



# Northwest Indiana COVID Plan

## 2021-2022

## A message from your Superintendent

We are so excited to welcome our scholars back for the upcoming 21-22 school year. As you know, our nation has faced very stressful and unpredictable circumstances that caused us to close our doors in March 2020 and provide learning online and through work packets. These were swift decisions that did not allow our schools to plan meticulously as we would typically. During this time, we learned many things, conversed with other districts as well as experts to help us plan for the return of our scholars. We know and understand that no situation will be perfect, but we seek to support our families and staff in any way possible. Lighthouse Academies of Northwest Indiana has developed a plan that we believe will best serve our scholars as we continue our efforts to educate each of them in the most effective way. This guide was developed to help navigate our return to school for the upcoming school year.

We appreciate you as partners as we embark upon this school year. Plans are subject to change based on guidance received from local and state authorities. Our goal is to always do what is best for our school community. As always please reach out with any questions.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jessica Beasley', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jessica Beasley  
Superintendent/Senior Vice President of Academics

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## Re-opening Memo

The Lighthouse Academies of Northwest Indiana board approved COVID-19 protocol memo for the start of the 2021-2022 school year can be found below:

At Lighthouse Academies of NWI (LANWI), we seek to always put the safety of our school communities at the forefront of what we do. The following are recommendations regarding COVID-19 protocols for the safe return to learn. We will continue to monitor CDC and State/Local Health Department Guidelines and update these recommendations as appropriate.

- For the 2021-22 school year, unvaccinated guests, staff, and students will be required to wear a mask. Should the community spread shift to red, everyone entering the building will be required to wear a mask.
- Students will be required to wear masks in certain circumstances. For example:
  - All students while on school transportation.
    - Students will continue to also have assigned seats.
  - Students walking in the hallway.
  - Elementary restroom breaks as a class group.
  - When deemed necessary in small rooms that may not provide reasonable space for social distancing.
  - While in small areas of the buildings where people may congregate.
- Classroom desks will be placed 3 feet apart facing in the same direction allowing scholars the opportunity to be mask free in these environments.
- Desk dividers will be available for students. Desk dividers or masks will be required to be used when students work in small groups and are unable to be socially distant.
- Students in elementary grades will stay in cohort groups as much as possible.
- Lunches will continue to be staggered to allow for better social distancing.
- Athletic and other program events will follow any reduced seating guidance from the state or CDC. Masks will be required for unvaccinated participants.
- School facility use by outside groups will be allowed on a limited basis.
- Guests will be asked to make appointments as much as possible.
- Guests will be temperature checked prior to entrance into each building.
- LANWI will continue to reduce the number of students in large group settings.
- On-site COVID-19 testing will be available for staff and students with parental consent.
- Continued cleaning and disinfection of all spaces especially high touched areas.
- Unvaccinated staff and students will have to follow CDC guidelines for quarantining due to exposure situations.
- Staff and students that are fully vaccinated will not be required to quarantine due to exposure situations unless they become symptomatic.

## Communication

To continue our healthy relationships with our families, we are committed to communicating regularly and through multiple platforms.

Communication Tool	Purpose	How to Access the Tool
Phone Calls/Robocalls	To provide updated information, announcements, resources, etc.	LHANWI will call the telephone number on your student's file. Please make sure your phone number is up to date.
Emails	To provide updated information, announcements, resources, and support.	Please refer to the staff contact list in the Scholar Handbook.
LHA Website	To provide updated information regarding our schools, announcements, and resources.	<a href="https://www.lha.net/schools/indiana">https://www.lha.net/schools/indiana</a>
Facebook	To provide updated information, events, and announcements.	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/LighthouseAcademiesofNW/">https://www.facebook.com/LighthouseAcademiesofNW/</a>
Google Classroom	To access recorded videos, new assignments and submit assignments	Links will be shared by the teacher.
Zoom On-line Sessions	To communicate directly with your child's teacher and for scholars to attend instructional sessions or receive online help	Links will be shared by the teacher.



