

McDowell Elementary School Opening Plan For 2020 – 2021 School Year

Introduction

Welcome back Sealions! This 2020-2021 Return to Campus page is designed to provide resources, information, and documents to help prepare you for our return on September 8th. We are so excited to welcome our new and returning families back to school.

It has been our goal throughout our entire planning process to reopen our campus safely and in accordance with all governmental guidelines and recommendations.

McDowell is like no other school. Our proven safety and security protocols - preschool has been open and operating since August 3rd - extraordinary faculty, and committed community, affords us the ability to be nimble and adapt to the circumstances around us. We are ready to transition back to on-campus learning (though parents have the option to have their children join their classes remotely) and believe our students will be safe and thriving when they return. We hope the extra measures and protocols put in place will relax and temper over time, but we will approach the start of school conservatively to ensure the utmost health and safety of our community.

Our unique small school size and very small class sizes positions us ideally to handle all the needed protocols to keep the community safe. Cadence being primarily a preschool company has given us a model that we know is safe and works, their practices are proven, both at McDowell and over 200 other schools across the USA. As a shared campus, we already comply with County Licensing for Preschool, Infants and Toddlers.

The following plan outlines how McDowell school will safely open its campus with all the new health and safety protocols in place. We will open on Tuesday, September the 8th – after the Labor Day holiday - in the most conservative of phases and hope that when our external environment opens up and as expert guidance suggests, we will work toward our ultimate goal of having our McDowell experience back to what it was prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Guiding Principals

Goals

Utilize the expert guidance from local state and federal resources, along with the proven practices and protocols of Cadence Education Inc in the decision-making process to safely reopen the elementary grade classes on our campus.

Utilize the expertise within the community working as an advisory group to address the specific needs of our small community and facility.

Utilize the experience and expertise of Cadence Education as they provided preschool services throughout the pandemic and guided the reopening of over 200 schools in over 26 States.

Implementation

Continuous monitoring of local and regional conditions as reported by the Orange County Health Care Agency and the Orange County Department of Education.

Continuous monitoring of national conditions through Cadence Education, who in turn take expert guidance from the CDC and recognized Health and Education experts.

Implementation of all Cadence Education practices and protocols, including mandatory training for all teachers and administrators and mandatory reporting of daily health checks.

Regular communications with the parent body.

Regular communications with faculty and staff.

Regular communications with advisory group. The McDowell Advisory Group comprises:

Negar Ashouri MD	Morgan Barrows Ph.D.	Reshma Block MBA
CHOC Pediatric Infectious Disease	Environmental Disease Scientist	Principal at Compass – Business Continuity and Emergency Planning
David Bunten DO	Laila F.M. Contractor MD	Irfan Khan MD
Family Medicine	Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist	Pulmonologist – Lung and Critical Care

This document serves as part of a written worksite specific Covid-19 prevention plan, following a detailed site and procedures risk assessment, to be implemented by the Head of School. All staff have been actively involved in the implementation of the plan, in the creation of classroom cohorts and application of community health requirements. Daily evaluation of the workplace for compliance and potential issues will be undertaken by the Head of School and staff.

The administration in concert with the regional director and the Health and Safety support services of Cadence Education will investigate any COVID-19 illness and determine if any work-related factors could have contributed to risk of infection and update the plan as needed to prevent further cases.

The administration in concert with the regional director and the Health and Safety support services of Cadence Education will implement the necessary processes and protocols when a workplace has an outbreak, in accordance with CDPH guidelines. They will also identify individuals who have been in close contact (within six feet for 15 minutes or more) of an infected person and take steps to immediately isolate.

The Student Experience

Goals

Ensure that all McDowell students are engaged in our significant, relevant, and challenging learning program every day, while balancing their social needs and adhering to recommended health and physical distancing protocols.

Provide for multiple learning scenarios, including the ability to support students who prefer to learn at home.

Repurpose all areas within the campus for optimal safety and novel teaching experiences.

Implementation

Limit class size to keep cohort or pod under 15 students (maximum) (Cohort sizes are anticipated to be between 5 and 8).

Utilize external spaces, lunch court, side tables, field, and sport court as scheduled relief from classroom setting.

Implement one-way travel system inside and outside building to minimize student interaction.

Specialty teachers will not have all classes taught in their room or personally visit all classrooms as usual. They will zoom their program into the cohort or pod classroom.

Each teacher will interact with a maximum of two pods or cohorts.

Staff will be screened in the same manner as the students including the entry temp check and mid-day checks.

Staff member specifically designated as home-school coordinator for those families choosing the remote option.

