



RIPON CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

Fall Reopening Plan

Official Plan for
2020-2021
School Year

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Introduction

The goal of Ripon Christian Schools' reopening plan is to provide re-entry that fosters the overall health of children, adolescents, staff, and community that we serve. The plan is based on evidence that is currently available and will be monitored as new information or situations arise. We hold as true that reopening will have a positive impact on the spiritual, mental, behavioral, and developmental health of our students. We trust that this plan will provide a framework for safety when Ripon Christian reopens on August 19, 2020.

There are many federal, state, and local guidelines available when it comes to making decisions on how to best mitigate the risk and protect our school and community. Ripon Christian has carefully considered many of the available guidelines and will lean most heavily on the medical advice from the American Academy of Pediatrics and has developed a plan that relies heavily on the 12 step plan to reopening schools provided by Toronto Hospital for Sick Children.

From the American Academy of Pediatrics:

“Schools are fundamental to child and adolescent development and well-being and provide our children and adolescents with academic instruction, social and emotional skills, safety, reliable nutrition, physical/speech and mental health therapy, and opportunities for physical activity, among other benefits.”

From the Hospital for Sick Children:

“Not opening schools in September would continue to have a negative impact on the mental, behavioral, and developmental health of children. We hope these recommendations help provide a framework to keep everyone safe when school doors reopen.”

Basis for RCS Reopening

Multiple reports from around the world indicate that children account for less than 5 -10% of infections. In California, according to the California Department of Public Health, of 391,538 COVID-19 cases reported as of July 20, 26,304 (6.7%) were in children aged 5-17 years. There have been zero reported deaths due to COVID-19 in California for ages 0-17. Children are less susceptible to COVID-19 infection and may be less likely to transmit the virus to others. There is also strong evidence that the majority of children who become infected are either asymptomatic or have only mild symptoms, such as cough, fever, and sore throat. While serious illness requiring hospitalization is known in children, including multi-system inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C), this is relatively rare and is generally treatable. Severe illness requiring intensive care admission occurs in a small minority of pediatric cases, particularly among those with certain underlying medical conditions, but the clinical course is much less severe than in adults and deaths are non-existent in California.

It is critical that we balance the risks of COVID-19 in children, which appear to be minimal, with the harms of school closure which is impacting their physical, spiritual, emotional, and mental health. It should be recognized that it will not be possible to remove all risk of infection and disease now that COVID-19 is well established in communities. Mitigation of risk will be needed for the foreseeable future.

Return to school has always been associated with increases in cases of community-associated seasonal respiratory viral infections. As a result, appropriate measures will be proactively put in place to mitigate the effects. Consistency is essential for our students and it will be important to ensure that once children return to school, our schools stay open to the extent possible. Furthermore, children rely on structure and schedule for stability, which supports the need for a daily school model.

Ongoing Monitoring



Ripon Christian recognizes that COVID-19 is constantly changing and administration is meeting regularly to monitor data within our community as a whole. Administrators are keeping the Ripon Christian School Board aware of all pertinent information.

The administration has relied on the following key principles as outlined by the American Academy of Pediatrics:

- School policies must be flexible and nimble in responding to new information, and administrators must be willing to refine approaches when specific policies are not working.
- It is critically important to develop strategies that can be revised and adapted depending on the level of viral transmission in the school and throughout the community.
- Policies should be practical, feasible, and appropriate for the child and adolescent's developmental stage.

Family Responsibility



As partners, Ripon Christian will be relying heavily upon parents to ensure the health and safety of all staff and students on our school campus. We ask that you commit to keeping Ripon Christian safe by keeping your student home if they are suffering from any symptom of illness. The ability to keep our campus open and students in classrooms hinges on our best efforts to keep the COVID-19 virus out of our school to the greatest extent possible.

While medical experts agree that the risk to the individual child is very low and reasonable precautions are being taken, there is a risk that a child could become infected while attending Ripon Christian Schools and infect others. No one understands their child better than parents. We are asking that parents make the ultimate decision and accept the responsibility that enrolling their child at Ripon Christian is appropriate.

Thank you for taking these precautions to keep our RC Family safe!

