following CDC guidance, the Village Leadership Academy will implement the following prevention strategies:

- Vaccination
- Masks
- Physical Distancing
- Screening, Testing, and Contact Tracing
- Cleaning and Disinfecting Facilities
- Hand-washing
- Staying Home When Sick

## Vaccination

Vaccines are not required to attend school. Students and staff are encouraged to get vaccinated.

[CDC Vaccine Information](#)

Fully vaccinated individuals may attend school without wearing masks or remaining physically distanced from others.

[CDC Guidance When Fully Vaccinated](#)

## Masks

Face masks and shields are not required for individuals who are fully vaccinated.

Face masks and shields will be recommended for all individuals who are not fully vaccinated. Masks can be removed when outside and away from others.

Masks do not need to be worn when outdoors.

Masks should completely cover the nose and mouth and fit snugly against the sides of face without gaps.

Face Masks will not be provided for all students. When necessary the school may provide a mask for students, staff, and visitors.

Individuals who cannot wear a mask due to a disability or [due to an situation where a mask is not recommended](#) may be exempt from the requirement to wear a mask. School administration will work with individuals on a case by case basis to make this determination.

Masks may be worn by an individual for any reason, regardless of level of community transmission.

[CDC Guidance for Wearing Masks](#)

## Physical Distancing

Fully vaccinated individuals are not required to maintain physical distance at school.

Physical Distance (“one arms length” or 3 ft) is required for individuals who are not fully vaccinated.

**Small Groups within Classrooms (“Podding”)**

When 3 ft of distance in a classroom is not possible for all students, teachers will place students in assigned small groups to limit physical interaction during partner and group work.

Masks may also be required when physical distancing cannot be maintained by unvaccinated individuals.

**Additional strategies implemented to promote physical distancing:**

- Use outdoor spaces to hold classes when weather permits and as class content allows;
- Space seating/desks and equipment/labs at least 3 feet apart.
- Host classes in larger rooms to allow for physical distancing;
- Turn desks to face the same direction (rather than facing each other),
- have students sit spaced at least 3 feet apart on only one side of tables; and
- Provide physical guides (such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls) to ensure that people remain at least 3 feet apart

## Screening, Testing, and Contact Tracing

Fully vaccinated individuals do not need to be screened, tested, or quarantine if exposed to Covid-19.

### Screening

Screening of students and staff will be done on an as needed basis and could be completed at the front office or in the classroom at any time.

Parents of unvaccinated children are encouraged to screen their own children each morning before sending their student to school. This includes checking their temperature and looking for other symptoms of coronavirus.

A list of symptoms from the CDC can be found [HERE](#) as well as a Self-Checker.

If unvaccinated students have symptoms at school, they will be sent home.

### Testing

Fully vaccinated individuals will not undergo testing for Covid-19 at the school.

VLA may provide screening testing for individuals who are not vaccinated if the level of community transmission is moderate to high.

VLA can help any individual access screening testings if requested.

### Symptoms

Anyone showing [symptoms of Covid-19](#) on campus may be asked to leave campus immediately.

Staff and students who have symptoms of Covid-19, or have been in contact with someone with symptoms in the past 14 days, should not come to school and should notify the school as soon as possible.

For some students and staff with another diagnosis, there may be symptoms that present similar to COVID-19. These individuals will be addressed on a case-by-case basis and may be allowed to continue at school with guidance from CDH and their health care provider.

## Cleaning and Disinfecting Facilities

### **Ventilation**

The VLA campus is already exposed to adequate outdoor ventilation. Staff will be encouraged to open windows and doors to increase ventilation to classrooms and offices when appropriate.

[CDC Guidance on Ventilation](#)

### **Deep Cleaning and Regular Disinfection**

The school will be deep cleaned prior to starting school in August and during extended breaks to provide more than normal sanitation and disinfection of all classrooms, offices, and common areas.

Custodial services will also provide daily disinfection after school. Teachers and Staff will sanitize frequently used surfaces throughout the day and shared objects between each use.

Staff and Custodial Services will follow guidance from the CDC for the correct sanitation and disinfection of the facility.

[CDC Guidance on Sanitizing Facilities](#)

## Hand-washing

Hand washing and the use of hand sanitizer at various times throughout the day will be required of students.

