

## **Mt. Helix Academy COVID-19 Prevention Plan for Schools**

**Mt. Helix Academy**  
5955 Severin Drive  
La Mesa, CA 91942  
619-243-1400

Mt. Helix Academy is a private school owned and operated by The Institute for Effective Education (TIEE), a California non-profit corporation [501(c)(3)]. TIEE's business office is located at 2255 Camino Del Rio South, San Diego, CA 92108.

### **Sources of COVID-19 information and guidance:**

The administration of TIEE along with that of Mt. Helix Academy regularly monitors communications from the San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE), California Department of Public Health (CDPH), California Department of Education (CDE), the San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency - Public Health Services (PHS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for updates to COVID-19 guidance. The following criteria and procedures will be implemented and modified as directed by these agencies.

### **General Measures**

1. Mt. Helix Academy's worksite-specific COVID-19 Prevention Plan is based on a comprehensive risk assessment of all work areas and work tasks and is posted on the school's website, [www.mthelixacademy.org](http://www.mthelixacademy.org).

(a) The person responsible for monitoring and implementing this plan

Mike Collins, Director  
Mt. Helix Academy  
619-243-1400  
[mcollins@tiee.org](mailto:mcollins@tiee.org)

(b) The COVID-19 liaison with Public Health Services:

Mike Collins, Director  
Mt. Helix Academy  
619-243-1400  
[mcollins@tiee.org](mailto:mcollins@tiee.org)

i) Mr. Collins will track reports of illness from parents, students, and staff, and he will monitor for evidence of COVID-19 outbreaks.

ii) Mr. Collins, will report information on positive cases to the Public Health Services Epidemiology Department at 619-692-8499 or on online at [https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/phs/community\\_epidemiology/dc/2019-nCoV/COVID-19\\_Notification\\_Form.html](https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/phs/community_epidemiology/dc/2019-nCoV/COVID-19_Notification_Form.html)

(c) The plan to train and to communicate with employees on the COVID-19 prevention plan is as follows:

i) Employees have received specific instruction and resources related to COVID-19 prevention, including wearing face coverings, hand washing, using hand sanitizer, cleaning/sanitizing/disinfecting, physical distancing and recognizing symptoms of COVID and staying home if ill.

ii) Specific program procedures will be reviewed and practiced during pre-service week and periodic fidelity checks have been and will be conducted. Lapses will be promptly corrected and may result in further training.

(d) Plan fidelity will be regularly evaluated by Mr. Collins and other members of TIEE's Leadership Team. Lapses will be promptly corrected and may result in further training.

(e) Any COVID-19 illness will be investigated to determine if work-related factors could have contributed to the risk of infection. If so, the plan will be updated as needed in the attempt to prevent further cases.

(f) If an outbreak of COVID-19 occurs, Mt. Helix Academy will implement the necessary processes and protocols as outlined in the most current CDPH and Cal/OSHA guidelines.

(g) If a student or employee contracts COVID-19, individuals who have been within 6 feet of the infected individual for at least 15 minutes in a 24 hour interval over the prior 2 days will be identified. Steps will be taken to isolate the person with COVID-19 and quarantine those who have been in close contact.

2. School facility doors are locked and notices are posted on all entrances describing the school's visitor policy. No one may enter unless they are wearing a face covering.

3. Mt. Helix Academy is prepared for the possibility of repeated closures of classes, groups, or the entire facility if and when persons associated with the school or in the community contract COVID-19.

4. Mt. Helix Academy has a plan to support students with special medical, access, or functional needs. For example:

- a. Health plans are reviewed and TIEE's Medical Director is made aware of students with compromised health conditions, which may result in consulting with medical care providers in order to establish the safest course of action by school personnel.
- b. All students are monitored for symptoms of illness, whether or not they can report such symptoms themselves.
- c. Students are assisted as needed with handwashing, using hand sanitizer, face covering usage. If proximity is required for instruction and/or support, additional personal protective equipment will be available to the student and staff members.

5. Mt. Helix Academy has reviewed "COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools in California, 2021-22 School Year", dated 7/12/2021 and San Diego County Public Health department guidance and incorporated face-covering use for all students and workers into this COVID-19 Prevention Plan.

