



Safe Return to Learning 2021-22



Laura Jeffrey Academy's Safe Return to Learning 2021-2022

August 2021 - Laura Jeffrey Academy is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for each employee, student, parent and visitor to our buildings. This operational plan identifies and explains the practices and protocols to help ensure we have a safe and healthy learning environment, and help mitigate transmission of COVID-19 in our school communities during the 2021-22 school year.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to change rapidly, this plan will be updated to reflect any shift in protocol, guidance and/or requirements.

Our primary focus continues to be the education of our students, while integrating health and safety responses into our existing pre-pandemic public health support. LJA looks forward to our continued partnership during this school year, and we remain committed to educational success and keeping our learning communities safe.

Our COVID-19 Operational Plan is rooted in prevention strategies based on community spread, vaccination coverage, populations at risk and efficacy of mitigation steps. It is important to remember that the **Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) asserts high vaccination numbers combined with low community spread lessen the need for masking and other prevention strategies.**

The CDC also identifies face coverings and the vaccine as effective preventative strategies that can lessen the time a person should be in isolation or quarantine, and can influence the trajectory of transmission.

Along with CDC and the Minnesota Department of (MDH), we strongly recommend people to get vaccinated, when eligible. For more information about vaccinations and to schedule an appointment, [visit the MDH website](#). Health

LJA also strongly recommends families and students to get tested every week or when exposed to a positive COVID-19 case or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. [Find a testing site near you by visiting MDH website](#). Scholars who participate in sports and extracurricular events are encouraged to test more often.

LJA asks that every student and family regularly review the following:

1. This COVID-19 operational plan and take responsibility to follow its recommendations and requirements
2. The [Minnesota Department of Health COVID-19 website](#) for updated guidance, and
3. The [Minnesota Department of Health Recommended COVID-19 Decision Tree](#), which includes recommendations for those who are ill.

This plan will be updated as needed, and follows all applicable executive orders, and current guidance and standards from the MDH, Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), the CDC, and federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). If you have questions about the plan, contact LJA's Leadership Team

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Assessing and Handling Illness

Public health agencies will continue to guide our decision-making process and the [Minnesota Department of Health Recommended COVID-19 Decision Tree](#) and [Minnesota Department of Health Recommendations for Handling a Confirmed Case of COVID-19](#) will act as guidance to help determine protocol and next steps related to monitoring, quarantining and notification. The district is required to report all positive COVID-19 cases to MDH. And all families are required to report their student(s) positive test results to LJA's Main Office.

All staff and students who intend to participate in person are **STRONGLY RECOMMENDED** to get tested for COVID-19 regularly. [Review the MDH COVID-19 Testing Recommendations](#) to help determine when/if you need to be tested. [Find a testing site near you by visiting MDH website.](#)

Experiencing Symptoms

Anyone experiencing illness should follow the above [decision tree](#), stay home and are **STRONGLY RECOMMENDED** to get tested. Refer to the first and second paths in the decision tree to determine the most appropriate course of action.

- Symptoms of COVID-19 can include: fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, headache, muscle pain, sore throat, fatigue, congestion or runny nose, or loss of taste or smell. Other less common symptoms include gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.

However, if a person has had lab-confirmed COVID-19 in the past 90 days and is experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19, retesting is not recommended. The person should follow the above decision tree and remain home until symptoms have improved and they have been fever-free for 24 hours. Siblings and other household members can continue to attend in-person school and activities.

If a student is symptomatic at school, LJA will notify a parent/guardian for the student to be immediately sent home, regardless of COVID-19 vaccination status or prior history of disease. The student will be **REQUIRED** to be isolated in a designated space. Students should remain under the visual supervision of a staff member while in isolation on school property. Symptomatic persons should be isolated separately whenever possible; however, if it is not feasible to maintain separate spaces, physical distancing should be implemented to the extent possible in the shared space

Students who are symptomatic will not be allowed to take public transportation home.

Positive COVID-19 Test

If a person tests positive for COVID-19 and has symptoms, they are **REQUIRED** to stay home and isolate for at least 10 days from the time the symptoms begin until symptoms have improved AND they have been fever-free for 24 hours without use of fever-reducing medication. LJA will notify the family as to when the student may return to in person learning. All families are required to report their student(s) positive test results to LJA's Office. LJA is required to report positive COVID-19 tests to MDH through the RedCap portal.

If the person tests positive for COVID-19 and does not have symptoms, they are **REQUIRED** to stay home for 10 days beginning the day they were tested. LJA will notify the family as to when the student may return to in person learning. Community members are encouraged to reach out to those people they determine to be close contacts when they are the positive case. All families are required to report their student(s) positive test results to their building. LJA is required to report positive COVID-19 tests to MDH through the RedCap portal.



