



# Potomac Crescent WALDORF SCHOOL

212 S. Washington Street, Alexandria, VA 22314 | (703) 486 - 1309 | [www.potomacwaldorf.org](http://www.potomacwaldorf.org)

## Potomac Crescent Waldorf School COVID-19 Health & Safety Response Plan, 2021-2022 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Introduction** – This Potomac Crescent Waldorf School (PCWS) Health and Safety Response Plan builds on the PCWS 2020-2021 COVID Plan, providing a comprehensive approach to the prevention, response and mitigation of the impact of severe acute respiratory coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), which causes coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

The plan draws on the latest data about the nature, epidemiology, incidence (new cases), prevalence (cumulative cases) and mortality due to COVID-19 in [Virginia](#), [Maryland](#) and the [District of Columbia](#), as well as guidance from the following: the [Brown University School of Public Health](#); the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) ([COVID Data Tracker](#) and [Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools](#)); the [Virginia Department of Health](#) (VDH); the [Virginia Department of Education](#) (VDOE); the [Alexandria Health Department](#) (AHD); the [Harvard School of Public Health](#); and [the Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health](#).

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention<sup>1</sup> and the Office of the Governor of Virginia<sup>2</sup> encourage in-person education with multi-layered prevention, response and mitigation measures, as reflected in this plan. PCWS plans to open for in-person instruction in September 2021.

**This Plan will be modified as the Coronavirus epidemic evolves.** Our experience operating successfully in-person during the 2020-2021 school year showed that we must continually adapt as conditions and best practice guidance change.

### **Objectives of the PCWS COVID-19 Policy include:**

- **Prevention** of coronavirus transmission among students and staff at PCWS (the “PCWS community”)
- **Response** to potential cases of COVID-19 within the PCWS community
- **Mitigation** of the impact of coronavirus on the PCWS community, if cases of COVID-19 occur

### **What is new this year: key changes in the 2021-2022 COVID Plan include:**

- **Vaccination** – PCWS requires all faculty and staff to vaccinate for Coronavirus or to provide a weekly, negative COVID-19 test result to the PCWS administration before arriving at work. PCWS will facilitate and encourage all staff to receive booster vaccines as these become available.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/182/2021/03/Interim-Guidance-to-K-12-School-Reopening.pdf>

- **Testing for students** – PCWS does NOT require students to be screen tested at this time. Diagnostic testing IS required as indicated by a licensed clinician (doctor or nurse practitioner) for students who have been exposed to or show possible symptoms of COVID-19.

**Additional Prevention Strategies are part of a layered approach, and are similar to last year’s recommendations, including:**

1. All staff and students are required to wear face masks consistently and correctly while indoors.
2. Staff and students are required to stay home when sick, to get a clinical diagnosis and to get tested if they show symptoms of COVID or have had a recent known exposure. Test results must be submitted to the PCWS administration.
3. Health checks will be carried out daily and registered in a common platform prior to arrival of students/staff at PCWS.
4. PCWS will stagger students’ morning arrivals.
5. PCWS programs will emphasize plenty of outdoor time, whenever possible.
6. Staff and students will observe physical distancing when possible.
7. PCWS will implement plenty of indoor ventilation, including by opening windows and using HEPA filters.
8. PCWS staff will promote frequent handwashing and respiratory etiquette for students and staff.
9. PCWS staff will maintain clean and healthy facilities.
10. The PCWS administration will carry out contact tracing, in combination with isolation and quarantine as required, in collaboration with the Alexandria Health Department and the Virginia Department of Health.

**What this plan does NOT do:** Regardless of the thoroughness with which the measures detailed in this plan are carried out, there will remain a level of risk associated with in-person instruction. PCWS cannot and does not guarantee against incidence of COVID-19 within our community.

