Dear AIS Community,

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to have major impacts on schools around the globe. After 18 months of successfully navigating the pandemic, our school’s leadership team has turned its focus to the 2021-2022 school year to ensure that we remained informed, prepared, and safe when on campus. Our focus will be to strike the balance between health and safety and best practices in teaching and learning. Our school’s vision, mission, and core values guide all that we do, including safe operations in our evolving global context.

The purpose of this document is to provide our community members with information about daily procedures that have been put into place to mitigate the propagation of COVID-19. Many of the procedures you will find in this document will be different from what you have been used to; other procedures are entirely new. Please ensure that as a family you take the time to read the contents of this document carefully.

In all instances, our team’s commitment is to use a scientific, medical, and evidence-based approach to guide our decision-making. While these tenets have provided a basis for the elements included in this document, they will continue to guide our thinking in the months ahead. The health and safety of our staff, students, and families has always been—and will always be—our first priority. By following the guidelines in this document, every member of our community plays a key role in helping to protect the health of all members of our community.

Within this context, we will continue to serve our students by providing a rigorous, trilingual program that will ensure their ongoing social and academic development throughout the school year. Our team and our program are striving to maintain maximum flexibility so that we can best serve our community. It certainly is an understatement to say that we are extremely thankful and appreciative of your understanding and flexibility as we continue to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic together.

We ask that all AIS community members join in our efforts to remain informed, prepared, and safe. Keep up to date with current health guidance, reinforce hygiene practices with your children, stay home while recovering from illness, wear masks when recommended, and check in on one another. These are just some of the things the AIS community can do to support each other in the weeks and months ahead.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding our school reopening plans, please do not hesitate to reach out to a member of the leadership team. We look forward to the next opportunity to reconnect with you all in person.

Sincerely,

Mr. Jacques A. Weber, M.Ed.
Head of School/Chef d’Établissement
To limit the potential spread of COVID-19 within our community, entry to the school will be restricted to only students and school staff until further notice, and to essential visitors by appointment only. To reduce cross-contact between classes, grade levels and/or cycles will have their own, separate entrances. Student entry points either provide direct classroom access or an entrance very near to the classroom. School staff members and visitors will also have separate entrances. Please see the following page for a labeled map of entry points.

School Entry Points

Health Screenings

With the support of parents and guardians, students will be required to complete health screenings each day. Our school require the parents/guardians of each student in PS-4è to complete the daily health screening questionnaire in the PikMyKid app prior to exiting their vehicles. Once on campus, students will be visually screened, which may include a temperature check. If the results of a visual health screening and/or temperature check indicates that it is not safe for the student to enter or remain on campus, they will be required to return home.

Attendance

Attendance will be recorded each day by the students’ first teacher of the day. Students must attend 90% of school days, meaning they should have no more than 18 absences (3 tardies equal 1 absence), otherwise promotion to the next grade may be reconsidered. The same policies in the student handbooks apply for excused and unexcused absences. Documented COVID-19 related absences will be marked as excused and any other extended absences should be discussed with the Principal in advance. Attendance notices may be sent via email to attendance@austinis.org.

School Calendar

School will begin on August 18, 2021, and our team will be making an effort to align with the board-approved 2021-2022 school calendar that is published on our website. We have updated the school calendar to reflect the most recent changes. However, it may be necessary to make changes to the calendar during the school year if required to do so by local, state, or federal authorities, or if it is in the best interests of the safety of the community.

School Hours

Austin International School’s campus is open from 7:45am-6:00pm, Monday-Friday. Wednesdays are early release days for children in maternelle and elementary school. Our school hours are:
- 8:30am-3:45pm for maternelle classes (PS, MS, and GS)
- 8:15am-3:45pm for all other grades (CP through 4è)
- **Note: On Wednesdays, school hours end at 2:45pm for PS through CM2**

Please pick up students no later than 2:45pm on Wednesdays unless they are signed-up for flat rate afterschool care. No complimentary childcare is available on Wednesdays between 2:45pm-3:45pm.

Drop-off and Pick-up Times

**Morning Drop-off Times:**
- PS-GS students may be dropped off between 7:45am-8:30am.
- CP-4è students may be dropped off between 7:45am-8:15am.

**Afternoon Pick-up Times:**
- PS-GS students may be picked up between 3:15pm-3:45pm (2:15-2:45pm on Wednesdays).
- CP-4è students may be picked up between 3:30-3:45pm (2:30-2:45pm on Wednesdays).
CAR LINE AND PARKING LOT

Parking Lot Access: The parking lot will open at 7:45am for drop-off and at 3:15pm for pick-up (2:15pm on Wednesday). Parents arriving earlier for drop-off or pick-up may line up on the right curb of Coronet St between the school entrance and Cassady Dr until the parking lot opens. If a line of traffic has formed at the entrance, cars will only be permitted to enter the Coronet St entrance by turning right; no left entry is permitted. The drive-thru lane under the portico may be closed during the day.

