

# Sage International Network of Schools Pandemic Learning Plan

(Reviewed & Board Approved 6.13.22)



### **OUR MISSION**

**Our schools engage students within an inclusive IB learning community, challenging all members to take risks and contribute locally and globally through open-minded inquiry.**

## INTRODUCTION

### VISION

We believe that in-person learning is best for children.

### PURPOSE AND FOCUS

This Network's Pandemic Learning Plan (formerly Back to School in 20-21 Plan) is focused on safely maintaining in-person learning at the Sage and Forge campuses. With this goal as our focus, prudence, nearly two years of experience and guidance from an array of local, State and Federal agencies (Board, CDH, SWDH, Idaho State Legislature, the Governor, Idaho State Board of Education, CDC and the President) requires that our network prepare for multiple learning models to ensure our campuses can remain open and as safely as practicable and to conduct in-person learning despite the public health situation in the communities we serve.

In line with the guidance and expectations from the Idaho State Board of Education's *Idaho Back to School Framework 2020 updated on October 21, 2020 (Updated Idaho Framework)*, this Network Plan identifies **three primary Learning Models** our schools may implement during the 2020-21 school year: (1) All-Student On-Campus Learning (Normal); (2) Hybrid Learning (groups of students return to campus full-time or part-time); and (3) remote/distance Learning (no students allowed on campus). The Network's criteria for determining which Learning Model will be in place at each campus at the start of the school year, and moving further into the school year, is guided by the levels of community transmission of COVID-19 as outlined in the CDC's transmission framework, updated guidance from Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, public health districts and the Centers for Disease Control. Each Learning Model is designed to provide learning experiences that fulfill our mission and vision and accomplishes our academic goals.

The Network Plan anticipates and expects that our schools could move from one Learning Model to another based on viral conditions in their local communities and per Health District guidance.

## **GUIDING PLANNING PRINCIPLES**

- (1) Ensure students and faculty have a safe and supportive environment in which they are learning and teaching;
- (2) Continue to deliver a world-class education that supports the whole child;
- (3) Provide staff with training, direction, time and equipment/materials needed to accomplish the schools' mission; and
- (4) Embrace the IB Learner Profile Attributes in all we do (inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced and reflective).

## **REOPENING GUIDELINES FROM STATE AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES**

In Idaho, the authorities primarily responsible for providing guidance on the operation of schools, in coordination with the Governor's Office, are: (1) the Idaho State Board of Education (SBOE); and (2) the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare and the respective Health Districts thereunder:

Sage International = Central District Health (CDH); and  
Forge International = Southwest District Health (SWDH) and Central  
District Health (CDH).

The Network Plan incorporates and complies with guidelines from these authorities regarding safe operation of our campuses and school buildings for the 21-22 school year. The Network Plan is a living document and it will be updated to include current or future guidance. As of January 5th, 2022, these guidance documents are:

[Updated Idaho Back to School Framework 2020 - Oct 21, 2020](#)

[The Governor's Idaho Rebounds Plan](#)

[CDH Covid-19: Schools Page](#)

[SWDH 2019 Novel Coronavirus \(Covid-19\) Resources](#)

[Idaho Department of Health and Welfare Covid-19 Resources](#)

[CDC Guidance for Covid-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools](#)

[Idaho Department of Health and Welfare's Vaccinate Idaho page](#)

### CONDITIONS-BASED DECISION MAKING

#### Normal, Hybrid or Remote/Distance

The Network has adopted the CDC’s levels of community transmission description to guide the rest of this document. The original plan, drafted in the Summer of 2020 used the The Updated Idaho Framework which defined 4 Levels/Categories of Community Transmission of COVID-19. The Network decides on learning models with consideration of the viral transmission condition represented in the model. Much has been learned about operating in this pandemic and we have learned to operate schools relatively safely even during the highest levels of community transmission. Nonetheless, we have also learned that different variants of this virus can change our learned assumptions. To that end, the CDC’s viral transmission model remains the fundamental framework we consider when deciding on learning models. The Network’s goal of maximizing the number of students returning to on-campus learning will be balanced against risks posed to students and staff by the ongoing viral situation and the Network’s ability to mitigate those risks so that instruction may continue on campus, in a hybrid setting, or remotely. The following chart from the CDC shows that framework:

