

# **SOUTH BUFFALO CHARTER SCHOOL**

## **Health and Safety Component of the ARP Reopening Plan**

For the federal requirement a Health and Safety Plan must meet CDC and NYSED/NYSDOH guidelines. The protocols presented below meet the minimum federal requirements as the School's ARP Health Plan.

The following topics may change at any time based on NYSED, NYSDOH, and/or CDC guidance. South Buffalo Charter School will update any section below as guidance changes.

### **1. Masks**

- Face masks are required at all times, except for meals.
  - The South Buffalo Charter School will consider and address developmental appropriateness, feasibility, and ability to implement such policy in a safe, consistent manner.
- Students who are unable to medically tolerate a mask, including students where such mask would impair their physical health or mental health are not subject to the required use of a mask.
- The School will offer assistance to students who may have difficulty in adapting to wearing a mask.
- The School will train all students, faculty, and staff on how to adequately put on, take off, clean (as applicable), and discard PPE, including but not limited to, appropriate masks. This training should be extended to contractors and vendors, if the School will be supplying the contractors and vendors with PPE.

### **2. Physical Distancing**

All students, staff and visitors will maintain appropriate physical distancing between individuals while in school facilities and on school grounds, inclusive of students, faculty, and staff, unless safety or the core activity (e.g., moving equipment, using an elevator) requires a shorter distance or individuals are of the same household.

The School has reduced physical distancing requirements from six feet to a minimum of three feet between students in classroom settings, subject to adherence to certain mitigation measures. This change is consistent with recommendations by the CDC and the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH).

At some levels of community transmission, the South Buffalo Charter School will implement the use of cohorts. Cohorts, particularly for younger students, are self-contained, pre-assigned groups of students with reasonable group size limits that will be set forth by the School in its updated School Reopening Plan. The School will enact measures to prevent intermingling between cohorts, to the extent possible (e.g., separation by appropriate physical distancing, particularly if there are multiple cohorts in one area). The School will make reasonable efforts to ensure that cohorts are fixed – meaning contain the same students – for the duration of the

COVID-19 public health emergency. Faculty may instruct more than one cohort so long as appropriate physical distancing is maintained.

The School recognizes that certain scenarios may prevent physical distancing from occurring, such as medical care, or student comfort/support. The School will minimize this contact to the greatest extent possible and continue to ensure appropriate prevention measures—such as cleaning/disinfection, masking, hand hygiene, and respiratory etiquette.

The School has adopted the CDC Indicators and Thresholds for Community Transmission of COVID-19.

The school has also adopted CDC and DOH recommendations for physical distancing and cohorting for elementary, middle, and high schools at each level of transmission. These recommendations are summarized below. The School requires that these recommendations be followed when implementing physical distancing in the School's classrooms.

- Low and moderate risk of transmission, elementary, middle, and high schools can maintain physical distancing of at least three feet between students in classrooms.
- Substantial risk of transmission, elementary, middle, and high schools can maintain physical distancing of at least three feet between students in classrooms and cohorting is recommended when possible.
- High risk of transmission, elementary schools can maintain physical distancing of at least three feet between students in classrooms and cohorting is recommended when possible. However, in middle and high schools three feet between students in classrooms is recommended only when schools can use cohorting. When schools cannot maintain cohorting, middle and high schools must maintain physical distancing of at least six feet between students in classrooms.

South Buffalo Charter School recognizes exceptions where a minimum of six feet of distance must be maintained

- Six feet is always the required distancing between adults (teachers, staff, and visitors) and between students and adults.
- Six feet of distance is required when eating meals or snacks, or drinking, or other times where masks must be removed. This means that meals cannot be eaten in classrooms that have been converted to three feet of physical distance during instruction time.
- Individuals participating in activities that require projecting the voice (e.g., singing) or playing a wind instrument must be six feet apart and there must be six feet of distance between the performers and the audience during performances and concerts.
- Six feet of physical distance must be maintained in common areas and outside of classrooms (e.g. lobbies, auditoriums, gymnasiums, cafeterias, and hallways), where possible.
- A distance of six feet in all directions will be maintained between individuals while participating in activities that require projecting the voice (e.g., singing), playing a wind instrument, or aerobic activity resulting in heavy breathing (e.g., participating in gym classes).
- When directed by the Local or State Health Department.
- The School will post the new plan online and must be sent to Local Health Departments and the State Education Department.
- The School will work with the school community (parents, teachers, staff, LHDs, etc.) to propose and adopt changes. Ultimately, the school/district's decision to move to shorter physical distances will come down to a local community's risk tolerance based on its unique circumstances.

