

RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN

SUMMER 2020



As-Sabeel Academy of Greenville

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A LETTER TO PARENTS

Assalamu Alaikum Dear Parents,

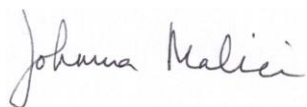
The COVID-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on children and families. Reopening schools is critical to the well-being and growth of students, allowing them to engage academically, socially, and spiritually with their peers and teachers. At the same time, schools shoulder a great responsibility to keep their students, staff, and families safe. Although times are challenging, we know that our faith in Allah (SWT) will sustain us. We ask for His guidance and protection as we forge ahead.

This document represents a summer of diligent and thoughtful planning. It is aligned with the guidance of state and local health officials from the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) and United States Centers for Disease Control (CDC). It is informed by the concerns and preferences expressed by our parents and teachers. Yet, we realize that adjustments and/or changes may very well be necessary as it is operationalized or as new information emerges. As we approach the official start of the school year, we will continue to communicate updates to parents. We will communicate with you as often as needed to ensure you stay informed.

Each of us has an important role to play as we embark on returning to school. I ask that you do everything you can to ensure that your family is healthy and ready to return to school on August 24th. Greenville County and the surrounding area has seen sustained and escalating numbers of positive COVID-19 cases over the past weeks. We ask that our families be part of the solution by maintaining social distance, wearing masks in public, and washing hands frequently. We also recommend that parents help their children practice these healthy habits now so that they are ready to do them once they are at school. This will be especially helpful for our youngest learners.

We appreciate all the support we have received from our parents, and we know that if we work together, we can successfully navigate this challenge. We are grateful that you have chosen to be part of the Sabeel family!

All my best,



Johnna Malici, Principal

REOPENING PRIORITIES

Our priorities for reopening are as follows:

- Maintaining the health and safety of our students, staff, and families.
- Returning to face-to-face instruction as quickly and safely as possible.
- Providing a high level of individualized instruction, regardless of the method of delivery.
- Remaining flexible and responding to needs as indicated.
- Providing options for parents and students when returning to school is not possible because of health concerns.

While complete elimination of the risks to our community cannot be achieved while COVID-19 is still a threat, we will implement a host of specific actions to reduce health risks as much as possible to protect our students, faculty, and families. We will provide training to all faculty and staff on these new protocols and will work with students and families to learn these new processes as well. A willing partnership between parents, students, teachers, and administrators will be more important than ever. By working together, we can ensure that our learning spaces are as safe as possible.

INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY MODELS

Given the significant health implications associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, As-Sabeel Academy will follow the guidance of local and state health officials in determining the instructional delivery method we will utilize at a given time. While we are eager to be able to teach our students in person, we also recognize our responsibility in keeping our students, staff, and their families safe during this health crisis. South Carolina DHEC has established metrics to help schools determine whether it is safe to return to in person instruction, depending on the recent disease spread in a locale. We will evaluate the local spread week by week to determine which instructional delivery model is to be utilized.

The table below shows our plan for instructional delivery depending on various levels of recent disease spread in the county.

Recent Disease Spread in Greenville County	Instructional Delivery	Description
Low	In person 5 days a week	Mostly normal operations with some additional safety precautions in place.
Medium	In person 2 days a week; remote learning 3 days a week	Reduced class sizes will allow students to maintain social distancing and reduce the risk of exposure. “Team Purple” students will attend school in person on Monday and Tuesday; “Team White” students will attend school in person on Wednesday and Thursday. Students will attend live classes remotely following the regular class schedule on the days they are not in person. All students will attend live classes online on Fridays.
High	100% remote learning	All students will attend live classes online.

Remote Learning

Teachers will provide live instruction following the class schedule in the event that students learn remotely part time or full time. This will allow students to receive immediately feedback on work, work collaboratively with classmates while being supervised by their teacher, and have class discussions. Our intention is to provide a full educational experience even if it needs to be done virtually.

