



Villa Academy Pandemic Response Plan¹

(August 20, 2020)

Villa Academy is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all its students, parents, employees, and guests. Thus, the following Pandemic Response Plan (PRP) for the 2020–21 school year has been developed to guide our decisions regarding the reopening of our campus to students and employees as well as our overall program. We recognize that through the implementation of the following coordinated efforts, we can greatly reduce, not eliminate, the risk of COVID-19 transmission in our community. We strive to balance our mitigation policies with the well known and documented benefits of children experiencing in-person learning at school.

Villa Academy will update this PRP as federal, state and local guidelines and regulations change. It will also be included as a temporary addendum to Villa Academy’s Parent Handbook and Employee Handbook. Until communicated otherwise, the rules and guidance of this PRP supersede any inconsistency between it and the existing Parent or Employee Handbook. If a parent has any questions regarding current policies or procedures, they should contact their child’s Division Head (*James Joseph - Middle School Director; Julie Grasseschi - Lower School Director*); faculty and staff members should contact their supervisor or the Head of School.

Resources And Guiding Entities:

Villa Academy’s Pandemic Response Plan is based on recommendations from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), [Washington State Department of Health \(DOH\)](#), [King County Public Health](#), the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#), the [Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction \(OSPI\)](#), (including the OSPI document entitled, [Reopening Washington Schools: Questions & Answers for School Districts](#)).

As part of our planning, Villa Academy has taken into account the mounting evidence regarding COVID-19 in children and adolescents, including the role they may play in transmission of the infection. According to the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#), COVID-19 “*appears to behave differently in children and adolescents than other common respiratory viruses, such as the flu, on which much of the current guidance regarding school closures is based. Although children and adolescents play a major role in amplifying influenza outbreaks, to date, this does not appear to be the case with COVID-19. Although many questions remain, the preponderance of evidence indicates that children and adolescents are less likely to be symptomatic and less likely to have severe disease resulting from COVID-19 infection. In addition, children may be less likely to become infected and to spread infection.*”² Similarly, the [most recent guidelines from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#), indicates “*Children appear to be at lower risk for contracting COVID-19 compared to adults. While some children have been sick with COVID-19, adults make up nearly 95% of reported COVID-19 cases. Early reports suggest children are less likely to get COVID-19 than adults, and when they do get COVID-19, they generally have a less serious illness. As of July 21, 2020, 6.6% of reported*

¹ Original - July 15, 2020 / Edit 1 - August 4, 2020 / Edit 2 - August 20, 2020

² A recent [preliminary study from South Korea](#) appears to challenge this APA conclusion as it applies to children over the age of 10. A New York Times summary of this study can be found [here](#).

COVID-19 cases and less than 0.1% of COVID-19-related deaths are among children and adolescents less than 18 years of age in the United States.

Early reports suggest the number of COVID-19 cases among children may vary by age and other factors. Adolescents aged 10-17 may be more likely to become infected with SARS-CoV-2 than children younger than age 10, but adolescents do not appear to be at higher risk of developing severe illness.”³

Implementation:

*To be effective, Villa Academy’s PRP requires the full cooperation of all our community members and everyone is responsible for implementing and complying with the School’s PRP.*⁴ This plan includes steps - such as signage placement, face coverings, physical distancing, screening procedures, contact tracing, enhanced cleaning and ventilation changes - that Villa is taking to mitigate COVID-19 contagion.

This PRP addresses the health and safety procedures that Villa Academy has implemented and the responsibilities of the school and its community members, including:

- Prevention procedures, including hygiene and respiratory etiquette;
- Procedures for safe physical distancing and limiting visitors, including parents, to campus;
- Cleaning, sanitizing and ventilation information;
- Screening procedures and policies for anyone exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms;
- Prompt identification and isolation of sick individuals and protocols for contact tracing;
- Protection and controls for student pick-up and drop-off; and,
- Employee training and ongoing communications.