### **3. Space Configurations**

- The South Buffalo Charter School will (1) modify or reconfigure spaces and areas, and/or (2) restrict the use of classrooms and other places where students, faculty, and staff gather (e.g., lockers, cubbies, entryways, hallways), so that individuals can be physically distanced, and are not sharing workstations, desks, tables, or other shared surfaces without cleaning and disinfection between use.
  - o If the School uses a cohort model, cleaning and disinfection may be performed in between each cohort's use instead of individual's use.
- The School will make best use of the space in the classroom by removing unnecessary furniture and objects to help maximize the distance between students and for better air flow. All desks should face the same direction and/or students should be seated on the same side of tables.
- Where feasible, the School will put in place measures to reduce bi-directional foot traffic using tape or signs with arrows in hallways, or spaces throughout the school, and post signage and distance markers denoting spaces of six feet in all commonly used areas and any areas in which lines are commonly formed or people may congregate (e.g., outdoor spaces, libraries, cafeterias, health screening stations).
- The School will determine which facilities, grounds, or portions thereof (e.g., libraries, recreational facilities) will be closed to the public (i.e., not students, faculty, or staff) or offer limited, specific hours to members of the general public. Any use of a school facility or grounds by the general public will be subject to the same guidelines required during all other school operations.
- If necessary, the School will work to find additional or alternate space with community-based organizations and other operators of alternative spaces (e.g., local governments) to maximize capacity for in-person learning.

### **4. Vaccination**

The South Buffalo Charter School will identify and discuss with their Local Health Department Approaches to maximize opportunities for vaccination of all eligible school personnel and students.

School leadership encourages staff members and students to get vaccinated before returning to school.

On a strictly voluntary basis, SBCS will poll the staff and students to ascertain a reasonable approximation of the percentage of students and staff that are fully vaccinated

### **5. Screening and Testing**

#### ***Health Screening and Temperature Checks***

The South Buffalo Charter School will use a daily screening questionnaire for faculty staff and students reporting to school. The School is prohibited from keeping records of student, faculty, staff, and visitor health data (e.g., the specific temperature data of an individual), but are permitted to maintain records that confirm individuals were screened and the result of such screening (e.g., pass/fail, cleared/not cleared).

Screening is strongly recommended to be conducted remotely (e.g. by electronic survey, digital application, or telephone, which may involve the parent/legal guardian), before the individual reports to school, to the extent possible; or may be performed on site at the school. Remote screening should be coordinated to identify individuals who should not go to school and should be referred to their health care provider for further evaluation and COVID-19 testing.

On-site screening should be coordinated in a manner that prevent individuals from intermingling in close or proximate contact with each other prior to completion of the screening. Screening for all students, faculty, staff, and, where practicable, visitors, contractors, and vendors, must be completed using a questionnaire that determines whether the individual has:

- knowingly been in close or proximate contact in the past 10 days with anyone who has tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 or who has or had symptoms of COVID-19;
- tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 in the past 10 days;
- has experienced any symptoms of COVID19, including a temperature of or greater than 100.4°F, in the past 10 days; and/or
- has traveled internationally per the New York State Travel Advisory in the past 10 days.

The School will conduct health screening practices for unscheduled visitors (e.g., members of the public allowed to use school grounds).

The School will refer to CDC guidance on “[Symptoms of Coronavirus](#)” for the most up to date information on symptoms associated with COVID-19.

The School is aware that quarantine of students, faculty, or staff may be necessary based on current guidance and/or executive orders.

The School requires individuals to immediately disclose if and when their responses to any of the aforementioned questions changes, such as if they begin to experience symptoms, including during or outside of school hours.

### ***Diagnostic and Screening Testing***

Any member of the School community who is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, and is a direct contact of a person identified as having COVID-19 or has been otherwise exposed to COVID-19 should immediately seek diagnostic testing. The School will make sure its families without regular access to healthcare know where in the community to find testing if needed. The School understands and will comply with the requirement to submit daily to the NYS COVID-19 Report Card remains.

- CDC recommends screening testing based on feasibility and community transmission levels. The School will follow CDC guidelines when implementing testing plans.

