



## **San Joaquin County Dept. of Public Health K- 6 Waiver Application**

**Tuesday, September 1, 2020**

### **Introduction**

Ripon Christian Schools is a PK-12th grade educational institution with approximately 830 total students, 396 of which are currently enrolled in K through 6th grade. The 2020-2021 school year was previously scheduled to begin on Wednesday, August 19, 2020. After discussions at the school board level, a decision to delay the school year until Tuesday, September 8, 2020, was made to prepare for a distance learning start to the school year. The Board and staff of Ripon Christian firmly believe it is critical to have students on campus for in-person instruction as soon as we are allowed. To be prepared for in-person/on-campus instruction, we have put into place guidelines and plans to minimize the potential for the spread of COVID-19 while providing a safe and nurturing environment for students (K-6th grade) to learn. Should some families not feel comfortable with their students on campus or are unable to attend because of illness, distance learning will remain an option.

Considerations made in considering reopening for on-campus/in-person school:

- Ripon Christian Schools (RCS) can utilize staff to group students into groups (cohorts) as small and consistent as practicable.
- RCS has over 35 acres and multiple indoor and outdoor facilities to allow students to spread out and socially distance.
- RCS has surveyed families on two occasions and found over 95% of enrolled families want their child on campus for in-person instruction as soon as possible.
- RCS also surveyed all elementary staff and found that 96% of staff are willing to return to campus for in-person instruction. Alternate arrangements and accommodations have been agreed upon to allow staff not comfortable with in-person instruction to provide services while feeling safe.

- RCS will continue to provide distance learning for all students if they are not yet able to return or in the event of COVID-19 exposure or illness.
- The additional cost of distance learning and all other expenditures have fallen squarely on the school and its primary funding tool, tuition. Outside resources such as state grants and aid are not available, causing a significant fiscal impact on RCS.

## **RCS Reopening**

- **Cleaning and Disinfection:**
  - RCS will regularly clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces (designated staff to do so throughout the day)
  - Shared items will be minimized: students will have individual supplies, and supplies required to be shared will be disinfected regularly.
  - Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched. This may include cleaning objects/surfaces, e.g., doorknobs, light switches, classroom sink handles, countertops.
    - Our staff and facilities team will clean with the cleaners approved for use against COVID-19 on the EPA approved list.
    - Our staff and facilities team will use all cleaning products according to the directions on the label.
    - Disposable wipes or an equivalent will be provided to teachers and staff so that commonly used surfaces (e.g., keyboards, desks, remote controls) can be wiped down before use.
    - RCS will ensure adequate supplies to support cleaning and disinfection practices.
- **Cohorting:**
  - RCS students will be fixed in a cohort that stays together for all activities and minimizes/avoids contact with other groups or individuals who are not part of the cohort.
- **Entrance, Egress, and Movement within the School:** RCS has plans for students and staff's movement to avoid close contact and/or mixing of cohorts.
  - RCS will avoid mixing students in common areas. For example, students will eat lunch outside or in their classrooms as a cohort.
  - Almost all RCS classrooms have entry doors from the outside into the rooms to minimize cohorts' mixing.
  - RCS will avoid taking multiple classes to bathrooms at once (e.g., avoid having all classes use the bathroom right after lunch or recess).
  - RCS will stagger playground use and disinfect equipment between classes.