K4 and K5 Remote Learning

Remote learning is a greater challenge with our youngest learners. In the event that we must hold school 100% remotely, we will provide a modified schedule that emphasizes the most important aspects of early childhood development for our youngest classes. We will work with early childhood experts and talk to our parents to develop an online program that caters to these students.

FULL TIME REMOTE LEARNING OPTION

Although most of our families favor in person instruction, there are a few families who prefer a remote learning option due to health concerns. As-Sabeel Academy will offer a full online option for any family who so chooses. We would like parents to understand that the remote learning option we are offering will be very different from the e-learning that was provided during the last quarter of the 2019-2020 school year. Based on our own observations, as well as student and parent feedback, we understand that students need more direct engagement with their teachers. Students who participate in the remote learning option will attend live sessions via a video platform, following the same schedule as other students in the class. They will be able to see and hear the teacher and participate in class. They can ask a question, get help with a task, and collaborate with their classmates virtually.

Parents who choose to enroll in the remote learning option will have the opportunity to change their child(ren)'s enrollment to in person quarterly.

PROTECTIVE MEASURES

Face Masks and Face Shields

Face masks will be worn by all faculty and staff. In the event that a teacher or staff member is having significant distance from others (for example, during a planning break), the face mask/shield may be removed. It must be put back on as soon as the individual is in proximity with others.

For some classes, seeing the teacher's mouth is necessary for students to learn properly. In these instances, teachers will use a clear mask or will be provided a face shield to use in lieu of a mask. Teachers will maintain social distance while wearing face shields and return to wearing their mask as soon as possible.

Face masks will also be worn by all students in 2nd grade and above when indoors. Students in K4, K5, and 1st grade may have challenges wearing masks for the entire school day, but parents are encouraged to have students wear a mask or a face shield for as much of the day as possible. Parents will provide face masks/face shields for their own child. We recommend cloth face masks. Parents are encouraged to have children practice wearing masks during the summer vacation to prepare for wearing masks during the school day.

During outdoor breaks when a space of at least 6 feet can be maintained between students, face masks can be removed. We also understand that there may be times when students need a break from wearing their mask. These will be provided with teacher guidance when social distance can be maintained.

Handwashing and Sanitizing

Frequent handwashing is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of illness. Students need to be taught and reminded of proper handwashing procedures. Teachers will teach and reinforce these throughout the year. When soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer (with a minimum alcohol content of 60%) will be used. Both soap and hand sanitizer will be provided in each classroom and bathroom. Additional hand sanitizer dispensers will be placed in common spaces, such as hallways.

Students will wash/sanitize their hands several times each day. To avoid long waiting periods, teachers need to develop procedures to aid in efficient hand-washing and sanitizing for the entire class. In addition to the typical handwashing that occurs after restroom use and before eating, teachers will implement hand-washing/sanitizing procedures at additional times throughout the day, such as between classes, after recess, after sneezing/coughing, etc.

To aid us in this process, students will also be asked to keep a personal hand sanitizer bottle in their desk, which can be used easily and regularly.

Facility Cleaning

The school facilities will continue to be cleaned daily by a professional cleaning company. In addition to this standard cleaning, high touch surfaces will be cleaned at regular intervals to ensure

that they are frequently disinfected. These include: doorknobs, light switches, sink faucets, drinking fountains, desks, countertops, and computers.

Shared Materials

Given the possibility of disease transmission on surfaces, students will be given individual materials to utilize to the greatest extent possible. Supplies such as pencils, markers, glue will be labeled and kept in students' desks to avoid sharing. When it is necessary to share a material (e.g., a computer in a lower elementary classroom), steps will be taken to sanitize the material between users.

Social Distancing

Social distancing has been shown to be one of the most effective measures at reducing the spread of COVID-19. The CDC recommends a distance of six feet be maintained between individuals. Our facility will allow for the recommended social distancing of six feet when in person attendance is reduced to 2 days a week. In this scenario, students attending in person will be spaced out at least six feet apart. Teachers will develop procedures to help ensure that when students need to get up from their desks, social distancing is maintained to the greatest possible extent.

