

# Roadmap for Reopening August 2020

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## **Part 1: Guiding Principles**

### **Introduction**

The COVID-19 pandemic presents the most serious public health crisis the world has experienced in generations. Looking forward to the 2020-21 school year and beyond, MSCS is committed to doing everything it can to reopen our campuses because we believe doing so is in the best interest of our students. And yet, we recognize that MSCS needs to find a pathway for reopening its campuses safely with the health and wellbeing of our entire community in mind.

Roadmap for Reopening is guided by the assumption that a vaccine will not be available for 12-18 months, which means MSCS needs to be able to respond quickly to circumstances in its own school community as well as to conditions in the state of Arizona. Even as we plan to reopen our campuses in August, we know we may need to close them again with very little advance warning. This means MSCS must be prepared to toggle between different learning models designed to fit a variety of circumstances and drivers.

### **This Roadmap is guided by five principles:**

1. Act with fidelity to MSCS's Vision, Mission, and Goals by prioritizing quality education for all students that provides continuity of learning and that is engaging and rigorous regardless of the instructional model they are served in during the school year.
2. Prefer in-person learning over remote learning whenever it is safe to do so.
3. Prioritize student and staff health, safety, and wellbeing.
4. Promote hygiene and health-related policies that are research based, clearly communicated, effectively implemented, and enforced.

5. Promote practices and policies to reduce the risk of virus transmission and support our capacity to be responsive and flexible when facing changing health circumstances.

Through this Roadmap, we hope to shape positive learning experiences within a challenging new context. MSCS would like to thank its students for their resilience, adaptability, and spirit; its families for their support, patience, and understanding; and its staff for their courage, professionalism, and dedication. The 2020-21 school year promises to be an especially challenging one for all of us, but we are confident that we can weather these challenges together. We will continue to operate under the guidance of the public health officials, Arizona Department of Education (ADE), and other governmental agencies.

## **Rights and Responsibilities within the MSCS Community**

**Rights** — Every student, teacher, or staff member should be known, valued, and cared for. This fundamental right accompanies membership in MSCS's school community. It implies we all have a right to expect both emotional and physical safety. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this means members of our community can reasonably expect a heightened level of concern for their health and wellbeing. While it is possible that students, teachers, or staff members will be exposed to COVID-19 in the course of their work or studies, everyone is entitled to expect that reasonable effort and reasonable precaution will be taken to prevent this from happening.

**Responsibilities** — Our Commitment also implies that members of our community should Know, Value, and Care for others. Our interactions with others (friends and strangers, students and adults) should be self-aware, respectful, and courteous. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this means complying willingly with rules and policies designed to keep our community safe and healthy. We must be thinking of others,

appreciating that their risk tolerance might be lower than ours, and adjusting our behavior with sensitivity and respect. Respecting policies and expectations, even when inconvenient to ourselves is non-negotiable. In some communities, measures taken to prevent COVID-19 infection have ignited conflicts between the liberty of individuals and perceptions of the common good. We expect our community to openly accept the following guidelines:

- **All** members of our community and visitors to our campus (when allowed) follow guidelines regarding wearing face coverings, wash and disinfect their hands frequently, and mind physical distancing norms;
- **All** members of our community and visitors to our campus respectfully interact with each other in and out of the classroom, and take responsibility for maintaining a healthy environment;
- **All** parents and bus riders comply with bus drivers/monitors' requests to follow rules on our buses;
- **All** members of our community and visitors to our campus follow self-screening guidelines for symptoms of illness and refrain from coming to campus when symptomatic; and
- **All** members of our community and visitors to our campus comply with self-quarantine rules regarding exposure to COVID-19.

## **Part 2: Learning Models**

### **Introduction**

MSCS does not believe distance learning is a satisfactory long-term substitute for families who have not chosen to learn in this setting. However, distance learning is a necessary mode for learning

when health and safety conditions leave no other option. Accordingly, MSCS has developed two different learning models to increase the likelihood that it will be positioned to reopen its campus at the earliest opportunity.