### **1. Face Coverings**

- (a) Masks are optional outdoors.
- (b) K-12 students are required to wear a mask indoors with exemptions allowed per CDPH face mask guidance. Adults are required to wear masks when sharing indoor spaces with students. A face covering may be removed for meals, snacks, naptime, outdoor recreation or when it needs to be replaced. There are situations where a staff member will be required to wear a mask and face shield.
- (c) Requests for a medical exemption are reviewed by the medical director. Persons exempted from wearing a mask due to a medical condition must wear a non-restrictive alternative such as a face shield with a drape on the bottom edge as long as their condition permits it.
- (d) Students who arrive at school without a face covering and who are not exempt will be provided with a disposable face mask to be used during the school day.
- (e) Students refusing to wear a face mask will be prohibited from entering the school building, parents will be contacted to discuss options and if refusal to wear a mask continues the student will be sent home with alternative educational opportunities to be completed off campus for the day.

- (f) In instances, due to instructional requirements, a teacher cannot use a mask then the teacher will use a clear mask or a face shield with a drape (per CDPH guidelines) and then will re-don the regular mask as soon as possible.
- (g) How to put on, take off, and wear face coverings or face shields will be practiced and reinforced. Students and staff members will be reminded as necessary not to touch their face covering and to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer frequently. Opportunities for handwashing are scheduled throughout the day.
- (h) Any visitors to the school will be required to wear a face covering, regardless of vaccination status.

## **2. Physical distancing**

- (a) Recent evidence indicates that in-person instruction can occur safely without minimum physical distancing requirements when other mitigation strategies (e.g., masking) are implemented. This is consistent with CDC K-12 School Guidance. However, spacing between student desks during indoor instruction and during certain other activities will be maintained to the extent possible.
- (b) During daily screening, students will remain in their vehicles until cleared to exit. Extra masks will be available in case a student forgets to bring one from home.
- (c) Schedules will be adjusted to accommodate stable groups as much as possible.
- (d) Space between desks will be maximized. Tape or other visuals on the floor are used, when needed, to identify where student desks are to be placed.
- (e) Activities expected to generate increased exhaled droplets such as band, choir and group sports will be conducted outdoors if at all.
- (f) Communal activities - use of the playground and lunch area will be staggered so groups do not overlap. Mt. Helix Academy does not have other communal activities.
- (g) Passing periods/transitions - Students will use face coverings and follow procedures for transitions (i.e., stay tight to the right, use the visuals on the floor to identify where to stand) maintaining social distancing when lining up. Passing periods will be staggered to the extent possible. Visual markers are placed on the floor to identify appropriate spacing and passing areas if needed.

- (h) Recess - Recess will consist of planned activities that promote social distancing. To avoid mixing of groups, each group will have their assigned section of the playground.
- (i) Restrooms - Signs are posted outside the student restrooms reminding students of the two-student limit at a time, and hooks have been installed outside each restroom where passes are hung so students have a visual letting them know how many students are in the restroom. Markers are placed outside of the restrooms so students know where to wait, promoting physical distancing.
- (j) Dismissal - Students will be dismissed on a staggered schedule to promote physical distancing.

### **3. Ventilation**

- (a) Ventilation is optimized following CDPH guidance. The HVAC system has been programmed to run longer than usual (an hour before staff arrival and an hour after staff leave) to increase ventilation and air filtering. The system has been programmed to increase the amount of outside air drawn into the system yet still allow maintenance of room temperature. Bathroom fans are on throughout the day. Filters have been changed and a MERV 13 filtration rating is targeted for the HVAC system.

### **4. Recommendations for Staying Home when Sick and Getting Tested per CDC**

- (a) Per CDC and CDPH guidelines, students, teachers, and staff who have symptoms of infectious illness, such as influenza or COVID-19 should stay home and contact their healthcare provider for testing and care. Staying home when sick with COVID-19 is essential to keep COVID-19 infections out of schools and prevent spread to others.
- (b) It is recommended that anyone with symptoms be tested as soon as possible for COVID-19, and when flu season starts, for influenza. Testing is available for free through county sites, many pharmacies and healthcare facilities.
- (c) Staff members and students with symptoms possibly related to COVID-19 infections are not to return for in-person instruction until they have met CDPH criteria:
  - (i) At least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications; and
  - (ii) Other symptoms have improved; and

- (iii) They have a negative test for SARS-CoV-2 (PCR, NAAT, CUE or molecular test) **OR** a healthcare provider has provided documentation that the symptoms are typical of their underlying chronic condition (e.g. allergies, asthma, migraines) **OR** a healthcare provider has confirmed an alternative diagnosis (e.g., streptococcal pharyngitis, coxsackie virus), **OR** at least 10 days have passed since symptom onset.
- (d) TIEE has a flexible, non-punitive, and supportive paid sick leave policies and practices that encourage sick workers to stay home without fear of retaliation, loss of pay, or loss of employment level and provide excused absences for students who are sick.

