REOPENING 2020

Middle Way School Covid 19 Reopening Plan
Academic Year 2020-21

October 6, 2020 [updated]

At Middle Way School, our primary commitment is to the students and families we serve, what we call our *sangha*. Our priority must be keeping them safe. When the 2020-2021 school year begins, on-campus school looks much different due to COVID-19 and the health and safety measures that continue to evolve. This School Reopening Plan defines clear guidance for our remaining open that aligns with the regulations developed in collaboration with NYSDOH and the NYS Education Department.

On top of these critical protocols, we rely on the innate wisdom of each individual in our community, their compassion for each other, evidenced by each taking responsibility for their actions. The Noble Eightfold Path—eight practices that cultivate wisdom, compassion, and discipline—is at the core of our school culture. We find timeless guidance on how to create harmony through our point of view; intention; speech; action; livelihood; effort; mindfulness; and concentration. The community must hold together with earned trust and open communication.

We at MWS have the privilege of being able to open in-person due to the current low level of community spread.

To keep our community safe and our school open, we need community buy-in for the reopening plan and for teachers to be empowered to operationalize the plan.

Our plan is evidence-based and supported by the latest research, which gives MWS the best chance of staying open.

We want to avoid a situation where MWS needs to close and reopen and close and reopen as that is disruptive and negates the benefits of opening in first place.

In accordance with the reopening guidelines provided to schools in New York State by the NYSED and NYSDOH, Middle Way School has prepared the following plans to prepare for potential reopening. This document provides details for: **1) Reopening of schools for in-person instruction, 2) Monitoring of health conditions, 3) Containment of potential transmission of the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19), 4) Closure of school facilities and in-person instruction, if necessitated by widespread virus transmission.**

Middle Way School established a Healthy School Committee (HSC) in July to engage stakeholders throughout the process of developing our reopening plan using the guidelines provided to schools in New York State by the NYSED and NYSDOH . The committee was composed of Board Members, Faculty, Parents, Health Experts, & Community Members. Committee members were tasked with individual research assignments and presented their findings, resources, and suggestions at each meeting. The HSC met five times as a whole group to support the MWS administration in developing and constructing the following reopening plan.

(1) Reopening of School Facilities for In-person Instruction

Middle Way School (MWS) plans to reopen with in-person instruction with 6 classes of 7-12 students. Governor Cuomo said school districts can reopen for in-person instruction if their region is in phase four and the positive rate of coronavirus tests is below five percent. MWS is located in Ulster County, which is in the Mid-Hudson Valley Region. Since the region is currently in phase four with a coronavirus positive test rate below five percent, it meets the criteria for reopening in-person. Middle Way School will work closely with the Ulster County Board of Health, the Saugerties School District, and all Federal and State guidelines to continually monitor the situation.

All students will return to in-person instruction on September 15, 2020 (except for our nursery/toddler class, which will have a delayed start date). MWS will limit in-person presence to only those staff who are necessary to be at the school during normal school hours. Each class will operate in their own cohort and will primarily be with 1 lead teacher.

Capacity

- 9 - Faculty/Staff members
- 54 - Students
- 5 - Administrators

Rooms/Capacity per Room:
Room capacity for physical distancing will be posted on each door

- Solar Classroom - 10 students + 1 faculty
- Luna Classroom - 8 students + 1 faculty
- Lotus Classroom - 12 students + 1 faculty
- Ananda Classroom- 12 students + 1 faculty

- Buddha Hall Classroom - 12 students + 1 faculty

Additional work spaces to accommodate physical distancing, small groups/pull-out

- 5 covered outdoor learning spaces -7-12 students + faculty
- Library - 4 students
- Admin Building - 10 adults

*The Ananda Classroom will become our Nursery Classroom upon completion of our new additional 3 classroom building (expected completion date: October/November) with 7 students + 1 faculty. Luna and Buddha Hall will become multipurpose spaces.

Physical Distancing

The difference between social distancing and physical distancing:
https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus/coronavirus-social-distancing-and-self-quarantine

Classes at MWS will take place outdoors as often as possible with students maintaining at least 6 feet of physical distance. Students will be required to always wear masks when 6 feet of distancing is not possible, even when outdoors. In addition to built in ventilation systems that are up to code, all classrooms will keep windows and doors open for cross ventilation whenever possible (weather permitting). When students must have lunch and/or snack indoors they will eat in their classrooms with 6 feet of physical distance and cross ventilation.