In short, MSCS believes learning should be an active, contextualized, and constructive process for students that allows them to grow academically, socially, and emotionally. We believe that learners construct knowledge through experience and social mediation and that the essential purpose of school is to provide "supportive environments rich in engagement, social interaction, and feedback." Relationships play an essential role in every student's school experience; these connections make us human. Accordingly, MSCS is highly motivated to open its campus to provide students with opportunities to learn through in-person environments whenever it is safe to do so.

## **Two Models for Learning**

In anticipation of ongoing and evolving challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, MSCS has developed two models for learning. These models take into account a "[preference for] in-person learning over distance learning whenever it is safe to do so." The first model, which we call our In-Person Learning Model, describes a traditional school experience where students attend school four days a week. If conditions demand that we close our campus, MSCS will continue to refer to our Distance Learning Model. More detail about each of these models follows below:

**In-Person Learning Model:** This is a traditional school experience with all students in the physical buildings to receive their instruction four days a week. The learning that happens off campus is mostly in the form of homework or projects. Preventative hygiene policies are implemented in combination with realistic physical distancing guidelines. This model is possible when the risk of exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19 is considered low enough that a greater student

population on buses, in classrooms, and in other shared facilities is appropriate.

**Distance Learning Model:** This model is nothing like the 4th quarter distance learning in the final months of the 2019-20 school year (when all schools were closed). It includes measures of engagement for students and teachers alike. The Distance Learning Model allows for learning to remain open through virtual educational experiences. Students attend school virtually through synchronous (real time) and asynchronous (self-paced) lessons, activities, and projects. Students collaborate online, but not with the same structure and frequency as an in-person school experience would allow.

## **MSCS Distance Learning Expectations**

MSCS will be prioritizing quality education for all students that provide continuity of learning and that is engaging and rigorous.

Note: Distance instruction will look different than what occurred in 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of last school year.

Expectations while in this format would include:

- A combination of live classes that require attendance and independent learning will happen daily.
- Teachers will use a consistent set of instructional technology tools for instruction (Google Education Suite including Google Classroom and Google Meet, etc.).
- All content areas will be taught and assessed according to grade level standards.
- Weekly classroom culture and relationship building activities will be provided.

- Specialists (i.e. special education teachers and related service providers) will design and provide specialized instruction based on the students' individualized education program (IEP).
- Assignments will be collected with timely feedback given. Grades will be based on grade level standards, the quality of work, and the accuracy for which it is completed.
- Teachers will have live virtual office hours available to all students who may have questions and/or comments regarding the online lessons and assignments.

## **SAFETY IMPLICATIONS OF EACH MODEL**

As we navigate the uncertainties associated with COVID-19, MSCS will need to be flexible in how it adjusts and responds to external health conditions and risks.

Significant medical advancements, access to testing, methods to treat and prevent associated illness, and antibody detection are needed. Until these are developed, external conditions and risk will continue to fluctuate.

MSCS will make decisions about re-entry protocols based on the health and safety data and information available at the time. That data and information will include Governor Ducey's Executive Orders and other state and local health guidelines, guidance from the CDC, county level percentage of positive PCR tests from [azdhs.gov](http://azdhs.gov), and overall community readiness.

### **Safety Measures**

These guidelines will be followed when students and teachers return to schools for in-person learning. Please note that they may be updated as we receive additional information from Executive Orders, mandates, or guidance from state or national health and education officials.

**Sick children** - Parents are encouraged to keep their child(ren) at home when they feel ill. Please do not send children to school if they are not feeling well or if they have illness symptoms.

**Hand Hygiene** - Frequent hand washing encouraged with soap and water and hand sanitizer will be encouraged.

**Screening** - Teachers and staff will visually screen students each morning and take temperatures upon entering the buildings. Staff will be required to have their temperature taken in the office on a daily basis.

**Face coverings** - Face coverings will be encouraged or required based on health and safety recommendations in real time when physical distancing is not possible. Face coverings must comply with the school dress code.

**Drop off and pick up procedures** - Parents/guardians will remain in their vehicles at all times.

**Bus/Transportation** - Social distancing will be practiced when feasible depending on the number of students on each bus. Students will have assigned seats. Face coverings will be required for all riders.

