

# Cedar Tree Academy PCS

## Health and Safety Policy

### Strategies for Everyday Operations

Cedar Tree Academy PCS, will take a variety of actions every day to prevent the spread of infectious diseases, including the virus that causes COVID-19. The following set of strategies for everyday operations will be in place at all COVID-19 Community Levels, including low levels.

### Staying Up To Date on Vaccinations

Students **must** Stay up to date on [routine vaccinations](#) in order to help prevent illness from many different infections. Vaccines reduce the risk of infection by working with the body's natural defenses to help safely develop immunity to disease. For COVID-19, [staying up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations](#) is the leading public health strategy to prevent severe disease. Not only does it provide individual-level protection, but high vaccination coverage reduces the burden of COVID-19 on people, schools, healthcare systems, communities, and individuals who are not vaccinated or may not develop a strong immune response from the vaccines.

Cedar Tree Academy has adopted the Districts "No Shots No School" policy

All students must have up-to-date immunization certification on file with the school within the first 20 school days or they will not be allowed to attend school or school activities until the immunization certification is secured by the school.

### Staying Home When Sick

- Staff and Students with symptoms of infectious diseases, including COVID-19, [influenza](#), respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and gastrointestinal infections should stay home and get tested for COVID-19.
- Staff and students who are at risk for getting very sick with COVID-19 who test positive should consult with a healthcare provider right away for possible treatment, even if their symptoms are mild.

Staying home when sick can lower the risk of spreading infectious diseases, including the virus that causes COVID-19, to other people.

Cedar Tree Academy has a flexible, non-punitive, and supportive paid sick leave policies and practices in place to support staff members who are sick. Cedar Tree also provides excused absences for students who are sick, and/or has to participate in situational distance learning.

## **Ventilation Systems**

The school will continue to engage with the HVAC vendor to ensure the systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible. Windows and doors will be opened where possible to maximize air quality for occupants while considering safety and health risks such as risk of falling, outdoor air quality triggering asthma symptoms, building fire safety, and security.

## **Ventilation Improvements**

Cedar Tree Academy take [additional steps](#) to increase outdoor air intake and improve air filtration. For example, safely opening windows and doors, including on school buses and using portable air cleaners with HEPA filters are strategies to improve ventilation. Cedar Tree will also consider holding some activities outside if feasible when the COVID-19 Community Level is high.

## **Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette**

Washing hands can prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Schools and ECE programs should teach and reinforce proper [handwashing](#) to lower the risk of spreading viruses, including the virus that causes COVID-19.

- Cedar Tree Academy staff will monitor and reinforce proper handwashing especially during [key times](#) in the day (for example, before and after eating and after recess) the school will also provide adequate handwashing supplies, including soap and water.
- If washing hands is not possible, Cedar Tree will provide hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol. Hand sanitizers will be stored up, away, and out of sight of younger children and will be used only with adult supervision for children ages 5 years and younger.
- Staff members will teach and reinforce covering [coughs and sneezes](#) to help keep individuals from getting and spreading infectious diseases, including COVID-19.

## **Cleaning and Disinfection**

- Cedar Tree maintains staff will clean surfaces at least once a day to reduce the risk of germs spreading by touching surfaces.
- If the school has had a sick person or someone who tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 24 hours, the space will be cleaned and disinfected.

## **COVID-19 Community Levels and Associated Prevention Strategies**

CDC's [COVID-19 Community Levels](#) help communities and individuals make decisions on what COVID-19 prevention strategies to use based on whether their community is classified as low, medium, or high. These levels factor in a combination of COVID-19 hospitalization rates, healthcare burden, and COVID-19 cases. COVID-19 Community Levels treat school programs the same as other settings in their community.

Cedar Tree Academy administrators will work with local health officials to consider other local conditions and factors when deciding to implement prevention strategies. For example, the school specific indicators—such as student and staffing levels or student and staff vaccination rates—can help with decision-making. Additional community-level indicators that might be considered for use in decision making about COVID-19 prevention are pediatric hospitalizations, results from [wastewater surveillance](#), or other local information.