Signage

MWS will develop our own customized aesthetically pleasing age-appropriate signage specific for MWS's setting that remind students, faculty, staff and visitors to:

- Stay home if they feel sick.
- Cover their noses and mouths with an acceptable face covering when unable to maintain physical distance from others or in accordance with any policy implemented by MWS.
- Adhere to physical distancing instructions.
- Follow hand hygiene, and cleaning and disinfection

guidelines.
- Follow respiratory hygiene

Directional Social/Physical Distancing Signage

Where feasible, MWS will put in place measures to reduce bi-directional foot traffic using tape or signs with arrows and post signage and distance markers denoting spaces of six feet in all commonly used areas and any areas in which lines are commonly formed or people may congregate (e.g., outdoor spaces, health screening stations etc...).

Faculty and Staff Meetings

MWS may consider choosing to use video or teleconferencing for faculty and staff meetings and conferences to reduce the density of congregations, per CDC guidance "Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)". MWS may choose to hold meetings in open, well-ventilated spaces and ensure that individuals maintain appropriate physical distance (e.g., leave space between seating). MWS will increase ventilation with outdoor air to the greatest extent possible (e.g., opening windows and doors) while maintaining health and safety protocols.

PPE and Face Coverings

- MWS requires face coverings to be worn by all individuals at all times, especially when they cannot maintain appropriate physical distancing. Masks do not need to be worn during meals or for short breaks so long as they maintain appropriate physical distance and the space is ventilated. Acceptable face coverings include but are not limited to cloth-based face coverings, and surgical masks that cover both the mouth and nose.

- MWS will have an adequate supply of face coverings, masks, and other required PPE on hand should faculty or staff need a replacement, or a student be in need.

- MWS will advise students, faculty, and staff that they are required to wear face coverings in common areas or situations where physical distancing may be difficult to maintain, such as entering/exiting classrooms, walking in hallways, and traveling around school buildings.

- MWS will allow students, faculty, and staff to use their own acceptable face coverings, but do not require faculty and staff to supply their own face coverings. Further, this guidance shall not prevent employees from wearing their personally owned protective coverings (e.g., surgical masks, NK-95 respirators, face shields), as long as they adhere to the minimum standards of protection for all MWS activities. MWS may require employees to wear more protective PPE due to the nature of their work. MWS will comply with all applicable OSHA standards.

- MWS will request that students bring their own face covering, but may not require it and must procure, fashion, or otherwise obtain acceptable face coverings and provide such coverings to any student who does not have their own, at no cost to the student.

- Face coverings should be cleaned or replaced after use and must not be shared. Students and parents/legal guardians should take responsibility for maintaining their face coverings. Please consult CDC guidance for additional information on cloth face coverings and other types of PPE, as well as instructions on use and cleaning. All face coverings are required to be labeled with the student's name or initials.

- Any time or place that individuals cannot maintain appropriate physical distancing, individuals must wear acceptable face coverings.

- Face coverings will be used at all times, except for meals and instruction with appropriate physical distancing outside.

- The use of face coverings by students at all times will take into account the developmental appropriateness, feasibility, and ability to implement such a policy in a safe, consistent manner.

- Face-covering breaks will be planned at regular intervals so that students do not have to wear masks for an extended amount of time. These breaks will take place between projects, classes, activities, and the like when children can maintain physical distance.

- All individuals in school facilities and on school grounds must be prepared to put on a face covering if another person unexpectedly cannot physically distance; and for

this reason, individuals – including students – must wear face coverings in common areas, such as entrances/exits, lobbies, and when traveling around the school.

- In extreme circumstances where a student is not able to wear a face covering for medical reasons, MWS will work with a healthcare professional to determine if in-person or remote learning is a better fit.

- MWS will assist students who may have difficulty in adapting to wearing a face covering.

- MWS will train all students, faculty, and staff on how to adequately put on, take off, clean (as applicable), and discard PPE, including but not limited to, appropriate face coverings.
- MWS requires face masks to be worn by all students, staff, teachers, and other people entering our campus. The expectation is that everyone will uphold this critical policy, respecting the health and safety of our greater MWS community. Classroom teachers will facilitate students' mask breaks, eating breaks, and when physical distancing allows students to be mask free. We have not yet determined our mask policy for our Fawns class which has a delayed start date.

Face masks approved to be worn at MWS must be the following:

- Fully cover the mouth, nose, and chin;
- Fit snugly against the side of the face so there are no gaps;
- Not create difficulty breathing while worn; and
- Be held secure with either a tie, elastic, etc. to prevent slipping.
- Face shields may be worn in addition to a face mask, but not as a replacement. The following article from NPR provides details on why face shields must be accompanied by a face mask:

[A User's Guide To Masks: What Types Offer The Best Protection?]