**Visitors on Campus** - No outside visitors or volunteers will be allowed on campus unless they are deemed essential by administration.

**Students with Special Needs** - The Special Services team will meet with families of students with unique health concerns and outline individual protocols.

**Classrooms** - Desks will be physically distanced when feasible and facing forward. Face coverings will be encouraged when social distancing cannot be honored.

**Walkways** - Walkways will be marked with one-way directions to maintain space when transitioning.

**Playground Equipment** - Allow no more than one class/grade level on the playground equipment at a time. Clean equipment and areas in between classes/cohorts. Each class will have their own bag of playground equipment.

**Cafeteria** - Pre-packaged, "grab and go" options will be available, lunch periods will have assigned seats, and will be administered one class/grade level/cohort at a time in the cafeteria. Social distancing floor markings with directional arrows will be visible. No sharing of food.

**Events/Activities** - School events will be modified or rescheduled.

**Social-Emotional Learning-** Teachers and staff will be trained in SEL processes and will provide SEL lessons throughout the online and in-person learning.

**Quarantine Protocols if Someone is Sick** - We will follow all current state and county protocols in regards to an infected student or staff member.

Risk Level	SAFETY IMPLICATIONS
<b>Substantial</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● External indicators support our confidence that physically closing our campuses is the best course of action. Indicators might include rising infection rates, a high degree of medical uncertainty, or infections within our own school community.</li> <li>● Distance Learning will occur for all students, and there would be no on-campus experiences.</li> </ul>
<b>Moderate</b>	<p>Depending on External health indicators, students may be Distance Learning, or schools may be open but with extra safeguards in place to promote staff and student safety.</p> <p>An on-campus experience would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Distancing norms that are encouraged and adhered to as much as possible, but not possible in all situations (e.g. in smaller class sizes, limited number of students in the cafeteria, one-way walkways during transitions).</li> <li>● Personal hygiene protocols that include encouraging frequent handwashing, wearing of face coverings, etc).</li> <li>● Cleaning protocols in place to ensure thorough and safe building sanitation to meet the active use throughout the day.</li> <li>● Physical barriers such as plexiglass will be used where feasible.</li> <li>● High-risk community members might be more vulnerable to exposure.</li> </ul>
<b>Minimal</b>	<p>External indicators support our confidence in opening campuses to full capacity and usage including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All students attending school.</li> <li>● All riders on our bus.</li> <li>● Full classrooms with students in a standard room.</li> <li>● Active use of all campus spaces if safe for staff and students.</li> </ul>

## Risk Determines Learning Model

MSCS will make decisions related to the selection of a learning model based on an assessment of risk. That is, if we assess risk as **SUBSTANTIAL**, our campus will be closed and we will move to Distance Learning. If we assess risk as **MINIMAL**, we are confident that conditions are appropriate to reopen school entirely, welcoming all students back on campus concurrently with realistic safety precautions in place. If we assess risk as **MODERATE** level, methods for reducing campus density will be enacted. This could mean encouraging students who have the means to learn from home to do so.

Risk Level	External Considerations/Drivers
<b>SUBSTANTIAL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State of Emergency or government request for schools to close</li> <li>• Guidance from CDC, Health Departments, and trusted authorities indicates a substantial risk</li> <li>• Infection rates locally are rising and/or remaining at concerning levels</li> <li>• Known infections within MSCS community</li> <li>• MSCS is not confident it can effectively mitigate risk and ensure safety</li> </ul>
<b>MODERATE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance from CDC, Health Departments, and trusted authorities indicates moderate risk</li> <li>• Infection rates locally are confined and/or traceable</li> <li>• MSCS has confidence in its ability to mitigate risk with enhanced measures.</li> </ul>
<b>MINIMAL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government guidance allows reopening</li> <li>• Guidance from CDC, Health Departments, and trusted authorities indicate minimal risk</li> <li>• Infection rates locally are declining and traceable</li> <li>• MSCS is confident in its ability to mitigate risk when school is fully open</li> </ul>