### Determining Transmission Risk



If the two indicators suggest different transmission levels, the higher level is selected

	Low	Moderate	Substantial	High
New cases per 100,000 persons in the past 7 days*	<10	10-49.99	50-99.99	≥100
Percentage of positive NAATs tests during the past 7 days**	<5%	5-7.99%	8-9.99%	≥10.0%

Ultimately, the Learning Model employed on each campus is determined by our Board and Administration and is guided by current Health District Guidance, viral conditions in the attendance zone, and campus-specific factors.

### **Overview of Learning Models Under the 4 Category Designations**

All-Student On-Campus Learning Model (Low, Moderate, Substantial or High). All students may be learning on campus and in person. This determination is heavily dependent on the school's ability to mitigate the risk to people in the school and the effectiveness of common mitigation measures.

Hybrid Learning Model (Moderate, Substantial or High). Some, many or most students return to <sup>3</sup> on-campus learning, but all students are not able to be on campus at the same time. An example is an A/B block approach where 'A students' are on campus 2 days each week and 'B students' are on campus the other 2 days; note that there are many variations of hybrid learning models. In this model, the goal is to maximize the number of students who can safely be on campus while implementing applicable prevention measures and procedures. The Network has identified a range of hybrid learning models that can be implemented depending on local viral conditions and campus-specific factors. Staff are expected to work from campus in a hybrid model. The exception would be that vulnerable student and staff populations should not return to campus, functioning under a remote/distance learning approach.

Remote/Distance Learning Model (Category Moderate, Substantial or High). No students permitted on campus with instruction provided through the schools' remote/distance learning model. Remote/Distance Learning could be implemented if viral conditions change (more dangerous and transmissible variant for example) or if staffing and/or attendance are so severely affected that holding school in person or in a hybrid setting isn't viable.

## **PREVENTION MEASURES AND PROCEDURES THAT APPLY WHEN ANY LEVEL OF ON-CAMPUS LEARNING IS TAKING PLACE**

This section identifies the prevention measures and protocols that are in place when students are learning on campus under any particular viral condition. The following sections contain additional category-specific prevention measures and procedures.

**Face Coverings:** Depending on a campus's Category Designation, the existence of Local Orders, and/or Network Board decisions (votes), face coverings may be recommended, expected, or required on a Network school campus by the Network Executive Director. In all cases, our schools will maximize the times during the day when students are distanced and will be able to safely learn and play without face coverings. For example, our schools will:

arrange (rearrange) all classrooms to maximize distance between students; have desk shields/dividers available for use on student desks; maximize outdoor learning opportunities, and create temporary outdoor classroom spaces.

**Deep Cleaning of all school buildings** before students return to campus.

**Daily School-Wide Disinfection of High-Touch Surfaces:** Schools will utilize CDC-approved disinfectant and/or a dilution of disinfecting bleach to clean high-touch surfaces at least daily, including but not limited to door knobs, toilet handles, light switches, classroom and bathroom sink handles, countertops.

**Hand Sanitizer Station Installation:** Hand sanitizer will be readily available throughout school buildings, including at each building entrance and in every classroom. Incorporate regular use of hand sanitizer into daily classroom procedures.

**Soap/Paper Towels and Tissues** will be widely available throughout school buildings.

**Use of Sneeze Guards** at high-traffic locations.

**Staff and Student Training - Sanitization, Hygiene Practices Distancing, Use of Masks, Hand-Washing:** Staff and students will be trained on CDC-recommended hygiene practices, including but not limited to: (1) covering coughs or sneezes with a bent arm or tissue and washing hands or using hand sanitizer afterward; (2) washing hands with soap and water for 20 seconds, dry hands with a paper towel, and using the paper towel to turn off the faucet; (3) keeping hands away from nose, mouth, and eyes; and (4) avoiding the sharing of food, drinks, and personal care items (e.g. lip balm). Training will also cover social distancing and use/wearing of masks.