**For further information, please contact the PCWS COVID-19 Team:**

Paul Nary: Director of Administration, Marketing & Communications,  
[pnary@potomacwaldorf.org](mailto:pnary@potomacwaldorf.org)

Jennifer Scotti: Faculty Chair, Early Childhood Faculty Co-Chair, [jscotti@potomacwaldorf.org](mailto:jscotti@potomacwaldorf.org)

## I. PREVENTION

### Key features of the PCWS approach to prevention of COVID-19 include:

1. **Vaccination** – COVID-19 vaccines offer effective prevention against severe disease and death from variants of the virus that causes COVID-19, including the Delta variant.<sup>3</sup> PCWS requires all staff to be vaccinated against COVID-19 or to submit proof of weekly screening testing for COVID-19. Information about free COVID vaccination is available at: <https://vaccinate.virginia.gov>  
  
PCWS does NOT currently require screening testing of students. Diagnostic testing IS required as indicated for students who have been exposed or who show possible symptoms of COVID. PCWS notes that families were very cooperative in getting their children tested last year. This helped the school to maintain awareness of the possibility of COVID infection and/or outbreaks at the school.
2. **Consistent and correct use of face masks** – Face coverings have been shown to prevent the wearer from transmitting the COVID-19 virus to others.<sup>4</sup> An August 12, 2021, public health order of the Virginia State Health Commissioner<sup>5</sup> requires all staff and students to wear face coverings while inside public and private schools.<sup>6</sup> Staff and students may take off their masks when outdoors. However, VDH does recommend that those who are not vaccinated wear masks in crowded outdoor settings or during outdoor activities that involve close contact with others.
3. **Children and PCWS staff should stay home if unwell** – While we always ask that sick children and staff stay home, we will continue to err on the side of caution, as we strive to safely remain open for a second year during the pandemic so that the children can continue their Waldorf education in person. We ask for everyone's willingness to follow the Virginia Department of Health's guidance to have any symptoms of illness checked out by a physician. Families and staff are asked to contact the PCWS Administration (703-486-1309) or by email: [information@potomacwaldorf.org](mailto:information@potomacwaldorf.org), when they or their children are sick.

**Staff and children who feel unwell at school should go home** – If staff or students express that they have or show symptoms of illness during the school day, we will ask that they go home or be picked up and be checked out by a physician. Note: The PCWS Sick-Leave Policy will continue to allow a flexible approach this year to ensure that sick PCWS staff can stay at home and/or work remotely to ensure the health and safety of staff, students and the community.

4. **Daily morning health checks** — PCWS will continue the approach to morning health checks that was taken last year. We ask that all parents/guardians assess their children for any possible COVID symptoms and take their child's temperature before leaving home for school each morning. Upon drop-off, a PCWS staff member will ask parents/guardians to provide the home temperature of each child and to confirm that the child showed no possible COVID symptoms at home.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/keythingstoknow.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/08/why-wearing-a-mask-is-the-most-important-thing-we-can-do-to-stop-the-spread-of-covid-19/>

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/governor-of-virginia/pdf/PHE-Order\\_K-12-8-12-2021.pdf](https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/governor-of-virginia/pdf/PHE-Order_K-12-8-12-2021.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/cloth-face-covers/>

Then, a PCWS staff member will ask how the child is feeling and whether the child has any symptoms; take and record the child’s temperature; and provide hand sanitizer for the child to clean their hands. PCWS will NOT admit staff or students who have not completed the daily health check. If a staff member or student presents with either a temperature at or above 100 degrees fahrenheit, and/or symptoms of COVID, they will be sent home.

**CONSIDERATIONS PRIOR TO ARRIVAL AT SCHOOL**

- All parents are asked to err on the side of caution when deciding whether to take a child to school who shows any signs of being unwell.
- A temperature of 100.0 or higher (even without other symptoms) is sufficient reason to keep the child home.
- The chart below shows common symptoms of COVID-19 that will activate our Response and Mitigation Protocol (Section II):

Please note: in accordance with VDH Guidelines, a child who exhibits symptoms related to allergies, or another non-debilitating, pre-existing condition which has been diagnosed and noted on the child’s PCWS Health Form, may come to school if feeling well enough to do so AND if the child does not exhibit any additional symptoms of COVID-19. Such conditions must have been diagnosed by a physician and recorded in the child’s Health Form.