We understand that social distancing will be especially challenging for our youngest learners. Therefore, in our K4 and K5 classes, we will install plexiglass shields at student work tables. This will allow students to "see" their classmates and have some degree of social interaction and collaboration, while helping them maintain distance and refrain from sharing materials.

In most classes, carpets and pillows will be removed. This will provide more space to spread out desks and will reduce the spread of disease transmission on these surfaces.

Signage

Signage will be installed in multiple areas throughout the school facility to help remind students and staff of important safety measures, including handwashing procedures, mask wearing, and social distancing.

Daily Drop Off & Screening

Each day as students arrive to school, they will be screened for COVID-19 symptoms as part of the daily drop off routine. Staff members will be present outside to complete this process starting at 8:00 am each day. Students are not permitted to enter the building without being screened. Parents will approach the circle drive and wait to let students out of vehicles until they are instructed to do so by school staff. The following process will be used for drop off and screening:

1. Staff member will ask student/parent the screening questions while students are still in the vehicle.
 - Have you or anyone in your household had any of the following symptoms in the last 14 days - cough, fever of 100.4 or higher, difficulty breathing, chills, aches, loss of taste or smell, nausea, and/or sore throat?
 - Have you or anyone in your household been tested for COVID-19 in the last 14 days?

- Have you or anyone in your household been in “close contact” as defined by DHEC with anyone suspected to have COVID-19 or who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days?
2. If a “no” response is given to all questions, the staff member will ensure students are wearing masks before they exit the vehicle. Masks will be available for students who forgot their mask at home. Parents should wait until step 3 of the process is completed before exiting.
 3. Students will exit the vehicle and have their temperature taken with a touchless thermometer. If their temperature is less than 100.4, the student may enter the school building. If it is 100.4 or higher, they will return to their parent’s vehicle immediately.

Parent and Visitor Access

Facility access will be limited to students, staff, and critical volunteers only until further notice. Parent conferences will be held via video conferencing software. For early dismissals, parents should remain in their car and call the front office. Your child(ren) will be escorted to your car. For late drop off, parents should call the front office. A staff member will come outside to screen your child(ren). No child can enter the building without being screened.

School Lunch

In past years, As-Sabeel has offered a weekly school lunch option for participating families. This will be discontinued until further notice. Parents should pack a school lunch and send a water bottle for their child, each day. Food sharing will not be allowed.

P.E.

Physical activity is very important to student health and progress. We will continue to offer PE twice a week. Students will maintain social distancing during PE class. Students who are learning remotely, can join PE class via video conferencing.

Recess

Recess is an important part of the school day, allowing students time for physical movement and socialization with peers. Recess will continue to take place, but with procedures in place to ensure student safety and reduce the possibility for disease transmission. Recess space will be assigned to classes to ensure that students in different classes do not share the same space at a given time. Social distancing will be maintained during recess. As long as social distancing is maintained, students may take a break from wearing masks during outdoor recess. Teachers may engage students in a class game or allow students to play in small groups so long as appropriate distances are maintained. The playground will be closed and students will be prohibited from engaging in play that requires close contact with others. Teachers will need to spend additional time establishing recess procedures and closely supervise students to ensure adherence.

STUDENT ILLNESSES

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it is more important than ever for parents to keep their children at home if they have symptoms of illness. No child should attend school if s/he has a fever above 100.4 with no fever reducing medications (e.g., Tylenol, Ibuprofen) having been taken. Parents should be aware of new symptoms, such as coughs or sore throats, and consult their physician in the event of suspected illness. If a symptom can be attributed to another source (e.g., Strep Throat, allergies) and is supported by a physician's letter the student may return to school after having been absent the number of days required by the physician's guidance.

When students begin displaying symptoms of COVID-19 during the school day, the student will be escorted to the isolation room. The student will maintain social distance, wear a mask, and will be supervised until a parent picks up the child. The isolation room will be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized according to CDC guidelines.

Similarly, staff members should remain home anytime they have symptoms of illness and will be required to leave immediately if they begin displaying symptoms during the school day.