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Additional mitigation strategies may be implemented in the classroom in which the positive case was identified.

If a school learns of a positive COVID-19 test during school hours, LJA will notify a parent/guardian for the student to be picked up and the student will be REQUIRED to wear a mask while waiting. If the student is unable to be picked up, they will be REQUIRED to quarantine until they are picked up. The student will not be allowed to take public transportation home.

Close Contact

Students and staff can be excluded as a close contact if they were correctly wearing a well-fitting face covering near the positive case AND prevention strategies (e.g. ventilation, cleaning and disinfection, respiratory etiquette and hygiene) were in place. Everyone is STRONGLY RECOMMENDED to test weekly and more often if participating in sports and/or extracurricular programs.

Students and staff who are fully vaccinated and have been identified as a close contact to a positive case (whether in school or not) do not need to stay home or quarantine but are STRONGLY RECOMMENDED to get tested three to five days after exposure. Close contacts are also STRONGLY RECOMMENDED to wear a face covering indoors when at home, for 14 days, following exposure OR until the test result is negative.

Students and staff who are not fully vaccinated and have been identified as a close contact to a positive case are STRONGLY RECOMMENDED to get tested and stay home for 10 days if they are not tested. They are STRONGLY RECOMMENDED to stay home for seven days, if between day five and seven they produced a negative test. If the close contact becomes symptomatic, it is STRONGLY RECOMMENDED they isolate and get tested. However, MDH asserts 14-day quarantine is the safest recommendation for people who have been exposed to COVID-19.

Everyone is encouraged to reach out to those people they determine to be close contacts when they are the positive case. All families are required to report their student(s) positive test results to LJA.

Notification

Program/classroom participants and their families will be notified of a positive case with a general notification letter when a case is reported.

All families are required to report their student(s) positive test results to LJA's Main Office. LJA is required to report positive test results to the Minnesota Department of Health.

Face Coverings

Face coverings are REQUIRED to be worn, covering the nose and mouth, indoors and outdoors by all individuals, including students, staff and visitors, (age 2 and older), regardless of vaccination status. Any scholar or staff member who is medically, physically or behaviorally unable to wear a face covering must provide documentation and will then be REQUIRED to wear a face shield.

Face coverings must be worn at all times during physical activity (e.g., when exercising in a gym, fitness center, or during recess), regardless of the level of physical exertion.



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Face coverings are REQUIRED to be worn by all staff and students riding SPPS Transportation and other vehicles as part of instructional programming (e.g. to and from school, field trips, educational outings), and co-curricular activities (e.g. after-school sports and other activities, high school athletics, etc) [per the CDC's federal order](#).

The following face coverings are acceptable:

- Paper or disposable mask;
- Cloth face mask; and
- Medical-grade masks and respirators.

Masks may not have work or logos, other than LJA's logo. LJA will have disposable masks available to students and staff who are in need of one during the day.

When staff are serving students in settings where seeing a person's lips is necessary, staff will be asked to wear a clear facemask. If staff do not have access to a clear facemask, they can choose to only wear the required face shield if fully vaccinated.

Reinforcement of use will be treated with the same approach as addressing students experiencing any behavior; reminder of desired behavior, visuals as appropriate, advisory lessons, and daily reminders.

Staff, students, and other people present at LJA may temporarily remove their face covering and/or face shield in the following situations:

- Face coverings may be temporarily removed to eat or drink, but care should be taken to maintain as much space as possible between people.
- During indoor practices or performances involving singing, acting, or playing musical instruments where face coverings cannot be worn or are impractical to wear while playing the instrument or participating in the activity. Because these activities often generate aerosols, performers should maintain at least 6 feet of physical distance from each other, but should ideally maintain greater distance (e.g., 12 feet) when possible.
- While teachers and students may temporarily remove their face coverings when public speaking (for example, in a debate or speech team competition or in an assembly), lecturing, or engaging in classroom instruction, face coverings should only be removed in such situations when 12 feet of distance from others can be consistently maintained. If a face covering would impede these activities but 12 feet of social distancing cannot be consistently maintained (for example, due to classroom size), a face shield should be considered as an alternative.
- Staff working in a space ALONE with no other staff, students or visitors may remove masks while working at their individual desk space.
- When communicating with a person who is deaf or hard of hearing or has a disability, medical condition, or mental health condition that makes communication with a face covering difficult, provided that social distancing is maintained to the extent possible. In these situations, a transparent, physical barrier (e.g., plexiglass) may be considered as an additional mitigation strategy.