School Program: On-Campus Learning And Distance Learning:

Prior to August 8, 2020, Villa Academy had planned to start the 2020-21 school year with on-campus learning.⁵ However, as the key indicators of COVID-19 activity in King County remained above 75 cases per 100,000 persons over the previous 2 weeks, and upon the strong recommendation of local and state leaders, the decision was made to begin the 2020 - 21 academic year with fully remote instruction.⁶

Safeguarding the health of our community and its members is our number one priority. Plans were made in July, 2020 for a delayed campus opening or a pivot to distance learning at any point throughout the school year if either public health guidelines or the unique needs of the Villa community necessitate a change of campus schedule. As such, parents will be informed of these changes as quickly as possible to ensure a smooth transition.

³ [Preparing K-12 School Administrators for a Safe Return to School in Fall 2020](#)

⁴ [Communicable Disease Policy](#)

⁵ As communicated in the July 10, 2020, “Update from the Head of School,” those families who choose to keep their student(s) at home during the 20-21 academic year will be able to learn remotely via web cameras and other on-line platforms. Villa Academy has invested in educational technology devices, equipment and applications - along with the concomitant training programs/plans for students and instructors - to, as much as possible, ensure that those students who will be learning from home are receiving the same quality of instruction (at the same time, if possible) as their peers are receiving on campus.

⁶ [Key indicators of COVID-19 activity in King County](#)

On-Campus Learning:

As soon as possible, we look forward to welcoming our students back to Villa Academy for on-campus learning; at that time, we hope to offer a full-day schedule⁷ that includes lunch service, specialists' classes and a modified Extended Day Program (EDP).⁸ Villa Academy's physical and human resources enable us to provide an at-school, in-person education under new thorough health and safety guidelines. Some program modifications that you may see at Villa include:

- Reconfigured classrooms for student grouping;
- Limiting student movement within the school building during the day;
- Limited in-person group meetings and activities;
- No off-campus travel;
- The increased use of outdoor spaces for student learning and socialization, and,
- Enhanced technology, including personal electronic devices for all students and digital access into the classroom.

Please contact your child's division head if you would like to discuss remote learning options if your child has underlying medical conditions or if you have other concerns.

Distance Learning If Campus Is Closed:

We learned a lot through our distance learning experience in the spring; for the fall and at any time in the future, if we must pivot to full distance learning, programmatic changes that incorporate parent, faculty and staff feedback will be implemented ensuring our students will experience the meaningful and joyful learning that is a hallmark of the Villa Academy Experience. Students will participate in developmentally appropriate schedules that are a balance of live and recorded content. All students will have access to their own electronic device and we will continue to utilize a number of digital tools - including Google Educational Tools and SeeSaw - for learning, engagement and assessment.

Social-Emotional Support:

Supporting our students' social and emotional development is more important than ever during these trying and uncertain times. In addition to your child's teachers or division director, Villa Academy's School Counselor, Ms. Jen Reisinger, a licensed mental health counselor, (LMHC), will take a proactive approach to supporting our community during the upcoming school year.

- **Student Focused:** Ms. Reisinger is providing ongoing oversight of our students' social-emotional learning and is also creating additional resources and tools to support students during this difficult time. Key areas of focus include safety, emotion management and social connectedness. Supports will be offered through classroom activities, individual meetings and creative social connections that maintain safety and social distancing.

⁷ The early morning dropoff of students and before school childcare (EDP) on campus will not be available until further notice.

⁸ A variety of plans and protocols for the restart of Villa's Extended Day Program (both childcare and enrichment classes) are currently being considered and evaluated. Further details will be forthcoming from the Director of the program.

- **Family-Focused:** Ms. Reisinger will provide support strategies, education and resources for families through The Weekly. Additionally, Ms. Reisinger will be available for family consultation to discuss your student's unique support needs. Families seeking additional assistance or referrals are encouraged to contact Ms. Reisinger as well.

Considerations For Parents:

Children are looking to their parents to let them know how they should be feeling about things. As much as possible, parents should try to be a non-anxious presence in their children's lives and communicate their confidence in their children's ability to cope with stressful situations, including going back to school.

Parents are encouraged to help children reestablish routines at home that will help prepare them for coming back to school. There are a variety of resources available online to help children return to school in the fall; including: [Parenting in a Pandemic: Tips to Keep the Calm at Home](#) and [Return to School During COVID-19](#).