**Signage Throughout School Buildings:** Continue displaying clearly visible signage at entrances and throughout school buildings to communicate symptoms, preventative measures, good hygiene, social distancing, and school-specific protocols including staying home when sick.

**Classrooms:** Classrooms will be (re)arranged to maximize the distance between students and to have all student seating facing in the same direction, to the maximum extent possible.

**Identify an Isolation/Screening Room for Suspected/Confirmed Illness:** Each school will identify a room on campus that will serve as an isolation room for suspected/confirmed cases of Covid until the staff member or student leaves campus.

**Monitor and plan for absenteeism:** Review daily absenteeism reports to identify large increases. Encourage students and staff to stay home when sick, even without documentation from doctors. Use flexibility, when possible, to allow staff to stay home to care for sick family members, especially for those with common cold and flu symptoms, which are similar to COVID-19.

**Ventilation:** Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, as long as this does not pose a safety or health risk to students or staff. Upgrading filtration level on the HVAC system to the maximum level the HVAC system can support, optimally to MERV 13 .

**Require sick students and staff to leave campus.** Sick staff and students will be sent home as soon as possible, and will be kept separate and isolated from students and staff until they can leave.

**Return to Campus After Probable or Confirmed to have COVID 19:** See the school nurse for updated quarantine and return to school guidance.

**Water Fountains / Water bottles:** Disable (make unusable) the mouth-spigot function on all water fountains such that only the water-bottle filling function is enabled. Communicate to staff and families the need to bring a water bottle to school each day.

**Shared Supplies:** Limit, to the maximum extent possible, the sharing of school/classroom supplies.

**Minimize Gatherings:** Implement strategies that prevent or minimize gatherings in areas such as restrooms, hallways, lunch, before/after school, and during recess. Minimize mixing groups. Minimize personal contact such (hugs, high fives, handshakes, etc). Schools may consider staggering arrival/departure times, designating one-way hallways, or other operational procedures to maximize social distancing in common spaces throughout the school buildings.

**Bussing:** Our schools will require the bus company providing home-to-school transportation to meet the applicable guidance and expectations in the Transportation Section of the Updated Idaho Framework.

**Remote/Distance Learning Platform(s):** Each school will use specific learning support platforms. At Forge, that is primarily Toddle. At Sage the tools are ManageBac in the MYP/DP/CP and Google Classroom in the PYP. Staff, students and families will be trained on

the use of these platforms, including offering parents 'virtual workshops'. These are the same platforms used on a daily basis during in-person instruction.

**Lunch/Food Service:** Each school will develop a lunch/food service plan that complies with the Lunch / Food Service section of the Updated Idaho Framework. Lunches will be organized to ensure social distancing. At a minimum, seating at lunch will be organized to maximize social distancing; individual meals are expected and sharing is discouraged; and handwashing and/or hand sanitizing is required before and after eating lunch.

## **LOW COMMUNITY SPREAD - TRADITIONAL ON-CAMPUS LEARNING - ADDITIONAL MEASURES AND PROCEDURES**

Network schools will implement the traditional on-campus learning model when under a low transmission designation. In addition to the above-listed prevention measures and procedures for both low and moderate transmission the following also apply under a low transmission designation:

**Facemasks / Coverings:** Recommend that all persons entering school buildings (staff, students, visitors) wear a facemask or covering over the mouth and nose. Encourage students, staff, and visitors to bring and wear cloth face coverings from home. Provide masks and other appropriate PPE to staff. Any person exhibiting mild symptoms must wear a mask until leaving campus.