### **5. Screening Testing**

Testing is available through county sites and many local pharmacies and healthcare providers.

### **6. Case Reporting, contact tracing and investigation**

- (a) Per AB 86 (2021 and California Code Title 17, Section 2500, schools are required to report COVID-19 cases to the local public health department. Local health officials will be notified by the school administrator or TIEE Medical Director of any positive cases of COVID-19 reported to us by calling the Public Health Services Epidemiology Department at 619-692-8499 or completing the online reporting form provided by the SD Health Department as well as the Private Schools Team for the County of San Diego's School Response Team. Staff and families will be notified electronically of any positive case of COVID-19, while maintaining confidentiality as required under FERPA and state law related to the privacy of educational records.
- (b) The school director or designee liaisons with the local health departments to assist with contact tracing and investigation as needed.

### **7. Quarantine recommendations for vaccinated close contacts**

- (a) For those who are fully vaccinated, CDPH does not require quarantine as long as the person is asymptomatic.

### **8. Quarantine recommendations for unvaccinated close contacts irregardless of mask wearing**

- (a) Contacts who remain asymptomatic, meaning they have **NOT** had any symptoms may discontinue self-quarantine under the following conditions:

- (i) Quarantine can end after day 10 from the date of last exposure without testing; **OR**
  - (ii) Quarantine can end after day 7 if a diagnostic specimen (meaning PCR, NAAT or molecular test) is collected after day 5 from the date of last exposure and tests negative.
- (b) To discontinue quarantine before 14 days following last known exposure, asymptomatic close contacts must:
- (i) continue daily self-monitoring for symptoms through day 14 from last known exposure; **AND**
  - (ii) Follow all recommended non-pharmaceutical interventions: must reliably wear a mask indoors, do hand hygiene and avoid crowds without significant prompting.
- (c) If any symptoms develop during this 14 day period, the exposed person must immediately isolate, get tested, contact their healthcare provider with any questions regarding their care, and contact the school.

### 9. Isolation recommendations

- (a) Both vaccinated and unvaccinated persons shall follow the CDPH Isolation guidance for those diagnosed with COVID-19:  
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/CDPH-Home-Isolation-Guidance.aspx>
- (b) Isolation can be discontinued:
- (i) If the person had symptoms:
    - (1) a minimum of 10 days have passed since the symptoms first appeared, **AND**
    - (2) symptoms have improved, **AND**
    - (3) been fever-free for at least the last 24 hours (without using medicine that reduces fevers)
  - (ii) If the person had no symptoms then isolation is discontinued 10 days after the test date.

### 10. Hand hygiene

- (a) Handwashing opportunities are incorporated into each classroom's daily schedule to further promote healthy hygiene practices.
- (b) Hand sanitizer (> 60% ethanol) is readily available
- (c) Handwashing, use of hand sanitizer, avoiding contact with eyes, nose, and mouth and covering coughs and sneezes are taught, practiced and reinforced throughout the day.

### 11. Cleaning

- (a) Consistent with CDPH and CDC guidelines, high touch surfaces will be cleaned once a day. As needed, surfaces will also be disinfected with agents that are known to kill SARS-CoV-2 as well as other organisms of concern.
- (b) if a person with COVID-19 has been in the building within the last 24 hours, spaces occupied by that person during that time will be cleaned **AND** disinfected.

### **12. Food Service**

- (a) Physical distance will be maximized while eating (especially indoors).
- (b) Frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned and if needed disinfected.

### **13. Vaccination verification**

- (a) Parents and staff members are asked to provide vaccination documentation because quarantine requirements vary depending on whether a person is fully vaccinated.

### **14. Visitors**

- (a) Visits from nonessential visitors and volunteers who are not fully vaccinated will be limited.
- (b) All visitors must wear a mask to enter the building.

### **15. Safety Planning Documentation**

- (a) Per CDPH requirements, the COVID-19 Prevention Plan is posted on the school website. This policy will expire when CDPH and San Diego county health remove the requirement for COVID specific plans.