## Health

LANWI is making every effort to keep our staff, students, and families safe. Every member of our community will be held accountable for doing their part to stop the spread of COVID-19.

### Signs and Symptoms

**Symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

Know the symptoms of COVID-19, which can include the following:

- Cough
- Fever
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing\*
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

**Symptoms can range from mild to severe illness, and appear 2-14 days after you are exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.**

**\*Seek medical care immediately if someone has emergency warning signs of COVID-19.**

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Bluish lips or face

This list is not all possible symptoms. Please call your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.

[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

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### Stop the Spread

We can all do our part to stop the spread of COVID-19. We have adopted the following guidance from the CDC as we prepare our return to school.<sup>1</sup>

- Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face mask when around others when unable to socially distance.
- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds as frequently as possible. *Approximately the time it will take to sing Happy Birthday two times.*

<sup>1</sup> CDC How to Protect Yourself & Others: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>

- If you are unable to wash your hands, hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol is encouraged.
- Avoid close contact; stay at least 3-6 feet from other people.
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Monitor your health daily
- Clean and disinfect

## Masks

Face masks help prevent the virus from spreading to others and wearing one will help protect those around you. All scholars, staff, and visitors will be required to wear a face mask while on site when unable to socially distance.

Masks should fit snugly against the sides of your face, cover your nose and mouth, and secured under the chin. Masks should not be placed around the neck, up on the forehead or under the nose.

- **Scholars:** Masks will be a part of our uniform and should be labeled with your child's name. We recognize that some scholars might require an alternate face mask. Altered face masks will be permitted. Please communicate this need to your building leader. A disposable mask will be provided when needed.
- **Staff:** All staff will be required to wear a face mask when unable to socially distance. Some might deliver instruction using a face shield or altered mask to allow visibility of the teacher's mouth.
- **Visitors:** All visitors will be required to wear a face mask and be temperature checked. A disposable mask will be provided when needed.

Guidance from the Indiana Department of Education:

# Back-to-School Face Covering Guidance for Families

Students and educators are facing many new challenges when they return for the 2020-2021 school year, including the recommendation that face coverings be worn. This two-sided document is designed to help families support students with acclimating them to appropriately wear a face covering and provide protocols for safe and effective maintenance of face coverings.

## 1 Get Familiar

Follow these steps when using your face covering:

- Wash your hands before touching the face covering.
- Put it over the nose and mouth and secure it under the chin.
- Make sure the covering fits snugly against the sides of the face.
- Make sure your child can breathe easily.

## 2 Start Now

It takes a lot of repetition to develop a habit. It is recommended that families begin having their school-aged children practice wearing a face covering for short periods in the days leading up to the start of school.

## 3 Set Rules

Talk to your child about appropriate use for their own face covering and the face coverings of others. Remind your child of the following examples of face covering etiquette:

- Keep your hands to yourself. Do not touch anyone else's face covering.
- Do not share face coverings with other people.

## 4 Reassure

The changes students experience at school can be scary to our youngest Hoosiers. Take the time to reassure your child that the protective measures being taken are meant to keep students, teachers, and other adults in the school healthy. Remember, families mold the attitude of students. Your support is appreciated!

**More Information on the Reverse Side**





# Caring for Your Cloth Face Covering

## Take Off Your Face Covering Carefully, When You Are Home

- Untie the strings behind your head or stretch the ear loops
- Handle only by the ear loops or ties
- Fold outside corners together
- Place covering in the washing machine or wash by hand
- Be careful to not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth and wash hands immediately after removal



## How to Clean Your Face Covering

- **Washing by Hand**
  - Prepare a bleach solution by mixing:
    - 5 tablespoons ( $\frac{1}{3}$  cup) household bleach per gallon of room temperature water
    - 4 teaspoons household bleach per quart of room temperature water
  - Check the label to see if your bleach is intended for disinfection. Some bleach products, such as those designed for safe use on colored clothing may not be suitable for disinfection
  - Ensure the bleach product is not past its expiration date
  - **Never** mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser
  - Soak the face covering in the bleach solution for five minutes
  - Rinse thoroughly with cool or room temperature water

