



## **EML-AZ Covid-19 Mitigation Plan**

The EML-AZ Mitigation Plan is intended to protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of students, teachers, school staff, their families, and communities and prepare for educating students on school campus this school year. This plan has been developed with multiple means of stakeholder engagement, consideration of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance for schools, and the current state of public health. The key elements to mitigating COVID-19 in school are promoting behaviors that reduce the COVID-19 spread, maintaining healthy environments, maintain healthy operations, and preparing for when someone gets sick.

### **1. Promoting Behaviors that Reduce COVID-19 Spread**

- A. Staying Home when Appropriate
  - Educate staff and families about when they/their child(ren) should stay home and when they can return to school.
  - Actively encourage employees and students who are sick or who have recently had close contact (less than 6 feet for fifteen minutes or more) with a person with COVID-19 to stay home.
  - Develop policies that encourage sick employees and students to stay at home without fear of reprisal, and ensure employees, students, and students' families are aware of these policies.
- B. Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette
  - Teach and reinforce handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and increase monitoring to ensure adherence among students and staff.
  - If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol can be used (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer).
  - Encourage staff and students to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue. Used tissues should be thrown in the trash and hands washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- C. Cloth Face Coverings or Masks
  - Teach and reinforce use of cloth face coverings or masks. The use of cloth face coverings or masks is one of many important mitigation strategies to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Cloth face coverings or masks are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected but does not have symptoms. Cloth face coverings or masks are not Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (e.g., surgical masks, respirators).
  - Appropriate and consistent use of cloth face coverings or masks is most important when students, teachers, and staff are indoors and when social



distancing is difficult to implement or maintain. Individuals should be frequently reminded not to touch the face covering or mask and to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer frequently. Information should be provided to staff, students, and students' families on proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings or masks.

- Appropriate and consistent use of cloth face coverings or masks may be challenging for some students, teachers, and staff, including: Students, teachers, and staff with severe asthma or other breathing difficulties. Students, teachers, and staff with special educational or healthcare needs, including intellectual and developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, and sensory concerns or tactile sensitivity.

#### D. Adequate Supplies

- Support healthy hygiene behaviors by providing adequate supplies, including soap and water, hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer), paper towels, tissues, disinfectant wipes, cloth face coverings (as feasible) and no-touch/foot-pedal trash cans.

#### E. Signs and Messages

- Post signs in highly visible locations that promote everyday protective measures and describe how to stop the spread of germs (such as by properly washing hands and properly wearing a cloth face covering).
- Send communications to staff, families, and students that promote everyday protective measures.

## 2. Maintaining Healthy Environments

#### F. Cleaning and Disinfecting/Sanitizing

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces (door handles, sink handles, drinking fountains) within the school at least daily or between use as much as possible. Use of shared objects are limited when possible or cleaned between use.
- Develop a schedule for increased frequency of routine cleaning and disinfection.
- Increase total airflow supply to occupied spaces, when possible.

#### G. Modified Layouts

- Space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible.
- Turn desks to face in the same direction (rather than facing each other), or have students sit on only one side of tables, spaced apart.
- Modify learning stations and activities as applicable so there are fewer students per group, placed at least 6 feet apart if possible.

#### H. Physical Barriers and Guides



- Install physical barriers, such as sneeze guards and partitions, particularly in areas where it is difficult for individuals to remain at least 6 feet apart.
- Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls, to ensure that staff and children remain at least 6 feet apart in lines and at other times.
- Add physical barriers, such as plastic flexible screens, between bathroom sinks especially when they cannot be at least 6 feet apart.

I. Food and Meals

- As feasible, have children eat in classrooms, while maintaining social distance at least 6 feet apart as much as possible, instead of a communal dining space.
- Have teachers and children wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol before and after eating. Ensure children do not share food.
- Students and parents should provide pre-packaged boxes or bags for any food item.
- Provide tissues and no touch or foot pedal trash cans, where possible, for employees, volunteers, and students to use.

