

# Cornerstone Christian Academy's Back to School Plan Re: COVID-19

## August 30, 2021

It is important to note that this plan reflects the evidence available at the present time, and changes may occur as new evidence or differing guidelines emerge. It is a working document.

### Introduction

Cornerstone Christian Academy has put together a plan for the safe return of students to school. It is designed to meet the needs of students, parents, and staff. It allows for children to return to the classroom fulltime, with a diverse curriculum to help them reach their God given potential. It also gives parents the opportunity to return to their regular work schedule.

*"...It is critical to balance the risks of direct infection and transmission of SARS-CoV-2 (the causative agent of COVID-19) in children with the harms of school closure on their physical and mental health."* (COVID-19: Recommendations for School Reopening, June 17, 2020, SickKids, page 2, sickkids.ca). Although it is not possible to remove all risks of infection, as COVID-19 is already established in our country, Cornerstone will strive to keep your child healthy as they return to the classroom. We have implemented the following policies and procedures in preparation for a safe return to school in September, 2021.

### COVID Recovery

*"Ontario should now start developing recovery plans to address the long-term mental health, health and educational problems arising from COVID19 related to school closures."* (Sick Kids May 2021)

This pandemic and subsequent school closures may have caused some children to fall behind academically. Cornerstone staff will review concepts, which were taught during the last closure, as needed. Additional tutoring, before and/or after school, at no additional cost to parents, will be offered this fall, if teachers deem necessary.

Cornerstone staff are preparing to meet emotional/spiritual needs of the children which may have heightened during this pandemic. ACSI is providing guidance and training to deal with these matters from a Biblical perspective.

### Pre-Screening

1. It is the parents' responsibility to screen children daily for fever, coughs, and other related symptoms. Check lists will be provided to assist parents with this home screening. Parents must sign a form agreeing to assume this responsibility.
2. Students, teachers, and parents who have signs/symptoms of COVID-19 (According to the Ministry of Health guidelines) should stay home and return should be guided by the KFL&A Public Health Unit protocols.
3. Should a child become ill during the day with signs/symptoms of COVID-19, he/she will be isolated in a safe place apart from others. Staff will use vocabulary to not generate fear in the child. Staff will be provided with disposable safety equipment to wear while caring for the ill child. Parents/caregivers

will be contacted and instructed to pick up the child immediately. Ministry of Health and/or KFL&A Public Health guidelines should be followed by the family.

4. Should a staff member develop signs/symptoms, they will be asked to self-isolate, leave the school, and seek advice from the Ministry of Health and/or KFL&A Public Health.
5. Children who are required to stay at home for an extended period of time due to COVID infection or exposure will be provided with learning from home opportunities via live stream, pre-taped videos, or Zoom.

## Masks

*“Children and youth’s social development hinges upon their interactions, facial expressions and body language.”* (COVID-19: Recommendations for School Reopening, July 29, 2020, SickKids, page 13, sickkids.ca).

1. The wearing of masks by children in grades Kinder-Readiness, JK, SK is not required. Should a parent opt to have their child wear a mask, it is the responsibility of the parent to dispose of the mask and/or wash reusable masks.
2. Students in grades 1-8 are required to wear masks while moving around inside the building and may remove them when working independently at their desks. For classroom activities in which individuals may be grouped, masks must be worn. Students will be instructed to sanitize hands before and after touching their masks.
3. The “homeroom” teacher is not required to wear a mask/shield when working within their own class cohort, if distanced from the students. They are to mask when working one-on-one in close proximity with a child and when moving around the room. However, the teacher may opt to wear a mask/shield at all times.
4. Should a supply teacher be required to temporarily replace a teacher, the teacher would be required to wear a mask for the duration of the time inside the school.
5. Masks will not be required while out doors.

## Hand Hygiene

*“...proper hand hygiene is one of the most effective strategies to prevent the spread of most respiratory viruses...”* (COVID-19: Recommendations for School Reopening, June 17, 2020, SickKids, page 4, sickkids.ca).

1. Children will be taught proper handwashing techniques on the first day of school.
2. Hand-sanitizer will be available in each classroom.
3. Age-appropriate signage will be placed throughout the school to remind children to sanitize/wash.
4. Handwashing/sanitizing breaks will be included in the daily schedule.
5. Hand-sanitizer will be stationed outside the washrooms and children will be encouraged to sanitize before entering, and to wash with soap and water before leaving. The outer washroom doors will be propped open.
6. Children will be reminded of respiratory etiquette – sneezing into elbow/sleeve.
7. Each classroom will have disinfectant wipes to wipe down communal things (ie. iPads) before and after use.
8. Children will perform hand hygiene prior to gym class and recess.

## Cohorting

*“The purpose of cohorting is to limit the mixing of students and staff so that if a child/youth or employee develops infection, the number of exposures would be reduced. (COVID-19: Recommendations for School Reopening, July 29, 2020, SickKids, page 14, sickkids.ca).”* Each class will become a ‘cohort’. Pre-COVID, Cornerstone routinely had small class sizes of approximately 15, and we will continue to maintain small numbers in each class.