Hand sanitizer is being provided in each classroom and common area.

[CDC Hand-washing Guidance](#)

## Staying Home When Sick

Staff and students are required to stay home when sick and when presenting symptoms.

### **Student Attendance**

Students who are absent for a covid related reason will not be adversely impacted by grades or any other measures.

### **Staff Attendance**

Special accommodations may be made for vulnerable staff to work online and/or from home on a case by case basis. Consideration will also be made for staff who have to care for family members at home.

Staff who are absent for a COVID related reason will not be docked personal or sick leave. This includes staff who have to stay home to care for sick children or family.

[CDC Guidance on When to Quarantine](#)

## Response to Positive Cases

Fully vaccinated individuals do not need to quarantine if in close contact with a positive case of Covid-19.

### **How to respond to a confirmed case within the school building:**

The response to a known person with Covid-19 within the building will be addressed on a case by case basis under the guidance of CDH.

The following are the general guidelines for how to respond once a known case is identified.

- Notify Central District Health, if not already involved.

CDH Call Center (321-2222). Or Email: [COVIDSchools@cdh.idaho.gov](mailto:COVIDSchools@cdh.idaho.gov)

- Send student home immediately if at the school.
- Identify anyone who may have been in [close contact](#) with the known case.



- For the purposes of identifying anyone in close contact:

***Close Contact: Anyone within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes***

- Following recommendations from CDH for next course of action, recommendations could include:
  - Exclude the positive person from the school to allow for self-isolation or self-quarantine until they can safely return.
  - Possible dismissal of students and staff within the same classroom for 1-2 days.
  - Extended school closure if necessary
- Communicate with staff, parents, and students who were possibly exposed to the positive case.
- Clean and disinfect thoroughly
  - This includes closing off areas where an infected person has been.
  - Waiting 24 hours or more before sanitizing and disinfecting.
- Reinstate strategies to continue education and support to students and parents as needed.

### **Assisting in Contact Tracing and Communication**

Under the direction of the CDH, staff will assist in identifying who was in [close contact](#) with a positive case of COVID and communicating with potentially infected individuals and their families.

School Administration and Staff will work with CDH to coordinate communication and to maintain confidentiality in accordance with [HIPAA](#).

### **Self-quarantine and Isolation**

Each incident will be addressed on a case by case basis with guidance from CDH.

Anyone who has been in contact with someone with symptoms will be asked to [self-quarantine](#) for up to two weeks (approximately 14 days) to watch for symptoms.

Anyone who is waiting for a test result should remain home until the result of the test is known.

Anyone who has been identified positive with COVID-19 will be required to follow guidance from the CDC for [leaving isolation](#) and should self-quarantine for two weeks (approximately 14 days).

# Additional Considerations

## Short Term or Extended Closures

In the event that a wide spread transmission or a local order closing the school, VLA will work with the CDH to provide guidance.

## Visitors and Volunteers

Visitors and Volunteers are required to follow all current school guidance.

Fully vaccinated volunteers and visitors will not be required to wear masks or physically distance.

Any visitor or volunteer showing symptoms of Covid-19 will be required to leave the school immediately.

## Events

### **Non-School Related Events**

Any non-school sanctioned events that occur within the school building will be required to follow the current safety guidelines in place.

### **School Events**

School events will be held in person, following all current guidelines in place.

## Lunch and Cafeteria

### **Preparing and Serving Food**

VLA will work with Life's Kitchen to prepare food in advance to provide the appropriate measures for serving food safely to students and staff.

### **Seating**

Students will be seated to allow for appropriate social distance (3 ft) while eating.

Students will be required to wash their hands before and after lunch. Hand sanitizer will be made available in the cafeteria.

High-touch surfaces will be sanitized between groups of students using the cafeteria.

Students will not be allowed to share food, utensils, or any other items during lunch.

Tables will be separated by 3ft or more and students will be seated in the same pods as in classrooms while eating.

### **Additional Measures**

If needed, VLA may do any of the following additional measures:

- Provide prepackaged meals
- Eat lunch outside
- Face students only in one direction or increase social distances
- Provide longer lunch periods to further stagger groups of students eating at any one time.

## **Recess and Physical Education**

Fully vaccinated individuals do not have any restrictions when outdoors or in Physical Education Classes.