Operational Activity & Cohorts

Middle Way School (MWS) plans to reopen with in-person instruction with 6 classes of 10-12 students on a full time schedule.

MWS students will remain in their cohorts to the extent practicable to limit potential exposure. “Cohorts ”are self-contained classes with 7-12 students. MWS will enact measures to prevent intermingling across cohorts, to the greatest extent possible (e.g., separation by appropriate physical distancing, particularly if there are multiple cohorts in one area). MWS will make reasonable efforts to ensure that cohorts are fixed – meaning contain the same students – for the duration of the COVID-19 public health emergency. Faculty may instruct more than one cohort so long as appropriate physical distancing with appropriate face coverings is maintained.

In the event that MWS participates in field trips, special congregate events, or has visitors we will consider risks of COVID 19 transmission and utilize physical distancing, PPE usage, and cleaning and disinfection which may include conducting virtual events.

Visitors

- No visitor should enter any buildings unless necessary. All meetings should be held outside or via virtual meetings when possible.

- All visitors must be wearing proper face covering prior to entering any building and it must be worn at all times, and especially when a six (6) foot physical distance cannot
  be maintained.

- All visitors outside of drop off time check in at the main entrance of the Buddha Hall for temperature screening and to fill out the COVID-19 CHECK-IN SCREENING which will be provided.

- All visitors must sign in and out at the main entrance of each building stating their destination in that building for contact tracing. All visitors should be accompanied by a staff member.

- Should a visitor become ill while on campus, they must alert the staff member they are visiting to report the issue and then immediately seek medical attention.

Restart Operations

MWS plans to safely reopen facilities and grounds by cleaning and disinfecting prior to school opening on September 15, 2020. All of our ventilation and water sources will be

properly tested and in working order for school to begin. We will continue to follow all guidelines provided to schools in New York State by the NYSED and NYSDOH to open MWS.

Air Filtration/Ventilation

- Whenever possible, doors and windows will be kept open to bring more outside air inside.
- Window box fans will face outward to blow the air from inside out.
- We purchased one ERV (Merv 8) for each of our existing classrooms before the weather turns cold.
- Still under consideration: Installation of portable HEPA filters placed on tables to lower re-suspension from floor. This is suggested for classrooms < 1,000 sqft. Select units with clean air delivery ate (CADR) > 300 (scfm).

Hygiene, Cleaning, and Disinfection

MWS will train all students, faculty, and staff on proper hand and respiratory hygiene, and will provide this information to parents and/or legal guardians as a way to reinforce this at home.

MWS will refer to the "Interim Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection of Public and Private Facilities for COVID-19" and "Interim Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection of Primary and Secondary Schools for COVID-19" for detailed instructions on how to clean and disinfect facilities.

MWS will provide and maintain hand hygiene stations around the school, as follows:

- For handwashing: soap, running warm water, and disposable paper towels.
- For hand sanitizing: an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol for areas where handwashing facilities may not be available or practical.
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizers will be in each room and space students, faculty, and staff use. They will not be used as a replacement for proper handwashing, just as an additional measure of sanitation. Student use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers will be supervised by adults to minimize accidental ingestion and

promote safe usage. Parents/guardians can inform the school if they do not want their child to use alcohol-based hand sanitizers by sending a written notice to the school.

- A combination of touch free and bottled hand sanitizer will be available throughout common areas at such locations as building and classroom entrances and exits.
- Proper signage and directions of use will be placed near hand sanitizer stations indicating that visibly soiled hands should be washed with soap and water; hand sanitizer is not effective on visibly soiled hands.
- All garbage receptacles around the school will be hands free and placed accordingly for disposal of soiled items, including paper towels, tissues, and PPE.
- MWS will ensure that cleaning and disinfection are the primary responsibility of the school's staff. Appropriate cleaning and disinfection supplies will be provided to all faculty and staff for shared and frequently touched surfaces:
- Disposable wipes will be used by faculty and staff on all commonly used surfaces (e.g.,
- Chairs, tables, toys, manipulatives etc...) can be wiped down before and/or after use, followed by hand hygiene.
- To reduce high-touch surfaces, MWS will install some touch-free amenities; such as hands-free trash receptacles, faucets, and paper towel dispensers, where feasible and possible.
- For added sanitation measures, hand sanitizer will be available near high-touch surfaces (e.g., trash receptacles, paper towel dispensers).
- MWS will provide regular cleaning and disinfection of the facilities and more frequent cleaning and disinfection for high-risk areas used by many individuals and for frequently touched surfaces, including desks and cafeteria tables which should be cleaned and disinfected between each individual's use, if shared.
- Each teacher (with support staff available upon request) will be responsible for their own cohort during the school day. Additional cleaning and disinfection will take place at the end of the school day.
- Cleaning and disinfection will occur daily, or more frequently as needed.
- MWS will clean and disinfect restrooms 3 times per school day and when necessary. Restrooms will also be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected at the end of the day.
- All staff and students will be trained to close toilet lids prior to flushing to

avoid toilet plumes.