Parking: Until further notice, there will be no parking permitted except for staff and maternelle parent parking during drop-off and pick-up times. Only staff and approved visitors may enter and exit the parking lot between the hours of 8:30am and 3:15pm.

Traffic Flow: All traffic will travel one-way, using one lane only, through the parking lot. All cars will be entering at Coronet Street and exiting onto Adelphi Lane. Maximum speed limit is 5mph.

Drop-Off and Pick-up Application: Our school uses PickMyKid to aid with safe and smooth pick-up and drop-off. We will send information and instructions about this application before school starts.

MATERNELLE DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

- Parents with maternelle (PS-GS) students should turn right into the entrance off Coronet Street to join the car line, drop-off/pick-up any older siblings under the portico, and proceed to the northeast parking lot of the school (see map, pg. 3).
- Parents of maternelle students must park to drop-off and pick-up students directly at their external classroom entrance (see map, pg. 3).
- In order to enter the school, parents/guardians must have a completed daily Health Screening Questionnaire in the PickMyKid app. This should be completed prior to leaving home.
- When required by protocol, parents and guardians will need to practice physical distancing and wear a mask when approaching the school building. Parents and guardians are not allowed in the classroom until further notice.

CP-4È DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

- CP-4è parents should turn right into the entrance off Coronet Street to join the car line and proceed to drop students off under the portico.
- Students will use the sidewalk to walk to their designated cycle entrance on their own, under school supervision.
- Parents with maternelle students can continue in the car line to the maternelle parking lot for drop-off or pick-up for PS-GS students.
- In order to exit the car, students must be wearing a mask (when required) and have submitted the daily Health Screening Questionnaire in PikMyKid. This should be completed prior to leaving home.

LATE ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

It is very important for students to arrive before the school start time each day. Arriving early gives students the opportunity to organize their belongings and settle into class without feeling rushed. This will help get our young learners off to a good start!

Students in PS-GS should be in class with all materials put away by 8:30am. Students in CP-4è should be in class with all materials put away by 8:15am. If a student at any grade level arrives after the school start time, the parent or guardian will need to call the receptionist at 512.331.7806. The receptionist will then call the classroom to notify the teacher of the student’s arrival, and the teacher will open the door of the student’s designated, external entrance for them to enter.
Based on guidance from Austin Public Health (APH) and the CDC, AIS will use an adaptive mask policy, with masking either optional or required at certain times of the school year. When required, students and staff should bring at least three masks to school each day since they will be required to change masks after eating and will need a spare in case their mask gets wet or damaged. Face masks must fully cover the nose and mouth and must sit underneath the chin. Cloth masks must be washed between daily use. Parents, guardians, and students should wash hands or use sanitizer before touching masks, eyes, face or nose in order to avoid spreading the virus.

Families can support the concept of physical distancing by discussing and practicing physical distancing outside of school. AIS will be following physical distancing guidance provided by local, state, and national health authorities. During the day, physical distancing measures will be reinforced in classrooms, hallways, restrooms, and other school spaces. As explained by APH (July 27, 2021), "Based on studies from 2020-2021 school year, CDC recommends schools maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms, and six feet between students and staff, combined with indoor mask wearing, to reduce transmission risk. [...] Mask use is particularly important when physical distance cannot be maintained."
HANDWASHING AND HYGIENE

Teachers will review handwashing techniques and how to properly cover coughs and sneezes with students regularly in all grade levels. There will be signage in each classroom reminding students of these healthy habits. Students will wash hands multiple times a day—before eating, after using the restroom, after recess, and as needed outside of these times. Students must continue to observe physical distancing requirements while handwashing. Additional, portable sinks (foot-operated) are being placed near each classroom to provide more handwashing stations. Students will have access to hand sanitizer in each classroom and may have access to their own, personal hand sanitizer, throughout the day outside of recess times.

CLEANING PROCEDURES

During the school day, teachers will be primarily responsible for sanitizing classrooms and classroom materials with the help of students, when appropriate. Cleaning staff will be present at school during the day to regularly sanitize common areas (i.e., restrooms). Cleaning staff will not enter classrooms when students are present. School and cleaning staff will use only EPA-approved cleaning and disinfecting products. Evening cleaning crews will disinfect all classrooms and common areas each weeknight and over the weekend.

LIBRARY

Though the AIS school library is currently closed to outside visitors, class visits will be permitted this year. When in the library, students will be required to wear masks and maintain physical distancing requirements as required by current protocols.

