

## Sky Islands Policies, Procedures, and Protocol Related to COVID-19

### Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)

Many of our policies have been updated for the 2020-2021 school year to reflect the Coronavirus public health crisis. Our primary goal is keeping everyone healthy and safe. There is a lot of talk nationally about getting schools reopened in person so that children don't 'lose out on their learning'. Speaking as a life-long educator, children will continue to learn whether they are in school or not. What they will miss is being with each other and being taught by adults who create an environment that fosters critical and creative thought, democratic values, and purposeful learning.

### Educational Goals & Framework

At Sky Islands, fostering that environment and building connections across the program and with each other are critical to students' academic success and well-being. In order to reopen the 2020-2021 school year, we are being called upon to develop our community at a distance to stay safe and to keep each other safe.

Our extraordinary challenge this year will be to integrate a connective environment onto a spectrum of scenarios that could potentially shift unexpectedly. Reopening this school year and moving forward will require foresight, planning, patience, flexibility, and mutual support. Each of us will be called on to contribute good will and trust, to think creatively, and to recognize how we contribute to the health and safety of the whole.

By taking part at Sky Islands, students and their families, as well as staff, are committing to help protect the larger school community by staying safe and following the CDC public health protocol that is driving the current school reopening policies.

### Scenarios: an instructional continuity plan

When people are facing difficult decisions about what to do, we think of different specific possibilities, or scenarios. A scenario is pretty similar to a situation, but a scenario hasn't happened yet and might not happen at all. We have designed several scenarios for students and staff on a continuum from fully remote instruction and study to full-day in-class attendance. Each scenario is designed to reflect the levels of public health risk present in the local environment and the school's response to that risk.

Although circumstances in these uncertain times are prone to change suddenly, the current plan is for Sky Islands to start classes **remotely on August 17, 2020** using the policies and protocols outlined in Scenario 1. Students identified as needing additional support due to IEPs or 504 Plans will receive virtual classroom accommodations and modifications and will have specific times to meet individually and in groups with the ExEd coordinator.

### Scenario 1: August 17 to safe reopening in person at Scenario 2

Every student attends school by means of **fully implemented remote instruction** and virtual study modules. Schedules and expectations will be established and implemented ahead of time. All students

and teaching staff will participate in the remote program every day and will follow a regular schedule of classes that is teacher taught and includes remote study. The schedule will repeat the Sky Islands weekly schedule of Monday/ Thursday and Tuesday/ Friday classes. Wednesdays will follow the alternating week class schedule that we used in 2019-2020, with early release at 12:30.

Teachers will provide instruction from their classroom via a combination of Zoom and Microsoft Teams and students will 'attend' remotely. Expectations for attendance and schoolwork will be maintained. Instruction time that includes new material will be shortened so that teachers and students allow time for questions and conversations to assure that each student is following the course of study.

Teachers will return on August 3 and work together for 2 weeks to analyze the course sequence so that they can develop a plan together to cover the content and standards necessary to complete the planned syllabus. During this initial period teachers will receive training on how to continue to deliver instruction via Zoom and Microsoft Teams, and how to troubleshoot problems with connectivity and student access. Scenario 1 allows teachers to work together daily to collaborate on material for students, exchange effective practices, and collaborate to support successful student learning.

## Scenario 2: partial safe reopening in person (could be 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter)

Students attend school in person on campus **2 days a week** according to their Scenario 1 schedule, and consistent with public health precautions and social distancing. 9<sup>th</sup> and 10 graders will attend Monday and Tuesday, and 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders will attend Thursday and Friday, with alternating Wednesday. That has the advantage of reducing the number of students on site by half. The balance of instruction and study for those not on-site will be delivered through remote instruction as per Scenario 1. Strategies for remote access will be integrated into regular classroom instruction so students better develop remote study skills.

Students who are unable to attend on campus at all due to reported and documented COVID-19 related concerns will attend class remotely as describe in Scenario 1 until they are cleared for safely coming to school. (See Health Policies below.)