**CONSIDERATIONS AT SCHOOL**

- If a child has any symptoms of illness, the PCWS staff will contact an approved parent/guardian to ask that the child be taken home and checked out by a physician, as explained in section 2 of this document

<b>Symptoms<sup>7</sup> to be checked each day (provided by CDC and VHD)</b>
● Fever (100.0 or higher)
● Cough
● Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing
● New loss of smell/taste
● Fatigue
● Sore throat
● Runny nose/congestion
● Chills
● Muscle or body aches
● Nausea or vomiting
● Headache
● Diarrhea

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

5. **Physical distancing** – The CDC recommends that schools maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms, combined with indoor mask wearing and other prevention methods to reduce transmission risk.<sup>8</sup> PCWS will promote physical distancing among students and staff in classrooms by situating desks at least 3 feet apart. In accordance with VDH guidelines, when physical distancing is challenging, PCWS will ensure that other layered approaches are implemented, including consistent wearing of face masks, plenty of ventilation, handwashing and classroom cleaning, staying home when sick, etc.<sup>9</sup>
  
6. **Emphasis on plenty of outdoor time, whenever possible** – Waldorf education typically includes much outdoor time. PCWS will make every effort to augment the amount of outdoor time, to enhance physical and mental health and to reduce the chance of exposure to COVID-19.
  
7. **Improving air quality and ventilation** – Each classroom will be equipped with HEPA filters to ensure filtering and steady flow of air. In addition, HVAC system filters will be checked and changed regularly to improve air convection. Windows and doors will be opened as much as possible to increase the flow of fresh air.
  
8. **Frequent hand washing with soap and water; use of hand sanitizer<sup>10</sup> if handwashing is not immediately possible**
  - a. Teachers will facilitate and monitor regular handwashing. Children and staff will wash hands for a minimum of 20 seconds, in accordance with CDC guidelines.<sup>11</sup> Alternatively, hand sanitizer may be used.
  - b. PCWS staff will ensure soap and paper towels are available in all bathrooms.
  
9. **Daily cleaning/disinfecting** -- PCWS teachers will clean their classrooms daily and periodically throughout the day. Faculty and Administrative Staff will share in cleaning all corridors and bathrooms daily. Custodial services are engaged every Sunday and Wednesday evening at the school. Teachers will be equipped with spray bottles and alcohol-based (at least 60%) disinfectant/cleaner to carry out periodic cleaning of classroom surfaces and toys.
  
10. **Clear, age-appropriate information and communication materials** will be posted inside halls, offices and classrooms of the school. Communication materials will address:
  - a. **How to wear your face mask properly**
  - b. **Washing your hands**
  - c. **Symptoms of Coronavirus**
  
11. **In the event that the State of Virginia orders ALL schools AND day-care centers to shut down,** PCWS will offer remote instruction, for as long as necessary and possible.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/182/2021/03/Interim-Guidance-to-K-12-School-Reopening.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/182/2021/03/Interim-Guidance-to-K-12-School-Reopening.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> PCWS will ensure, as advised by Alexandria Department of Health, that the hand sanitizer it is using will NOT be on the FDA list located at: <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/drug-safety-and-availability/fda-updates-hand-sanitizers-consumers-should-not-use#products>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/global-covid-19/handwashing.html>

## II. RESPONSE & MITIGATION OF COVID IMPACT

The main features of the PCWS approach to Response and Mitigation, in the event that cases of COVID-19 occur, include:

### 1. Information and Forms for Preparation

- a. The PCWS Administration will ensure that all parents/guardians have completed and signed **Appendix 1 “Authorization to Use and Exchange COVID Information”** VDH form by October 15, 2021.
- b. The PCWS COVID Committee will post on the PCWS website:
  - i. **Appendix 2: Contact Tracing For COVID-19 in K-12 Schools, How To Prepare And What To Expect** and
  - ii. **Appendix 3: VDH Algorithm for Evaluating a Child with COVID-19 Symptoms or Exposure**

### 2. Assessment Prior to or During Morning Health Check -- When a staff member or student becomes ill prior to or during the morning health check:

- a. If the staff member or student has any of the symptoms in the table above, the PCWS COVID Committee will ask them to stay at home or go home and will follow the Response and Mitigation protocol in #4 below.