- All materials and tools used by employees at MWS will be regularly cleaned and disinfected using registered disinfectants. MWS will refer to the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) list of products registered in New York State and identified by the EPA as effective against COVID-19.
- With regard for specific materials, tools, and employees, MWS will supply disposable gloves and access to hand hygiene stations if use of cleaning or disinfection products are uncomfortable to work with.
- Habits MWS would like to teach and reinforce with their students:
    - Proper handwashing (preferably with soap and water, otherwise with hand sanitizer >=60% alcohol)
        - Upon arrival at school
        - Always before eating
        - Always after using the bathroom
        - After coming indoors from outside
    - Appropriately covering coughs and sneezes
    - Putting the toilet seat down before flushing
    - No spitting

Training

Middle Way School will train all staff on new protocols and frequently communicate safety guidelines. Training on the precautions listed below will be conducted either remotely or in person. Physical distancing and face coverings will be required for all participants if training is conducted in person.

Middle Way School will ensure all students are taught or trained how to follow new COVID- 19 protocols safely and correctly, including but not limited to hand hygiene, proper face covering wearing, physical distancing, and respiratory hygiene. Additional training will be provided in:

- Prevention of disease spreads by staying home when they are sick.
    - Important for all students and staff to stay home when they themselves are sick, even if showing only mild symptoms.
    - Strongly recommended for all students and staff to stay home when another member of their household is sick, even if they themselves

are not showing any symptoms.
    - The current CDC recommendation is to stay home for at least 14 days following exposure to an individual showing COVID symptoms or exposure to an asymptomatic person who tested positive for COVID: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/public-health-recommendations.html

- Proper respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes.

- Avoiding the use of communal objects. If communal objects must be used, provide information on proper disinfection procedures between use. Examples of communal objects include, but are not limited to, other individuals' phones, desks, offices, computers or other devices, other work tools and equipment.

- Provide employees and students with up-to-date education and training on COVID-19.

- Risk factors and protective behaviors (i.e., cough etiquette and care of PPE). https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html

Outdoor Physical Distancing

MWS will use outdoor space whenever possible for classes, eating, singing activities, and physical education. MWS will also look into creating an alternate space for the Cozy Nook Space for students isolation (weather permitting).

Extracurricular Activities

MWS will be operating on a limited extracurricular basis. Programs will be run entirely outside with cohorts practicing physical distancing, PPE usage, cleaning and disinfection, as well as, risk of Covid-19 transmission awareness. If MWS decides to add extracurricular activities we will refer to the DOH's Interim Guidance for Sports and Recreation During the Covid-19 Public Health Emergency.

Before and Aftercare

Aftercare programs will mandate physical distancing, PPE usage, and meet all cleaning and disinfection requirements to lessen the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

Vulnerable Populations

We are in the process of creating accommodations for those not able to come to school at all. MWS will provide these accommodations for all vulnerable populations, including students, faculty and staff who are at increased risk for severe COVID-19 illness, and individuals that may not feel comfortable returning to an in-person educational environment. Accommodations may include but will not be limited to remote learning or telework, modified educational or work settings, or providing additional PPE to individuals with underlying health conditions.

MWS will ensure that any modifications minimize COVID-19 exposure risk for students, faculty, and staff, to the greatest extent possible.

Transportation

MWS students who take public bus transportation will adhere to state-issued public transit guidance, protocols and procedures, which mandate that individuals wear acceptable face coverings at all times on school buses (e.g., entering, exiting, and seated), and that individuals should maintain appropriate physical distancing, unless they are members of the same household. Parents are expected to read and refer to their public school district's policy pertaining to the transportation of their children to MWS.

If possible, MWS recommends that parents drop off and pick up their child each day. This option might be safer than taking the bus. This is not a mandate.

Student Drop-Off and Pick-Up

MWS will establish designated areas for student drop-off and pick-up, limiting contact and entry of parents/legal guardians into the building, to the greatest extent possible.

Safe Arrival and Protocols

A dedicated class greeter meets students at the drop off point in full PPE on campus, screens students, and delivers students to class (details in Section 2: Monitoring of Health Conditions).