While on campus, all persons will continue to follow the school health, distancing, and cleaning policies and protocols. Students will have multiple opportunities to be outside during lunch and breaks, and during class when the instruction allows. (See Health Policies below.)

## Scenario 3: full in-person reopening (could be 2<sup>nd</sup> semester)

Every student attends school on campus every day from the start to the end of the school day for **fully implemented in-person instruction**. Precautions to ensure health and safety have been put in place (see below). Strategies for remote access will be integrated into regular classroom instruction so students have well-developed skills for remote study. Students who are restricted from campus due to positive COVID screening and/or family incidence will have equitable access to classroom activities and instruction via remote education platforms.

## Scenario 4: return to Scenario 1

Students and staff fully adopt Scenario 1 in response to the emergency closure of the school.

## Remote teaching: continuity of purpose

### The virtual environment

Unlike the program we created for the spring quarter, the school day will be scheduled and instruction will take place in real time, but remotely. Students will be enrolled in classes that start at 9 am and will be expected to 'attend' each class and participate remotely. Student participation will require that students are logged on to their class, and that they have video and audio ON. Class attendance will be taken.

Teachers will be instructing from their classrooms at school or a suitable location using a combination of Zoom and Microsoft Teams. They will have the ability to respond to questions and carry on conversations in real time. Students will also be able to talk with each other in the virtual environment. As well, teachers will be attentive to 'Zoom fatigue', rights to privacy, increased anxiety due to prolonged eye contact, and competing obligations that might interfere with student engagement. Allowances will be made during class for students to take short breaks away from the screen.

Students will be enrolled in a full set of courses on alternate days using the weekly block schedules of Monday/Thursday and Tuesday/Friday classes. Regular classes on Wednesday will continue to follow the alternating block schedule, and teachers will allow time for virtual office hours, ExEd instruction, and for students to engage in independent study or group work.

### Computer and Online Access

Electronic technology has become a critical tool for our educational environment during this public health crisis. Students will be expected to have access to the electronic platforms that we are using to provide instruction and to be able to access their classes during the times they are being taught. The school has purchased Chromebooks that will be available to students without appropriate technology to borrow for class work. Students who borrow the Chromebooks will be required to complete the Loan Agreement and will be held to its rules for use.

School rules for the safe use of technology will be in effect at all times. Cyber-bullying will not be tolerated, nor will the use of technology during class times for gaming or random web surfing.

The use of cell phones during class will not be permitted, and all phones will have to be silenced during school hours. Using cell phones in place of a desktop or laptop computer during class will continue to be against school policy and not permitted.

In-person access to the curriculum will be available on site at school upon request. Students who choose this option can expect to be provided with a Chromebook, regular break times, and a monitor but no direct, in person instruction on site.

An addendum regarding school policies for online access and remote classroom protocol has been attached to our existing Student Handbook. This addendum specifies school norms and rules for student participation in the remote instruction program. Also, parts of the Student Handbook have been adapted to include remote instruction policies.

As well, remote instruction will be guided by the approaches to technology use that are presented in the field of Digital Citizenship, esp. as put forward in the work by Kristen Mattson, *Digital Citizenship in Action: Empowering Students to Engage in Online Communities*. Those ideas and practices will be integrated across the curriculum in both remote and in person instruction because students will require the skills and ethics of being digital citizens beyond high school.

## Attendance

### Absence and Attendance Policy

Students who 'arrive' on time and actively engage in scheduled virtual classes remotely will be considered in attendance. Attendance will be taken by the teacher at the beginning of class and again at the end of class to record full instructional participation, and that report will be delivered to the Administrative Assistant for ADE upload via Schoolmaster.

### Arriving Late or Leaving Early

Students are considered to be tardy if they arrive more than five minutes past the start time for a class. Allowances will be made for technology malfunctions, but students will be held responsible for logging in and participating.

School attendance policies as they appear in the Student Handbook will continue to apply for on-site, in person instruction.

### Excessive Absence

Due to the current public health crisis, it is important for community members to take the side of caution with regards to attendance. However, students in high school are required to complete academic work for credits to graduate. Students who miss attending school, either remote or in-person instruction, due to COVID-19 related issues need to make a good faith effort at engaging in coursework and maintain regular communication with the school. Coursework extensions can be provided on a case-by-case basis.

