

Mississippi School of the Arts

COVID-19 Plan for 2020-2021 School Year (*revised August 17, 2020*)

As most are aware, the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has continued the spread worldwide. The Mississippi School of the Arts has created a plan to prepare aligned with Center for Disease Control for the possibility that this virus may be in our community for months to come and reopening the campus for operation must be done with great care.

COVID-19 Basics:

- The Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) causes a febrile respiratory syndrome, similar to influenza.
- Many cases may have mild symptoms.
- Severe cases may occur, leading to respiratory failure and death, especially among older adults and those with chronic medical conditions.
- The vast majority of people infected with COVID-19 will fully recover.
- The virus is spread from person-to-person through respiratory droplets.
- There is no antiviral treatment or vaccine currently available for COVID-19.

Please review the essential elements of CDC guidance for preventing the spread of illness in the workplace.

The protocols in this document are provided for Traditional or Hybrid MSA operations. If CDC/MDE/MDHS guidance should expect closure of campus or an outbreak has begun to disrupt traditional operations, protocols will be released for a Virtual Learning Environment. An online web-based instructional portal is in place to provide seamless instruction regardless of operation model.

Traditional Operation – All students are on campus. Schedule operates daily without change from original plan. If necessary, while on campus to allow for smaller classes in a few of the courses, students could participate in class while on campus in their dormitory rooms removing internet/device obstacles. They would alternate days in the classroom with the teacher.

Hybrid Operation – Rooms are assigned with a junior and senior in each room. If Hybrid operations are adopted, a (junior or senior) class of students would attend on campus courses for two weeks and switch to online for two weeks while the other class would attend on campus. This would half the capacity of school operations. Initial plans for reopening will be August 31-September 27 on hybrid model with extensions as needed.

Virtual Operation – All students and staff work from home for a minimum of 14 days or length as designated necessary for the safety of all.

Obstacles to consider – internet access; device access; motivation of the students to participate in online/virtual learning

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MSA is implementing the following CDC Recommended Strategies:

Prevent

Employees and students with symptoms of acute respiratory illness are recommended to stay home and not come to work until they are free of fever (100.0° F or greater), signs of a fever, and any other symptoms for at least 48 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines. Employees should notify their supervisor and stay home if they are sick.

Students or staff who live with a COVID-19 positive family member should self-quarantine for 14 days before returning to campus. Students or staff who have taken trips to highly infected areas should consult with the administration prior to returning to campus to assess if a self-quarantine is warranted.

When a student returns home on weekends, if there is a person in the home who is COVID-19 positive, the student should quarantine and begin distance learning for 14 days before returning to campus. Do NOT return to campus if you are sick or feeling ill. Communicate with the administration to ensure coursework and absences are excused.

On Campus Preventative Measures

- Handwashing, social distancing, masks required posters throughout campus
- Daily temperature checks of all staff and students at the beginning of the day
- Screening questionnaire for students returning to campus from overnight
- Sanitizer stations on every level of all buildings and every classroom
- Restrooms are continuously stocked with soap and paper towels
- Disinfectant spray is being utilized on high touch areas
- Masks required in all common areas and outdoors when social distancing is impossible
- Masks provided to all staff and students; face shields for classes with more vocal exertion and each teacher; clear barriers for singers to stand behind
- Small ensemble and solo work for all performing arts classes
- Student training on cleaning procedures; handwashing procedures; habits regarding high touch areas
- Two students per dormitory room (when in hybrid operations, 1 per room)
- Floors assigned by arts discipline as much as possible
- Limited access for fitness center, art room, laundry room in the Student Life Center
- Staggered meal times by group with assigned seating areas; additional outdoor seating
- No visitors from outside of campus for the Fall 2020
- Modified check out procedures as a drive through for weekend departures
- No visiting from floor to floor, instead visiting in common areas on campus or 1st-2nd Floors of the Student Life Center
- Small class sizes, distanced classroom seating, barriers for teachers
- Virtual learning with partner school, Brookhaven High School for the 1st nine weeks
- High traffic barriers at administrative desk areas
- Virtual performances and exhibits for the Fall 2020

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- No field trips for Fall 2020 – replaced with increased on campus activities
- Administration monitoring daily updates from all regulatory and health agencies
- Small group mental health sessions and individual sessions are available for students dealing with trauma related to COVID-19 or other issues
- No equipment, props, costumes, supplies should be shared without first wiping them down between touches.