## How to Clean Your Face Covering

- **Washing Machine**
  - Wash your face covering with your regular laundry
  - Use regular laundry detergent and the warmest appropriate water setting for the cloth used for the face covering



## How to Dry Your Face Covering

- Make sure to completely dry cloth face coverings after washing
- **Dryer**
  - Use the highest heat setting and leave in the dryer until completely dry
- **Air Dry**
  - Lay flat and allow to completely dry. If possible place the cloth face covering in direct sunlight



More Information on the Reverse Side



## Hand Washing and Hand Sanitizer

Washing your hands is the easiest way to prevent the spread of germs. All LANWI bathrooms are fully stocked with hand soap and have a friendly reminder of how to wash hands and why it is important. When handwashing is not an option, hand sanitizer should be used. Our facilities have multiple stations in the hallways, classrooms and offices with hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol as recommended by the CDC. Anyone entering or leaving a space will be reminded to wash his/her hands (if possible) or use hand sanitizer.

Here are some handwashing tips from the CDC. Help us create a handwashing community at home, school, and where kids play.

# Handwashing: Keeping Your Family Healthy

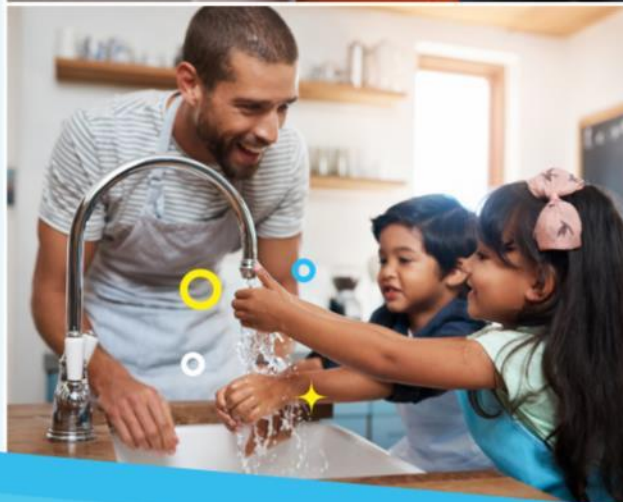
Handwashing is an easy, cheap, and effective way to prevent the spread of germs and keep kids and adults healthy. When your family is healthy, you don't have to worry about missing school, work, or other activities.

## Help your child develop handwashing skills

Parents and caretakers play an important role in teaching children to wash their hands. Handwashing can become a lifelong healthy habit if you start teaching it at an early age. Teach kids the [five easy steps for handwashing](#)—wet, lather, scrub, rinse, and dry—and the key times to wash hands, such as after using the bathroom or before eating. You can find ways to make it fun, like making up your own handwashing song or turning it into a game.

## Lead by example

Young children learn by imitating the behaviors of adults in their lives. When you make handwashing part of your routine, you're setting an example for your children to follow.



LIFE IS BETTER WITH

**CLEAN  
HANDS**



[www.cdc.gov/handwashing](http://www.cdc.gov/handwashing)



This material was developed by CDC. The Life is Better with Clean Hands Campaign is made possible by a partnership between the CDC Foundation, GOJO, and Staples. HHS/CDC does not endorse commercial products, services, or companies.

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Handwashing can prevent

**1 in 3**

cases of diarrhea



**1 in 5**

respiratory infections,  
such as a cold or the flu



### Give frequent reminders

Building handwashing skills takes time. At first, your child will need regular reminders of how and when to wash hands. It is especially important to remind children to wash their hands after using the bathroom, before eating, after touching pets, after playing outside, and after coughing, sneezing, or blowing their nose. But once handwashing becomes a habit and a regular part of your child's day, they will practice it throughout their lives.

