

Discovery Charter School

School Year 2021-2022

Reopening and Path Forward Distance Education Plans



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## Background

As charter schools plan for the 2021-22 school year, there are several important requirements that must be met. The Nevada Department of Education and the State Public Charter School Authority are requiring a reopening plan with the following in mind.

- Charter Schools are responsible for determining certain COVID-19 mitigation measures and therefore, must develop plans for how they will ensure the safe reopening of school buildings. This plan addresses health and safety as well as how the school will respond to the impact of COVID-19 on students' opportunity to learn.
- Pursuant to [Emergency Directive 044](#) and guidance provided by the Nevada Department of Education on May 28, 2021, charter schools must develop Path Forward Program Distance Education Plans for the 2021-22 school year. This plan addresses how the school will provide distance education to students who are unable to learn in person. These students must provide documentation from a medical professional related to a condition that would be compromised by attending school in-person or be quarantined on the advice of local public health officials.
- [Senate Bill 215](#) from the 2021 Legislative Session now requires the governing body of each charter school to “develop a plan for conducting a program of distance education for at least 10 school days in the event of an emergency that necessitates the closing of all public schools in this State.” This plan must be submitted to the charter school sponsor and provided to the school community, parents and school employees. This plan establishes an emergency distance learning plan to be implemented in the event of a major emergency.

Discovery Charter School (DCS) is prepared to adjust any of the following policies as required by the CDC, SNHD, SPCSA, and NV DOE. DCS was able to provide distance education beginning March 16, 2020 and operated a successful and fluid hybrid program for SY 2020-2021 in response to student and family needs. DCS will continue to monitor public health responses. DCS will continue to survey all stakeholders and respond to concerns throughout SY 2021-2022.

## **In-Person Learning Health and Safety**

Discovery Charter School follows CDC, state, and local government regulations. As regulations change, the school will modify practices to ensure health and safety.

### *Face Coverings*

The proper use of face coverings will be implemented to include the following:

- Mask will cover mouth and nose
- Wet or soiled masks will not be worn
- Masks can be removed for eating, drinking, or outside play when 6 feet can be maintained
- Masks will be worn on bus

Students 9 and under are not required to wear a face mask.

Vaccinated students and staff are not required to wear a face mask.

### *Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette*

All classrooms will be equipped with hand sanitizer. All sinks will be equipped with hand soap and paper towels. Handwashing will take place upon entering classrooms from outside and prior to lunch or snack times.

Respiratory Etiquette will include one direction seating when possible, limiting group work time and maximizing outdoor instructional time.

### *Cleaning and Maintaining Healthy Facilities*

Discovery Charter School will continue to employ Merchants Building to daily clean facilities. This contracted company has improved their practices to align with safer and cleaner practices as a result of possible covid exposure. In addition, air filters have been upgraded to medical facility rating.

### *Contact Tracing*

When an individual tests positive for covid and has been on campus, a list of contacts will be generated. A close contact is considered to have been within 6 feet of the positive case for an accumulated 15 minutes. All close contacts will be notified. If the close contact has been vaccinated, no quarantine is necessary. If not vaccinated, the close contact will quarantine for the recommended time period as required by the Southern Nevada Health Department.

### *Diagnostic and Screening Testing*

Discovery Charter School will use covid diagnostic symptom charts to determine if an individual should leave campus for testing. Families will be notified as soon as symptoms present themselves to staff.

Staff will be monitored and encouraged to stay home and seek testing using the same symptom charts.

Efforts to increase access and awareness of vaccinations will be provided to all stakeholders.

Discovery Charter School will communicate on all platforms the importance of vaccinating and provide location sites for families to visit.

### *Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities*

Discovery Charter School will make all attempts to provide a free and appropriate education to children with disabilities in accordance with the student's IEP. In the event a mask is not wearable by the child with disabilities, the staff and close proximity peers will wear a mask and practice social distancing.

## **In-Person Learning: Student and Staff Wellbeing**

### *Students' Social, Emotional, Mental, and Physical Health*

Discovery Charter School is prepared to identify and meet the social emotional needs of students. A contract with private counselors has been established to offer on campus sessions for those in need and referred. After school activities are planned to include creativity, engagement, and movement in an attempt to teach the whole child and their senses that may have been neglected during the regular school day. Physical education will be scheduled for all students at a minimum of twice a week. DCS is also participating in the NCSAA organization for school sports in SY 2021-2022.

### *Discovery Charter School Educator and Staff Well-being*

Staff needs will continue to be assessed with surveys. Confidential communication with an assigned board member proficient in human resources is made available. Professional development has been scheduled for growth and awareness in the social emotional needs of students and others. The professional development will be provided by an outside professional vendor and will occur in person within the first six weeks of school.