Daily questioning will be conducted of students and staff to indicate any new developments in their health.

Response Measures

- If symptomatic or temperature of 100 degrees, student will be isolated in nurse's station isolation room; staff members will be sent home immediately
- Student's Parent/Guardian will be contacted to pick up and/or arrange for local testing
- Kings Daughters Medical Center will be contacted for assessment
- Patient will either be quarantined at the local hospital or sent home until fever free for at least 72 hours
- While waiting for test results, the student/staff member must self-isolate until results are provided
- Contact tracing will occur to identify any additional students/staff who may need to quarantine, monitor for symptoms, or test
- Students/staff should work from home when possible during the time off campus; inability to work due to illness will be accommodated with time for make up

Staying Home When Ill - Many times, with the best of intentions, students report to school and staff report to work even though they feel ill.

Students who are absent with an illness requiring quarantine for two weeks or more will be afforded alternative assignments and opportunities to recover their work for course credit. No penalties toward honors status or other recognition will be issued for illness.

Employees are provided with paid medical leave to compensate employees who are unable to work due to illness. During flu season and/or an influenza pandemic, it is critical that employees do not report to work while they are ill and/or experiencing the following symptoms: fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. A significant number of people who have been infected with this virus also have reported diarrhea and vomiting. Currently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that people with influenza-like illness remain at home until at least 48 hours after they are free of fever (100 degrees F) or signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medications.

Employees who report to work ill will be sent home in accordance with these health guidelines. Employees who are sent home under this policy will be required to utilize leave. If leave is exhausted and a COVID-19 diagnosis has been given by a doctor,

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employees will not be penalized with leave without pay. Medical documentation is required.

Recover

Upon removal of students or staff who test positive, disinfection protocols will be increased. Within privacy laws and confidentiality, public health notices will be issued. In some cases, there may be a recommendation for testing for those who were in direct contact with a positive COVID-19 patient. Prevention protocols will continue to be followed. If the student doesn't test and exhibits symptoms of illness, they should stay at home and continue virtual learning until they are fever free for 48 hours.

Mental Health is definitely impacted by this pandemic. As a result the school psychologist will be available for small groups (either online or in person) to deal with the uncertainty and isolation for students. These will be conducted weekly to offer students a mechanism of coping. When these efforts are inadequate, communication will be provided to the parents for further resources available to the family.

If more than 1/3 of a group (floor, discipline, class, etc.) on campus becomes ill with COVID-19 that group may be expected to quarantine with remote learning for 14 days. If a significant number of students or staff are diagnosed with COVID-19, the school may close to virtual operation for a period of time as needed for the safety of students and staff.

Sources monitored regularly as well as in consultation with colleagues and institutions:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>
- <https://msdh.ms.gov/msdhsite/ static/14,0,420.html>
- <https://www.nasn.org/nasn-resources/practice-topics/covid19>
- <https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/>
- <https://www.ed.gov/coronavirus>
- <https://www.misshsaa.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/nfhs-guidance-for-fall-2020-review-june-19-2020-final.pdf>
- <https://mdek12.org/>

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Sample letter to parents and community for COVID-19 Diagnosis – to be tailored for the particular audience – sent via email and mail:

Dear MSA Family,

As of (date), a student/staff member in your student's class/group/discipline/floor/team has tested positive and been diagnosed for COVID-19. With protocols in place, MSA believes this is not an outbreak at this time and will continue operations as scheduled until notified otherwise. However, all individuals should monitor for symptoms and consult your physician as needed.

In the case of prolonged exposure, some students/staff members may receive a separate notification to quarantine at home for 14 days.

If your student develops symptoms or are ill, please stay home and do not return to campus. All students/staff are asked to stay home if they present with a fever and remain there until fever free for 48 hours.

As always, MSA strives to maintain a safe and healthy environment for our family. Please help us in staying in communication for any symptoms or diagnoses by contacting our school nurse at denise.owen@msabrookhaven.org or call 601-823-1347.

Thank you,

Suzanne Hirsch
Executive Director