

Phyl's Academy
COVID-19 Re-Opening
Parent Handbook
September 2020

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August 3rd, 2020

Dear Families,

As we prepare to reopen in September 2020, we recognize that these are still very uncertain times. So much has changed in every aspect of our daily lives and our school is equally affected. We want to make sure that all in our community are fully informed with new measures and safety protocols for a safe re-opening.

None of us have ever experienced a time like this before, but we assure you, Phyl's Academy's teachers, administration and facility staff members are committed to providing a clean, safe and child-friendly environment. Though things will be different, our goal remains to encourage and inspire our children to become the very best they can be. Our students are here to thrive and we are committed to their continued learning and growth while keeping them safe and happy.

Since COVID-19 remains extremely contagious and is still not completely understood, our protocols around this virus will keep evolving along with developing guidelines from CDC (Center for Disease Control) as well as those put forth by New York State Department of Education, and NYC Department of Mental Health and Hygiene, Please be sure to read through our guidelines carefully. We'll continue to inform you of any updates as they are implemented. See current protocols as of August 3rd, 2020 [here](#).

Feel free to contact us if you have any questions about the policies and procedures that are outlined. They are in place to ensure that Phyl's Academy remains a safe, secure and welcoming place for your family and all families in our Phyl's Academy village.

Thank you for your cooperation in these matters and for being a part of our Phyl's Academy family.

Sincerely,

Ms. A. Frempong-Boadu
Head of School

Possible Scenarios for September 2020

At Phyl's Academy we are fortunate to have a facility with ample classroom sizes. This makes it possible to practice **safe 6ft social distancing**. We therefore intend to open full time, 5 days a week, for the school day. As always, our priority is the safety, health and success of all members of our Phyl's Village, so in creating and implementing this plan, we are keeping in mind the impact these decisions may have on learning, and on our faculty's ability to deliver the best early learning and elementary education for our students. To that effort, we have planned around the most likely scenarios, but are also prepared for the unpredictability of COVID-19, in which circumstances could change abruptly. We have therefore readied our school and programs to be flexible and prepared for the unexpected.

Plan A – On Campus, Full Day, 5 Days a Week.

In Plan A, we welcome our families back onto our physical campus on September 9th, 2020. We will use a phase-in approach so on these first three days, early childhood students will attend half day in small groups to get to know their teachers and elementary school students will participate in safety trainings on proper handwashing, mask wearing, social distancing, classroom pods, etc. Parents and teachers will have met through Virtual orientations and parents will be given their assigned arrival and departure times. All staff will be required to test negative for COVID-19 and quarantine for 14 days prior to receiving our students. For this to be successful, all in our village need to take social interactions seriously, and we ask all families observe quarantine guidelines as much as possible. There will be no after-school September 9th – 11th.

Plan B – Virtual Learning - At Home, 5 Days a Week.

In Plan B, the government does not give permission for schools to reopen by September 9th. In such case, we will offer full-day, 5 days a week, live remote learning starting on September 14th. We quickly and very successfully implemented our remote program last March, and expect Plan B to be an equally successful version of our past offerings. Full-day live remote learning will be offered indefinitely, until we are permitted to reopen our facility and revert to Plan A.

Plan C – Blended Learning – In School, and At Home, Flexible Learning.

In Plan C, the government allows students to return to school intermittently, has abrupt periodic closures, or families choose to have students minimize risk by remote learning. Plan C allows for flexibility in scheduling, but still offers students the same rigorous curriculum and allows for attention from live teachers and independent projects and work. Plan C may also be enhanced through videoconferencing, which we are currently working on putting in place. Parents will be notified if videoconferencing becomes an additional option.

Safety Practices

This document addresses the measures that Phyl's Academy Schools will have in place to protect the members of our Phyl's Village community. In putting together these plans, we also recognize that as a part of a community, we are all responsible for taking measures to limit the spread of COVID-19. **This illness remains extremely contagious and is still not completely understood.** So, to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 in our school, we're asking all families to adhere to CDC guidelines, which include but are not limited to the following:

- Quarantine if possible, but at the least, limit attendance at gatherings, events, and other activities in or outside of the home.
- When it is necessary to attend, limit participation only to activities that maintain physical distancing, even in your own home.
- Please continue to ensure that all family members wear masks when going about daily activities in public.
- Please ensure that your family's home practices follow the CDC "Household Checklist."
- If you or family members have left the NYC area, we ask that you return to NYC by August 25th and practice 14 days of quarantine. Though this may seem an extreme measure, such quarantines are a requirement of the CDC for a safe return.

The following information outlines current plans to manage our facility.

A. Visitors

To reduce exposure and risk to our school community, visitors will not be permitted on premises. Families will have the opportunity to meet with teachers and see classrooms virtually at orientation and will be asked not to enter beyond the lobby when bringing children to school. To help mitigate the impact of this, we are designing a thoughtful "phase-in" process for students and families so everyone can meet and connect with teachers and staff virtually prior to the start of school, and we are planning approaches that will help even our youngest students acclimate to their new environment, routine, and classroom community. Any necessary visitors must wear a mask, will be temperature checked, and required to sanitize hands before signing in when entering the facility.