Deliveries while In-person Instruction is Taking Place

MWS has a designated area in the circular driveway for pickups and deliveries, limiting contact to the greatest extent possible.

Food Services/Meal Times

- MWS does not provide any food services requiring any protocols or procedures.
- Students, faculty, and staff are required to bring their own water bottles.
- Pack in and pack out tiffins are required for all students and will be provided by MWS.
- The sharing of food and beverages (e.g., buffet style meals, snacks) is prohibited, unless individuals are members of the same household.
- Teachers will be responsible for promoting hand washing and/or hand sanitizing before and after meals in addition to discouraging the sharing of food.
- For all grades, between each lunch group, staff will wipe down all high touch surfaces in the lunch area.
- Teachers will be trained on food allergies, including symptoms of allergic reactions to food.
- Train staff on any meal service-related activities they will be responsible for. https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/foodallergies/pdf/13_243135_A_Food_Allergy_Web_508.pdf

Mental Health

- All MWS faculty and staff will recieve training during our Professional Development (PD) week on how to talk with, and support students during and after the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency, as well as information on developing coping and resilience skills for students, faculty, staff, and families.

- At MWS, our faculty has been working with **Thayer Case**, *LCSW-R*. His expertise on child development and family counseling are highly-personalized and delivered in a warm way. He is a nationally recognized leader on Somatic Experiencing anda dedicated senior student at the Zen Mountain Monastery, and Clinical Supervisor

at Maverick Family Counseling. MWS recommends that families contact Maverick Family Counseling to pursue additional resources for their children.

- On staff at MWS is Lama Karma Justin Wall, who is a teacher within the Buddhist tradition who gives regular meditation sessions and guidance to families from a Buddhist perspective and is available for one on one support.

School Schedules

Equity is at the heart of all MWS instructional decisions. All instruction at MWS will be designed intentionally in hopes of delivering quality education to all of our students.

100% In-Person Model		
Plan	**Nursery - 4**	**Notes**
Fully in person (no remote option)	Students K-4 return 5 days per week. Nursery 4 days.	Only available with vaccine and once DOH removes all social/physical distancing requirements
The term "Fully In-Person" is a technical term that will only be used once there is a vaccine and/or the DOH removes all social/physical distancing requirements. However we can return to campus 100% in-person full time (Option A below), until the State says otherwise.		

Hybrid Model Parents can choose option A or B at the start of the year.		
Plan	**Preschool - 4**	**Notes**
Option A 100% In-person	Students K-4 return 5 days per week. Nursery 4 days. Stay with their cohort, follow schedule w/ daily attendance	Available to all students starting 9/15

Option B 100% Remote Legally, parents have the option for their children to not attend school in-person until there is a vaccine and/or the DOH removes all social/physical distancing requirements.	Fully remote, students receive weekly assignments from teachers, attendance tracked through submission of Home Study Weekly Checklists submitted each week.	Must register and confirm by Friday, August 21, 2020. Instruction will be delivered in a variety of manners with mindful attention to screen time requirements. Parents can choose option B and then revert to Option A upon request at any time.

Should MWS be mandated to close due to COVID, all instruction will fluidly shift to a Fully Remote Learning model.

Fully Remote Model All-School		
Plan	**Nursery - 4**	**Notes**
Fully Remote	Fully Remote, students receive weekly assignments from teachers, attendance tracked through submission of Home Study Weekly Checklists submitted each week.	Instruction will be delivered in a variety of manners with mindful attention to screen time requirements.

Phase in Plan

Goals

1- To slowly increase the amount of time and number of students on campus at the same time.

2 - Provide staff time and support in adapting to and refining new protocols.

3 - Ensure cohorts do not mix until we feel there has been enough time to do so safely.

4 - Provide 2 weeks buffer between any changes.

Phase 1 (9/15 - 9/25)

Students will meet on campus 2X per week for a full day.

Students and staff will remain in “cohorts” that do not mix

Friday 9/25 will consist of 3 hours of virtual learning from home.
No virtual learning on other "off" days.

Monday 14	Tuesday 15	Wednesday 16	Thursday 17	Friday 18
No School	**Full Day** Snow Lion Ravens	**Full Day** Wild horses Dragons Owls	**Full Day** Snow Lion Ravens	**Full Day** Wild horses Dragons Owls
Monday 21	Tuesday 22	Wednesday 23	Thursday 24	Friday 25
Full Day Wild horses Dragons Owls	**Full Day** Snow Lions Ravens	**Full Day** Wild horses Dragons Owls	**Full Day** Snow Lions Ravens	**Half Day All School Virtual Learning** (9 a.m.-noon)

Phase 2 (9/28 - 10/9)

Students meet on campus 4x per week.
Students and staff will remain in "cohorts" that do not mix
Fridays will consist of 3 hours of virtual learning from home.