Unvaccinated individuals do not need to mask or physically distance when outdoors, unless activities require sustained close proximity with other people.

Unvaccinated individuals may be asked to mask or physically distance during indoor Physical Education classes.

## **Continuity of Learning**

To the greatest extent possible, VLA will continue in-person learning for the 2021-22 school year. Continuing in person learning reflects the intent of [House Bill 175](#) and the desire of the VLA community to have students in Kindergarten through 8th grade in person for instruction to the greatest extent possible. VLA shares the belief that students well being and academic success result from learning in person. Through implementing the guidance provided above, VLA will be able to safely maximize in person learning for the next school year in all stages of community transmission.

The disruptions over the past year had social, emotional, mental, and academic impacts for all students at VLA. Some populations of students were more impacted than others during periods of virtual learning. For VLA, these include students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and students with limited access to resources during the pandemic.

In addition to ensuring that VLA continues in person learning, addressing unfinished learning and responding to the social, emotional, and mental needs of students and staff are a priority for the 2021-22 school year.

### **Addressing Unfinished Learning**

Following the guidance of Gary Whitely and Lexie Domaradzki in their presentation of Strategies for Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 and Learning Loss Across All Grade Levels, VLA will implement the following recommendations from research to address unfinished learning as a result of the pandemic.

1. *Assess what students need:* VLA will use multiple measures, including state assessments, school benchmark assessments, ongoing classroom assessments, attendance data, and survey results to identify students who have been most impacted by the pandemic.
2. *Increase vertical teaming opportunities:* VLA will ensure that teachers have the time, resources, and guidance to work together to address the broad range of academic, behavioral, and social/emotional needs of students.
3. *Provide teacher/staff resources and supports:* VLA will provide information and professional development opportunities to assist staff in implementing trauma sensitive supports and instruction, including ways to address the emotional/mental well being of students.
4. *Monitor progress and tailor supports:* VLA will use ongoing assessment data to identify and respond to individual student's needs, provide targeted supports, implement interventions, and monitor achievement gaps for all students.
5. *Emphasize home-school connections:* VLA will continue to emphasize the importance of home-school connections and include families in meaningful partnerships to address the unique needs of all students.

The following additional strategies will be employed to address unfinished learning:

- Professional development for teachers in effective instructional methods
- Purchase of high quality instructional materials
- High-dosage tutoring and supplemental interventions for struggling learners
- Accelerated learning within grade level instruction

### **Addressing Students/Staff Social, Emotional, Mental Health**

VLA does not employ mental health professionals. Therefore, the responsibility of addressing the social, emotional, and mental health needs of students falls on teachers and staff.

VLA will continue to provide a systematic approach to address the social and emotional well-being of students through the Leader in Me Program. VLA will use survey data with students, staff, and families (Measurable Results Assessment) to ensure that social and emotional supports are being implemented effectively.

The following supports and strategies to address student well-being:

- Professional Development for teachers/staff on integrating social and emotional learning (SEL), trauma informed practices, and restorative practices.
- Provide time in the instruction schedule for the explicit teaching of social and emotional skills at every grade level through the Leader in Me Program.
- Implement restorative practices in disciplinary policies
- Assist families with accessing counseling, behavioral health, mental health and trauma supports.
- Develop relationships with community partners and resources to broaden available supports to students/families in and out of school.

VLA will continue to provide for staff well-being through the following strategies:

- Providing access to mental health services via the Employee Access Program (EAP).
- Providing time and training in self-care and social/emotional well-being.
- Utilizing frequent “check-in” strategies to evaluate the emotional, social, and mental needs of teachers and staff.

### **Review and Revision of the Covid Operations and Continuity of Learning Plan**

This plan will be reviewed once each 6 months as required by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. The plan will be made available online on the website and include means for parents, students, and community to provide input and comment at any time. Additionally, VLA administration will seek input and engage in conversations with stakeholders (students, parents, staff, community members).

The VLA School Board and Administration will make updates each 6 months, if necessary, to reflect community input and changing guidance at a regularly scheduled VLA School Board Meeting.

VLA will utilize the support and technical assistance of the State Department of Education, Central District Health, and other organizations to provide for the implementation, review, and revision of this plan.