B. Arrivals and Departures

While operating in this phase of re-opening, every staff, faculty & student will be required to conduct a health check before leaving home. Staff will arrive early and student drop-off times will be staggered. We will work with families to establish arrival and departure times as well as a specific entrance/exit point to effectively reduce unnecessary interactions. Please observe your designated drop-off or pick-up time/location to help keep everyone safe. Parents and students must wear masks. Each child will be observed & temperature checked as part of a daily wellness review. If another family is being checked in/out, please be patient and maintain social distancing. Staff members, (runners), will be available to help younger students to and from their classrooms, and we will make every effort to move things along quickly.

C. Admission/Exclusion due to symptoms of illness

Children who are obviously ill or have fever, diarrhea, vomiting, green-runny nose, puss/oozing eyes, disease or condition, (i.e.- ringworm, head lice, chicken pox, measles, mumps, pink eye, fever over 100 degrees, etc.), will not be admitted to the program. If you have any doubts about your child's health, please do not bring the child in.

If on school premises your child appears to be sick or starts to exhibit symptoms while at school, we will notify the parent or guardian immediately. It is absolutely necessary that the child be picked up within one hour of notification and we need the co-operation of our families in this matter as we work to protect our entire community from illness.

If it is believed that the child has COVID-19 or has been in contact with anyone believed to have COVID-19, we will ask families to self-quarantine for 14 days. The child will be permitted to return with a doctor's note and when his/her temperature is normal for 72 hours without the aid of fever-reducing medication. The doctor's note must be written on official letterhead and clearly state that the child can return to school because they are no longer believed to be contagious.

We ask that all parents and staff let us know of any potential exposure immediately. A potential exposure means being in a household with or having close contact, (within 6 feet), with an individual with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 for at least 10 minutes within a period of 48 hours before, during or after the individual became symptomatic. If there is a positive case of COVID-19 in a child or an adult who has been present in the childcare center, we will inform our families and the NYC Department of Mental Health and Hygiene, and follow all required safety protocols to keep our community safe.

D. Personal Belongings

While in this phase of operation, children may not bring in any personal belongings such as toys or personal items from home. All fabric masks must be laundered after each use, and for young students, bedding will be sent home on the last day of each week for a **mandatory** laundering before return to school.

E. Extra Hygiene Measures and Procedures

1. Handwashing: When students arrive school, hands will be sanitized. At classroom locations, they will wash their hands. Hands will also be washed frequently throughout the day with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Hand sanitizer will be available when soap and water are not, and sanitizing stations are conveniently located throughout the facility.
2. Sanitizing/Disinfecting: All hard surfaces will be wiped down throughout the day, before and after use as well as at the end of each day. For young students, any toys that go into a child's mouth will be put into the disinfecting process as usual. All surfaces and toys will be sprayed prior to leaving the room throughout the day. All sensory bins, soft toys, pillows, dress-up clothes have been put away during this time. For older students, children will be assigned particular technology items such as iPADs, chrome books to limit usage and these will be sanitized after each use.
3. Mask wearing: Masks are required for daily use. Each enrolled student will receive two masks to start the school year which should be laundered after each use. Disposable masks will be available in the event a student forgets his/her mask.
4. Social distancing: For Grades 1 – 5, each class is considered a 'pod'. Each pod will social distance from other pods to enhance safety. Classes will not intermix and will be with the same teachers as much as possible. Staff and children will wear a mask to the best of their ability with scheduled mask breaks in open air spaces. All staff will wear masks when in the company of others. For Nursery – Pre-K, Each classroom will have mini pods and students will stay within those mini pods for all interactions.
5. Indoor shoes only classrooms: All children will take shoes off before entering the classroom. Teachers and students will be allowed to bring in and wear "indoor shoes" only in the classroom. Since children do spend time on the floor, we need it to remain as clean and safe as possible. This policy will help to facilitate that. Students and staff can wear outside shoes in hallways, hallway bathrooms, designated play spaces, shared rooms and stairwells.
6. Contactless Office Procedures: Payments and document submission will remain contactless, which means all regular tuition payments, enrollment, consent and other forms will be handled online. Meetings with teachers and administrators will remain for the most part virtual.

E. Social Distancing

We've made every effort to maximize space for the children in each classroom with the following changes:

We've selected the rooms that best space desks and tables

Staff and students will use indoor shoes within classrooms to maintain germ free floors.

All staff and students will be trained in mask wearing, following guidance signs and maintaining social distancing.

Elementary students are staggered within the room with a 6ft space radius around each desk or when using group tables, using shields or minimizing sitting face to face.

Furnishings such as some learning centers and extra shelving, have been removed from classrooms. Instead, larger play areas are set up outside of the classroom for safer use.