**Assess group gatherings and events:** Review any planned events (e.g. assemblies, field days, athletic events) and determine if social distancing strategies can be put in place. If not, consider cancelling or rescheduling.



## **MODERATE COMMUNITY TRANSMISSION OR SUBSTANTIAL COMMUNITY TRANSMISSION - ON-CAMPUS, HYBRID, OR DISTANCE LEARNING - ADDITIONAL MEASURES AND PROCEDURES**

Network schools may implement any of the three learning models under moderate or substantial designation (on-campus, hybrid or distance). Under a substantial designation, Network schools may also implement a hybrid or distance learning model. In addition to the above-listed prevention measures and procedures for both low transmission the following also apply under a moderate or substantial designation:

**Coordinate with Local Health District:** Under a moderate or substantial designation, Network schools will continue to stay in contact with their local public health district to ensure that the most recent guidance on the safe operation of schools in this Covid-19 pandemic.

**Conduct daily health screenings of employees and students** for COVID-19 symptoms upon entry into school buildings, including a possible check for low-grade fever with no-touch thermometer and/ or daily symptom checking. If screening indicates potential risk, send the student to the Isolation/Screening room for additional screening. Any fever of 100.4 or greater automatically means a student or staff member must go home.

**Facemasks / Coverings:** Expect that all persons in school buildings (staff and students) wear a facemask or covering over the mouth and nose when distancing is not possible. Encourage students, staff, and visitors to bring and wear cloth face coverings from home. Provide masks and other appropriate PPE to staff. If students/families are unable to provide a mask, a disposable mask will be provided for the day and school staff will work with families to provide other reusable options. The wearing of Face masks may also be required under moderate or substantial transmission per the **Notes** below.

**\*\*\*Note:** In the event there is a local, state or federal Order that applies to the city/area where a school is located that requires the wearing of masks or face coverings in public, the wearing of masks or face coverings will be required in all school buildings in accordance with the terms of the order, including the identified exceptions to the order (for example, individual circumstances based on a documented physical condition, mental health condition, or disability).

**Note:** The Board or Executive Director may also require or require the wearing of masks in periods of moderate, substantial or high community transmission.

**Encourage parents to screen students every morning** before attending school and to keep students exhibiting any sign of illness at home. (Screenings may include taking temperature and assessing for symptoms.)

**Close Contact Activities:** Staff duties and student activities requiring close contact will be modified as necessary. Modifications are the common mitigation measures in use during the pandemic- distancing, barriers, face coverings, hand washing/sanitizing, and ventilation.

**Campus Visitors:** Each campus will, at a minimum, implement the following: (1) Not allow unscheduled visitors on campus (in buildings); and (2) limit on-campus visitors to parents and essential visitors.

**Encourage staff and families to self-report** to the school if they or their student have symptoms of COVID-19, a positive test, or were exposed to someone with COVID-19. Maintain privacy and confidentiality. Contact the school nurse for the latest guidance.

**Daily, Regular Synchronous Learning with Distance Learning Model:** Distance Learning Model is to include a weekly schedule for all grade levels that provides and prioritizes daily synchronous learning (live with teacher/class) activities. Create set, consistent daily/weekly schedules for students so that students, parents, and teachers can plan and establish routines.

**In-Person Opportunities During Distance Learning:** Include in the distance learning model safe, regularly scheduled, social-distanced opportunities for small, class-sized groups to meet in person when doing so complies with all local Orders and applicable distancing recommendations. An example would be a class meeting in a local park or outdoors on the school campus. The focus of these opportunities is establishing connections and the social/emotional well-being of students.

**Office Hours During Distance Learning:** In the distance learning model, particularly at the secondary level, include teacher 'office hours' where students can sign up for one-on-one time with their teacher(s). These can be virtual meetings or in person (possibly outdoors on the school campus) when an in person meeting can be safely conducted in compliance with all prevention measures and procedures.