Staff well-being will be supported by a staff retreat before the contract year begins, scheduled social events, and recognition of staff life events. The contracted counselors will be made available to staff.

### **In-Person Learning: Accelerating Student Learning**

Discovery Charter School is greatly concerned about the impact of learning during the pandemic. Data meetings took place in Spring 2021 to begin to assess the gaps, losses, and trends. Returning to the classroom will present learning spectrums and not all students will need to close a gap, but rather accelerate their learning. A GATE program was installed during SY 2020-2021. In addition to GATE students being identified, an ACE (Accelerated Curiosity and Exploration) program will be implemented at the same time. Students for ACE were identified using the GATE diagnostics, teacher referral and family referrals. Students in either program will receive a minimum of 150 minutes per week of accelerated learning.

Student data will be analyzed weekly with classroom teachers, administration, literacy specialists, and special education facilitators. During the data talks, resources and plans for instruction will be made. The instructional plans will be implemented either in the classroom or with the literacy specialist in the form of Tier 2 or 3. The data and plans will be shared with family.

Instructional time will include small group instruction for all grade levels. Classroom teachers will use data for grouping. The groupings will be reevaluated a minimum of three times a year using student data.

### **Distance Education: Students unable to participate in- person**

Students who have documentation from a medical professional related to a condition that would be compromised by attending school in-person will be offered full time distance learning. Students will be assigned a classroom teacher. All technology needs will be provided to ensure equitable access to education. Students will participate in synchronous learning via google

classroom. Teachers will have designated office hours for distance learning students to receive support.

Students who are quarantined on the advice of local public health officials will be given a determined date to return to campus. During their quarantine, technology needs will be provided to ensure equitable access to education. Students will participate in synchronous learning via google classroom. Teachers will have designated office hours for distance learning students to receive support.

### **Distance Education Emergency Closure**

In the event of of school closure recommended by the Southern Nevada Health Department all staff and students will transition to the following distance education plan:

- Return to campus date will be determined by the health department and CDC guidelines.
- Students will remain assigned to classroom teacher.
- Lessons will become synchronous.
- All staff and students will have access to necessary technology, including hot spots.
- Pick up of paper resources will be available at the front office.
- Attendance will be recorded daily using Infinite Campus.
- Absent students will be contacted via email, phone, google chat, or through submission of assignments.

### **Distance Education: Supporting Students**

Students identified to participate in distance learning will receive all necessary technology to include hot spots, chargers, and laptops. All resources will be printed and either mailed or ready for pick up at the front office on a weekly basis. Special education students will be invited to virtual meetings by specialists in order to ensure IEP minutes are met. EL services will be provided accordingly. Virtual counseling meetings may be scheduled for those students identified. If in person meetings are necessary, face masks and social distancing will be required for all participants.

## **Attendance**

Discovery Charter School will take daily attendance for all modes of learning: in-person and full distance.

*Daily attendance* may be satisfied in any of the following ways:

- (1) The student is physically present; and/or
- (2) The pupil makes progress in their classwork leading toward mastery of Nevada Academic Content Standards and/or a course's completion that can be verified through a learning management system or other means; and/or
- (3) The pupil participates in a real-time (synchronous) class session; and/or
- (4) The pupil meets with or otherwise communicates with a licensed teacher or licensed substitute teacher who is able to discuss the pupil's progress in the course.

If a pupil participating in distance education full- or part-time demonstrates any one of the four criteria, the pupil is considered present for the full day. If the pupil does not demonstrate at least one of the four criteria, they are considered absent for the full day.

## High Risk Exemption Form Page 1 - Information

If a student or an individual in his/her household has a high-risk medical condition\*, a Medical Certification for COVID-19 High Risk Exemption Form may be completed in order to participate in distance online learning at home for the 2021-2022 school year.

Students who are out on a high-risk medical exemption may not participate in any in-person learning, face-to-face extracurricular or on-campus activities, including field trips, competitions, and athletics (as a participant or spectator without prior approval). This is because it would open them up to possible exposure to COVID-19, just as being in the classroom on campus would. Once approved for distance learning, students will only be allowed to switch back to in-person learning at the end of each quarter - which will be determined on a case-by-case basis and with public health protocols in mind.

Distance learning will consist of your student working individually on assigned work through different learning platforms. Students will check in daily with their teacher for progress check-ins, checking for understanding of the lessons, academic goal setting, assessment preparation, etc.