Once parents have read through the Villa's PRP and understand more about the 2020–21 school year, they are encouraged to communicate clearly with their children about the return to school to begin to prepare them for how things are going to look different this school year. Frequent brief conversations—e.g., “*See how the mailman has a mask on? You and your teachers will wear masks at school, too!*”—are recommended instead of one or two long conversations that hash out all of the changes.

Parents are also encouraged to reinforce the idea that children have agency in keeping themselves safe and healthy rather than emphasizing the many unknowns. Although no one knows exactly what the school year will bring, it is important that children feel a sense of comfort knowing that there are specific things they can do (e.g., *hand washing and maintaining a safe distance*) to help keep themselves and others healthy.

Ample evidence shows that maintaining balanced nutrition, getting moderate exercise, practicing mindfulness, establishing good sleep habits and having adequate social support are the best ways to counteract the effects of stress on children (and adults). Little things can help to make big improvements in the reduction of stress!

Parents can help Villa by communicating with their children that although every family has dealt with COVID-19 differently, the Villa Academy's community supports each other. There will be a different set of expectations at school and we hope that everyone will respect differences in how families have approached dealing with the virus.

Mitigation Strategies:

Villa Academy recognizes that through the implementation of coordinated efforts, we can greatly reduce, not eliminate, the risk of COVID-19 transmission in our community. Villa strives to balance our mitigation policies with the known benefits of children experiencing in-person learning at school.

This fall we will implement basic infection prevention measures, including the promotion of handwashing and respiratory etiquette and the use of face coverings and physical distancing. *Continual on-campus learning will only be possible with all of us working together to follow these health and safety guidelines, on and off-campus.*

Handwashing:

Frequent handwashing is critical in preventing the spread of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases. Hand sanitizer dispensers (*that use sanitizers of greater than 60 percent alcohol*) are at entrances and other locations throughout the school. *Students, employees, parents and visitors should wash or sanitize their hands after entering the building.*

Everyone is instructed to frequently wash their hands throughout the day for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, but especially at the beginning and end of their time on campus, before and after mealtimes and after using the restroom.

Respiratory Etiquette:

Everyone will be expected to cover their mouth and nose with their sleeve or a tissue when coughing or sneezing and avoid touching their face, in particular their mouth, nose and eyes, with their hands. They should dispose of tissues in provided trash receptacles and wash or sanitize their hands immediately afterward. Respiratory etiquette signage will be displayed throughout the School.

Face Coverings:

Adults and children age five⁹ and older must wear a face covering while on campus—including during drop-off and pickup; students, parents and visitors to campus are expected to provide their own face coverings. Students should have two clean face coverings available each day at school. According to public health officials, individuals can spread COVID-19 to others even if they do not feel sick. While not a substitute for physical distancing, the use of face coverings is an important way that we, as a community, can protect each other by mitigating the spread of COVID-19.

Exceptions may be made with consideration for medical reasons and age and to accommodate eating and drinking; outdoor and physical activities, including physical education class and instructional time when physical distancing can be maintained and additional preventative measures are in place.

CDC guidelines provide [general considerations for wearing and maintaining a face covering](#), including the following:

- The mouth and nose are fully covered;
- The covering fits snugly against the sides of the face so there are no gaps;
- The wearer does not have any difficulty breathing while wearing the covering;
- The face covering can be tied or otherwise secured to prevent slipping;

Face coverings do not have to be worn by employees when they are alone in their classroom or office.

Cleaning, Disinfecting, And Ventilation:

Villa Academy uses CDC-approved, eco-friendly, medical-grade disinfectants and has implemented updated cleaning, disinfecting and ventilation practices. This includes routine cleaning and disinfecting throughout the campus. We will administer frequent cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch areas and items, such as toys, manipulatives, door handles, elevator panels, railings, copy machines and water fountains.

All students and employees will practice healthy hygiene, including frequent handwashing, throughout the day.

If someone within the community contracts COVID-19, contact tracing will be used to identify and notify people who may have been exposed at school and also to determine the exposed areas and equipment within the building. These areas and equipment will be disinfected per CDC guidelines.

⁹ Children under the age of five are encouraged - but not required - to wear a face covering while on campus.