### What if soap and water aren't available?

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to get rid of germs. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that has at least 60% alcohol.

### Did you know?

Baby wipes may make your hands look clean, but they're not designed to remove germs from your hands. CDC recommends washing hands with soap and water when possible.

Remember to make handwashing a healthy habit at home, school, and at play!

## Social Distancing

COVID-19 spreads when people are in close contact. It is recommended that a safe distance of 3-6 feet should be maintained to help stop the spread.

We are making every effort to maintain safe distances. Classrooms are equipped with only essential furniture, and desks will face in the same direction. In addition, learning materials will be individual; no community use of supplies will be permitted.

## Monitoring Your Health Daily

We ask that you monitor your health and your child's health daily and stay home if sick. If your child is unable to come to school, please notify your school's main office no later than 8:30am.

All visitors that enter our facilities will be monitored, and temperature taken upon arrival. Anyone with a temperature of **100.4** will not be permitted inside the building. In addition, visitors will be asked screening questions prior to granting access.

Scholars riding the school bus will have assigned seating and be required to wear a mask.

## Sick Protocol

Any member of the community with a temperature of **100.4** will not be allowed in the building. We encourage everyone to self-monitor every day before leaving the house so that you may plan accordingly.

Anyone exhibiting the following symptoms will not be allowed to enter the building:

Symptom	When can I return to school?
Fever in the past 24 hours	Fever free without medication for 72 hours
Vomiting in the past 24 hours	No vomiting for 24 hours
Diarrhea in the past 24 hours	No Diarrhea for 24 hours
Chills	No chills for 24 hours
Shortness of Breath and/or Chest Pains	Doctor's note stating student is clear to return
Sore throat	Doctor's note stating student is clear to return
Strep Throat	Must have been taking an antibiotic, with proof provided to the school upon return, for at least 24 hours before returning to school.
Bad Cold	Doctor's note stating student is clear to return



COVID-19 related exclusions:

COVID-19 Related <sup>2</sup>	Who to Contact?	When Can I Return to School?
I think or know I had COVID-19 and had symptoms	<b>Families:</b> School Nurse  <b>Staff:</b> Your Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 72 hours fever free with no medication, <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Respiratory symptoms have improved, <b>AND</b></li> <li>• At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared, <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Got retested with a negative result.</li> </ul>
Tested positive for COVID-19, no symptoms		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>10 days</b> since positive test, <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Got retested with a negative result.</li> </ul>
In proximity of a person with COVID-19		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Symptom free after a 10-day quarantine.</li> </ul>

Indiana currently has hundreds of testing sites throughout the state. Visit <https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/2524.htm> to find the nearest testing facility.

