



PATAULA CHARTER ACADEMY
SPRING CREEK CHARTER ACADEMY



March 13, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

In everything we do, the safety of our students and staff is our top priority. The situation with COVID-19 (Coronavirus) has rapidly been changing over the past week. The school has created a plan in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The plan includes all stages of the outbreak, including Prevention, Early Preparedness, Response, and Recovery. We have been working on the Prevention and Early Preparedness stages in the last week. As the letter we sent out last week stated, our schools have put many strategies in place to prevent the spread of illness in efforts to decrease the chances of an outbreak at our schools. These strategies include increased cleaning/sanitizing of the schools and buses, educating and enforcing good hygiene habits, and reminding and encouraging parents to follow illness related absence procedures. We will continue these efforts and appreciate your cooperation in following these procedures as well.

At this time, we are moving into the Response stage of the plan. In an abundance of precaution, we have made the decision to suspend all activities outside of normal school functions until further notice. This includes suspended field trips, sporting events, and other special events such as PTO meetings and Gallery Night. We will continue the normal school day, after-school program, and sports practices at this time. However, that could change at any time based on new information. Therefore, our teachers have been working on instructional plans for continued learning should a school closure be required. We are continuing to closely monitor the situation by staying in close contact with local health officials and the GaDOE to make further decisions on possible school closure. At this point, we also recommend staff and students who are more susceptible to illness contact their physician for guidance on whether it is safe to remain in school. We will work with those individuals to help ensure their safety and continued learning as needed.

At this time, we are not aware of any cases of COVID-19 within our school families or of any of our staff or students being directly exposed to someone with a confirmed case. Based on information from GaDOE and health officials, a school closure is not necessary at this time. **Please report to the school immediately if a staff or student has been diagnosed or directly exposed to someone who has been confirmed as having the illness.** If that should happen, we will likely immediately implement a 14 day closure, as recommended by health officials. We will continue to update parents as the situation progresses.

Thank you,

Kylie Holley
Superintendent



Pandemic Infectious Disease Plan
Pataula Charter Academy
Spring Creek Charter Academy

March 12, 2020

(COVID-19, Corona Virus)



Purpose

The purpose of this Pandemic Infectious Disease Plan is to provide a coordinated school response to protect students, staff and our community should a pandemic incident occur in our communities. The Toolkit for Schools describes a pandemic as a worldwide epidemic over a wide area, crossing international boundaries and affecting large numbers of people.

Prevention

To help with preventing the spread of any infectious disease, schools will educate students, staff, and the community on social etiquette and disease prevention.

The schools will also encourage parents and community members to learn more about a possible pandemic infectious disease by accessing outside resources.

We encourage parents, students, and staff to be aware of the symptoms of illness and not to report to school if they experience **fever**, along with any of the following symptoms:

- Cough
- Sore Throat
- Shortness of Breath
- Body Aches
- Diarrhea and Vomiting
- Headaches
- Chills
- Fatigue (w/ other symptoms)

Strategies to prevent the spread of illness include:

- Keep children who are sick at home. Follow normal school guidelines on this. Students should not return to school until fever-free without taking fever-reducing medication for at least 24 hours.
- **If your child is absent due to flu-like symptoms or has been diagnosed with the flu or Coronavirus, please let the school know.** Tracking this will help the school, in cooperation with health officials, make decisions for the school's pandemic plan of action.
- Teachers and parents should teach children to wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Cleaning frequently touched surfaces at school and home with soap and water or a bleach solution often.
- Teachers and parents should teach children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or by coughing into the inside of the elbow. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Practice "social distancing" – do not shake hands, hug, or touch other people in general, stay at least 6 feet away from sick people

Informational Websites:

Georgia Department of Education

<https://www.gadoe.org/External-Affairs-and-Policy/communications/Pages/coronavirus.aspx>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Georgia Department of Public Health

<https://dph.georgia.gov/novelcoronavirus>

Early Preparedness

Schools will implement the following preparedness steps if there is the potential for an outbreak or pandemic infectious disease:

- Educating teachers, students, and families on illness symptoms and prevention strategies.
- Implement an increased cleaning schedule to include frequent surface cleaning with a bleach solution and more frequent checks on soap and paper towel dispensers. This includes disinfecting buses daily.
- Frequent monitoring of websites with official health information and increased communication with local health officials to ensure the most current information is being used to make decisions. This especially includes monitoring confirmed cases of the infectious disease in or near our communities.
- Begin preparing for potential school closing by creating distance learning packages. Ensure communication avenues are well established for communicating whole-school messages, as well as communication among students and teachers for continued learning.
- Monitor absences more closely and request that parents contact the school to report symptoms of illnesses. This will help the school, in cooperation with local health officials, make decisions about school closure.

Response

Students and staff who may be more vulnerable to infection are encouraged to consult health care professionals regarding additional health/safety precautions. It may be suggested that students and staff who have an increased level of susceptibility stay home depending on the level of the outbreak.

As a pandemic progresses, the Superintendent will consult with the Community Department of Health to recommend actions to be taken.

If the pandemic protocol is enacted, the following steps for monitoring and documenting absences will begin:

- It will be the responsibility of the building secretary to solicit information regarding a student's illness if they are absent from school.
- Each school building will use a log for maintaining a record of absences.
- Each building will submit a summary of absences to the Superintendent on a daily basis.
- The superintendent will report illness related absences as necessary to the Department of Community Health.

Based on recommendations by the CDC and local health authorities any students or staff with symptoms of the pandemic infectious disease should voluntarily stay home for 14 days unless it has been confirmed by a doctor that the student or staff member does NOT have the pandemic infectious disease. If it is confirmed that the patient does NOT have the pandemic infectious disease, students and staff should follow the normal school protocol (outlined in the Student/Parent Handbook) before returning to school.

If a student or staff member has come into direct contact with a person who has a confirmed diagnosis of the pandemic infectious disease the school should be contacted and the person should not return to school for at least 14 days.

During a pandemic event, normal absence or sick leave policies and procedures may be altered to ensure that students and staff are not penalized for being cautious when making decisions about when to stay out of school.

Should students become ill at school, students will be isolated until picked up by a parent/guardian. Staff members who become ill at school should contact an administrator immediately to get coverage of the class until a substitute can arrive, and the staff member should leave school immediately.

In consultation with local health authorities, other school districts and/or based on mass student and staff absences or confirmed cases of the pandemic infectious disease within the school community the school may:

- Cancel all nonacademic events and/or
- Close schools for an extended period of time (14 days is being recommended for COVID-19).
- Follow outlined procedures in the schools' Emergency Plans.

During the pandemic the Superintendent will work together with public health officials regarding decisions on closure and cancellation of events. If the decision for school closure is made, the Superintendent will determine critical staff needed to maintain the function of the schools. If it is determined that critical staff should remain at work during the closure, social distancing should be utilized to prevent potential exposure to the illness.

When preparing to dismiss students for an extended period of time, students should take all academic materials home with them. Prior to school staff being dismissed lesson plans should be prepared to promote student study at home during school closure. Due to the fact that many students in our rural area may not have access to internet, lesson plans should include activities that can be completed without internet access. However, internet activities may be included to enhance learning for students with access. The schools may also implement a plan for students without a home computer to check-out Chromebooks during the closure. Teachers should also prepare for ways to communicate with parents and students and to monitor learning progress during the closure.

The schools will continue to communicate to the community via media and/or internet throughout the pandemic response regarding any relevant information leading to recovery and return to normal operations.

Note: Statewide orders to close schools and other community places can/may be declared by the governor at any time.

Recovery

The Superintendent will communicate with the Community Health Department and other health officials regarding when it is safe for the district to resume normal operation. When it is determined to be safe to resume the district will notify the community in advance via normal school communication methods and media routes. The schools will relay to the community information regarding expectations and schedule changes.

As the schools resume normal operation it will remain in contact with the Health Department regarding disease surveillance and any need to return to a response mode. The school will prepare in advance of re-opening for needs of staff and students.