If a student misses 10 consecutive days of school with no communication, regardless of instructional platform, that student will be withdrawn from Sky Islands as per state law.

If a student misses more than, or fails to engage in, more than 10% of regularly scheduled instructional time, regardless of instructional platform, that student will risk failure and loss of education credit. Chronic absence will put graduation at risk and may result in mandatory student withdrawal.

Attendance policies and consequences are captured more fully in the Student Handbook.

### Policy Changes Affecting the School Day

It is critical that the school has current contacts for parents and guardians. Every family is expected to have a sick-child care plan in place. If it is necessary to close the school during the school day, families will be notified to pick their children up from school as soon as possible. If we have no response from parents at the number/s provided, we will continue down the list of contacts until we reach someone. Students will be required to immediately leave the school premises in case of COVID presenting at school by any student or staff member. All in-person activities will be terminated until the health and safety threat is lowered to a safe level according to Pima Health Department rules and guidelines.

## Health Policies

### Illness Policy

Sky Islands follows all federal, state, and local health department guidelines regarding infectious and communicable diseases (including COVID-19, measles, influenza, etc.) which result in school closings. We are required to send students home when we observe or they report vomiting or diarrhea, COVID-19 related symptoms or when they have a fever. Sky Islands reserves the right to send students home when they have other symptoms of illness in order to protect the health of other students and staff.

### Health Screenings

Sky Islands requires that families monitor students' health and well-being prior to coming to school each day for COVID symptoms, and that employees monitor their own health and well-being daily. This will involve:

- Taking and recording family temperatures daily
- Monitoring students for symptoms such as:
  - feeling feverish
  - respiratory symptoms including:
    - runny nose
    - sore throat
    - cough
    - shortness of breath
  - headache
  - muscle aches or chills
  - changes in sense of taste or smell

Individuals with any of the symptoms listed above should not come to school and will not be permitted to enter the Sky Islands campus.

If a family member or other person in close proximity to a student or employee is diagnosed with COVID-19 or another infectious disease as described by the Pima County Health Department, the family must contact the school immediately; the student and family members must remain away from campus and continue attendance through Sky Islands remote instruction platform.

Children with fevers, taken at home and defined by ADHS as 101°F oral or 100°F under the arm, or recorded at school by the electronic temperature readers, or who report having contagious diseases, undiagnosed rashes, and flu or COVID-19-like symptoms will not be allowed to attend school in person. A child must be fever- and symptom-free for seventy-two hours **without medication** before returning to school. If a child has any of these symptoms, parents or guardians must keep the child home and call to notify the school about the absence and illness.

If a child develops or is identified with symptoms during the school day, Sky Islands will follow these procedures:

- The student will be sent to a physically isolated space and monitored.
- Parents or guardians will be called to pick their student up.
- If the school is unable to reach the parents or guardians, a message will be left at each designated phone number.
- If there is no response from the parents or guardians within 15 minutes, the school will contact the emergency numbers on the contact list provided.

Employees who develop or are identified with symptoms during the school day will be required to leave the campus immediately to care for themselves and will follow the same return to school policies stated above.

Students and employees who have experienced COVID-19 related symptoms are required to remain away from campus until they are fever and symptom free, without fever-reducing medications, for 72 hours.

Students who are restricted from campus due to the screening will have access to remote instruction. If a student cannot engage in scheduled remote curriculum due to illness, the office must be notified as soon as possible. With timely notification, students may be entitled to accommodations to complete and catch up with work as appropriate.