Monday 28	Tuesday 29	Wednesday 30	Thursday 1	Friday 2 (oct)
	Full Day Snow Lions Ravens Wild horses Dragons Owls	**Full Day** Snow Lions Ravens Wild horses Dragons Owls	**Full Day** Snow Lions Ravens Wild horses Dragons Owls	**Half Day All School Virtual Learning** (9 a.m.-noon)

Monday 5	Tuesday 6	Wednesday 7	Thursday8	Friday 9 (oct)
Full Day Snow Lions Ravens Wild horses Dragons Owls	**Full Day** Snow Lions Ravens Wild horses Dragons Owls	**Full Day** Snow Lions Ravens Wild horses Dragons Owls	**Full Day** Snow Lions Ravens Wild horses Dragons Owls	**Half Day All School Virtual Learning** (9 a.m.-noon)

Phase 3 (10/12 and 10/23)

Students will meet on campus 5x per week. Fridays are full days in person.
Students and staff will remain in "cohorts" that do not mix.

Phase 4 (10/26 and beyond)

Students will meet on campus 5 full days per week.
Cohorts and staff mix more freely.
Cohort Staffing

Group	Lead Teacher	Support Staff
Snow Lion	Rachel	Megan
Wild Horses	Talia	Dondre
Ravens	Brian	Kelly

Dragons	Addie	Gillian
Owls	Hannah	Dorothy

Communication

MWS will provide a communications plan for students, parents/guardians, staff, and visitors that includes applicable instructions, training, signage, and a consistent means to provide individuals with information pertaining to adapting to social/physical distancing requirements, properly wearing face coverings, and proper hand and respiratory hygiene.

- **Class leaders** - each class will have a parent representative responsible for following up on communications or delivering some communications, making sure each family has received the information.

- Email **Community Alerts** are sent with specific subject headings and one of three levels of urgency. The subject heading will begin with MWS Alert: followed by the urgency level in brackets. High level urgency are **Red**. Medium are **Orange**. And low are **Green**. A health concern or any other urgent news will be in red and parents know these need to be read immediately.

- Red alert emails are followed by **phone text messages** sent via the Remind App using the "urgent" key that breaks through anyone's settings.

- Middle Way staff will be trained to observe for signs of illness in students and staff and will know how to report to designated personnel to assist symptomatic persons to be isolated and sent home.

(2) Monitoring of Health Conditions

The health and safety of our students, our staff and their families is extremely important to us. We want students and employees to feel comfortable and safe returning to our school campus.

Screening

All students, employees, or visitors must affirm their wellness to be on campus. Anyone exhibiting any symptoms must stay at home and consult health professionals to make a plan for safe return with guidance from the Ulster County Department of Health.

Employee & Visitor Self-Screening

Employees and visitors will complete a self-screening to affirm their wellness each day prior to entering school grounds. No parents or visitors will be permitted inside school buildings.

Faculty/visitors will also be asked to perform self-screenings and have their temperature taken on arrival to MWS.

Testing Policy

MWS will not provide testing services onsite or offsite for its students or faculty.

Testing Protocols

Any students/staff who have tested positive for COVID need to stay home for the recommended duration of time per the latest CDC guidance. These recommendations have been changing as new data comes in. Current guidelines (as of August 11) are as follows:

Anyone who has tested positive can return:

- 10 days after symptoms first appeared **and**
- 24 hours with no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and**
- COVID-19 symptoms have improved (for example, cough, shortness of breath)

More detail can be found on the CDC website here.

In addition to working with the local health department to support our contact tracing efforts, MWS has a protocol for immediately notifying the school community while maintaining confidentiality should there be a positive test among students or staff.

For example, if an individual—student or staff—notifies MWS that they tested positive for COVID, MWS will commit to confidentially notify all other students/staff in the affected individual's class cohort ASAP and instruct them to stay home and quarantine for the next 14 days. The notification must maintain the confidentiality of the affected individual.

Note that if the affected individual had traveled to/from school by bus or if they have a sibling in another cohort, that group will be instructed to quarantine at home for the next 14 days as well, in which case MWS will consider closing in-person instruction completely until contact tracing is complete and/or up to 14 days.

After notifying the affected class cohort (+aftercare and bus contacts), MWS will send a communication to the wider school community to inform them that the specific class cohort has been instructed to stay home for the next 14 days due to a positive test.