### ***Positive Screen Protocols***

- Any individual who screens positive for COVID-19 exposure or symptoms, if screened at the school, must be immediately sent home with instructions to contact their health care provider for assessment and testing.
  - Students who are being sent home because of a positive screen (e.g., onset of COVID-19 symptoms) must be immediately separated from other students and supervised until their parent/legal guardian or emergency contact can retrieve them from school.
  - The School will provide such individuals with information on health care and testing resources, if applicable.

- The School will immediately notify the state and local health department about the case if diagnostic test results are positive for COVID-19.
- Asymptomatic individuals who are fully vaccinated or have recovered from laboratory confirmed COVID-19 in the previous 3 months who screen positive for COVID-19 exposure may remain at school.
- Anyone with symptoms must be immediately sent home with instructions to contact their health care provider for assessment and testing irrespective of vaccination status or previous COVID-19 infection.
- The School will establish policies, in consultation with the local health department(s), about the requirements for determining when individuals, particularly students, who screened positive for COVID-19 symptoms can return to the in-person learning environment. This returning to learning protocol must include at minimum documentation from a health care provider evaluation, negative COVID-19 testing, and symptom resolution, or if COVID-19 positive, release from isolation.
- The School will designate a central point of contact(s), which may vary by activity, location, shift or day, responsible for receiving and attesting to having reviewed all screening activities, with such contact(s) also identified as the party for individuals to inform if they later experience COVID-19-related symptoms or COVID-19 exposure, as noted on the questionnaire.

### ***In-Person Screening***

- Responsible Parties must ensure that any personnel performing in-person screening activities, including temperature checks, are appropriately protected from exposure to potentially infectious individuals entering the facilities. Personnel performing screening activities should be trained by employer-identified individuals who are familiar with CDC, DOH, and OSHA protocols.
- Screeners should be provided and use PPE, which includes at a minimum, an acceptable mask, and may also include gloves, a gown, and/or a face shield.

## **6. Hygiene, Cleaning and Disinfection**

### ***Hygiene***

- The South Buffalo Charter School leadership will ensure adherence to hygiene and cleaning and disinfection requirements as advised by the CDC and DOH, including “Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection of Public and Private Facilities for COVID-19,” and the “STOP THE SPREAD” poster, as applicable.

The School will:

- maintain logs that include the date, time, and scope of cleaning and disinfection as applicable.
- identify cleaning and disinfection frequency for each facility type and assign responsibility.
- oversee the regular cleaning of frequently touched surfaces (e.g., toys, door handles, sink handles, toilets, drinking fountains) within the school at least daily or between use as much as possible.
- train all students, faculty, and staff on proper hand and respiratory hygiene, and provide information to parents and/or legal guardians on ways to reinforce this at home.
- teach and reinforce handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- The School will provide and maintain hand hygiene stations in restrooms around the school, as follows:

- For handwashing: soap, running warm water, and disposable paper towels.
- For hand sanitizing: an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol for areas where handwashing facilities may not be available or practical.
  - School medical or health directors should approve and permit the use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers in school facilities without an individual's physician orders as alcohol-based hand sanitizers are considered over-the-counter drugs. Student use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers should always be supervised by adults to minimize accidental ingestion and promote safe usage; supervision is required for elementary school students. Parents/guardians can inform the school that they do not want their child to use alcohol-based hand sanitizers by sending a written notice to the school. The School will provide accommodations for students who cannot use hand sanitizer, to allow for their use of handwashing stations.

The School will make hand sanitizer available throughout common areas. Hand sanitizers should be placed in convenient locations, such as at building, classroom, and cafeteria entrances and exits. Touch-free hand sanitizer dispensers should be installed where possible.

- The School will place signage near hand sanitizer stations indicating that visibly soiled hands should be washed with soap and water; hand sanitizer is not effective on visibly soiled hands.
- The School will place receptacles around the school for disposal of soiled items, including paper towels and PPE.
- The School will make hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes available near shared amenities. Sanitizer should be an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol for areas where handwashing facilities may not be available or practical.
- Hand sanitizer should be placed in convenient locations, such as at building, classroom, and cafeteria entrances and exits. Touch-free hand sanitizer dispensers should be installed where possible.