As Sky Islands implements systems to check students for coronavirus symptoms, administrators and teachers will ensure Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) guidelines are followed when disclosing any information about students:

- During health and safety emergencies, Sky Islands can disclose information to public health officials, but not to the general public without written consent from parents.
- All communications will conform to FERPA regulations. However, in some cases it may be appropriate and necessary to share a student's COVID-19 diagnosis with other families. FERPA permits schools and districts to nonconsensually disclose education records, including health-related records, to appropriate parties if there is an articulable and significant threat to the health or safety of the school community.
- The school can share information with the student's healthcare provider if parents are unavailable (FERPA), but education records (HIPAA) must continue to remain private during the health crisis.
- Under the *health or safety emergency exception* to FERPA's consent rule, a school or district may disclose a student's COVID-19 diagnosis to public health officials, medical professionals, and other individuals who need the information to stop the spread of the virus.
- The health or safety *emergency exception* applies if the school determines that an articulable and significant threat to the health or safety of a student or other individuals exists and that someone needs personally identifiable information from school records to protect the student's or other individuals' health or safety.
- FERPA does not apply when schools disclose that a student may have COVID-19 as long as the school does not directly or indirectly identify that student.

### Immunization Forms

Each student has an Emergency Information and Immunization Record Card on file at school. It is imperative that each parent keeps this information current. Families must report any changes in contact phone number, addresses, email address, etc. to the office immediately in order for the school to report changes to the school schedule, school emergency closures, or if a student becomes ill during the day.

Two people with different telephone numbers, other than parents or guardians, must be authorized to pick up a student if a parent or guardian is not available. The Department of Health Services requires

that the school uses Child Protective Services for an authorized pick up if the names on a student's contact list cannot be reached in an emergency.

Sky Islands will release a student only to adults authorized on their emergency contact list. In an emergency, a phone call or note sent to the school administrator will be required to approve a change in arrangements. The administrator may call to verify these new arrangements and will ask to see identification when the person arrives to pick up the child.

Parents of students who participate in a carpool must ensure that drivers' names are listed on the contact list.

## Protecting our Community

### Face Masks, etc.

All staff and students will be required to wear a face covering while on campus unless social distancing of 6 feet or more is possible. Face covering must cover the nose and mouth and may include:

- multi-layered cloth masks
- paper medical masks
- plastic face shields.

Students attending school in person are not allowed to opt out of wearing face coverings. Refusal to wear face covering will prevent any student from participating in on-site instruction. Students who refuse to cover their faces will be required to access the instruction remotely until the risk of COVID has been mitigated.

### Flow Patterns in the Buildings

Students accessing remote instruction on-site will be required to enter the building at the north breezeway entrance and pass by the temperature reader in order to be allowed into the building. Students who are on-site for remote instruction will be placed in the MPR, the area known as the Cafegymatorium. Each student will have a desk, wifi, and a chrome book to work with. Bathrooms are available in that area and will be restricted to student use. Students can use the outside courtyard and tables in that area for breaks and lunch. Students will not be allowed into the other classroom areas, and only allowed into the administration area for an emergency. All phones should be turned off during instruction time as per school policy but may be used during breaks and at lunch.

Adults traveling back and forth across the campus during the day will wear face coverings and will maintain a six-foot distance from other adults. Thorough cleaning and disinfecting will occur when individuals travel across campus.

All classrooms and common rooms have windows that open to allow increased fresh air circulation and to mitigate the spread of air-borne infections. When we return to in-person instruction we will make use of outdoor classrooms on campus to reduce indoor transmission.

A return to full on-site instruction will not occur until the risk of COVID has been mitigated to the extent that the curve has been flattened and Tucson has been infection-free as provided in Pima County Public Health guidelines.

### Cleaning Protocols

During on-site remote instruction, cleaning high use surfaces at school such as bathrooms, exterior doors, desktops and chairs, with disinfectants will occur during the day, and at multiple times during the

week. The school will maintain a cleaning schedule with a checklist of cleaning responsibilities assigned at regular intervals during the day.

When we transition to in-person instruction and return to full classrooms, the cleaning protocols will initially include the use of commercial electrostatic spraying to reduce the transmission of COVID-19.

### Hand Washing / No-touch Facilities

Hand washing stations and alcohol-based hand sanitizers will be available in each classroom and at other locations through the campus. Students and staff will use the hand sanitizer gel dispensers as they enter the school and each time they leave and enter a room, and at other times as needed.