Return to School General Protocols

Minimizing Interactions

For the school to operate with in-person classes, the emphasis will be on the separation of class groups and minimal adult interaction. The class group and the class teacher effectively form a 'pod' or cohort. Each cohort will be separated physically in their classroom, or by schedule in outside spaces. One other teacher will be assigned to each cohort to facilitate breaks and in case of an emergency.

No other adults, other teachers, or administrators will ordinarily go into any of the classrooms. (Except in the case of an emergency but must be wearing full PPE.)

Parents and visitors are not allowed inside the building, before, during, or after school.

Students Teachers and Staff will utilize internal doors for entry to a room, and the external door for exiting.

Morning Drop Off Procedure

A parent should approach the Drop Off area with their child during their designated drop off time. Once the precheck questions have been asked and documented, the child's and parent's temperature will be taken. If both are clear, the child can enter the school, wash their hands, and go directly to their classroom.

Questions to be asked and recorded are:

- 1) Have you or any household members been in contact with COVID + or a symptomatic person?
- 2) Are you or any household members waiting on COVID test results, or asked to quarantine?

- 3) Have you or any household members traveled to restricted areas within 14 days?
- 4) Have you or any of your household members had any of the following.
 - Drainage from eyes or nose, headache.
 - Cough, wheezing or shortness of breath.
 - Sore throat, loss of taste or smell.
 - Vomiting or Diarrhea.
 - Fever in last 24 hours.
 - Pallor, lethargy, unexplained behavior changes.
 - Ibuprofen or Acetaminophen given at home: when and why?

Afternoon Pick-Up Procedure

Students will wash their hands, exit the classrooms, and wait in socially distanced lines in the front of the school. Children will be released when parents drive to the pickup location. (See map). On rainy days children will be summoned from classrooms by staff.

Face Masks and Face Shields

Face coverings for children are technically optional in grades K,1 and 2, though highly recommended by CDC /OHSA. We are mandating that K, 1, 2 children wear masks unless there is a medical reason that they cannot (and in that case we suggest that parents should utilize our remote learning option). Face coverings are mandatory for grades 3, 4 and 5.

All adults on campus will wear face masks. Face shields are optional ***in addition*** to a mask. Teachers can utilize shields only when socially distanced in their own classroom to teach.

A cloth face covering, or face shield should be removed for meals, snacks, naptime, or outdoor recreation, or when it needs to be replaced. When a cloth face covering is temporarily removed, it should be placed in a clean paper bag (marked with the student's name and date) until it needs to be put on again.

Food and Drink

Students need to bring their own lunch and a water bottle. Parents of younger students, please make sure your child can open their own food and drink containers. Remember McDowell is a nut free facility. (This includes seed butters, so anything that looks like peanut butter is not permissible).

When possible, students will eat outside, socially distanced, otherwise in classroom.

Teacher and Staff Safety

Teachers and staff must maintain physical distancing from each other as it is critical to reducing transmission between adults.

All staff must use face coverings in accordance with CDPH guidelines and Cal/OSHA standards.

Staff who are at higher risk for severe illness or who cannot safely distance from household contacts at higher risk, have been provided options such as telework, or teaching in a virtual learning or independent study context.

All staff meetings, professional development training and education, and other activities involving staff will be done with physical distancing measures in place, or virtually, where physical distancing is a challenge.

Teachers and staff must minimize congregation in staff rooms, break rooms, and other settings.

Teachers and staff must follow the procedures for daily symptom monitoring.

Sickness Protocols

If a child or member of staff has a temperature of 100.4 or higher, they will not be able to attend. Temperatures will be taken upon entry to the building and at lunchtime. (We utilize no-touch scans). These records are forwarded to our corporate office.

In the case of any reported sickness (our usual childhood expectations) the sick child will be isolated; parents will be contacted, and the child must be removed from school immediately. If a staff member or student shows or reports illness symptoms, the entire family must remain out for 72 hours past the last symptomatic day. If the doctor does clear them with something diagnosed with a lab test (strep, ear infection) their note needs to be detailed and state the diagnosis, otherwise they must remain out.

If a child, parent, or family member is exposed to COVID they will need to quarantine for 14 days. There is no allowance for negative test results to clear someone in the interim period.

If there are concerns that this could be a contagious matter, California Department of Health protocols will be followed. The members of that child's cohort will be informed, and if the individual tests positive for covid-19, none of the members of that cohort may return to school until fourteen days have elapsed.

If a person is exposed by someone in their immediate household and they do not move out, the school will coordinate determination and communication of isolation and quarantine instructions with the OCHCA.