### 3. Care and Assessment During School Day -- When a staff member or student becomes ill during the school day:

- a. A PCWS staff member or teacher will call a member of the COVID Committee.
- b. The staff member will walk the staff/student to an outside waiting area (weather permitting) or the PCWS “sick room.”
- c. The staff member will assess the symptoms presented. This will be done gently.
- d. A PCWS staff member will contact the student’s parents and ask them to pick up their child.
- e. A PCWS staff member will wait near the child, physically distanced, so they do not feel alone.
- f. If a staff member has symptoms, they will be asked to go home immediately.

### 4. Response and Mitigation Protocol Developed with AHD Guidelines

- a. The PCWS administration will advise the staff member/parents of student who presents with a symptom from the list above to **go to a primary care physician (PCP)** for examination and possible COVID-19 testing as indicated.
- b. If a physician provides a diagnosis of a different illness unrelated to COVID-19, the staff member/student can return to school with proof of the alternate diagnosis when they are symptom-free for 24 hours. The Alexandria Department of Health emphasizes the importance of being fever-free without fever-reducing medications for 24 hours prior to return to school.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/24/2020/08/Evaluating-Symptoms-in-a-Child.pdf>

- c. If the staff member/student tests negative for COVID-19, they can return to school with proof of the negative test and being fever-free without fever-reducing medications for 24 hours.<sup>13</sup>
- d. If the staff member/student has a positive COVID-19 test result (confirmed by PCR test), (or does not provide proof of alternate diagnosis or negative COVID-19 test result), they can return to school 10 days after receiving their test result or after the onset of symptoms, provided they are fever free for at least 24 hours without use of any fever-reducing medication.
- e. If the staff member/student has a positive COVID-19 test result (confirmed by PCR test), PCWS will inform the AHD, based on a signed *Authorization to Use and Exchange COVID-19 Information*. (See Appendix 1 below).
- f. PCWS will notify PCWS families and staff when someone has tested positive for COVID-19. (Note: care will be taken to respect privacy by NOT revealing the identity of any staff or student who has tested positive for COVID.)
- g. The AHD and/or the relevant Virginia, Maryland, or D.C. health department (depending on residency) will contact the staff member/student's parents and PCWS for contact tracing. They will determine who was a "close contact" of the staff/student who tested positive during the 48 hours preceding the onset of symptoms (or 48 hours before the positive test if asymptomatic).
- h. AHD will contact families and/or others if they or their child are considered a "close contact" of the person who tested positive and instruct them to seek a physician's opinion and/or a COVID-19 test.
- i. The CDC calls for "close contacts" to quarantine for 14 days from last exposure to someone with a positive COVID-19 test, before they can return to school and for those who test positive to isolate for 10 days.<sup>14</sup>
- j. PCWS will check in regularly with the affected family(ies) or staff members.
- k. If a "close contact" develops symptoms, they are considered a probable COVID positive case by the VDH and will be advised to see a doctor for possible testing.
- l. Contacts of "close contacts" do not have to quarantine unless the "close contact" becomes a positive or probable COVID case.
- m. Vaccinated individuals are NOT required to quarantine or isolate IF they show no symptoms of COVID-19.<sup>15</sup>

**Note:** The CDC defines a "close contact" as someone who was less than 6 feet away from an infected person (laboratory-confirmed or a clinical diagnosis) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (for example, three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes).<sup>16</sup>

**Note:** "If AHD has directed a person to quarantine for 14 days because they have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, AHD does not recommend ending quarantine early if that person receives a negative test result."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/24/2020/08/Evaluating-Symptoms-in-a-Child.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html#isolation>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/contact-tracing/contact-tracing-plan/appendix.html#contact>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.alexandriava.gov/health/info/default.aspx?id=114730>

**Additional Information (from Alexandria Health Department/VA Department of Health)**  
(Access on PCWS Website)

- 1. Authorization to Use and Exchange COVID-19 information**
- 2. Contact Tracing For COVID-19 in K-12 Schools, How To Prepare And What To Expect**
- 3. Algorithm for Evaluating a Child with COVID-19 Symptoms or Exposure**