No-touch appliances have replaced toilets and faucets in bathrooms and faucets in classrooms to further ensure hand sanitation practices.

### Distancing Guidelines

Only students and Sky Islands staff will be admitted into classrooms and school buildings beyond the administrative offices. Parents, guardians, and other adults must remain out of doors or, as weather requires, in the administrative office lobby. Parents and guardians presenting with COVID-19-like symptoms are not permitted on campus, including the parking lot, outside of a car, or school grounds.

Classroom spaces will be organized to maximize the distance between individuals and to minimize prolonged face-to-face contact, maintaining a comfortable environment that promotes safety and community. Seating, eating, and workspaces will encourage healthful distancing. Teachers and students will monitor the use of resources such as classroom and art supplies to minimize shared use.

Adults on campus will observe and maintain a six-foot distance from other adults on campus. Members of a work crew, such as plumbers and custodial staff, will be masked at all times during a regular school day and will follow all the health and safety guidelines.

## Communication

### Announcements & Notices

All correspondence will happen electronically. If you require a paper print-out of any correspondence from the school, contact the office and coordinate as schedule for pickup or mailing. Exceptions will be made for end of semester grades, IEPs, and by request.

Regular news and updates will be sent via Mad Mimi and by email with updated information, answers to frequently asked question, as well as information about upcoming events, school status, and community resources. This information will also be posted on the Sky Islands website.

Health and well-being education will be provided to students, family, and staff by means of posted signs, newsletters, videos, and ongoing community discussion. The school will be proactive in acquiring and sharing the most up-to-date, reliable information for our community.

Please take the time to review the information sent to your family. If you do not receive newsletters, or if your contacts change, please notify the office.

### Website

Newsletters and other communications will be posted on the website at <https://skyislands.org/welcome-to-the-reopening-school-notice-board/>. Important information about the school, current health department news, and the instructional program will be updated regularly.

## Parent/Teacher Conferences

Our Parent/Teacher Conferences and informal parent meetings will take place online this year using Zoom. Exceptions can be made at the discretion of the school director. Teachers' contact information is available on the school's website and on the class syllabi.

Communication and a strong relationship between home and school is fundamental for student well being and success. Contact any Sky Islands teacher by email or for an online informal parent/teacher conference when needed.

## Classrooms

Teachers will provide instruction from their classrooms at school during remote instruction to maintain the classroom environment. There will be exceptions for virtual field trips, outdoor activities, and potentially culinary and art experiential learning.

When in-person instruction safely resumes, care will be taken to practice safe distancing and use outdoors classrooms. Each indoor classroom has a full wall of windows that open to increase ventilation. Creating natural ventilation by opening windows is an important factor in preventing the virus that causes COVID-19 from spreading.

Small class sizes will continue to be maintained at Sky Islands to facilitate safe distancing.

Video capability is a requirement for the Sky Islands remote teaching and learning platform. Students must be visible during direct instruction throughout each class period. Teachers and other students need to see each other for discussion, to maintain the social interaction, and to support the sense of community. There is **no opting out**.

Students will not be admitted to any remote class on Zoom without working video capability. Students who turn off their video will be removed from class and their parent/guardian contacted. Students who chronically opt out by turning off their video will risk loss of course credit.

## Curriculum

The core curriculum and culture will retain consistency regardless the instructional model. Classroom protocols will include and integrate online learning tools with real-world in-person instruction. Transitions between in-person and remote instruction have been built into the continuity plan. For example, staff, students, and parents will continue to use the SkyLink site on the website to find and review assignments, tests, and due dates. <https://skyislands.org/class-blogs/>

Sky Islands already uses strategies like block schedules and cross-curriculum assignments to integrate in-person instruction. That instructional model will be integrated with the educational technology so that students who might be restricted from campus due to health screening are included in the physical classroom environment via online tools, etc.