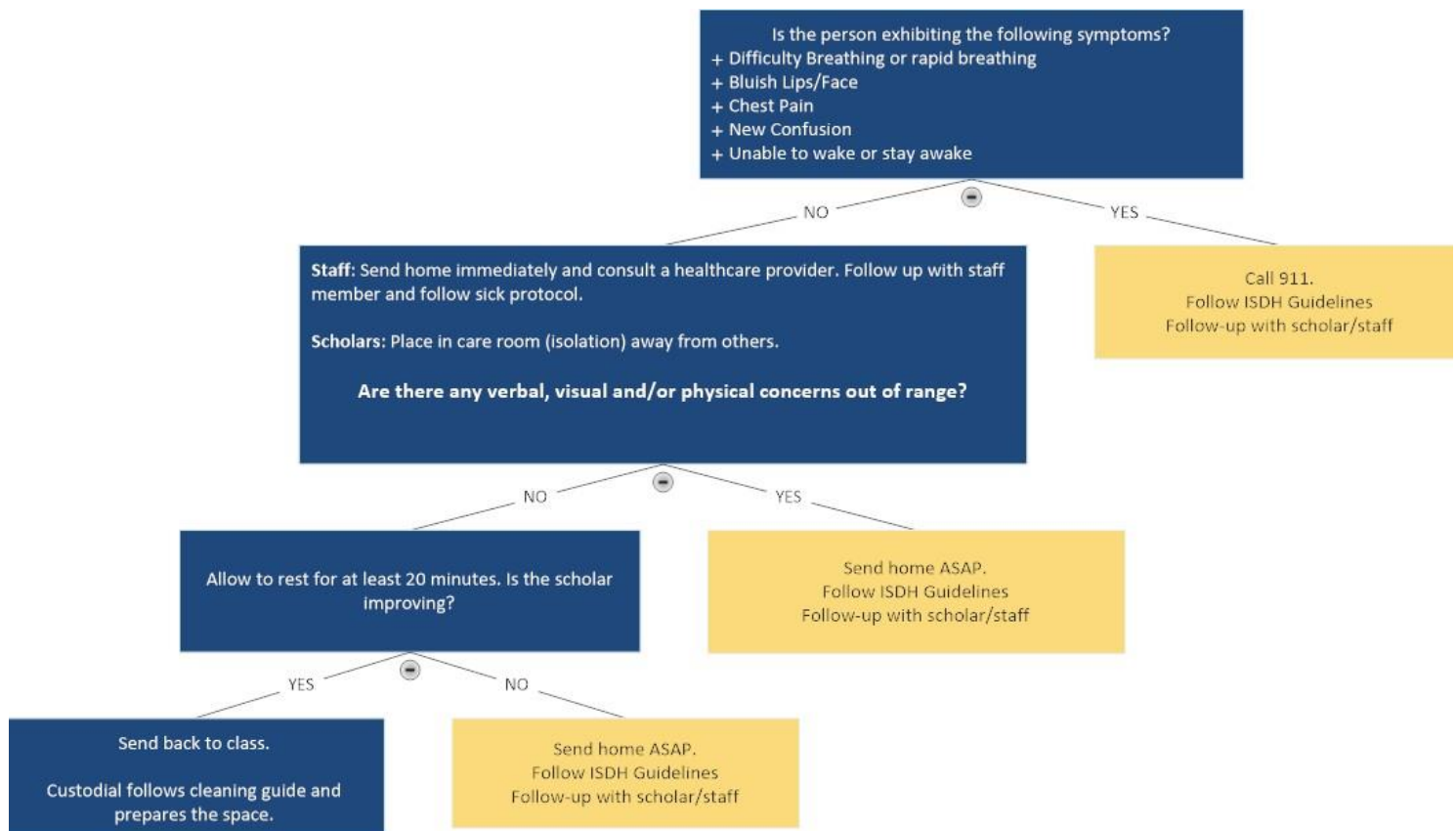
<sup>2</sup> CDC: When You Can be Around Others After You had or Likely Had COVID-19 [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprevent-getting-sick%2Fwhen-its-safe.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprevent-getting-sick%2Fwhen-its-safe.html)

## Sick Scholar or Staff Member

Should a scholar or staff member report symptoms, the school will refer to the Indiana State Department of Health guidelines. These guidelines can be found by visiting

[https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/2400.htm?utm\\_content=&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_name=&utm\\_source=govdelivery&utm\\_term=](https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/2400.htm?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=)

An immediate response may include:



## Care Room

A designated space in each building has been identified in the event a scholar becomes ill and exhibits COVID-19 symptoms. Parents/Guardians will be contacted immediately, and the scholar will remain in the care room until he/she is picked up. It is essential that all contact information, including emergency contacts, are up to date. Ill scholars must be picked up by an adult and will not be able to leave school on his/her own.

## Contact Tracing

The Indiana State Department of Health defines a close contact as anyone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 2 days before symptoms – 2 days before test was taken if the person was asymptomatic – until the time the person was isolated. For any scholar or staff who has tested positive for COVID-19, the school will identify and notify those who have been in close

contact. The Close Contact Checklist for Schools can be found by visiting:  
<https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/files/close%20contact%20checklist.pdf>

It is the recommendation of the Indiana Department of Health to do the following should you be identified as a close contact:

- Close contacts with no symptoms should self-quarantine at home for 10 days from their last potential exposure and should be referred for testing.
- All close contacts who have symptoms of COVID-19 should self-isolate at home, contact their healthcare provider and be tested as soon as possible.