There is a new link here with some helpful info from the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>

In addition to the enhanced cleaning protocols throughout the school, if a specific room or area is connected with a positive Covid-19 case, the school will execute a localized deep cleaning plan. At this point we will take everything under advisement from the Orange County Health Care Authority, but other classes and cohorts should not be impacted.

Identifying and Tracing of Contacts

McDowell Administration will maintain a regularly updated list of contacts and will utilize the School Management Systems (Child Care Works and Gradelink) to record and report attendance. Normal class protocols re attendance will be enhanced with phone checks on absent students and daily virtual student attendance. Community communications will stress the need for all contact information to be current, and any changes to be reported to the school. In the event some or all the community needs to be informed of a closure or illness, the Head of School and Office Manager will take that responsibility.

Testing of Students and Staff

All testing will be provided by the individual's health provider. Cadence Education provides health coverage for all its staff through Aetna, and staff who chose not to utilize the company provision, must show proof of health coverage.

The school keeps on file the name of each child's doctor or pediatric health provider.

HCA has identified testing options if needed at:

<https://occovid19.ochealthinfo.com/covid-19-testing#wherecanlgettested>

Cadence Education likewise has a Health and Safety coordinator and access to the counsel of a Pediatric Epidemiologist, who have experience in dealing with Covid-19 cases throughout the companies over 200 schools.

Promoting Healthy Hygiene Practices

All Staff will Teach and reinforce washing hands, avoiding contact with one's eyes, nose, and mouth, and covering coughs and sneezes among students and staff. There are health posters located throughout the school reinforcing the protocols.

We will Teach students and remind staff to use tissue to wipe their nose and to cough/sneeze inside a tissue or their elbow.

Students and staff will wash their hands frequently throughout the day, including before and after eating; after coughing or sneezing; after classes where they handle shared items, such as outside recreation, art; and before and after using the restroom.

Students and staff will wash their hands for 20 seconds with soap, rubbing thoroughly after application. Posters reinforce the procedures at all wash stations.

Staff will model and practice handwashing. For example, for all grade levels, use bathroom time as an opportunity to reinforce healthy habits and monitor proper handwashing.

Students and staff will use hand sanitizer when handwashing is not practicable. Sanitizer is available in all classrooms and common areas.

After School Programs

To operate safely and ensure no comingling of cohorts (so no cross age activities) as well as maintain the integrity of the drop-of and pick-up procedures. After School Programs will not be available until further notice.

Extended Care Program

To operate safely and ensure no comingling of cohorts (so no cross age activities) as well as maintain the integrity of the drop-of and pick-up procedures. Extended care will not be available until further notice.

Field Studies

Both Off-campus and On-campus field studies and guest presentations will be cancelled until further notice. Where possible, virtual field studies will be utilized

One-way system for foot traffic

There will be posted directional signs and maps to minimize cross traffic. Each classroom has separate entry and exit doors. Six feet markers will be placed on all corridors and shared foot traffic areas.

Cleaning Disinfection and Ventilation

We have suspended or modified the use of site resources that necessitate sharing or touching items. Students will have personal materials kits and there will be no drinking fountain use so students should bring their own reusable water bottle.

Staff will clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at school at least twice daily and, as practicable, these surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected thoroughly at the end of the day by the custodial staff.

We are limiting the use and sharing of objects and equipment, such as toys, games, art supplies and playground equipment. There are 15-minute breaks built into the schedule to allow staff to clean and disinfect with approved products between uses.

Custodial staff and any other workers who clean and disinfect the school site will be equipped with proper protective equipment, including gloves, eye protection, respiratory protection, and other appropriate protective equipment as required by the product instructions. All products will be kept out of children's reach and stored in a space with restricted access.

Where possible, and safe doors and windows will be left open to increase airflow and ensure proper ventilation during cleaning and disinfecting. We want to introduce fresh outdoor air as much as possible and when using air conditioning, utilize the setting that brings in outside air. The AC system has been fully serviced, replacing and checking air filters and filtration systems to ensure optimal air quality, and will continue to be regularly serviced.

We are currently working on installing portable high-efficiency air cleaners and have upgraded the building's air filters to the highest efficiency possible, to increase the quantity of outside air and ventilation in classrooms, offices, and other spaces.

Physical or Digital Attendance

Parents may choose to have students in class or can participate remotely. Pre-prepared materials will be available for pick up for those staying at home.

A heavy-duty mobile TV stand with flat screen 50-inch smart TV, Camera with digital focus, and microphones, controlled through a dedicated Chromebook, will be situated in each classroom, viz:



Classroom Space

To reduce possibilities for infection, the students will remain in the same space and in cohorts as small and consistent as practicable, including for recess and lunch. We will be keeping the same students and teacher or staff with each group. Other teacher interaction will be from other rooms via zoom. We need to minimize the movement of students and teachers or staff as much as practicable.