### ***Cleaning and Disinfection***

- The School Leadership will ensure that cleaning and disinfection are the primary responsibility of the school's custodial staff. However, the School will provide appropriate cleaning and disinfection supplies to faculty and staff for shared and frequently touched surfaces:
  - Consider providing disposable wipes to faculty and staff so that commonly used surfaces (e.g., keyboards, desks, remote controls) can be wiped down before and/or after use, followed by hand hygiene.
  - To reduce high-touch surfaces, the School will install touch-free amenities, such as water-bottle refilling stations, trash receptacles and paper towel dispensers, where feasible.
  - If installing touch-free amenities is not feasible, the school will make hand sanitizer available near high-touch surfaces (e.g., trash receptacles, paper towel dispensers).
  - The School will consider closing water drinking fountains (unless they are configured as a bottle refilling station) and encourage students, faculty, and staff to bring their own water bottles or use disposable cups.
- The School will adhere to and promote hygiene, cleaning, and disinfection guidance set forth by the NYSDOH and CDC.
- There are two scenarios that require cleaning and disinfecting multiple times per day:
  - High risk areas including health offices, classrooms, lunchrooms/dining rooms, athletic rooms, bathrooms, and high traffic areas. The School will establish procedures for

surfaces that must be sanitized after use, such as gym mats, health office cots, and lunch/dining tables.

- High touch surfaces including lunch tables, desks and chairs, light switches, handrails, door handles/push plates, faucets, equipment handles and buttons, shared equipment and electronics, bus seats, and handrails.
- The School will conduct regular cleaning and disinfection of the facilities and more frequent cleaning and disinfection for high-risk areas used by many individuals and for frequently touched surfaces, including desks and cafeteria tables which should be cleaned and disinfected between each individual's use, if shared. If cohorts are used, cleaning and disinfection may take place between each cohort's use rather than each individual. Cleaning and disinfection must be rigorous and ongoing and should occur at least daily, or more frequently as needed. Please refer to DOH's "[Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#)" and "[Cleaning, Disinfecting, and Hand Hygiene: A Toolkit for School Administrators](#)" for detailed instructions on how to clean and disinfect facilities.
- Please refer to the updated Coronavirus (COVID-19) Custodial Checklist for Schools for additional detail on COVID-19 cleaning guidelines and routine cleaning procedures.
- The School will ensure regular cleaning and disinfection of restrooms. Restrooms should be cleaned and disinfected more often depending on frequency of use. The School will implement best practices in shared (i.e., communal) bathrooms which include such practices as use of touch-free paper towel dispensers in lieu of air dryers.
- The School will ensure physical distancing rules are adhered to by using signage, occupied markers, or other methods to reduce restroom occupancy at any given time, where feasible.
- The school will ensure that materials and tools used by employees are regularly cleaned and disinfected using registered disinfectants. Refer to the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) [list of products](#) registered in New York State and identified by the EPA as effective against COVID-19.
- If cleaning or disinfection products or the act of cleaning and disinfection causes safety hazards or degrades the material or machinery, the School will put in place hand hygiene stations between use and/or supply disposable gloves and/or limitations on the number of employees using such machinery.

#### ***Cleaning and Disinfection Following Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 Case***

- The School will provide for the cleaning and disinfection of exposed areas in the event an individual is confirmed to have COVID-19, with such cleaning and disinfection to include, at minimum, all heavy transit areas and high-touch surfaces.

The School will follow CDC guidelines on "[Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#)," if someone is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19:

- Close off areas used by the person who is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19.
  - The School does not necessarily need to close operations, if it can close off the affected areas (e.g., classroom, restroom, and hallway). The School will consult with its local health department in making this decision.
- Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.
- Wait 24 hours before you clean and disinfect, unless waiting 24 hours is not feasible, in which case, wait as long as possible.

- Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, such as offices, classrooms, bathrooms, lockers, and common areas.
- Restrict access to any area where someone with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 was present until the area is cleaned and disinfected.
- Once the area has been appropriately cleaned and disinfected, it can be reopened for use.
  - Individuals without close or proximate contact with the person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 can return to the area and resume school activities immediately after cleaning and disinfection.
- If more than seven days have passed since the person who is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary, but routine cleaning and disinfection should continue.