Plan for Reopening

The following summarizes our current plan for school reopening based on the available evidence as well as expert opinion, organized into the categories below:

- Symptom Screening
- Positive Test Procedure
- Hand Hygiene
- Face Coverings
- Physical Distancing
- Facility Setup & Cleaning
- Busing

Symptom Screening



Screening to prevent symptomatic individuals from entering the school

In order to prevent the spread of infection, students, teachers, and other employees who have signs/ symptoms of COVID-19 (California Department of Public Health) should stay home. Signs and symptoms include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills / Repeated shaking with chills
- Fatigue
- Muscle Pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- New loss of taste or smell

Before entering campus - Parents will complete a form attesting to the results of a daily health screening before arriving at school. ***This screening will be required*** and can be completed via the school app (to be released soon) or school website (www.rcschools.com/covid-19).

Symptoms at school - Should a student present with symptoms during the day, parents will be contacted and student will need to be picked up immediately.

At home - Distance learning procedures will be implemented on an as-needed basis for children who are required to stay home because they are sick or in isolation due to COVID-19 infection or exposure.

Positive Test Procedure



Procedure for a positive COVID-19 test for a student or teacher

- Any student or staff member that tests positive for COVID - 19 will be required to isolate for 10 days and must be symptom free for at least 72 hours prior to entering campus.
- Family members of individuals that test positive will be required to quarantine and monitor themselves for symptoms.
- Any person in close proximity to a person who has tested positive for COVID -19 will be notified of possible exposure and instructed to self-monitor for the onset of symptoms.
- The privacy of all individuals who test positive will be maintained in accordance with all state and federal privacy laws.

Hand Hygiene



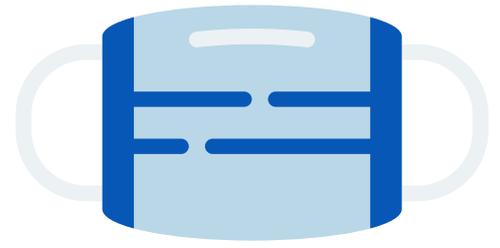
Hand washing & sanitizing protocol

COVID-19 and other respiratory viruses are almost exclusively spread by respiratory droplet transmission. As a result, and because virus shedding may occur prior to symptom onset or in the absence of symptoms, routine, frequent and proper hand hygiene (soap and water or hand sanitizer) is critical to limit transmission.

Proper hand hygiene is one of the most effective strategies to prevent the spread of most respiratory viruses including COVID-19, particularly during the pre-symptomatic phase of the illness.

- **Education** - Students will be taught how to clean their hands properly (with age-appropriate material) and to try and avoid touching their face, eyes, nose, and mouth as much as possible.
- **Signage** - Ripon Christian will remind students to perform hand hygiene.
- **Schedule** - A regular schedule for routine hand hygiene, above and beyond what is usually recommended (before eating food, after using the restroom, etc.) will be required.
 - **Lower school** - Students will practice hand hygiene at the start and end of every school day as well as prior to and after all recess and/or breaks.
 - **Upper school** - Students will practice hand hygiene upon entering all classrooms.

Face Coverings



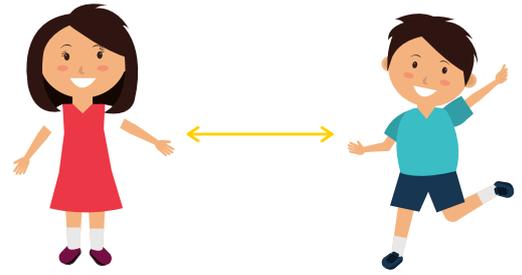
Face masks or coverings including shields may reduce transmission from individuals who are shedding the virus. However, the extent of this benefit is unknown however if worn incorrectly, it could lead to an increased risk of infection and it is not practical for a child to wear a mask properly for the duration of a school day.

- For students and staff, face coverings will not be required at all times.
- While at Ripon Christian, staff and students may be required to wear a face covering at certain times.
 - Such times include circumstances throughout the day when close physical proximity is unavoidable.
 - For example, passing periods, pick up and drop off and classroom activities in which physical distancing is not possible.
 - Face coverings will not be required during lunch and recess.
- All students must have access to a face covering while at school.
- It is acknowledged that some teachers, students, and other school staff may choose to regularly wear masks. This is a personal choice and will not be discouraged.