## **COMPARISON OF LEARNING MODELS**

CATEGORY	IN-PERSON LEARNING MODEL (Minimal Risk)	DISTANCE LEARNING OR IN-PERSON (Moderate Risk)	DISTANCE LEARNING MODEL (Substantial Risk)
Campus Status	Campus is open	Campus may be closed for Distance Learning or Campus is open with enhanced safety protocols	Campus is closed to in-person instruction
Learning Environment	Mostly on campus	Either Distance Learning or In-person on campus	Distance Learning
Teacher Communication	In-person and digital communication	Online for Distance Learning In-person and digital if schools are open	Real time, live online instruction with a possibility of some video recordings
Collaboration amongst Students	Mostly in-person and real-time	Online for Distance, or in-person if school is open	Virtual only
Teacher Feedback	Combination of in-person and digital feedback in multiple forms	Digitally online for Distance, or in-person if school is open	Digital feedback in multiple forms

### **Special Education Learning Considerations**

MSCS is committed to providing quality special education services for our students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP). During the current COVID-19 situation, we will continue to provide specially designed instruction and related services to our students as delineated within each student's IEP. We have completed a Special Education Instructional Framework that aligns with In-Person and Distance Learning to ensure students with IEPs receive their special education services.

It should be noted that, if feasible, students with more significant needs may be offered and receive in-person instruction within each model. However, if the Governor mandates that districts across the state are closed, all students will receive instruction through distance

learning. As always, school teams will work with families, through the IEP team meeting process, to support the individual needs of students.

Risk Level	INSTRUCTIONAL FRAMEWORK
<b>Substantial</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students and Teachers will engage in distance learning.</li> </ul>
<b>Moderate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If Distance Learning, students receive virtual specially designed instruction. Services for students with higher needs <i>may</i> include in-person and/or virtual instruction.</li> </ul>
<b>Minimal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All special education instruction and related services are provided on campus.</li> </ul>

### Part 3: Health & Safety

The challenge of planning for the reopening of Mingus Springs charter School started with the question: What would an average school day for a typical student look like in MSCS "new" normal? We imagined how students would board the bus in the morning; how classrooms would need modifications; where students would eat lunch; how recess might need to change; and how we would get them home safely. We quickly realized every policy, protocol, and practice would need to be reviewed with the goal of ensuring preventative hygiene or providing for physical distancing. Guiding Principles 3, 4, and 5, which are repeated again below, further informed this planning:

**Principle 3:** Prioritize student, faculty, and staff health, safety, and wellbeing.

**Principle 4:** Promote hygiene and health-related policies that are research-based, clearly communicated, effectively implemented, and enforced.

**Principle 5:** Promote practices and policies to reduce the risk of virus transmission and support our capacity to be responsive and agile when facing changing health circumstances.

## **MSCS's approach to safety has four areas of focus:**

- Physical Distancing & Reducing Density
- Preventive Hygiene & Health Screening
- Cleaning, Sanitizing, & Disinfecting
- Training, Communications, & Coordination.

Each of these critical areas helps shape our approach so that our policies and protocols provide the necessary conditions on campus to mitigate the risk of exposure to COVID-19. We identified these categories through ongoing study of the growing literature on COVID-19, such as how to reduce transmission risk of the virus, the role face coverings and effective hand-washing play in protection, and how to reduce and kill surface germs in a school setting. We also know that the best operations plan must be clear, flexible, and sustainable; therefore our efforts only become operational when we can train, communicate, and coordinate these efforts effectively.

### **Category 1: Physical Distancing & Reducing Density**

Infectious disease experts have promoted physical distancing as an essential strategy in the containment of COVID-19. MSCS recognizes that to effectively reduce the risk of infection, it must implement effective physical distancing policies. Student density will be as follows according to the different learning models.

<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>Distancing</b>	<b>Density</b>	<b>Learning Model</b>
<b>Substantial</b>	School closes	School closes	Distance Learning
<b>Moderate</b>	6 feet in classrooms wherever possible and as feasible during transitions	If allowable and practical, density will be limited, but health and education mandates may not allow for limited density.	Distance Learning or In-Person
<b>Minimal</b>	All students back on campus and distancing encouraged	Full capacity, all students in attendance	In-person Model

Student density and physical distancing procedures will be implemented wherever feasible through modifications in classroom layouts, movement through walkways, lunchroom layouts and procedures, playground usage, and car pick up and drop off procedures. Other factors such as the age of the students and furniture in the classroom also influence decisions around distancing. Student density, therefore, will remain a fundamental mitigation factor we continue to rely on for decision-making, as we face the new realities of the 2020-21 school year.