When appropriate, teachers will be able to utilize designated outdoor teaching space.

We have maximized space for seating and desks. We have distanced the teacher and other staff desks to at least six feet away from student desks. We have established separation of students through other means such as, six feet between desks, partitions between desks, markings on classroom floors to promote distancing and arranging desks in a way that minimizes face-to-face contact.

Music class will be provided as an online service from Music Play Patrol not a live teacher to minimize use of instruments etc.

Procedures for picking up and turning in assignments are in place to minimize contact with designated outdoor tables, and we will use Google classroom where possible.

Extraneous personal items not permitted and teacher materials and displays minimized to support easy and regular cleaning.

When appropriate, teachers will be able to utilize designated outdoor teaching space.

Classroom Materials

Students have their own desk supplies, storage or cubby and in grades 3 and up their own personal electronic devices.

All books and shared materials monitored and cleaned after each use.

All materials for projects prepared as individual student supply packs made in advance.

Hand Washing

Children and staff must wash their hands upon entering the classroom. If a handwashing sink is not available, they may use sanitizer or bathroom sink.

Kindergarten, Grades 2, 4 and 5 have sinks in classroom.

Grade 1 use K/1/2 lower school restroom sinks.

Grade 3 use 3/4/5 upper school restroom sinks.

We are working on upgrading restrooms with touchless faucets and touchless soap dispensers.

We have also installed an outdoor sink.

Sanitizers are located all throughout the campus.

Specialty Classes

Yoga outside, physically distanced

PE outside, physically distanced (any equipment used, cleaned between each use of student or classes). Emphasis on fitness and health.

Art from Art Room/home studio via zoom to home or classroom (individual student supply packs made in advance).

Science from Science Lab via zoom to home or classroom (individual student supply packs made in advance).

Spanish from Teacher's room via zoom to home or classroom.

Custodial

Our custodial providers follow the current CDC recommendations for proper cleaning and disinfecting at the end of the school day.

Hospital Standard cleaning materials are provided for all staff by Cadence for intermittent cleaning during the school day. High touch points will be cleaned on a regular basis.

Spay on and leave school-safe disinfectant will be utilized in each classroom at the end of the school day.

Any external play surfaces (climbing structure) will be cleaned between classes.

Staff Training and Family Education

All staff have been trained (and there is ongoing training) and we have provided educational materials to families in the following safety actions:

- Enhanced sanitation practices
- Physical distancing guidelines and their importance
- Proper use, removal, and washing of face coverings
- Screening practices
- How COVID-19 is spread
- COVID-19 specific symptom identification
- Preventing the spread of COVID-19 if you are sick, including the importance of not coming to work if staff members have symptoms, or if they or someone they live with has been diagnosed with COVID- 19.
- For workers, COVID-19 specific symptom identification and when to seek medical attention
- The employer’s plan and procedures to follow when children or adults become sick at school.
- The employer’s plan and procedures to protect workers from COVID- 19 illness.

All training and education are done virtually, or, if in-person, we ensure a minimum of six-foot distancing is maintained.

Checking for Signs and Symptoms

McDowell will not discriminate against students who (or whose families) were or are diagnosed with COVID-19 or who are perceived to be a COVID-19 risk.

We actively encourage staff and students who are sick or who have recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19 to stay home without fear of reprisal.

We have implemented screening and other procedures for all staff and students entering the facility.

We conduct visual wellness checks of all students and when checking temperatures, we use a no-touch thermometer.

We ask all individuals if they or anyone in their home is exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms.

We have made available, and we encourage use of hand-washing stations or hand sanitizer.

We document/track incidents of possible exposure and will notify local health officials, staff and families immediately of any exposure to a positive case of COVID-19 at school while maintaining confidentiality, as required under FERPA and state law related to privacy of educational records.

If a student is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, staff will communicate with the parent/caregiver and refer to the student's health history form and/or emergency card.

We will monitor staff and students throughout the day for signs of illness; and send home students and staff with a fever of 100.4 degrees or higher, cough or other Covid-19 symptoms.

None of our policies penalize students and families for missing class.

When a Staff Member or Child becomes sick

The school administrators will isolate a sick person in a room or area to separate anyone who exhibits symptoms of COVID-19.

Any students or staff exhibiting symptoms will immediately be required to wear a face covering (mandatory within the building) and be required to wait in an isolation area until they can be transported home or to a healthcare facility, as soon as practicable.