Villa Academy's architecture¹⁰ allows for the maximum amount of incoming fresh air and recirculation. However, the maintenance staff will continue to check the building's ventilation systems to ensure that it is being properly used and maintained.

Limiting Campus Access:

To reduce the number of people on our campus *we are restricting all parent and visitor/volunteer access to student learning spaces.*

- All parents and visitors must enter through the main reception area (*i.e. the east-facing door at the top of the steps from the patio*), wear face coverings and be screened upon arrival.
- There may be occasions when parents are invited onto campus for meetings and events and to pick-up their child(*ren*), etc., at which time strict protocols will be in place and communicated to parents prior to arrival.

Physical Distancing, Student Cohorts And Group Gatherings:

All individuals at Villa Academy will maintain a safe physical distance of six feet as feasible. Signage throughout the School will reinforce physical distancing.

Villa Academy will maintain cohorts of students and teachers (*per grade*) to minimize crossover among children and adults within the building. We will minimize and stagger travel throughout the building when feasible, including a lunch being delivered to classrooms and specialist teachers (*excluding P.E.*) traveling to classrooms to facilitate learning. In addition, teachers will take advantage of Villa's outdoor learning spaces when possible.

Villa will limit in-person large group meetings in the school building. We are reimagining how we come together as a community, including the opportunity for students to perform and speak in public through virtual and small group settings.

Physical Barriers:

Fixed or mobile physical barriers will be used throughout the campus as necessary, such as at the Main Office reception desk and at similar other locations; barriers may also be used on student tables and in learning support rooms.

Shared Items And Water Fountains:

Teachers will limit the sharing of classroom materials and workspaces between students and will sanitize items as needed. Only items that can be easily disinfected will be used.

No personal toys will be allowed on campus.

Students and employees should bring and use a refillable water bottle and use the water bottle refilling stations as well as faucets in classrooms. Please label your child's water bottle. Water fountains will be available for refilling bottles only.

¹⁰ [Summary Of Villa Academy Architectural Design](#)

Travel And Field Trips:

Non-essential business travel is restricted for faculty and staff members and we ask that all community members limit non-essential travel.

Off-campus field trips are suspended for the time-being, including grade-level camps.

Student Drop-off And Pickup:

Carpool schedules will likely remain the same for the 2020–21 school year, though this question is currently under review. We appreciate everyone’s patience as new health and safety protocols may extend the duration of our carpool.

- Everyone should wear face coverings when they arrive on campus; should a student or visitor not have a proper face mask when arriving on campus, the school will provide one.
- During student drop-off and pickup, employees will wear face coverings, maintain six feet of physical distance whenever possible and avoid physical contact with other individuals.

Deliveries:

Parents will not be allowed beyond the Main Office Reception Desk to deliver items to students.

All other deliveries (*UPS, Amazon, FedEx, etc.*) will be received at the Office of the Facilities Director with the exception of those from the United States Post Office which will continue to be received at the Main Office.

Health Screenings And Symptom Assessment And Reporting:

We will continue to inform and encourage families and employees to self-monitor for [signs and symptoms of COVID-19](#).

As defined by the CDC, individuals with COVID-19 may have any of the following symptoms, which may appear two to 14 days after exposure to the virus:

- Cough;
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing;
- Fever,
- Chills,
- Muscle or body aches,
- Congestion or runny nose,
- New loss of taste or smell,
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest,
- New confusion,
- Inability to wake or stay awake,
- Bluish lips or face,
- Nausea or vomiting, and
- Diarrhea.

Also, according to the CDC, this list of symptoms does not include all possible symptoms. Please contact your healthcare provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.

Villa Academy has implemented the following policies and procedures to assess a person's health status prior to entering the school building; to provide guidelines for screening individuals before they are allowed to enter the building; and to provide a process for families to report when they are sick, experiencing symptoms, or if they or anyone in their household have come into close contact with someone who has COVID-19.

Before Arriving On Campus:

Anyone who is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 or knows that they have COVID-19 should isolate at home. In addition, parents should communicate with Villa Academy - using the methods listed below - if one of them or a member of their household tests positive for COVID-19, experiences symptoms of COVID-19, or has close contact with someone who is positive or symptomatic of COVID-19.

