



COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines for the 2022-2023 School Year

1. INTRODUCTION

La Tierra Community School's Health & Safety Guidelines are driven by three principles. La Tierra will:

1. Act with fidelity to LTCS's Vision, Mission, and Goals by delivering quality education to all students that is engaging, rigorous, and provides continuity throughout the duration of the school year.
2. Prioritize full in-person learning over other learning models, and implement creative strategies to keep students coming to school in-person, even if community metrics indicate high transmission of COVID-19.
3. Focus on student and staff health, safety, and well-being by promoting hygiene and health-related policies that are research-based, clearly communicated, effectively implemented, and enforced.

LTCS would like to thank its students for their resilience, adaptability, and spirit; its parents for their support, patience, and understanding; and its staff for their courage, professionalism, and dedication. The 2020-2021 school year was an especially challenging one for all of us, the 2021-2022 school year was a transition back into full in person instruction and we are confident that the 2022-2023 school year will be a productive year for all of our students and staff.

We will continue to operate under the guidance of Yavapai County Community Health Services (YCCHS), Arizona Department of Health Services (AZDHS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Arizona Department of Education (ADE), Yavapai County Education Service Agency (YCESA) and other governmental agencies.

Rights & Responsibilities within the LTCS Community

Rights – Every student, teacher, or staff member should be known, valued, and cared for. This fundamental right accompanies membership in La Tierra’s school community. It implies we all have a right to expect both emotional and physical safety. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this means members of our community can reasonably expect a heightened level of concern for their health and wellbeing. While it is possible that students, teachers, or staff members will be exposed to COVID-19 in the course of their work or studies, everyone is entitled to expect that reasonable effort and reasonable precaution will be taken to prevent this from happening.

Responsibilities – Our Commitment also implies that members of our community should Know, Value, and Care for others. Our interactions with others (friends and strangers, students and adults) should be self-aware, respectful, and courteous. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this means complying willingly with rules and policies designed to keep our community safe and healthy. We must be thinking of others, appreciating that their risk tolerance might be lower than ours, and adjusting our behavior with sensitivity and respect. Respecting policies and expectations, even when inconvenient to ourselves, is non-negotiable. In some communities, measures taken to prevent COVID-19 infection have ignited conflicts between the liberty of individuals and perceptions of the common good. We expect our community to openly accept the following guidelines:

- Members of our community and visitors to our campus follow guidelines and policies
- Members of our community and visitors to our campus respectfully interact with each other in and out of the classroom, and take responsibility for maintaining a healthy environment;
- Members of our community and visitors to our campus follow self-screening guidelines for symptoms of illness and refrain from coming to campus when symptomatic

Objective

Objective – The objective of this document is to provide LTCS administration with guidelines when making decisions related to COVID-19 health and safety protocols, instructional models, and other COVID-related decisions. LTCS knows that information, guidance, and recommendations from trusted sources may change or be adjusted as we continue to move through this pandemic. This document will be used to help guide decisions to continue to keep our schools open for in-person instruction in a manner that is safe and healthy for students, staff, and families. Additionally, this document may be updated as new information about COVID-19 becomes available and/or new recommendations to mitigate COVID-19 spread are made by public health agencies.

Monitoring & Evaluation

LTCS administration understands that we may need to adjust or modify our mitigation measures throughout the 2022-2023 school year as necessary if our community experiences changes related to the COVID-19 pandemic. These changes could include changes to community metrics, a new variant introduced into our community, or another unforeseen scenario. In coordination with La Tierra’s Director, YCESA and YCCHS, La Tierra will continually monitor COVID-19 cases in our community and schools and evaluate the effectiveness of health and safety mitigation measures. LTCS is committed to implementing health and safety measures when and where they are needed, but we are also committed to eliminating measures that may no longer be necessary to continue to move toward a more “normal” in-person school experience for our students.

2. NEW CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE 2022-23 SCHOOL YEAR

Vaccines – Any person 6 months of age and older is now eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. Children ages 5-11 are eligible to receive a booster shot 5 months after their initial vaccination. La Tierra encourages families to get vaccinated to protect themselves and others from contracting COVID-19.

Long Term Remote Learning Option Not Available – LTCS will not be providing a long term, individualized remote learning option for the 2022-2023 school year.

New Mitigation Measures – No new mitigation measures instituted at this time.

Revised Community Metrics

The CDC continues to publish a weekly Community COVID-19 Community Level which can be used by families to monitor the current community risk level.

Instructional Models

At this time, LTCS will be offering full In-Person learning for all students. **La Tierra will NOT be offering any form of Distance Learning at this time.** Any decision to move to an instructional model other than full in-person will be made in consultation with YCCHS and approved by the LTCS Governing Board.