## **7. Ventilation and Filtration**

The South Buffalo Charter School understands the following:

- Indoor air quality can be improved by increasing outdoor air delivery to the school facility (ventilation) and removing particulates/viral particles from the air (air filtration) to the greatest extent possible. Ventilation and filtration together can reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.
- Portable air cleaners may supplement other preventive measures to decrease the risk of COVID-19 spread. These are designed to remove particles. However, they are limited in the amount of air they filter per hour and so they may reduce, but may not eliminate, particles, viruses, and/or microbes in the air. The selection, installation, and maintenance of portable filtration devices should be made in consultation with an indoor air quality professional. The use of portable filtration devices does not decrease the need for mask wearing, physical distancing, sanitation practices, or adequate ventilation.
- Portable air cleaners are particularly relevant for rooms without natural ventilation (openable windows) and for higher risk environments (e.g., nurses' station, isolation rooms) but can be considered for any other areas where there is heightened concern.

For School Classrooms That Have Mechanical Ventilation the School will:

- Evaluate systems to ensure the mechanical ventilation system is working properly, code compliant, and optimized according to these guidelines:
- Ensure that diffusers, exhausts, and unit vents are not blocked or obstructed by cabinets, books, or other materials.
- Communicate to staff the importance of not obstructing diffusers and vents or attempting to modify the ventilation controls. For example, not adjusting the thermostat or fans in their respective rooms.
- Maintain a routine maintenance and inspection schedule and strictly adhere to it.
- Increase ventilation by increasing outdoor air and decreasing recirculated air as much as possible.
- Run the HVAC system a minimum of one week prior to reopening.
- Suspend the use of demand control ventilation, systems that shut down the percentage of fresh air under certain conditions automatically, unless doing so will degrade indoor air quality.



- Keep ventilation systems running longer on school days, 24/7 if possible.
- Keep bathroom exhaust systems running 24/7.
- Flush building air at least two hours prior to and one hour after occupancy.
- Will open windows and doors while also maintaining health and safety protocols (e.g., risk of falling, security risk, increase asthma triggers) where increased mechanical ventilation is not possible.
- Ensure that there is adequate ventilation when cleaners and disinfectants are used to prevent students or staff from inhaling irritating fumes. With increased cleaning activities,
- Check and replace existing unit air filters infiltration of centralized HVAC systems per manufacturers' instructions.
- Optimize filtration of centralized HVAC systems by upgrading to a filter with a minimal efficiency rating value (MERV) of MERV 13, or the highest rating compatible with existing equipment.

For School Classrooms That Do Not Have Mechanical Ventilation the School will:

- Open windows and doors to maximize fresh air flow through the classroom.
- Consider the use of window and box fans to cross ventilate rooms to exhaust stale room air. Keep in mind any health, safety, and security concerns with open windows and doors.
- Use the outdoor air setting, rather than the recirculate setting if a room has a window air conditioner.
- Use a portable air cleaner for air filtration in areas lacking central HVAC, and understands that portable air cleaners are a supplement and cannot replace outdoor air ventilation and filtration and that these devices are best considered where outdoor air ventilation is not adequate (e.g., open windows not possible, or in nurses/isolation areas).
- Only use one air cleaner per room.
- Only use these devices for single rooms with closed door and windows, as the devices are not designed to filter larger volumes of air.
- Be sure the device is sized appropriately with the correct clean air delivery rate (CADR).
- Use the CADR rating of the device for tobacco smoke when comparing air cleaners, as this rating corresponds most closely with airborne viral particle sizes of concern.
- Use air cleaners that contain a high-efficiency particulate air filter or MERV 13 or greater filter efficiencies.
- Not use units that feature ionizers, precipitators, or ozone generators since these features do not provide additional benefit and can generate harmful byproducts.
- Replace MERV13 or HEPA filters on the timetable according to manufacturer recommendations.
- Request documentation of particle/viral removal efficacy for any device being considered.
- Confirm the unit can deliver at least two air turnovers per hour for typical school classroom sizes (approx. 400 sq. ft).
- Will increase ventilation with outdoor air to the greatest extent possible (e.g., opening windows and doors) while maintaining health and safety protocols.

## **8. Vulnerable Populations including SWD**

The South Buffalo Charter School staff who are at increased risk for severe COVID-19 illness, and individuals who may not feel comfortable returning to an in-person educational environment, to allow them to safely participate in educational activities and, where appropriate, accommodate their specific circumstances. These accommodations may include but are not limited to remote learning or telework, modified educational or work settings, or providing additional PPE to individuals with underlying health conditions. The School will also identify and describe any modifications to physical distancing or PPE that may be necessary for certain student or staff populations, including individuals who have hearing impairment or loss, students receiving language services, and young students in early education programs, ensuring that any modifications minimize COVID-19 exposure risk for students, faculty, and staff, to the greatest extent possible