Parents should continue to report student absences, COVID-19 symptoms, close contacts and COVID-19 diagnoses to the Main Office.

All parents will be regularly reminded to monitor their child's health and stay home if they are sick or showing symptoms.

Screening Procedure For Students:

- A face covering is meant to protect others, therefore all employees, parents, visitors and students five years and older are required to wear a mask on campus, especially when physical distancing is not feasible.
- Parents/Guardians will be expected to, ***prior to arriving on campus each day***, attest to their student's health and wellness via a distinct [Villa Academy Daily Health Screening Form](#). This form will ask parents to:
 - ✓ Confirm that their child ***has not had*** any of the following symptoms of COVID-19 the past 14 days: Fever or chills; cough; shortness of breath or difficulty breathing; fatigue; muscle or body aches; headache; new loss of taste or smell; sore throat, congestion or runny nose; nausea, vomiting or diarrhea;
 - ✓ Confirm that their child ***has not received*** any medicine within the last 24 hours that would intentionally reduce a fever (*e.g., aspirin, ibuprofen, acetaminophen, etc.*);
 - ✓ Confirm that their child ***has not tested positive*** for COVID-19 in the past 14 days;
 - ✓ Confirm that their ***child has not, within the past 14 days, been told by a public health or medical professional to self-monitor, self-isolate or self-quarantine*** because of concerns about COVID-19 infection;
 - ✓ Confirm that ***their child has not, in the past 14 days, been in contact with anyone who has tested positive*** for COVID-19;
 - ✓ Confirm that their ***child has not themselves or any member of his/her household travelled by airplane or cruise ship in the past 14 days***;
 - ✓ Confirm that ***their child understands*** that they will need to observe mask and distance policies, as well as directional traffic and enhanced sanitization policies while on campus.

- During the school day, should a student show any of the symptoms of COVID-19 noted above, that student's parent/guardian will be quickly contacted and expected to retrieve that student as soon as possible.
 - ✓ Classmates or teachers of the student who has shown symptoms of COVID-19 and who have been in close contact with that symptomatic student (*the CDC currently defines "close contact" as "someone who was within six feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 48 hours before illness onset until the time the patient is isolated"*) will be excluded from school and expected to quarantine for 14 days from the last contact with the symptomatic student. If the symptomatic student is determined to not have COVID-19, his/her classmates and teachers will be notified of an earlier return to campus.

Screening Procedures For Employees, Parents And Visitors:

- Similarly to students, employees, parents and visitors must attest to their own health and wellness via the [Villa Academy Daily Health Screening Form](#).
- Employees, parents and visitors must enter through the main school entrance, i.e., the east-facing doors at the top of the steps from the patio.
- Non-essential visitors will be limited and all visitors must have an appointment prior to being screened and admitted.
- Parents will not be allowed past the Main Office once school resumes unless they have an appointment or have received a communication from the school that states otherwise.
- A face covering is meant to protect others, therefore all employees, parents, visitors and students are required to wear a mask in the school building, especially when physical distancing is not feasible.
- All non-employee adults entering the building will have their temperature checked at the Main Office.
- Anyone with a temperature of 100° Fahrenheit or above must immediately leave the campus.
- If any screening reveals any COVID-19 symptoms, the individual will immediately leave the campus or be isolated in a designated isolation space until the Head of School or his designee can determine the appropriate next steps.
- All individuals should wash or sanitize their hands after entering the building.

Policies For Individuals Exhibiting Symptoms At School:

If a student is sick or experiencing symptoms at school, the teacher or other designated adult will escort the student directly to the isolation room (*Room 221 - directly across from the mailroom and the main "sick" room*) and report the case to the Main Office and the Head of School. Both escort and student should wear face coverings.

Parents who become sick or experience symptoms while at Villa Academy should notify the Main Office and leave the building immediately or report to the designated isolation room until able to leave the campus.