When the COVID-19 Community Level indicates an increase, particularly if the level is medium or high, Cedar Tree will consider adding layered prevention strategies, described below, to maintain safe, in-person learning and keep the school program safely open. Cedar Tree may choose to add layered prevention strategies at any COVID-19 Community Level, based on local or facility needs.

If Cedar Tree Academy is experiencing a COVID-19 outbreak, the school will consider adding prevention strategies regardless of the COVID-19 Community Level.

- Increasing the frequency of testing to our existing screening program, regardless of the vaccination status of the population.
- Put in place prevention strategies recommended at medium and high COVID-19 Community Levels (for example, masks) even if the community is in a lower COVID-19 Community Level.
- If Cedar Tree experience an outbreak the school will work with the local health department in accordance with state and local regulations.

With decreasing or low COVID-19 Community Levels, Cedar Tree will consider removing prevention strategies one at a time, followed by close monitoring of the COVID-19 Community Level in the weeks that follow.

## **Masking**

Wearing a [well-fitting mask](#) consistently and correctly reduces the [risk of spreading the virus](#) that causes COVID-19. Universal indoor mask use is recommended at a high COVID-19 Community Level.

- Anyone who chooses to wear a mask will be supported in their decision to do so at any COVID-19 Community Level, including low.
- At a medium COVID-19 Community Level, people who are immunocompromised or at risk for getting very sick with COVID-19 should talk to their healthcare provider about the need to wear a mask and take other precautions (for example, avoiding high-risk activities).
- Since wearing masks or respirators can prevent the spread of COVID-19, people who have a household member or social contact with someone at risk for getting very sick with COVID-19 (for example, a student with a sibling who is at risk) may also choose to wear a mask when the COVID-19 Community Level is medium.
- Cedar Tree has flexible, non-punitive policies and practices to support individuals who choose to wear masks regardless of the COVID-19 Community Level.
- **At a high COVID-19 Community Level, universal indoor masking will be enforced at Cedar Tree Academy PCS.**
- Students at risk for getting very sick with COVID-19, Cedar Tree will make reasonable modifications when necessary to ensure that all students, including those with disabilities, are able to access in-person learning.
- Cedar Tree will require masking, based on federal, state, or local laws and policies, to ensure that students with immunocompromising conditions or other conditions that increase their risk for getting very sick with COVID-19 can access in-person learning. Students with immunocompromising conditions or other conditions or disabilities that increase risk for getting very sick with COVID-19 could be placed into separate classrooms or otherwise segregated from other students.

Because mask use is not recommended for some [children with disabilities who cannot safely wear a mask](#), Cedar Tree Academy will consider other prevention strategies—such as cohorting and avoiding crowding—when the COVID-19 Community Level is high. Cedar Tree Academy may choose to implement universal indoor mask use to meet the needs of the families served, which could include people at risk for getting very sick with COVID-19.

### ***Diagnostic Testing***

Diagnostic testing is intended to identify current infections in individuals and should be performed on anyone that has signs and symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and/or following recent known or suspected exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19.

- Cedar Tree Academy offers [diagnostic testing](#) for people with symptoms of COVID-19 or who came into close contact with someone with COVID-19.
- If students and Staff who have COVID-19 are identified early and isolate at home, this can help prevent the spread of COVID-19

In addition to diagnostic testing offered by Cedar Tree Academy, students and staff are encouraged to test at home or in the community (for example, at a testing site or healthcare provider office) if they have symptoms or have had close contact with someone with COVID-19. Anyone who tests positive or has symptoms should follow CDC recommendations for [isolation](#) to stay home from school. Staff and students who come into close contact with someone with COVID-19 should follow CDC recommendations to [quarantine](#), get tested, and

wear a well-fitting mask. Recommendations for close contacts depend on vaccination status or history of prior infection. Staff and students who come to Cedar Tree Academy with symptoms or develop symptoms while at school will be asked to wear a well-fitting mask while in the building and will be sent home and encouraged to get tested if testing is unavailable at school. Cedar Tree will offer home-test kits if someone comes to school with symptoms of COVID-19 or develops symptoms at school, that can be used to test at home or at school in accordance with [Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments \(CLIA\)](#) requirements.