Class sizes are limited to decrease student interactions and each class will be treated as 'pod' so children will for the most part interact with only the other children in their pod.

Teachers will travel to students' rooms instead of students traveling to teachers. Teachers will sanitize hands prior to entering a new room.

Where a class requires use of a different location, (art studio, technology room, science lab, media room, gym, etc.), the location will have limited daily use and be sanitized before & after each use.

For now, assemblies will contain only the hosting class family and be listened to or viewed virtually by other classes in their own rooms.

There will be no field trips or special event gatherings during this time. This includes birthday parties or any personal events.

We are waiting on further guidance from the CDC and DOHMH to determine safe protocols for activities like indoor physical education, dance, karate, choir, afterschool, etc. if such activities will be permitted under guidelines for safety during COVID-19.

By taking these steps, in the event of exposure to COVID-19, only limited parts of our school community will require quarantine and we can continue to operate safely if legally and medically permitted.

F. Food

With additional concerns for COVID-19, no foods from home are permitted. All students should participate in our Day-Time Meal plan, which provides a carefully prepared and packaged lunch and snack daily. Menus are provided in advance. Meals will never contain shellfish, peanuts, other nuts or pork products. All meals include fresh fruits and vegetables, with vegetarian and hot and cold options daily. Meals are prepared so food items, utensils and condiments are delivered to students individually packaged on disposable, onetime use plating, clean and contactless. Exceptions will be made for students who are vegans or have medically required diets. Documentation of same must be submitted and meals must adhere to school guidelines – no shellfish, no nuts. Exempt students may eat outside of group eating areas. All students will observe social distancing during meals. Though family style meals are usually an important learning activity in school, we ask all families to have sit down meals at home so young students learn these social skills while maintaining safety at school.

G. Assumption of Risk

COVID-19 is extremely contagious and is believed to spread by person-to-person contact. As a result, federal and state health agencies recommend physical distancing and various other measures to mitigate the risk of contracting the virus. Our School has implemented reasonable preventative protocols, policies and procedures designed to reduce the spread of COVID-19 on the School's campus for the 2020-2021 school year and will update them if Guidance from the CDC or DOHMH changes. Despite these protocols and procedures in place to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19 on campus, there are inherent risks that students may become infected with COVID-19 due to their attendance at School. These risks include, but are not limited to, the following: exposure to COVID-19, becoming infected with COVID-19, or becoming a symptomatic or asymptomatic carrier of the virus. It is possible that the Student is already an asymptomatic carrier of the virus before attending school and that the Student may infect other students, employees, or other individuals at School as a result of his/her attendance. Any person who receives a positive diagnosis of COVID-19, including the Student or another family member, may encounter extended quarantine/self-isolation, additional tests, medical care, hospitalization, other potential complications, including the risk of demise. By sending their child/children to School, Parents acknowledge and assume these risks and the responsibility for same.

Facility Preparations

Cleaning: Prior to the opening of school, an intensive cleaning and sanitization of our entire facility will be performed during the summer. We are assigning additional cleaning and sanitization staff to keep our facility safe and clean both throughout the day and overnight. We are collecting a plentiful supply of necessary protective gear as well as cleaning and sanitizing equipment and supplies in order to be able to implement our school safety plan for as long as is necessary.

Signs and Reminders: Age-appropriate signage, passageway markers, and reminders of hygiene and safe behavior requirements will be prepared and installed throughout the facilities.

Community Training and Preparation: We will ask all families and employees to participate in online health and safety protocol training prior to the start of the school year. Have students practice washing hands, wearing masks and safely removing their mask. Have students practice social distancing from others to gain an intrinsic sense of how 6 feet of distance feels. Being familiar with our comprehensive protocols and high safety standards before school begins will ensure that every one of us can contribute to a safe and successful back-to-school experience for our students. In addition, while our community's safety is our primary concern, we are also very aware that many members of our school community are experiencing emotional challenges. We want everyone to feel secure when they return to school. Our faculty will receive social/emotional training so they are well prepared to handle any possible COVID-19 trauma in our student community. Faculty and staff will be both mindful of this possibility and proactively address these issues with our students.

Thank you for reading our COVID-19 Safety Handbook.

Phyl's Academy

Parent or Guardian COVID-19 Handbook Receipt Form

Parents or Guardians,

Please thoroughly review the Parent Handbook "COVID-19" edition for the 2020- 2021 school year, which contains the policies and procedures for Phyl's Academy while in the process of reopening. After reading the handbook, please complete this form and return it to the school via email as soon as possible. This form will be kept in your child's file for the duration of the school year.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Ms. A. Frempong-Boadu
Phyl's Academy Management

I, _____ (print your name), the parent/guardian of
_____ (print child's name), hereby acknowledge receipt of Phyl's Academy's electronic COVID-19 Parent Handbook. I have read and agree to adhere to all the policies and regulations set forth in this handbook. I acknowledge that the school is taking all precautions for safety on school and assume responsibility for all associated risks of my child/children attending school.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____