If a Villa Academy employee is sick or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms at school, that employee must notify his/her supervisor or the Head of School before leaving school. The symptomatic employee will be excluded from

returning to school until they have received a negative COVID-19 test result (*according to directions of a healthcare provider*) and:

- Been fever and medication free for at least 72 hours, AND;
- Other symptoms have improved;

Villa Academy parents and the colleagues of the symptomatic employee will be notified of the employee's symptoms (*and may be asked to self-quarantine if the employee has been in close contact with students, colleagues, et al.*) but the symptomatic employee will not be identified unless specific, written permission is granted by the symptomatic employee.

Villa Academy has implemented a specific COVID-19 health support policy (*via educational technology devices and platforms*) that promotes everyone staying at home when they are sick or displaying symptoms of COVID-19, when household members are sick or displaying symptoms of COVID-19 or when required by a healthcare provider to isolate or quarantine themselves or a member of their household.

Contact Tracing And Returning To School:

Contact tracing is part of the process of mitigating the spread of infection. Villa Academy has a plan to work with public health officials if a community member tests positive for COVID-19. The Head of School and/or his designate, with the assistance of the King County Public Health Department, will work with the infected person to identify close contacts and will notify community members who may be close contacts. Patient confidentiality will be maintained to the greatest extent possible. Instructions that follow current CDC and Washington State guidance will be provided to the infected person and all close contacts regarding isolation and quarantine.

Returning To School:

- Anyone who is absent or sent home due to any illness that presents COVID-19 symptoms, shall not be permitted back in school again until they have:
 - ✓ Received a negative COVID-19 test result (*according to directions of a healthcare provider*);
 - ✓ Been fever and medication free for at least 72 hours, AND;
 - ✓ Other symptoms have improved;
- Please consult your family's healthcare provider if you have specific concerns about your or your child's health or would like further medical evaluation.

Anyone who is absent due to a positive COVID-19 test shall not be permitted back in school until at least 10 days after the positive test result and all symptoms have subsided and subsequent COVID-19 tests are negative.

Anyone who is absent due to close contact with a person who has COVID-19 shall not be permitted back in school until 14 days after last exposure. This person should check temperature twice daily and be observant for any onset of symptoms. They should also stay away from anyone who is at higher risk for getting sick.

In addition to the aforementioned requirements, anyone who is required to be off-campus due to a COVID-19-related concern must consult and receive clearance from the Head of School or his designate before being allowed back on campus.

Extended Programs And Childcare:

Villa Academy will offer a modified version of our Extended Day (*after school*) program and a limited number of online enrichment classes.¹¹ To maintain the guidelines in this PRP, including physical distancing, the number of openings in in-person enrichment classes will be reduced. Even with modifications, students will enjoy creative, meaningful, and fun offerings.

Conference Day Childcare:

Conference Days will likely look different this year and information about conferences and childcare will be forthcoming.

Faculty/Staff Training And Preparedness:

This document will serve as Villa Academy's response plan for COVID-19. Villa will provide staff members with pandemic preparedness training and additional resources will be available as necessary.

Additional communications and training will be ongoing as COVID-19 guidelines and requirements change. If you have any questions, please contact your child's division head or the Head of School.

Additional Information For Employees:

Employee Absence Notification: Employees should notify their supervisor of their absence and continue to report absences, COVID-19 symptoms, close contacts (*the CDC currently defines "close contact" as "someone who was within six feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 48 hours before illness onset until the time the patient is isolated"*) and COVID-19 diagnoses.

Employees Who Become Sick At School:

Employees who become sick or experience symptoms while at school should notify their supervisor and leave the school immediately or report to the designated isolation room (*Room 221*) until able to leave the school.

Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL): Employees who are absent for COVID-19 related reasons for four or more days and are eligible for [EPSL](#) under the special emergency rules, should notify the Head of School or his designate as soon as practicable (*but no later than four days after the qualifying event*) that they will be filing for Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL). Employees who have exposure concerns due to underlying health conditions must contact the Head of School or their supervisor.

Expanded Family Medical Leave: Employees unable to secure childcare should contact the Head of School and he, working with the individual's supervisor, will determine what accommodations can be made. If none can be made, the employee will be granted Expanded Family Medical Leave if said employee meets eligibility criteria. Employees should contact Villa's Director of Business & Finance to discuss other available options.

¹¹ Villa Academy's Extended Day Program Director will provide further details in a separate communique in August, 2020.