#### Cleaning and Disinfecting if Someone is Sick:

LANWI will follow the CDC guidelines listed at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html> should a scholar or staff member become sick while on campus.

## Cleaning

The cleanliness and disinfection of our buildings has been of great importance. Our operations team has been working tirelessly with building and regional leaders to ensure there is a plan in place for the return of our staff and scholars. There is much work happening in our buildings to prepare for this return. In each building the following has been put in place:

- Increased personnel to support the new schedule of cleaning throughout the day and nightly.
- Sanitation stations located throughout the building for the use by scholars and staff.
- Schedules for extreme deep cleaning.

#### Highly Touched Areas:

Frequently touched areas are routinely cleaned on the hour. Examples of these areas include:

- Doorknobs
- Light switches
- Bathrooms – toilets, sinks, faucets

Classrooms will be equipped with cleaning materials. Desks, chairs, and computers will be wiped before scholars exit the classroom.

#### Water Fountains

Due to CDC guidelines, all current drinking fountains will be shut off. Scholars will be provided water throughout the day either bottled or individually served in single-use cups. The schools are working to upgrade our drinking fountains to support water bottle refills by December 2021.

## Transportation

LANWI is working closely with our transportation vendor, Illinois Central, to ensure the safety of all on board. Every bus will be staffed with a bus monitor who will check that each scholar is wearing a mask, assign seating, and ensure scholars adhering to the rules.

### Mask Usage

All passengers will wear masks upon entering and while riding on and exiting the bus. If a scholar does not have a mask, one will be provided.

### Passenger Seating

The first 2 rows behind the driver and the 1<sup>st</sup> row on the passenger side will be marked off and unavailable. This is to ensure the safety of the driver.

No more than 2 scholars per seat unless they are family members living in the same house where up to 3 to a seat will be acceptable.

### Loading and Unloading

Loading will happen from the back to the front and assigned seating will be given. **Only** scholars assigned to the bus route may ride the bus. Unloading will be done by row from the front to the back.

Capacity on the bus may be reduced. Transportation will be granted on a **first come, first serve** basis.

### Bus Cleaning

Drivers and Bus Monitors will be responsible for wiping high touch areas between routes. Buses will return to the depot for cleaning between the last AM route and the PM routes.

## Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival and dismissal will look different this year. All scholars must wear masks when arriving and leaving for the day.

### Parent Drop Off and Pick up

Parents must always remain in the car. Upon arrival, scholars will have their temperature taken prior to leaving the vehicle. Any scholar with a temperature of **100.4** must remain in the vehicle and sent home with the parent/guardian.

Building specific dismissal procedures will be shared once plans have been finalized.

## Congregation

No congregation will be allowed at the doors. Markers will indicate 6-feet guidance to maintain social distancing in the hallways and common areas.

## Visitors

To protect those inside our facility, we are allowing limited visitors – staff, scholars, emergency personnel, and family and community members by appointment. Upon arrival, temperatures will be taken, and a simple questionnaire will be given to all visitors.

## Extra-Curriculars

All sports, clubs and field trips will continue to follow any reduced seating guidance from the state or CDC. Masks will be required for unvaccinated participants.

## School Food

Lighthouse Academies will continue to provide breakfast and lunch for all scholars on-site. Students will pick up breakfast upon entry to the building and eat in their homeroom classroom. Students will receive a meal delivered to the classroom or common lunch area for lunch. Lunch will be eaten in classrooms or a designated area to limit congregation and maintain social distancing.

## School Closure

We will continue to monitor and assess this pandemic the best we can and will follow guidelines and recommendations set forth by local, state, and federal agencies.