1. The cohort will be in one class, with the majority of the subjects being taught by their homeroom teacher, in the same room.
2. If another teacher enters the room to teach a speciality subject, they must hand sanitize before entering and upon exiting the room, and wear a mask/shield. In the case of French, where the students might need to see the facial expression/phonetic formation, the teacher might remove the mask temporarily, if at least 6 feet away from the students, to teach the concept.
3. Should an inside the school assembly/chapel be held, students will be physically distanced with each cohort set apart from other cohorts.
4. Leadership training is of high importance at Cornerstone; some of these activities will be reinstated this year with safety considerations.
  - Older students may assist little ones with shoe tying, jacket zippers, etc. as they did pre-covid, but students, grades 1-8, must wear a mask during this time and hand wash/sanitize before and after serving in this capacity. Parents are asked to provide clothing that the child can manage with minimal help.
  - Should an older student serve as reading buddy for a younger, the two will meet in the hall way or common space; the students grades 1-8 will wear a mask and hand wash/sanitize before and after.

## Vaccinations

As per Ministry of Education guidelines, Cornerstone staff must meet one of the three requirements:

1. Provide proof of COVID-19 vaccinations
2. Provide official documented medical reasons for not being vaccinated against COVID -19, undergo regular COVID-19 testing, and receive negative results.
3. Participate in a program approved by the Ministry of Education, undergo regular COVID-19 testing, and receive negative results.

The information will be disclosed to and maintained by one individual.

## Physical Distancing

*"...Strict physical distancing should not be emphasized to children in the school setting as it is not practical and could cause significant psychological harm."* (COVID-19: Recommendations for School Reopening, June 17, 2020, SickKids, page 6, sickkids.ca).

The objective of physical distancing, maintaining a minimum of two metres between people, has been a widely used strategy during this pandemic. Physical distancing with children is not practical; interaction with peers is an important part of development. We do not want this to become a stressful situation for the children or the teachers and thus, strict physical distancing within the cohort will not be strongly enforced. However, things will be implemented to assist with some natural physical distancing within each classroom.

1. Desks will be scattered throughout the room, with spacing between each desk.
2. When weather permits, classes may be held outside.
3. Students will eat lunch and snack at their own desks, or potentially outside, should weather allow. Food sharing will not be permitted.
4. Physical distancing will not be required for recess outside.
5. As children enter and exit the building, care will be taken to avoid one cohort passing closely by another cohort. Tape on the floor will assist with movement.
6. The number of students at anyone time in the washroom will be limited, unless from the same cohort.

## Physical Education

*"Re-initiation and maintenance of extra-curricular activities (e.g. music, sports, clubs) is an important component of return-to-school plans."* (Covid-19 Advisory for Ontario, July 19, 2021)

1. Physical education classes will continue. Depending on the activity, masks may or may not be removed.
2. Hand washing/sanitizing will occur before phys-ed classes.
3. When possible, classes will be held outside rather than in the gymnasium.
4. Team sports and playing against other schools may occur with safety practices in place.

## Cleaning of the Building

1. All rooms will be cleaned and sanitized daily, using a product that safely kills germs. This includes sanitizing desk tops, door knobs, light switches, handrails, and other high touch areas.
2. High touch areas in the washrooms will be disinfected mid-day, with a complete cleaning at the end of each day.
3. Checklists will be created to monitor completion.
4. Doors will be propped open, as much as possible, to eliminate the touching of door handles when entering or exiting a room.
5. School toys will be cleaned regularly. Children should not bring toys or trinkets from home.
6. Phones, photocopier, computers, etc. are to be wiped down with sanitizer after use.

## **Ventilation**

The building has HVAC units on the roof to assist with air movement. *Exclusive Cooling, Kingston, ON*, conducts four inspections and four filter changes each year.

Some classes will be held out of doors.

## **Parents in the Building**

Parents have always been a welcomed and valued addition to our school. Parents assisting in the school is a requirement for the reduced tuition plan. Before entering the building, parents must self screen to confirm they have no Covid-like symptoms, wear a mask at all times, and sign in/out.

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## **Children with Compromised Immunized Systems**

Returning to school could present a unique challenge to children with underlying health concerns. Upon consultation with your child's doctor, parents are welcome to speak with Cornerstone staff to discuss details of how we can best meet your child's health and educational needs.

## **Record Keeping**

The school will keep daily records of anyone entering the building, including names and times, to facilitate contact tracing in the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case. School principals are mandated to report infectious diseases under the Health Protection and Promotion Act. The KFL&A Public Health could recommend additional testing, self isolation, cleaning advice, or a temporary closure.

## Miscellaneous

1. Hot lunch will resume should we have a parent(s) able to take on the task.
2. The children will once again have access to the library, with a focus on hand washing/sanitizing before and after. *“There is no need to quarantine paper products.”* (Covid-19 Advisory for Ontario, July 19, 2021)
3. School trips may resume following safety procedures put in place by the school/destination. Students should wear masks while travelling in vehicles.

## COVID-19 Fourth Wave

Should the COVID-19 situation worsen, and schools be forced to close again, Cornerstone is prepared once again to quickly return to online learning with videos being prepared by the classroom teachers and ZOOM lessons. Technology may be borrowed from the school.