## **Category 2: Preventive Hygiene & Health Screenings**

Another essential category recommended by health care professionals involves health screenings and preventive hygiene which includes hand-washing, possible use of face coverings, and minimizing the sharing of belongings. Coupled with physical distancing, these are the most effective strategies in containing COVID-19. Our goal is to prevent symptomatic children and adults from boarding the buses or entering our campus. Student families will play a critical role in the health screenings of students. Please refer to the charts below for guidelines.

## Face Coverings:

<b>Learning Model and Risk</b>	<b>In-Person (Minimal Risk)</b>	<b>Remote Learning or In-Person (Moderate Risk)</b>	<b>Remote Learning (Substantial Risk)</b>
<b>Face Covering Requirement</b>	Face coverings will be encouraged or required based on health and safety recommendations in real time when physical distancing is not possible.*	Face coverings will be encouraged or required based on health and safety recommendations in real time when physical distancing is not possible.*	N/A

\*Decisions regarding face coverings will be monitored and adjusted in accordance with health department, state, local, and CDC guidance.

**NOTE:** Due to the possible dense occupancy of the bus, by default, students who ride the bus will be required to wear face coverings. Students must be able to properly manage wearing their face coverings.

## Health Screenings:

	<b>In-Person (Minimal Risk)</b>	<b>Distance Learning or In- Person (Moderate Risk)</b>	<b>Distance (Substantial Risk)</b>
<b>Parent Responsibility</b>	Temperature checks and symptom screenings prior to the morning drive, bus ride, or walk to campus. Keep students at home if symptoms are detected.	Follow Minimal or Substantial, depending on if school is Distance or In-Person.	Monitor student health at home.
<b>School Responsibility</b>	Daily temperature checks. Visual screening of symptoms. Students with symptoms will be referred to the Office for further assessment.	Follow Minimal or Substantial, depending on if school is Distance or In-Person.	N/A

## Category 3: Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting

The third category in MSCS's operational strategy to prevent the spread of COVID-19 has been to ensure our cleaning protocols follow guidelines established by the CDC. These guidelines encourage institutions to consider the important differences between cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting, and recommend the best chemicals to use and how to apply them. MSCS's plan includes frequent cleaning of high touch areas, daily sanitation measures, and deep cleanings as needed. We will continue to use the CDC guidelines, along with other occupational and environmental recommendations, to learn the safest and most current practices in school facilities.

## **Category 4: Training, Communication, & Coordination**

MSCS's operations plan will only be successful if it has clear expectations set out for its community, a structure that is sustainable, and the flexibility to adapt to changing realities. The first step is targeting communication to the community on how to protect ourselves and others by informing everyone about what guidelines must be followed. In addition to existing communications channels, we will implement hygiene-related signage on campus.

Once communication mechanisms are in place, more detailed instruction and training will be implemented throughout the community, prior to and at the start of our campus reopening. Our cleaning staff has been trained on new measures of reducing and eliminating germs, and our teachers and staff will be trained in sanitizing classroom space and shared objects. Additionally, our students will be trained in maintaining physical distance and upholding personal health hygiene. Everyone will have a role to play and will be an integral part of school safety.