Students will have the opportunity to check out books each week. Students may keep their library books for one week. After one week, students will drop their books in a return bin in the library. The returned books will be disinfected according to library standards before they are re-shelved.

RESTROOMS

Maternelle classes will each have their own restroom in order to minimize cross-contact between classes. Students in PS will use the restroom near the back entrance of the school and restroom inside the classroom, MS will use one of the maternelle restrooms, and GS will use the other maternelle restroom. CP-CE2 students will use the restrooms behind the reception area, and CM1-4è students will use the restrooms upstairs across from the science lab. Students may go into the restroom a maximum of four students at a time (2 boys, 2 girls) in order to maintain physical distance. Restrooms will be cleaned regularly throughout the day, and students must properly wash their hands after using the restroom.

LUNCH

To minimize cross-contact between classes, students will have lunch in their classrooms each day. Classes may eat outside on occasion, at their teacher’s discretion, for additional air circulation and distancing; if eating indoors, teachers will open classroom doors and windows. Students will need to bring a cold lunch or bring a warm lunch in a thermos. Microwaves are not available for reheating food. We ask that all students bring reusable utensils, as the school will not provide utensils for students for hygiene and environmental reasons.
### LEARNING AND SHARED SPACES

The adapted use of shared spaces will be coordinated between grade levels in order to minimize the cross-contact between grade levels. The use of hallways in the school will be limited to physically distanced travel from classrooms to restrooms in small groups. For recess, students in PS-CM2 will use their designated, external, grade/cycle level entry point to travel with their class to the playground using an outdoor walkway to avoid using hallways.

Middle school students may use the middle school hallways to travel, using appropriate physical distancing, between their classrooms, as these are separated from the rest of the school and have minimal shared use with other classes. Middle school students will remain in spaces designated for middle school and will not come in contact with elementary grade levels.

Medical-grade HEPA air purifiers have been purchased for each classroom. Students’ desks will be arranged to respect adapted physical distancing protocols that are currently in force. Teachers, assistant teachers, and co-teachers may also use outdoor spaces for learning at their discretion. Physical distancing protocols must be respected in all learning spaces.

Teachers will make pedagogical choices regarding collaboration and group work. Regardless of the method or strategy being implemented, students will be required to abide by the adaptive masking and distancing protocols that are in force at the time.

### STUDENT MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES

Student use of shared materials will be limited, and students will use their own, individual materials as much as possible. In the case of shared materials, they will be wiped down and sanitized in between uses. Desks and other classroom surfaces will be wiped down throughout the day by students and teachers. Students will be able to place their backpacks and lunchboxes on hooks outside their classroom while respecting physical distancing.

### RECESS AND PLAYGROUNDS

Recesses on the back *maternelle* playground have been planned so that only one class is using the playground at a time. Depending on adaptive cohorting protocols in place at the time, the front playground may be divided into sections with one cycle/class assigned to a section at a time during recess.

Physical distance will be reinforced by staff members supervising recesses, according to adapting distancing protocols. Recess may be used as PE time and students may participate in organized, physically distanced activities (i.e. walks, relays, etc.) either on the playground or in other designated outdoor areas.

### MATERNELLE NAPTIME

PS and MS classes will use separate, designated nap rooms for naptime in order to avoid cross-contact and physical distancing guidelines will be reinforced. Regardless of the adaptive face covering protocol in place, for health and safety reasons, students will not use masks during naptime.

Nap materials will be sent home for washing each day or less frequently if situations permit. Students will be assigned their own mats, and mats will be disinfected each day after use.
AFTERSCHOOL CARE AND ACTIVITIES

Afterschool care will be held from 3:45-6:00pm Monday-Friday and from 2:45-6:00pm on Wednesdays. Adaptive physical distancing and cohorting guidelines will be reinforced throughout afterschool care. Afterschool activities will be available to families, though students activities may be required to operate at Level 3 face covering in the event of an activity with students from different daytime cohorts.

Please ensure children are picked-up no later than 2:45pm on Wednesdays unless they are signed-up for flat rate afterschool care. Due to staffing COVID-19 protocol constraints, no complimentary childcare is available on Wednesdays between 2:45pm-3:45pm.

REQUIRED ABSENCES FOR ILLNESS AND FEVER

Any student or staff member who is ill must remain at home. There are no exceptions to this requirement. If a student or staff member has a fever of 100°F/37.8°C or higher, they will be required to stay home for 72 hours and provide a doctor's note clearing them to return to school. All other contagious disease policies apply as written in the student handbooks.

COVID-19 REQUIRED ABSENCES

Symptom & Testing-Related Absences: If a student or staff member suspects they may have COVID-19, they must remain at home until they are cleared by a doctor to return to school.