We have in place procedures to arrange for safe transport home or to a healthcare facility, as appropriate, when an individual is exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms:

Fever – Cough - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing – Chills - Repeated shaking with chills - Fatigue - Muscle pain – Headache - Sore throat - Congestion or runny nose - Nausea or vomiting – Diarrhea - New loss of taste or smell

In the case of a serious injury or illness, we will call 9-1-1 without delay. We will seek medical attention if COVID-19 symptoms become severe, including persistent pain or pressure in the chest, confusion, or bluish lips or face.

We will notify local health officials immediately of any positive case of COVID- 19, and exposed staff and families as relevant while maintaining confidentiality as required by state and federal laws.

We will close off areas used by any individual suspected of being infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 and will not use before cleaning and disinfection. To reduce risk of exposure, we will wait 24 hours before we clean and disinfect or wait as long as practicable. We will ensure a safe and correct application of disinfectants using personal protective equipment and ventilation recommended for cleaning. As in all school situations we will keep disinfectant products away from students.

We will advise sick staff members and students not to return until they have met CDC criteria to discontinue home isolation, including at least 24 hours with no fever, and off antipyretics, symptoms have improved and at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared, or CDC’s updated criteria.

We have ensured that all students, including students with disabilities, have access to instruction when out of class, as required by federal and state law.

We offer a comprehensive distance learning package, including a dedicated member of staff to interact and problem solve for our at-home families

We will implement the necessary processes and protocols when a school has an outbreak, in accordance with CDPH guidelines.

We will investigate any COVID-19 illness and exposures and determine if any work-related factors could have contributed to risk of infection, and update protocols as needed to prevent further cases.

We will update protocols as needed to prevent further cases. See the CDPH guidelines, including a plan to identify cases, communicate with students and staff and other exposed persons, and to conduct and assist with contact tracing.

Social and Emotional Support

Every effort will be made to recreate the close personal relationships that our school community is known for, while adhering to the safety protocols. The mental health of our students is an important part of our program and our desire to return.

For faculty and staff, Cadence Education provides significant resources to foster health and wellness.

Schedules and assignments will be designed to build in support and much needed breaks, for both the children and the adults.

Our signature parent communications will be emphasized to provide support to the wider community.

While our community events need to be on hold, creative online opportunities will be sought as a temporary solution.

Admissions Process

Our normal practice of having prospective families visit our campus and classrooms while we are actively in session will not be permitted until further notice.

Wherever possible all enquiries will be handled remotely, utilizing the technology available to us, with any in-person visits handled by the administration, outside school hours.

Remote Learning Protocols (and Triggers)

If we must return to remote learning, all classes will be offered virtually. We learned a great deal from our March through June 2020 experiences and have planned a more “classroom centric” program that better represents the McDowell school experience. We will offer both synchronous and asynchronous instruction, and students will be required to participate daily in their core and specialty classes while learning remotely.

Our remote learning platform is designed to blend their learning into their home environment with minimal “teaching” expectations from parents. We realize that learning online and at home is not ideal for the majority of our families, but we need to be prepared for every eventuality.

What would initiate remote learning for students and families that have elected in-person learning?

- If through the daily health screen, a student is found to be ill and unable to attend school on campus.
- If a student has an immediate family member in their residence who has tested positive for Covid-19.
- If a new stay-at-home order is issued.

We will be following all the guidelines listed by the State of California. Individual school closure is recommended based on the number of cases, the percentage of the teacher/student/staff that are positive for Covid-19 and following consultation with the Local Health Officer.

Individual school closure may be appropriate when there are multiple cases in multiple cohorts at a school or when at least 5 percent of the teachers/students/staff are cases within a fourteen-day period, depending on the size and physical layout of the school. The Local Health Officer may also determine is warranted for other reasons, including results from public health investigation or other local epidemiological data.

Remote learning guidelines for successful students.

To ensure the success of our remote learners (by choice or by mandate) we have implemented the following procedures and suggestions.

- Students need a dedicated learning area, comfortable, quiet, appropriate, and free from too many distractions (like toys.)
- Students need a dedicated device with a camera and home Wi-Fi capable of live streaming data.
- All remote learners must be punctual, ready for class with the appropriate materials and wearing school polo shirt.
- Attendance in classes is required. If there are planned absences, please coordinate with the grade level teacher and/or Mrs. Campbell who is the home-school coordinator.
- Remember, this is a schooling environment, students may not eat during class instruction and they must display their correct name on any zoom screen. Inappropriate use of technology is not allowed.

Remote by choice

Mrs. Campbell will be an additional resource for all families taking this option. She will connect and communicate with you in addition to your classroom and specialty teachers.

Ms. Barbara will be available to assist you with tech needs.