If just one class cohort needs to quarantine at home, then MWS admin and teachers will provide resources for remote learning to the affected class cohort during those 14 days until they are able to return to school.

If more than one class cohort needs to quarantine during the same time period, then MWS will consider closing and transitioning to remote learning for all students for at least the next 14 days or until it is safe to reopen the school.

Symptom-based strategy for determining when students/staff can return to MWS.
Students/staff with mild to moderate illness who are not severely immunocompromised:

- At least 10 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared* and
- At least 24 hours have passed *since last* fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and**
- Symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) have improved

Student/staff who are not severely immunocompromised and were asymptomatic throughout their infection may return to work when at least 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive viral diagnostic test and they have medical clearance to return

Student/staff with severe to critical illness or who are severely immunocompromised[1]:

- At least 20 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared*
- At least 24 hours have passed *since last* fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and
- Symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) have improved

Student Screening

As a part of the opening of school documents, all parents will receive and need to complete their school health forms.

Middle Way School Health forms will include a document that asks parents to understand that it is their responsibility each day to 1) ensure their child is well - according to the screening process determined by MWS prior to school 2) that if their child becomes ill during the school day, the parent/guardian will make arrangements for their child to be picked up as soon as possible following notification.

Periodically teachers and/or school staff will do informal check-ins with students to ensure all students are feeling well throughout the day.

Students will undergo two screenings each day. The first screening will be performed by a parent or guardian. The second screening will be performed by a MWS faculty/staff member.

Morning Screening Protocol

1. Self Screening Check (parents perform before leaving the house - see below)
    a. Parents will use some form of digital communication prior to arrival to mark that they have performed home child screening.
    b. MWS screens for a fever of 100.0 or higher. This should be done at home by parents each day and again upon arrival to school.
2. When students arrive - staff performs secondary screening - same as parent screening. Staff will track that check-ins are completed.
    a. Note: check-ins will not document specifics - just yes/no to adhere to HIPAA privacy laws
3. Screenings are performed outside before students enter class.
4. Drop off will take place with class greeters. Parents will not be allowed in enclosed areas.
5. Entering class should be a pleasant scenario, uniting with individual classroom teachers.

SELF-SCREENING QUESTIONS
Before entering Middle Way School parents should assess their child's wellness with the following questions:

- Does your child currently have (or have had in the last 10 days) one or more of these new or worsening symptoms: temperature above 100 degrees F, feeling feverish or chills, cough, loss of taste or smell, fatigue, sore throat, shortness of breathing, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, muscle pain, body aches, headaches, nasal congestion, or runny nose?
- In the past 14 days has your child traveled internationally to a CDC level 2 or 3 COVID-19 related travel health notice; or traveled to a state or territory on the NYS travel advisory list; or been designated a contact of a person who tested positive by a local health department?
- In the past 10 days has your child been tested for the virus that causes COVID-19?
- If you answered yes to any of these questions, has your child met the criteria to return to campus?

Testing Protocols

All members of the MWS community should be tested for Covid-19, in consultation with Ulster County Health Department Officials, when they are symptomatic, had close contact with Covid-19 suspected or confirmed individuals, and individuals with recent international travel, or travel within a state with widespread transmission of Covid-19 as designated through the New York State Travel Advisory before being allowed to return in-person to MWS.

Testing Responsibility

Should there be large scale testing needed at MWS, the school will work in conjunction with the Ulster County Department of Health to meet these needs.

Early Warning Signs

MWS will monitor defined metrics provided by state and local health departments to warn if local Covid-19 cases may be increasing beyond acceptable levels.

(3) Containment of potential transmission of the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19)

School Health Offices

At present, MWS does not have an onsite school nurse. MWS has submitted a request for health services to the Saugerties School District and is currently waiting for a response. Ulster County Department of Health will be available for consultation to assist in guiding the MWS administration with appropriate decision making.

For first aid services traditionally done by a "school nurses," students will be received at the Admin Office by a staff member trained in first aid & CPR.

Isolation

The Self-Care Cozy Nook Area in Tara Hall is a designated isolation space that will only be used in the event of a possible Covid-19 emergency.

If a student is not feeling well, only a designated administrator will escort them to an isolated area.

Staff (not able to take themself home) and students that exhibit possible Covid-19 symptoms will be taken to the Self-Care Cozy Nook Area as an isolation place in the Tara Hall.

Considerations are being made to establish a secondary Self-Care Cozy Nook isolation area (either outside or indoors) in case there is need to isolate more than one student or faculty member.

MWS faculty and staff will call 911 in the event of a medical emergency.