### ***Screening Testing***

[Screening testing](#) identifies people with COVID-19 who do not have symptoms or known or suspected exposures, so that steps can be taken to prevent further spread of COVID-19.

Cedar Tree Academy will implement screening testing at medium and high COVID-19 Community Levels. Maintaining screening testing infrastructure during a low COVID-19 Community Level, even at a reduced volume, will help by more easily allowing for testing to scale up when the COVID-19 Community Levels are medium or high. Cedar Tree Academy will also consider implementing screening testing for high-risk activities such as indoor sports and extracurricular activities, returning from breaks (for example, holidays, spring break, at the beginning of the school year), and for students who are at risk for getting very sick with COVID-19, such as those with moderate or severe immunocompromise or complex medical conditions.

Screening testing will be done in a way that ensures the ability to maintain confidentiality of results and protect privacy. Consistent with state legal requirements and [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#), Cedar Tree Academy obtain parental consent for minor students when applicable.

### ***Test to Stay Programs***

Cedar Tree Academy has a [Test to Stay](#) (TTS) program as an alternative to traditional at-home quarantine for close contacts who are not up to date with COVID-19 vaccines. Test to Stay combines contact tracing and frequent testing to allow those who have been exposed to attend school in person. Cedar Tree Academy will use TTS as recommended by the CDC as a strategy to support in-person learning.

Students eligible for and participating in TTS must wear a [well-fitting mask](#), follow testing [recommendations](#) and monitor for COVID-19 symptoms for 10 days after the date of last close contact to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19.

### ***Cohorting***

Cohorting is the practice of keeping people together in a small group and having each group stay together throughout the day, while minimizing contact between cohorts.

In areas with a high COVID-19 Community Levels, this will be used to limit the number of people who come in contact with each other. The school will ensure any use of cohorting for learning is designed to support inclusion of English language learners, students with disabilities consistent with their Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 plans, and other underserved students, and not result in segregation. In areas with high COVID-19 Community

Levels, Cedar Tree will also discourage crowding indoors to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19.

### **Case Investigation and Contact Tracing**

Although universal [case investigation](#) and contact tracing are not routinely recommended for health departments as part of COVID-19 response, they can be useful strategies in response to a school or ECE outbreaks.

If case investigation and contact tracing are done at Cedar Tree Academy, investigations will focus on people who started having symptoms or tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 5 days. Cedar Tree will ensure that people identified with COVID-19 are provided with information about [isolation](#) and treatment. Notification of close contacts will focus on those who were exposed in the last 5 days. Cedar Tree will seek support from DC Department of Health with outbreak investigations and help decide if case investigation and contact tracing are needed.

Case investigation and contact tracing are important components of [Test to Stay](#) (TTS) programs. Cedar Tree Academy has implemented TTS strategies and will continue to conduct contact tracing to allow those identified as [close contacts](#) and would otherwise need to quarantine at home to remain in an educational setting for in-person learning.

In the event that Cedar Tree Academy is unable to conduct contact tracing, the school will use other methods to inform people who might have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19 in the school environment of their potential exposure and the actions they should take to remain safe and reduce transmission. The school will give timely notification to all students, children, and staff in a classroom, cohort, or other school-based group with a potential exposure. The school will make notifications using a variety of methods including phone calls, emails, or letters.

### **Quarantine**

[Quarantine](#) is a strategy used to prevent transmission of COVID-19 by keeping people who have been in [close contact](#) with someone with COVID-19 apart from others.

Cedar Tree Academy will follow CDC recommendations for close contacts and have staff and students to quarantine, wear a well-fitting mask, and get tested depending on vaccination status and history of prior COVID-19 infection.