Current Isolation Criteria

Below are the current criteria from DHEC for isolation related to COVID-19:

- Students and staff who test positive for COVID-19 and persons with symptoms of COVID19 (fever or chills; cough; shortness of breath or difficulty breathing; fatigue; muscle or body aches; headache; new loss of taste or smell; sore throat; congestion or runny nose; nausea or vomiting; diarrhea) who do not get tested, should isolate until:
 - Ten (10) days have passed since symptoms started - and
 - Three (3) days (72 hours) have passed since last fever without taking medicine to reduce fever - and
 - Overall improvement in symptoms.
- Those who test positive by a PCR test but do not have symptoms will be required to stay out of school until ten (10) days after the specimen was collected.
- The criteria above should be used to determine eligibility to return to school. Negative PCR test results are not required after meeting these criteria.

Notification of Illness

Parents and staff MUST notify the school immediately in any of the following cases:

- A child or immediate member of the family tests positive for COVID-19,
- A child displays COVID-19 symptoms that cannot be explained by an underlying illness,

- A child comes into close contact (less than 6 feet for more than 15 minutes) with someone who tests positive for COVID-19.

As-Sabeel Academy will follow DHEC guidelines for managing suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19, which can be read here:

https://www.scdhec.gov/sites/default/files/media/document/Interim_DHEC_Guidance_for_School_Response_to_Cases_and_Contacts_of_COVID-19-7.8.20%20FINAL.pdf

In the event of a positive COVID-19 case of a student or staff member, As-Sabeel Academy will notify DHEC and follow all procedures required and/or recommended. All parties who were in close contact with the person who tested positive will be notified and any requirements for isolation will be provided.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

We have decided to delay the start of our school year by one week. **Our first day of school will now be Monday, August 24th.** This will help families who have children enrolled in As-Sabeel and Greenville County Schools, and it will also give us additional time to prepare for school opening. The new start date will not affect the end date for the 2020-2021 school year. The five days missed by starting one week later will be made up as follows:

- The three “make-up days” built into the calendar will become school days. As of this year, any inclement weather day will become an e-learning day for students, so no school day will be missed due to a weather-related closing.
- November 2nd will become a school day instead of a holiday.
- January 15th will become a school day instead of a teacher workday/student holiday.

BOOKS AND MATERIALS

In the event of any online instruction, students' books and supplies will be distributed to families during a pick up day. Students will be provided with textbooks, workbooks, books/novels, as well as supplies that they will use to complete their work while they are at home. If students are attending in person 2 days a week, it will be important for them to bring their materials back and forth to school.

Parents are highly encouraged to procure devices (laptop or tablet) for students to use in the event of remote learning. Students who do not have access to a device will be given an opportunity to check one out from the school. Parents will be responsible for ensuring that the device is returned in the same condition as it was lent.

Families who do not have access to the internet from their home and whose income is 250% or less than the federal poverty level may be able to receive a personal hotspot under Act 142. Parents who meet these criteria should notify As-Sabeel as soon as possible.

RESOURCES

South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control – scdhec.gov

- How to protect yourself and your family: <https://www.scdhec.gov/infectious-diseases/viruses/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/protect-yourself-those-around-you-covid-19>
- What to do if you feel sick: <https://www.scdhec.gov/infectious-diseases/viruses/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/what-do-if-you-feel-sick-covid-19>
- Resources for Schools and Childcare Centers: <https://www.scdhec.gov/infectious-diseases/viruses/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/schools-childcare-centers-covid-19>

United States Centers for Disease Control – cdc.gov

- Schools and Childcare Programs: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>

American Academy of Pediatrics – aap.org

- COVID-19 Information for Families: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx>

South Carolina Department of Education – ed.sc.gov

- AccelerateEd Task Force - <https://ed.sc.gov/newsroom/covid-19-coronavirus-and-south-carolina-schools/accelerateed-task-force/>

South Carolina Independent Schools Association – scisa.org

- COVID-19 Updates and Recommendations: <https://www.scisainfo.org/>