*\*Those individuals who are at higher risk of severe illness, as designated by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), are those with conditions including, but not limited to, asthma, chronic lung disease, compromised immune systems (including from smoking, cancer treatment, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, or use of corticosteroids or other immune weakening medications), diabetes, serious heart disease (including heart failure, coronary artery disease, congenital heart disease, cardiomyopathies, and hypertension), chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis, or liver disease.*

Procedure for submitting a medical exemption form:

- Please see the next page for the form.
- Fill in your child's name, grade, campus, and the parent-related information.
- Have your licensed healthcare provider complete and sign the form.
- Turn in the completed form to the front office staff.
- For *siblings*, one form must be completed for each sibling.
- If the student's medical physician cannot be reached for signature (i.e., moved to Las Vegas from another state), a letter from the physician on letterhead will

suffice in place of the form

All medical exemption requests will be subject to verification. form must be completed and signed by a licensed health care provider and is subject to verification.

Parents/guardians will be notified by campus leadership when the form has been verified and accepted.

### High Risk Exemption Form Page 2 - Medical Certification

Student Name: Campus: Grade:	
The High-Risk Exemption is due to the health of: <i>(circle one)</i> Student                      Household Member	
Parent Name:	Parent Email:
Parent Signature:	Parent Phone #:

Should a student be required to return to in-person instruction, but the student or an individual in his/her household has a high-risk medical condition as defined by the Centers for Disease Control, this medical certification form will need to be submitted in order for the student to be considered for remote learning.

Completed forms should be submitted to the front office to claim the high-risk exemption for COVID-19. Forms must be signed by a licensed health care provider and are subject to verification. Parents/Guardians will be notified when the form has been approved.

Individual at Higher Risk: Individuals at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 are those individuals with certain underlying health conditions as designated by the CDC, which provides as follows: Those individuals who are at higher risk of severe illness, as designated by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), are those with conditions including, but not

limited to, asthma, chronic lung disease, compromised immune systems (including from smoking, cancer treatment, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, or use of corticosteroids or other immune weakening medications), diabetes, serious heart disease (including heart failure, coronary artery disease, congenital heart disease, cardiomyopathies, and hypertension), chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis, liver disease, or severe obesity.

*For High-Risk Student, a Medical Professional Must Complete the Section Below For High-Risk Household Member, Parent Must Complete Questions 1 & 2 + Attach Documentation*

Health Care Provider's Name:

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Health Care Provider's Address:

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Type of practice / Medical specialty:

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Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Does the named student or individual in his/her household have an underlying medical condition deemed to be high risk for severe illness from COVID-19 as determined by the CDC and listed above?  Yes  No

2. Please provide the medical diagnosis of the underlying condition for the student/household member.

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Signature of Health Care Provider

Date

Received by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Forms will be available in front offices.

## Parent Considerations for Distance Learning

Parents/guardians are asked to consider the following information when seeking full-time distance learning (DL) for their student:

- Students will only be allowed to switch back to in-person learning at the end of each quarter, which will be determined on a case-by-case basis and with public health protocols in mind.
- If a full-time distance learning student begins to struggle, intervention meetings may be conducted with the student and parent/guardian, and the student may be required to attend school for face-to-face instruction.
- Students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) may need to attend therapy and related services at the school.
- Only students may participate in the real-time synchronous sessions. If a parent/guardian has a question or needs assistance, they should not interrupt a lesson.
- Successful candidates for full-time distance learning have demonstrated positive attendance and grades during the previous year of school. All full-time distance learning requests are subject to approval by the school leadership.
- Students will be expected to attend and have their cameras on for the full duration of real-time sessions during the school's instructional day.
  - **Kindergarten - 2nd grade** will have a minimum of 60-90 minutes of real-time sessions daily.
  - **3rd - 5th grade** will have a minimum of 90-120 minutes of real-time sessions daily.
  - **Middle and High School** will have a minimum of 60-90 minutes of real-time sessions per week per course.
- Full-time distance education elementary students must have an adult at home readily available to support their learning. Families may be asked to pick up resources weekly from the front office.
- Students will be required to attend school face-to-face for designated activities and assessments.
- Some courses/classes may not be offered through full-time distance education.
- Parents will initiate communication with the teacher as soon as concerns arise.
- Parents will assist students in planning a time schedule for long-term assignments.
- Make-up work is available to all students. Students are responsible for asking teachers for the make-up work upon returning to class. Students will receive credit for satisfactory

make-up work, including tests, after an absence, but may receive a zero for any make-up work, including tests, not made up within the allotted time. Any assignment not turned in within the allotted time falls within the late work guidelines. Exceptions may be granted by the teacher in extenuating circumstances.

### **Grading and Attendance**

Families are encouraged to utilize the portal in Infinite Campus to monitor grades and attendance. Staff will account for grading and attendance routinely in this student information system. Families are also encouraged to check email and class dojo for messages from teachers and administration.

### **Communication**

DCS will continue to communicate with stakeholders using email, class dojo, the school website, robocalls, text messages, social media and conferences. We maintain a 24 hour return call policy for the upcoming year. Middle school students are encouraged to communicate with their teachers first before a family member communicates. Surveys will be administered to conduct needs assessments as policies and procedures change.