Social Distancing and Cohorting

Social distancing (also called physical distancing) means keeping space between yourself and other people outside of your home. Social distancing continues to be a critical tool in decreasing the spread of COVID-19. The CDC



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STRONGLY RECOMMENDS schools maintain at least 3 feet of physical distancing between students within a classroom. When it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of at least 3 feet, we may layer additional mitigation strategies (masking at all times, screening testing, forming cohorts, and staying home when sick with symptoms of infectious illness) to help reduce transmission risk. All persons in the building and on district transportation must do their best to provide as much space as possible between themselves and other people.

CDC continues to recommend maintaining a distance of at least 6 feet between students and staff, as well as 6 feet of distance between staff who are not fully vaccinated. LJA will also recommend maintaining a distance of at least 6 feet between staff and staff, as well as 6 feet of distance between staff who are not fully vaccinated. CDC recommends that physical distance should be maximized as much as possible when moving through food service lines and while eating (especially indoors). Using additional spaces outside of the cafeteria for mealtime seating, such as the gymnasium or outdoor seating, can help facilitate distancing.

Floor markings will be placed at building entrances, service counters and throughout the school to indicate where people should stand and provide directional flow and spacing for social distancing.

Signage will be posted in all district buildings promoting health and safety.

LJA bus and alley supervisors will greet scholars to ensure social distancing is reinforced. Staff will supervise hallways and common areas during arrival and departure times to curtail congregating. (e.g., during lunch, arrival and dismissal, restrooms)

LJA will be limiting nonessential visitors, volunteers and activities involving external groups or organizations during the school day. Leadership will approve requests to access during the school day. All visitors will follow face covering and social distancing policies.

Nonessential visitors, volunteers and activities involving external groups or organizations will be invited after the school day with specific times to ensure social distancing and follow COVID-19 Sports Guidance for Youth and Adults provided by MDE.

Scholars will remain in their cohort that do not intermix for mealtimes, and that six feet of distance be maintained between student cohort groups as much as possible.

Implement contactless pick up and/or delivery of meals and school materials for days that students and staff are not in the school building.

Students who will be arriving late to school should enter through the main door. Guardians are asked to not enter the building unless previously scheduled. Therefore, guardians should send a signed note with the student or call the office letting LJA know of the reason for arriving late. For students who are being picked up early, guardians should call LJA's office when they arrive and LJA will send their scholar out.

Whenever possible, physical education and music classes will be held outside and scholars will be encouraged to spread out.

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Protecting Vulnerable Populations

Students and staff who self-identify as high risk for illness due to COVID-19 should email LJA's Leadership Team.

LJA's School Nurse, SpEd Coordinator, and Leadership member will evaluate all current plans (healthcare plans, IEP's, 504s) to ensure accommodations are being provided for students with special health care needs and continue to update them as needed to decrease risk for exposure to COVID-19.

Hygiene and Cleaning Practices

Proper hygiene practices such as frequent handwashing with soap and water, cleaning hands using hand sanitizer and disinfecting surfaces will be implemented and taught at LJA.

- Appropriate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors (e.g., soap, hand sanitizer, paper towels, disinfectant) will be available and strategically placed in areas where they may be/are frequently used (entrance areas, cafeteria, bathroom and classrooms) encouraging students to use upon entrance. LJA will offer foot handles on bathroom doors for contact less entrance/exit.
- LJA will build routines of hand hygiene into the daily school schedule for all students and staff, including handwashing and sanitation breaks during or between classroom activities.
- HEPA filters will remain in all instructional spaces and buildings.

Regular cleaning and disinfection of our learning spaces and vehicles will continue, and they will be cleaned and disinfected regularly using disinfectant products that are approved and effective against the COVID-19 virus.

- Before school, after students are within a classroom space, and at the end of day - LJA staff will disinfect.
- Cleaning products will not be used near children, but will wait until they have left the space to ensure there is adequate ventilation when using these products.
- LJA will securely store products away from children.
- LJA staff will minimize sharing of high-touch materials to the extent possible by dedicating supplies or equipment to individual students or limit the use of supplies and equipment to one small classroom cohort group at a time, allowing for time to clean and disinfect between uses.

All staff will be responsible for handling antimicrobial products (sterilizers, disinfectants, and sanitizers) and be provided with initial and ongoing training so staff understand and follow all product label directions and precautions appearing on (or included within) product containers.



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Water and ventilation systems

LJA will run and flush all water systems and features (e.g., sink faucets, drinking fountains) to ensure water is safe to use after our prolonged facility shutdown. Drinking fountains will be cleaned and sanitized daily. LJA will encourage staff and students to bring their own water, use cups, or other alternative procedures to minimize use and touching of water fountains.