**3. Maintaining Healthy Environments**

J. Protections for Staff and Children at Higher Risk for Severe Illness from COVID-19

- Offer options for staff at higher risk for severe illness (including older adults and people of all ages with certain underlying medical conditions or disabilities) that limit their exposure risk (e.g., telework, modified responsibilities that limit exposure risk).
- Offer options for students at higher risk of severe illness that limit their exposure risk (e.g., virtual learning opportunities).
- Provide inclusive programming for children and youth with special healthcare needs and disabilities that allows on-site or virtual participation with appropriate accommodations, modifications, and assistance (e.g., students with disabilities may have more difficulties accessing and using technology for virtual learning.)
- Consistent with applicable law, put in place policies that protect the privacy of people with higher risk for severe illness regarding underlying medical conditions.

K. Regulatory Awareness

- Be aware of local or state regulatory agency policies related to group gatherings to determine if events can be held.

L. Identify Small Groups and Keeping Them Together

- Dividing students and teachers into distinct groups that stay together throughout an entire school day during in-person classroom instruction.



Limit mixing between groups such that there is minimal or no interaction between cohorts.

M. Staggered Scheduling

- Stagger student arrival, drop-off, and pick-up time or locations by cohort, or put in place other protocols to limit contact between cohorts and direct contact with parents, guardians, and caregivers as much as possible.
- When possible, use flexible worksites (e.g., telework at home) and flexible hours (e.g., staggered shifts) to help establish policies and practices for social distancing (staying at least 6 feet apart).
- Mix of virtual learning and in-class learning (hybrid schedule)

N. Gatherings, Visitors, and Field Trips

- Pursue virtual group events, gatherings, or meetings if possible, and promote social distancing of at least 6 feet between people if events are held. Limit group size to the extent possible.
- Limit any nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations as possible – especially with individuals who are not from the local geographic area (e.g., community, town, city, county).

O. Communication System

- Process established for staff and families to self-report to the school if they or their student have symptoms of COVID-19, a positive test for COVID-19, or were exposed to someone with COVID-19 within the last 14 days.
- Process established for notifying staff, families, and the public of school closures and any restrictions in place to limit COVID-19 exposure (e.g., limited hours of operation.)

P. Staff Training

- Train staff on all safety protocols.
- Conduct training virtually or ensure that social distancing and face coverings are mandated during trainings.
- Should conduct safely and respectfully, and in accordance with any applicable privacy laws and regulations (e.g., confidentiality as is required with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- Reference CDC's guidance related to screening of staff, interim guidance for business and employers responding to coronavirus disease and the prevent transmission among employees' section of the CDC's resuming business toolkit.

Q. Support Coping and Resilience



- Encourage employees and students to take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories about COVID-19, including social media if they are feeling overwhelmed or distressed.
- Promote employees and students eating healthy, exercising, getting sleep, and finding time to unwind.
- Encourage employees and students to talk with people they trust about their concerns and how they are feeling.
- Transparently communicate with staff, teachers, students, and families, about mental health support services available through the school. These critical communications should be accessible to individuals with disabilities and limited English proficiency.
- Share facts about COVID-19 regularly through trusted sources of information to counter the spread of misinformation and mitigate fear.

#### **4. Preparing for When Someone Gets Sick**

##### **R. Advise Staff and Families of Students Sick with COVID-19 of Home Isolation Criteria.**

- Sick staff members or students should not return until they have met the CDC's criteria to discontinue home isolation.
- Communicate to staff and families that they (staff) or their children (families) should not come to school, and that they should notify school officials if they (staff) or their child (families) test positive for COVID-19 or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 symptoms or a confirmed or suspected case.

##### **S. Isolation and Transportation of Students Who Develop Symptoms of an Infectious Illness While at School**

- Some students may develop symptoms of infectious illness while at school. The school will take action to isolate students who develop these symptoms from other students and staff.
- Clean and Disinfect: Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use these areas until after cleaning and disinfecting them.
- Notify Health Officials and Close Contacts: In accordance with state and local laws and regulations, school administrators will notify local health officials, staff, and families immediately of any case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality.
- Inform those who have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay home and self-monitor for symptoms, and follow CDC guidance if symptoms develop.
- The school might need to implement short-term building closure procedures if/when an infected person has been on campus during their infectious period and has close contact with others.