## **Other Specific Areas of Enhanced Protections**

### **Bus Transportation**

MSCS has one bus to use for transportation to and from school. To decrease our bus occupancy, we encourage parents to transport their child(ren) to and from school, if possible. For students who need to ride the bus, we recognize that the 2020-21 school year will present enhanced challenges as we attempt to mitigate risks of COVID-19 exposure. The following procedures/requirements will be in place for the 20/21 school year:

- The bus will be sanitized prior to students boarding the bus.
- The driver will wear facial protection in the form of a mask or face shield.
- Students will be given assigned seats. Siblings will be assigned

- to the same seat.
- Parents should follow the outlined health screening responsibilities prior to students going to the bus stop.
  - Parents should communicate with their children regarding the importance of physical distancing at the bus stop.
  - Due to the dense occupancy of the bus, by default, students who ride the bus will be required to wear a face covering. Students must be able to properly manage wearing their face coverings. This decision will be monitored and adjusted based upon the health and safety recommendations in real time.
  - If a student expresses that they are not feeling well, they will sit at the front of the bus. Upon arriving at school, a staff member will meet the student at the bus and escort them to the office.
  - Parents need to know that social distancing on the bus may not be available at all times depending on the kids at the bus stops.

## **Visitors and Volunteers**

Non-essential visitors and volunteers will be restricted from campus including alumni, family visitors, and guest speakers. All visitors must be approved by the front office prior to arrival. This will include alumni, family visitors, and guest speakers. Essential visitors will need to access entry through our main office and may have their temperature checked.

## **Part 4: Other Campus Considerations**

### **Introduction**

MSCS understands the importance of many other considerations such as social-emotional support, technology support, and attendance requirements. We will return to participation in a phased approach maintaining safety guidelines from the Center for Disease Control

(CDC) and Arizona Department of Education (ADE). Guidelines are subject to change and will be updated when new information and recommendations become available.

## **Social Emotional Support Considerations**

MSCS believes social and emotional supports are a critical component of our educational vision. Students are encouraged to build their relationships with school staff and their peers. However, as families, staff, and community members face many new challenges throughout this pandemic, MSCS is very aware of the uncertainty and trauma that COVID-19 is creating for our students and staff. We believe that social and emotional learning and support (SEL) should be a top priority.

MSCS Staff views social and emotional learning as the process through which students and adults:

- Understand and manage emotions
  - Feel and show empathy for others
  - Set and achieve positive goals
  - Establish and maintain positive relationships Make responsible decisions
- Handle challenging situations constructively

We are examining our current specifically designed programs to help support social and emotional learning for our students, educators, and families. Integrating these practices can occur by:

- Promoting feelings of autonomy, relatedness, and competence
- Providing opportunities to practice recognizing, understanding, labeling, expressing, and regulating emotions
- Taking advantage of teachable moments that occur naturally throughout the school day

Our students will be returning to school with a range of experiences throughout the pandemic. We want to acknowledge that not all

students are coming back with the same feelings and emotions. Some had access to technology; others did not. Some had a great experience learning with family; others did not. Some are living in families that are struggling financially; others are not. We will continue to have children who may be struggling because of their families' situation. We understand that each child is coming back with various issues and coping mechanisms.

It is also important for school leaders to acknowledge that the staff coming back to the building have, and will continue to encounter, a wide range of emotional experiences themselves. Whether that be the loss of a loved one, financial difficulties, or fear of the risk that returning to school may pose on the health of themselves and their families. Having dedicated and consistent support for both students and staff will be a critical component of returning to school.

## **Technology Considerations**

MSCS will provide a device for each student to use during Distance Learning. The device will be managed through MSCS. Parents are asked to contact the office for help with technology.

We have varying procedures for each risk level.

- During the minimal risk model, teachers will ensure that proper cleaning procedures are taken for Chromebooks used throughout the school day. Students will use only the Chromebook assigned to them.
- For substantial risk, students will retain the device throughout the time school is closed, and families will be responsible for reporting issues, damages, and defects to the device. All parents must have a Chromebook Checkout Agreement signed and on file before a device can be loaned. In addition, when possible, MSCS may assist families having difficulty accessing the Internet. Solutions for this challenge will be evaluated on a case by case situation. The Chromebook will be returned when the student returns to school.
- For moderate risk, protocols for either minimal or substantial

risk will be followed, depending on whether learning is taking place in-person or through Distance Learning.

### **Attendance Considerations**

Research shows that attendance at school is directly linked with academic success. Teachers and support staff will assist with implementation of distance learning attendance requirements. The school will not provide good attendance incentives during this time as students must stay home if they exhibit symptoms of COVID-19. MSCS will assist students with make up work if students need to stay home.