All students in both remote and in-person situations will be able to engage in meaningful activities using the same platforms to minimize disruption and confusion. This might look like:

- participating in direct instruction in large groups on Zoom
- participating in small group activities and projects on Zoom
- using ALEKS to access math curriculum
- writing and storing documents on Microsoft Teams
- accessing assignments posted on Microsoft Teams

- participating in hybrid class meetings with most students in attendance, but some connected through a video platform
- accessing the instruction by viewing a recording of the class—students will need to request this option in advance and provide a reasonable excuse for absence. This option is not meant to replace actual live class time

### Enrichment Classes

Enrichment or elective classes will be provided as part of the curriculum for remote and in-person instruction. In addition to the state core requirements, Sky Islands will continue to offer the following courses—3 visual art classes, 2 culinary classes, guitar with the UA Lead Guitar program, French 1 and 2, health and humanities classes, and watershed management. The teachers for these classes have been full partners in the design and implementation of the remote instruction model using the Zoom and MS Teams platforms.

Art and culinary supplies and guitars, as well as books, will not be communally shared. They will be available ahead of time for students to pick up at school and use according to the Sky Islands equipment loan policy.

### Homework Policy

In remote instruction, all work is essentially *homework*. Sky Islands will continue to minimize the amount of out-of-class work. But where necessary to practice using existing skills and tools, outside of class work can be turned in using MS Teams or Google Docs. Students have a history using Google docs and are familiar with it. The homework policy for in-person instruction as provided in the Uniform Syllabus will apply to remote instruction as well. Individual teachers may supplement the Uniform Syllabus with their own class instructions.

### Grades and Report Cards

Sky Islands will report academic progress at each quarter. The grade scale can be found in the Uniform Syllabus that can be found in the documents on MS Teams that are available to each student, along with the Student Handbook. Grades can be appealed according to the policy in the Handbook.

### Classroom Visits

When we resume in-person instruction, only students and staff will be admitted into classrooms and school buildings beyond the offices. Parents, guardians, and other adults must remain out of doors or in the office lobby if the weather requires. Parents and guardians presenting with COVID-19-like symptoms are not permitted on campus, including the parking lot, outside of a car, and the playground.

Following COVID-19 guidelines, all students, staff, and visitors must be masked and have their temperature taken upon entry to the school. Entry and exit from any rooms should be accompanied by use of hand sanitizer.

### Field Trips

Field Trips are historically an important part of our curriculum and will resume in person when it is safe to do so. During remote instruction, teachers may take students on virtual field trips in real time or as video recorded and presented as part of class instruction.

### Personal Items

When we resume in person instruction and due to the strict cleaning and distancing protocols that have been put in place, we are minimizing the degree of contact between home and school. As much as

possible, non-essential personal items must remain at home. This includes toys, games, and cell phones. Where possible, duplicates for critical items be stored one at school and one at home.

### Lost and Found

Sky Islands will not maintain a lost and found this year. Students are responsible for securing their own items and keeping them clean and in good repair.

### Lunch and Snacks

During remote instruction, students who access the curriculum on site at school will eat lunch and daily snacks at a designated spot out of doors. Students should bring a substantial, healthful lunch from home, and enough for two healthy snacks per day. If your student does not have lunch or snacks for the day, please notify the office.

The school lunch program will resume when it is safe to return to school in person.

## Community

### Events

We will work together as a community to explore new ways to connect as a community and to honor and adapt our traditions to fit a socially distanced model.

Please look for information about our community events on the website and in the newsletters.

### Family Volunteer Service

Volunteer opportunities are being restricted due to COVID-19. When it is safe, we will identify the activities that volunteers could help will and seek community participation.

**Guest Speakers:** Sky Islands reaches out to parents and community members for special presentations. This will continue during remote instruction and resume in person when possible.

**Special Events:** As Sky Islands continues to restore the grounds on site, there are many opportunities to participate in events that include water management, tree planting, pond restoration, etc. Those activities will be resumed when it is safe to do so in person and will be announced on the website.

## Visiting Campus & Parking

Due to COVID-19 guidelines and restrictions, Sky Islands is limiting the presence of adults on campus. If you need to park and enter the building, you must pass the health screen self-assessment and wear a face covering as described above.

Do not enter any part of the school buildings through the breezeway entrance to the north of the main entrance doorway. All visitors must enter through the doors by the flagpole.