## **HIGH COMMUNITY TRANSMISSION - IN-PERSON LEARNING, TARGETED, SHORT-TERM OR EXTENDED CLASSROOM/BUILDING CLOSURES OR HYBRID OR DISTANCE LEARNING**

Under a high transmission designation, Network schools may (and have learned how to) operate with all students on campus. Nonetheless, targeted, short term or extended building closures could happen, with a transition to Distance Learning for some or all students for some period of time - dependent on the length of the closure. With extended building closures, students will participate in the distance learning programs offered by our schools.

**Student Technology (Chromebooks):** Identify those students in need of a chromebook during distance learning and will assign a chromebook to each student.

**Synchronous Learning:** Under the Distance Learning Model, daily schedule for all grade levels to include and prioritize daily synchronous learning (live with teacher/class) activities in distance learning models. Create set, consistent daily/weekly schedules for students so that students, parents and teachers can plan and establish routines.

**In-Person Opportunities During Distance Learning:** Include in the distance learning model safe, social-distanced opportunities for small, class-sized groups to meet in person when doing so complies with all local Orders and applicable distancing recommendations. An example would be a class meeting in a local park or outdoors on the school campus. The focus of these opportunities is establishing connections and the social/emotional well-being of students.

**Office Hours During Distance Learning:** In the distance learning model, particularly at the secondary level, include teacher 'office hours' where students can sign up for one-on-one time with their teacher(s). These can be virtual meetings or in person (possibly outdoors on the school campus) when an in person meeting can be safely conducted in compliance with all prevention measures and procedures.

## **Support for Vaccination as a Mitigation Strategy**

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) maintains that vaccination against Covid-19 is the most effective strategy to prevent Covid-19 infections. In the reference list above, Idaho's Department of Health and Welfare as well as the two public health districts in whose jurisdiction Forge and Sage are located, provide a wealth of information about vaccines and how to receive them. Additionally, we are required to remind all of our families that there are exemptions available for all vaccines. Immunization exemptions are allowed, in accordance with Idaho Code 39-4802, and include medical, religious, and 'other' exemptions. Parents/guardians may check the 'Religious/Other' exemption provided on the immunization requirements form, or may include a signed written statement regarding religious/other exemptions. The Sage Network of Schools' Policy 3525 describes how the Network supports those exemptions.

## **Supporting and Promoting Social-Emotional Well-being**

We believe that in person learning is best for children and allows parents to lead their lives in the best way possible to support their families. We also believe that in person learning is the best way to support children's social-emotional health during the school day. Further, we believe that teachers and staff feel more supported and connected when working together at school with children. Sage and Forge International Schools provide an array of social-emotional support at school. These supports include intentional relationship building between students and teachers in the classroom and through advisory programs. Both schools employ a range of support staff that include counselors, nurses, occupational therapists, speech language pathologists and psychologists - all of whom play key roles in supporting children's social-emotional well-being.

Sage and Forge began offering in-school clubs, extracurricular programs and athletics during the second semester of the 20-21 school year and will continue to expand those offerings to meet students' needs within the resources of the school and in alignment with any applicable guidance from public health or athletics authorities during the 21-22 school year.

We recognize that staff and faculty also need and deserve social-emotional support after encountering and overcoming significant challenges and anxiety producing situations since March of 2020. The Sage International Network of Schools is committed to supporting our staff with dedicated time to collaborate and build relationships with each other during the school week and especially during dedicated, weekly professional development days on Fridays. Additionally, every employee with benefits has access to an Employee Assistance Program which provides mental and emotional health services. The Sage International

Network is committed to listening and supporting its staff, faculty, students and families as we begin to emerge from this public health emergency.

### **Timeline for review of the Network school reopening plan**

We are committed to reviewing the Network Reopening Plan no less frequently than every six months through September 30th of 2023.

### **Technical assistance**

We understand that local, State and Federal officials are available to provide technical assistance as we continue to operate both schools. We will reach out to various authorities for advice as new situations arise.