3. HEALTH AND SAFETY MEASURES

Preventive Hygiene & Health Screenings Another essential category recommended by health care professionals involves health screenings and preventive hygiene which includes hand-washing, possible use of face coverings, and minimizing sharing of belongings. Coupled with physical distancing, these are the most effective strategies in containing COVID-19. Our goal is to prevent symptomatic children and adults from entering our campus. Student families will play a critical role in health screenings of students.

Face Coverings Per a provision in the FY 2022 State of Arizona budget passed by the legislature and signed by the governor, LTCS will not require masks for the 2022-2023 school year. However, LTCS encourages students and staff to follow CDC guidelines regarding mask-wearing and be respectful of everyone's personal choice to wear a mask.

Health Screenings LTCS will monitor for COVID-19 symptoms in students by doing visual screenings and sending any student who appears to be ill or complains of illness to the office. Per LTCS health and wellness policy any student with a temperature of 100 degrees or higher will be sent home immediately.

Hand & Respiratory Hygiene LTCS students and staff will be encouraged to wash or sanitize their hands often throughout the day during the 2022-2023 school year. Not only is this an effective method to slow the spread of COVID-19, but it is also effective at preventing other illnesses that can become prevalent in our school. Students may be offered hand sanitizer by school staff at certain points throughout the school day, such as before and after lunch, before and after recess, upon returning from the restroom, and before using devices.

Additionally, LTCS will encourage proper respiratory etiquette. Covering coughs and sneezes are an important way to stop the spread of germs. Students will be encouraged or reminded to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when they cough or sneeze and

immediately throw used tissues away. If no tissue is available, students will be asked to sneeze or cough into their elbow, not their hands. Students should wash or sanitize hands immediately after blowing their nose, sneezing, or coughing.

Contact Tracing & Quarantine When notified of a student or staff member who has tested positive for COVID-19, LTCS school administration will send an exposure letter home to the class that was affected notifying them of possible exposure. The letter encourages parents to use heightened monitoring of their student for a 10 day period following exposure. Per updated guidance from the AZDHS there is no longer a recommendation of quarantine for close contacts of a positive individual. Current guidance recommends the close contact wear a mask for 10 days from the date of exposure. While there will not be a requirement for students who are close contacts to wear a face covering, it will be recommended to families. LTCS will provide flexibility and support to students who are absent due to COVID-19 and will work with families to keep their student caught up in their class(es).

Cleaning, Sanitizing, & Disinfecting La Tierra's plan includes frequent cleaning of high touch areas, daily sanitation measures, and deep cleanings as needed. Classroom staff will continue to be provided sanitizer and clean rags to sanitize desks and high touch areas periodically during the school day.

Ventilation LTCS has installed free standing air purifiers in every classroom and in the office. Additionally, classrooms will continue to bring in as much outdoor air as possible and ensure HVAC settings are maximizing ventilation.

Physical Barriers CDC no longer recommends physical barriers such as plexiglass to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Use of plexiglass in the classroom will be optional at the teacher's discretion for classroom management and/or layout purposes.

As guidance is continually updated by public health agencies, we will modify this document to reflect the updates. Any changes that may be substantial and/or controversial will be communicated clearly to families. Any changes to mitigation measures or instructional models will be clearly communicated to families.

4. OTHER CAMPUS CONSIDERATIONS

Social Emotional Support Considerations At LTCS, social and emotional supports have always been a critical component of our education vision. Our highly qualified counselor and other dedicated staff are ready to help students with social and emotional needs.

However, as families, staff and community members face many new challenges throughout this pandemic, LTCS is very aware of the uncertainty and trauma that COVID-19 is creating for our students and staff. We believe that social and emotional learning and support (SEL) should be a top priority.

Since the start of the pandemic in 2020, LTCS staff noticed many social emotional needs of our students including anxiety, grief, fear, self regulation, and difficulty adjusting to on-campus procedures. Therefore, LTCS will continue to have our Counselor on campus 2 days per week to work with students.

La Tierra Community School and its leaders view social and emotional learning as the process through which students and adults:

- Understand and manage emotions
- Feel and show empathy for others
- Set and achieve positive goals
- Establish and maintain positive relationships
- Make responsible decisions
- Handle challenging situations constructively

Technology Considerations When technology is used in the classroom, LTCS teachers will ensure that proper cleaning procedures are taken for Chromebooks and iPads used throughout the school day.

Attendance Considerations LTCS must follow state guidelines regarding daily attendance taking for the 2022-2023. Research shows that attendance at school is directly linked with academic success. Plans for supporting student attendance include contacting families with a history of chronic absenteeism at the start of the school year and identifying and providing solutions to barriers for attending school.

Although attendance is extremely important, students who must stay home will be provided with the supports necessary to continue to be successful when they return to campus. Additionally, no programs encouraging or rewarding attendance will be instituted at this time.