LJA will ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, for example by opening windows and doors, running window fans and keeping on portable ventilation equipment during the school day. Portable ventilation equipment (window fans and HEPA Filter Fans) are both installed in each classroom. LJA will take steps to minimize air from them blowing from one person directly at another person to reduce the potential spread of any airborne or aerosolized viruses.

Food and Nutrition Services

All meals throughout the 2021-22 school year are free, regardless of eligibility, for all LJA students ages 18 and younger, due to special funding from the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture. LJA will follow practices consistent with MDH, MDE and CDC health and safety guidelines when serving students in our schools.

Technology and Internet Access

If your scholar needs to quarantine, LJA will provide an LJA device if needed. This will support your scholar in accessing assignments from home. LJA will assist families who need access to the internet.

Hot spots are available for students who do not have reliable access to the internet. Contact LJA's Office directly to submit a request for a free hotspot.

Academic Considerations

LJA will work to engage students in their academic learning by providing social emotional support and academic work that builds on their interests and requires the application of multiple skills and modalities.

LJA educators will use formative assessments to analyze students' learning needs, and provide fine tuned support where needed, prioritizing math and reading skills.

Student and Family Support

LJA will hold virtual or in-person home visits with each family. Advisor teachers will serve as the primary point of contact for students and families.

LJA will connect families with LJA's social workers to help address concerns, fears and any mental health needs. When needed or requested, LJA will connect families with outside providers to expand their care network.

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Homelessness Supports

LJA will be in contact with families affected by homelessness and will continue to support them with their individual needs. LJA will be periodically checking in with families to see if their status has changed. LJA also offers an open door for families to reach out on a daily basis to receive support on their individual needs.

Students experiencing homelessness will be given priority for devices with hotspots if needed.

LJA scholars who self identify for desired additional food will have access to Sheridan Story and have access to LJA's food shelf.

Homeless youth will have access to taxi service if experiencing homelessness and do not have access to our bussing service.

Mental Health and Wellness

The COVID-19 pandemic is causing a tremendous amount of stress, fear and anxiety for many people. It's normal to be experiencing these feelings right now. And it is important to be gentle with yourself and others, and to take steps to support both your own and your family's mental well-being. LJA staff is available to guide you to additional available resources, both within school and within the community. LJA is committed to:

- Provide staff, families, and students (age-appropriate) with information on how to access resources for mental health and wellness.
- Increase capacity to offer social support services by increasing the number of professionals on-site.
- Encourage staff, students, and families to talk with people they trust about their feelings and concerns regarding COVID-19

Students will have access to student support groups or one-on-one support with LJA's school social workers and dean of students along with our AmeriCorps Promise Fellow.

Staff will have access to each other regularly through daily staff meetings, weekly committee meetings, weekly student focus meetings. At any time staff will be encouraged to address concerns with the immediate community. Additionally, the school social worker will be available when necessary to address staff needs.

Mental Health Resources

[Supporting Mental Wellbeing During COVID-19](#)

[Mental Health Support](#)

[Tips and Resources for Children and Parents During COVID-19](#)

[Helping Children Cope](#)

[Find Your Happy Place](#)

Athletics, Activities and Enrichment

Engaging, enriching and inspiring opportunities for students during non-school hours is an important component of a well-rounded education. Therefore:

- LJA will work to provide opportunities outdoors.
- When inside, provide as much space as possible between participants.
- Personal protective equipment, HEPA filters in instructional space, and sanitizers and cleaning products, will be available.



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Students are able to participate in athletics and activities according to guidelines set forth by the Minnesota State High School League and MDH.

Transportation

All staff and students riding buses are **REQUIRED** to wear a face covering/mask, [per the CDC's federal order](#).

Bus ride recommendations including boarding, seating and school arrival:

- Students from the same household are encouraged to sit together.
- Windows and roof hatches will be opened to the extent weather permits to increase airflow and circulation.
- Buses will be cleaned and disinfected regularly using disinfectant products that are approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for effective use against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. The cleaning will focus on frequently touched surfaces in the vehicle.
- Doors and windows will be open when cleaning the vehicle and between trips to let the vehicles thoroughly air out.

Communication

A physical copy of this plan is available at LJA's front office. All staff, students, families and visitors are expected to comply with and follow the established guidelines and protocols in this plan for the health and safety of our community. LJA's Leadership Team is expected to ensure compliance with these provisions and support employees as needed.

* As MN Department of Education and MN Department of Health update guidance throughout the 2021/22 school year, LJA will be following implementation of additional requirements or recommendations. If any changes to LJA's Safe Return to Learning occur, the LJA community will be updated.