Regardless of the current COVID-19 Community Level, staff and students who have come into close contact with someone with COVID-19 should follow the recommendations outlined on the [COVID-19 Quarantine and Isolation](#) webpage. Cedar Tree Academy will use [TTS](#), which can keep those who would otherwise need to quarantine in in-person learning.

For children not yet eligible for COVID-19 vaccination who cannot wear a mask, or may have difficulty consistently wearing a well-fitting mask, it is safest to quarantine for a full 10 days. For more information, see [Isolation and Quarantine in Early Care and Education Programs](#).

### **Considerations for High-Risk Activities**

Due to increased and forceful exhalation that occurs during physical activity, some sports can put players, coaches, trainers, and others at increased risk for getting and spreading the virus that causes COVID-19. Close contact sports and indoor sports are particularly risky. Similar risks may exist for other extracurricular activities, such as band, choir, theater, and other school clubs that meet indoors and entail increased exhalation.

At all COVID-19 Community Levels, Cedar Tree Academy will implement screening testing for high-risk activities such as indoor sports and extracurricular activities. Cedar Tree Academy will consider temporarily stopping these activities to control an outbreak, or during periods of high COVID-19 Community Levels.

### **Considerations for Prioritizing Strategies**

Cedar Tree Academy with help from DC Department of Health , will consider local context when selecting strategies to prioritize for implementation. Cedar Tree Academy will balance the risk of COVID-19 with educational, social, and mental health outcomes when deciding which prevention strategies to put in place. Additional factors that may be considered include:

- **Age of population served:** Layered prevention strategies that are most suitable for young children will be given special consideration. For instance, some of the children served at Cedar Tree Academy are not yet eligible for vaccines. Young children may also have difficulty wearing a well-fitting mask consistently and correctly. For these reasons, additional layered prevention strategies—such as encouraging vaccination among staff and others around young children, improved ventilation, cohorting, and avoiding crowded spaces—will be considered first.
- **Communities served:** The feasibility and acceptability of certain prevention measures may vary. Cedar Tree Academy may choose prevention strategies in consultation with the community.
- **Pediatric-specific healthcare capacity:** Cedar Tree Academy will work closely with local health departments to stay updated on the latest science about COVID-19, its impact on the local healthcare and hospital system, and any changes to recommended prevention strategies. While children are at lower risk for getting very sick with COVID-19, some children may still be hospitalized as a result of infection. Cedar Tree Academy will consider increasing the use and number of prevention strategies when the COVID-19 Community Level is high, Cedar Tree Academy will consider the extent to which students or staff are at risk for getting very sick with COVID-19 or have family members [at risk for getting very sick](#) with COVID-19.
- **Equity:** [Equity](#) at both the individual and school level will be considered in all decision-making. Care will be taken so that decisions related to layered prevention strategies and learning options do not disproportionately affect any group of people. For instance, at Cedar Tree Academy, decisions to put in place strategies such as screening testing and contact tracing will be made in a way as to ensure that the same resources are provided to all within the school.
- **Students with disabilities:** Federal and state disability laws require an individualized approach for working with children and youth with disabilities consistent with the child's

IEP, Section 504 plan, or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). Reasonable modifications, when necessary, will be provided to ensure equal access to in-person learning for students with disabilities. School administrators will consider additional prevention strategies to accommodate the health and safety of students with disabilities and protect their civil rights and equal access to safe in-person learning. Cedar Tree Academy will also consider the needs of people who are at risk for getting very sick with COVID-19 or who have family members at risk for getting very sick with COVID-19. Some students may need additional protections to ensure they can remain safely in the classroom. In addition, people who spend time indoors with individuals at risk for getting very sick with COVID-19 should consider taking extra precautions (for example, wearing a mask) even when the COVID-19 Community Level is not high. School districts, Cedar Tree Academy may choose to implement masking requirements at any COVID-19 Community Level depending on the school's needs – and especially keeping in mind those for whom these prevention strategies provide critical protection for in-person learning.