Positive Diagnosis: If a student or staff member is diagnosed as COVID-19 positive, the individual may return to school only when all three of the following criteria are met:

1) at least three days (72 hours) have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications);
2) the individual has improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and
3) at least ten days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

Exposure-related Absences: If a student or staff member lives with someone who has tested positive (test confirmed) for COVID-19, they must stay home for 14 days and may only come back if they have not experienced symptoms and meet the three requirements above.

Marking Student Absences: Documented COVID-19 related absences will be marked as excused. Students will receive make-up work for their excused absences according to our current policy.

COVID-19 REPORTING

Family Reporting Requirements: In the case of a student or staff member testing positive for COVID-19, it must be immediately reported to the school via phone call to 512.331.7806 or email to reception@austinis.org.

School Reporting Procedures: In the case that it is determined that a student or staff member has been on campus when positive or potentially positive for COVID-19, the school will notify the local health department and send an AIS Health Alert to the school community. AIS is required by law to protect the privacy of its students and staff members, and no personal information will be shared in AIS Health Alerts besides grade level assignment.
OFF-CAMPUS LEARNING

Per CDC guidance (July 9, 2021), "Students benefit from in-person learning, and safely returning to in-person instruction in the fall 2021 is a priority." As such, our focus in 2021-2022 will be on adaptive and layered virus mitigation strategies that will keep our campus open and safe.

In the event that our school program is compelled to move to distance learning (e.g., by an outside authority), our primary goal will be to ensure the continued academic and social development of our students through our unique, trilingual curriculum. To achieve continued success, our distance learning program strives to minimize disruption to students’ weekly routines and to maximize engagement and exchange with educators and peers. In the event of a move to distance learning, families will be provided information in advance through a Distance Learning Guide.

Though off-campus learning was offered on an individual, case-by-case basis last school year, there will be no off-campus learning offered to individual students during the 2021-2022 academic year. Our school’s focus will be on safe and healthy practices to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. If you have individual health concerns for your child that you believe our team should be aware of, please email your child’s teachers and the Principal.

COVID-19 TESTING

Austin International School is a private COVID-19 testing center authorized by the Texas Department of Emergency Management. Tests are conducted using Abbott Labs BinaxNOW rapid antigen tests, using a shallow nasal swab (i.e., not the deep, nasopharyngeal swab). Testing is free and official results are available in 15 minutes. If you would like to schedule a test, please send an email to COVIDtesting@austinis.org to request more information.

DISTANCE LEARNING

In the event that our school program is compelled to move to distance learning (e.g., by an outside authority), our primary goal will be to ensure the continued academic and social development of our students through our unique, trilingual curriculum. To achieve continued success, our distance learning program strives to minimize disruption to students’ weekly routines and to maximize engagement and exchange with educators and peers. In the event of a move to distance learning, families will be provided information in advance through a Distance Learning Guide.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:
- Parent Checklist
- Caring for Children during COVID
- Talking with Children about COVID
- What to do if you are sick
- Managing Stress & Anxiety
- Protecting yourself if High Risk
- Health & Hygiene

Child Mind Institute:
- How Mindfulness Can Help During COVID-19
- Parenting Disagreements During COVID
- Preschoolers: Tips for Supporting Learning at Home
- Will My Child Bounce Back From the Coronavirus Crisis?
- Helping Kids Face the Challenges of Reopening
- How to Ask What Kids Are Feeling
ADAPTIVE HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS

Last updated: August 2nd, 2021

During the 2021-2022 school year, Austin International School will operate using adaptive COVID-19 health and safety protocols for face coverings, physical distancing, and cohorting. Though protocol levels will be primarily informed by current Austin Public Health staging data, decisions to change protocol levels will also be based on current scientific and medical guidance provided to our school’s leadership team. Any changes to protocol levels will be communicated by the school’s leadership to the school community. Please also note that all protocols and adaptive levels in this document are subject to change during the school year.

FACE COVERINGS

- **Level 0.** Masks optional indoors and outdoors.
- **Level 1.** Masks recommended indoors. Masks optional outdoors.
- **Level 2.** Masks required indoors. Masks recommended outdoors.
- **Level 3.** Masks required indoors and outdoors.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

- **Level 0.** Any distance permitted.
- **Level 1.** At least 3’ distance, where feasible, when masks are not used.
- **Level 2.** At least 6’ distance, where feasible, when masks are not used.
- **Level 3.** At least 3’ of distance required, where feasible, with mask use.

COHORTING

- **Level 0.** Contact between cohorts permitted.
- **Level 1.** Reduced contact between cycle-level cohorts.
- **Level 2.** Reduced contact between grade-level cohorts.
- **Level 3.** Reduced contact between classroom cohorts.

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For the latest Austin Public Health COVID-19 staging levels, please visit [APH’s Key Indicators for Staging Dashboard](#)