From The University of Toronto, Hospital for Sick Kids

- *Children are not typically trained in their use and there is potential for increased risk of infection with improper mask use.*
- *In young children, in particular, masks can be irritating and may lead to increased touching of the face and eyes which could increase the risk of infection.*
- *It is impractical for a child to wear a mask properly for the duration of the school day. Children would need assistance to follow appropriate procedures for putting on and taking off the mask (i.e. during mealtimes, snack times). In addition, during these times when the mask is removed, they would need to be stored appropriately to prevent infection spread.*
- *It is likely that masks will be disposed of improperly throughout the school and potentially lead to increased risk by children playing with them.*
- *The mask may not be tolerated by certain populations (i.e. children with underlying lung conditions, asthma, allergies) and especially during warm time periods.*

Physical Distancing



Physical distancing will be emphasized where practical. The following steps will be taken to ensure proper distancing.

- **Classroom furniture** will be arranged to leave as much space as possible between students.
- **Smaller class sizes**, if feasible, will aid in physical distancing.
- **When students are in the classroom**, when physical distancing can be maintained, face coverings will not be required.
- **During outdoor activities**, such as recess and P.E., physical distancing will not be required.
- **Recess** will be offered at staggered times to create additional spacing on playgrounds.
- **Large gatherings** or assemblies will be modified or canceled for the immediate future.
- **Chapel** will remain a staple of every student's experience here at Ripon Christian.

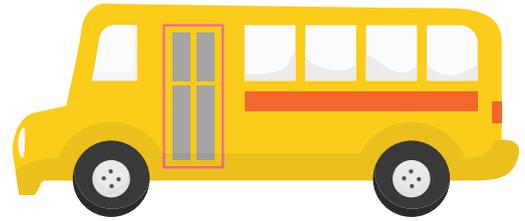
Facility Setup & Cleaning



Ripon Christian Schools is committed to providing thorough, comprehensive and detailed cleaning of school facilities prior to the start of each new school day.

- A regular cleaning schedule will be used throughout the school day by teachers with an emphasis on high touch surfaces.
- Maximum efforts will be made to reduce the need to touch objects/doors.
- More thorough cleaning of all surfaces will be addressed by the cleaning crews each evening at the conclusion of the school day.
- All classrooms will be outfitted with hand sanitizer stations as well as common areas on campus.
- Partitions will be placed in classrooms where students share tables.
- Partitions will be situated in offices and reception areas for the safety of our office staff.

Busing



Ripon Christian remains committed to providing bus service across our broad constituent area. Additional measures will be taken to protect our students that utilize our bussing system.

- All students must complete their health screening before entering the bus.
- Students will be grouped by families and will be in assigned sections on the bus.
- Masks will be required for entry onto the bus.
- Each bus will be thoroughly sanitized at the end of both morning and afternoon routes as well as all other student trips.

Summary

Parents, children, and the community at large need to be aware COVID-19 is likely to persist and circulate like other respiratory viruses. Current data indicates COVID-19 causes mild symptoms in children and young adults and that the best overall strategy for students and the population at large, taking into account the secondary adverse health and well-being implication of a lockdown, is to return to school.

This document provides guidance surrounding the reopening of Ripon Christian Schools as it relates to the measures to mitigate risks. As discussed, the risks of infection and transmission in children, which appear to be minimal, need to be balanced with the harms of school closure which is impacting their spiritual, emotional, physical, and mental health.

It is important to note that this reopening plan may evolve as new evidence emerges and as more information is gathered.

Resources

*Association of Christian Schools International
American Academy of Pediatrics*

The University of Toronto, Hospital for Sick Kids

National Association of Independent Schools

Western Association of School and Colleges

California State Department of Education

California State Department of Public Health

Center for Disease Control

Staying Connected

Through prayer

Pray for continual health & safety for our community as well as guidance for our national and local leaders.

Ask questions

Please use the link [HERE](#) and on our website www.rcschools.com/covid-19 to ask questions and find answers to FAQ.

Check your email and our website frequently

Updates will be sent out to your school email and posted on our website.

Engage on social media

Follow us @riponchristianschools to see what is happening on campus and look out for our new Ripon Christian app coming soon!