- **Face-Coverings and Other Essential Protective Gear:** RCS will follow the California Department of Public Health face-covering requirements.
  - RCS staff will be required to wear face-coverings when another individual is present or in public spaces.
  - For children, masks/face-coverings are required 3rd - 6th grade and are recommended for students under 3rd grade, unless exempt (with a note from an MD or DO).
  - For adults, masks/face-coverings are required, unless exempt (with a note from an MD or DO).
  - RCS will engage and encourage everyone in the school to practice preventive behaviors, communicating that these are the most critical actions that will support RCS's safe reopening and will help us stay open.
- **Health Screening for Students and Staff:** Upon arrival, students and staff will be temperature checked before entering the facilities. Ill students or staff will be separated from others and sent home immediately.
  - Before arrival, all students and staff will complete a health screening. Staff and students will be asked if they or anyone they live with have any of the following symptoms:
    - Fever or chills
    - Cough
    - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
    - Fatigue
    - Muscle or body aches
    - Headache
    - New loss of taste or smell
    - Sore throat
    - Congestion or runny nose
    - Nausea or vomiting
    - Diarrhea
  - RCS will have a designated room strictly for ill students.
  - Staff will be trained and informed of all sick leave policies.
  - RCS will have a medical profession on-site each morning to help with student arrivals.
- **Healthy Hygiene Practices:** RCS has availability of handwashing stations and hand sanitizer.
  - We will enforce strict handwashing guidelines for all staff and children. They will be taught to wash hands for 20 seconds with soap, rubbing thoroughly after application, and use paper towels (or single-use cloth towels) to dry hands thoroughly.

- Teachers will review hygiene guidelines regularly with students (age-appropriate).
- Students will wash their hands or use hand sanitizer upon arrival, before and after eating, after using the bathroom, after outdoor time, and any time the student coughs or sneezes.
- Drinking fountains are only available to fill a reusable bottle. Families must send a labeled water bottle for students.
- RCS students must bring their own lunches and snacks, and food sharing will not be permitted.
- All prepackaged food sales on campus have been suspended.
- **Identification and Tracing of Contact:** RCS will take the following actions when there is a confirmed case of COVID-19. RCS has a designated person for the local health department to contact about COVID-19 (Eric Segaar at [esegaar@rcschools.com](mailto:esegaar@rcschools.com)).
  - If any school staff has a known exposure to COVID-19, they will follow the staff plan:
    - If an employee calls in sick due to symptoms or is at work displaying symptoms associated with COVID, let HR know. Once that is done, the supervisor should not be the answer person. All employee questions should be directed to HR.
    - A brief interview will occur by HR to determine a timeline of the symptoms' onset to conclude if their possible exposure was on-campus or off-campus.
    - If it is determined it might be from an on-campus exposure, we will direct the employee to go to Kaiser On The Job (KOTJ), the fourth floor in the Main hospital on Dale Road, for immediate attention.
    - We would confer with our Facilities Manager and determine the best course of action to disinfect the employee's areas.
    - If it is determined it was definitely from an off-campus exposure, the employee would be asked to stay home, contact their healthcare provider, stay home for 14 days, and let them know they would need to be released by their healthcare provider.
    - We would ask for the names of all the people the employee had close contact with, working, or standing within six feet.
    - HR will contact those employees and inform them of their possible exposure and give options on how to proceed.
    - If an employee tests positive for COVID, they are asked to follow their physician's orders or KOTJ's orders, if they were asked to go there and to obtain a release form before returning to work.
    - We will continue to require a release from a health care provider or KOTJ before allowing an employee to return to work. HR will monitor any

direction changes from the CDC and state and county health officials to determine if these procedures need to be adjusted.

- If any student or immediate family member contracts COVID-19, they will be prohibited from returning until they have met CDC criteria to discontinue home isolation, including one day with no fever, symptoms have improved, and ten days since symptoms first appeared.
- We will keep sick students and staff, particularly those with respiratory illness symptoms, separate from well students and staff until they can leave. We have designated areas where these individuals can be isolated from well students and staff until they can leave the school.
- We will share resources with the school community to help families understand when to keep children home.
- RCS will make decisions that take into account the level of community transmission.
- **Physical Distancing:** RCS has considered how space and routines will be arranged to allow students' and staff's physical distancing.
  - All field trips, assemblies, and other large gatherings have been canceled until otherwise allowed by state and local authorities.
  - All athletic events, special performances, and all outside rentals have been suspended.
  - RCS has increased the space between desks and rearrange student desks to maximize the distance between students. Desks are turned to face in the same direction (rather than facing each other) to reduce transmission caused by virus-containing droplets (e.g., from talking, coughing, sneezing).
  - Desk dividers have been installed at locations where tables are shared.
  - RCS has limited the amount of close contact between students in high-traffic situations and times.
  - RCS has restricted nonessential visitors.
  - RCS will teach staff, students, and their families to maintain distance from each other in the school through messaging, educating staff, students, and their families at the same time and explain why this is important.
  - RCS has restricted access to campus for all outside individuals, including parents, during school hours.
- **Staff Training and Family Education:** RCS staff will be trained, and families will be educated on the application and enforcement of the plan.
- **Testing of Students and Staff:** RCS will ensure that staff who have symptoms of COVID-19 will be rapidly tested and given instructions while waiting for test results. Students will be recommended to consult their medical professionals.
  - Students with COVID-19 symptoms:

- Send home, recommend seeking medical advice, the school remains open. No communication action is needed.
  - Student with COVID-19 contact with confirmed COVID-19 case:
    - Send home, quarantine for 14 days from last exposure, communication considered to the school community.
  - Student confirmed with COVID-19 infection:
    - Notify the San Joaquin County Public Health Department
    - Isolate case and exclude from school for ten days from symptom onset or test date
    - Identify contacts, quarantine, and exclude exposed contacts for 14 days after the last date the case was present at school while infectious.
    - Disinfection and cleaning of classroom and primary spaces where case spent significant time
    - School remains open
    - School community notification of known case
  - We will keep sick students and staff, particularly those with respiratory illness symptoms, separate from well students and staff until they can leave. We have designated areas where these individuals can be isolated from well students and staff until they can leave the school.
- **Triggers for Switching to Distance Learning:** RCS will use governmental criteria to determine when to physically close the school and prohibit in-person instruction.
  - RCS will have distance learning available for all elementary students if we need to close, isolate individuals or cohorts, or for another determination.
- **Communication Plans:** RCS will communicate with students, staff, and parents about cases and exposures at the school, consistent with privacy requirements such as FERPA and HIPAA.
  - Each RCS communication goes to the School Board, Staff, All Families.
  - RCS will communicate the steps staff, students, and families can take to stay healthy and guidance to stay home if sick through the weekly school emails.
  - RCS maintains regular communication through our learning management system to keep staff and families updated on any changes through weekly emails, texting, and notices home.

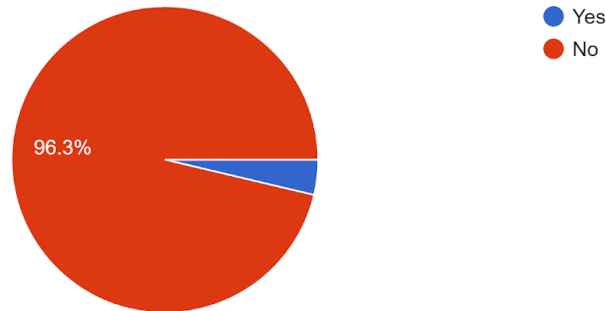
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## Supporting Documentation

### Teacher Feedback - Survey from August 2020

Do you have any reservations about returning to campus for in-person instruction if a K-6 reopening waiver were to be granted?

54 responses



### Parent Feedback

In late July, a survey of parents asked if they were interested in a distance learning option over in-person instruction and then asked what level of interest they had on a scale of 1-10. The results revealed that 29 of 299 families that responded preferred a distance learning option over a return to campus. The 29 families were expressed interest rated their level of interest at an 8.5 out of 10. Overall, this survey showed approximately 90% of families preferred a return to campus.

In late August, a second parent survey was completed asking parents if they preferred their students to return to campus for the start of the school year. Over 350 of approximately 400 families responded, and over 95% of the responding families answered they preferred a return to campus over a distance learning model.

**Order of the Ripon Christian School Board**

**We, the Board of Trustees for Ripon Christian Schools, agree and consent to the following:**

**After a review of both family and staff reopening data as well as consideration for the best interests of the students of Ripon Christian Schools, do hereby order the submission of the K-6th school reopening waiver to seek approval from the San Joaquin County Public Health Service to reopen grades K through 6th grade for in-person instruction.**

**Approved: 9/1/2020**