Collection

Any student not feeling well or exhibiting any COVID-19-like symptoms will be taken by an MWS administrator to the self-care cozy nook to then be picked up by a parent as soon as possible.

Protocols for referring a student to the school isolation self-care cozy nook area will be part of all staff training prior to students returning in September 2020.

If a teacher or school-based staff member notes a concern, the teacher will call the office. An office administrator will come to the classroom to assess and escort the student back to the office or Self-Care Cozy Nook, if needed.

- All temperatures will be taken using a no-contact thermometer.
- If a student is found not to be well and needs to utilize the Self-Care Cozy Nook area, parents/guardians will be called and expected to pick up their child as soon as possible. Students who are not well will not be transported home on the bus nor sent back to class or to an after-care provider.
- The Self-Care Cozy Nook will be monitored at all times when a student is present. All Staff assigned to monitor the Self-Care Cozy
- Nook will be provided with education on PPE and signs that further assistance is needed by the office member.
  Parents will be provided with information on health conditions/symptoms that will require an absence from school and recommendation to follow-up with medical professionals. Symptoms requiring an absence include, but are not limited to:
    - ❖ **Active vomiting or diarrhea**
    - ❖ **Fever ≥100.0F/chills/generalized body aches**
    - ❖ **Undiagnosed, new, and/or untreated rash or skin condition**

*Teachers will be held to the same standards as the students in terms of screening requirements.

Infected Individuals

MWS requires that persons who have tested positive complete isolation and have recovered and will not transmit Covid-19 when returning to in-person learning. Discharge from isolation and return to school will be conducted in coordination with the Ulster County Department of Health.

Exposed Individuals

MWS requires that individuals that were exposed to the Covid-19 virus complete quarantine and have not developed symptoms before returning to in-person learning. Discharged from quarantine and return to school will be conducted in coordination with the Ulster County Department of Health.

Hygiene Cleaning and Disinfection

MWS will ensure adherence to hygiene, cleaning and disinfection requirements as advised by the CDC and DOH, including "Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection of Public and Private Facilities for COVID-19," and the "STOP THE SPREAD" poster, as applicable.

MWS will maintain logs that include the date, time, and scope of cleaning and disinfection. Responsible Parties must identify cleaning and disinfection frequency for each facility type and assign responsibility. These protocols will be written out for each building.

Contact Tracing

MWS plans to support local health departments in contact tracing efforts using the protocols, training, and tools provided through the NEW YORK STATE CONTACT TRACING PROGRAM.

To ensure that MWS employees comply with contact tracing and disinfection requirements, MWS will following:

- Have a plan for cleaning, disinfection, and notifying Public Health, in the event of a positive case. In the case of an employee testing positive for COVID-19, CDC guidelines will be followed regarding cleaning and disinfecting the building if someone is sick. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html
- Close off areas used by the person who is sick.
- Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.
- Wait 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.
- Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person who is sick areas, shared electronic equipment like tablets, touch screens, keyboards, remote controls, and copier machines.
- Vacuum the space if needed. Consider temporarily turning off room fans.
- Contact tracing will determine if faculty or students have not had close contact with the person who is sick. If UCDH determines it is safe, Students and faculty can return to school after disinfection.

Communication

MWS plans to share protocols and safety measures with all relevant parties including parents, legal guardians, faculty, staff, and students through Red alert emails that are followed by phone text messages sent via the Remind App using the "urgent" key that breaks through anyone's settings.

MWS will also inform the Ulster County Department of Health when concerned about any possible Covid-19 exposure.

(4) Closure of School Facilities and In-person Instruction, if Necessitated by Widespread Virus Transmission

Closure Triggers

Due to the dynamic nature and risk of community transmission of COVID-19, MWS will prepare for remote learning to take place, which may be necessary at various times throughout the 2020-2021 school year. In cases where in-person instruction is not feasible, phased-in and hybrid models of education will be implemented. MWS will identify the conditions that may warrant reducing in-person education or closing of the school, in consultation with the state and the Ulster County Health Department, and plan for an orderly closure.

- Decisions about school dismissal or cancellation of school events will be made in coordination with the Ulster County Board of Health. Middle Way School does reserve the right to close the school based the needs of the school community.

- Middle Way School may need to temporarily dismiss school for 2-5 days, if a student or staff member attended school before being confirmed as having COVID-19. This initial short-term dismissal allows time for the local health officials to gain a better understanding of the COVID-19 situation impacting the school and for custodial staff to clean and disinfect the affected facilities. MWS will work with the local health officials to determine appropriate next steps, including whether an extended dismissal duration is needed to stop or slow further spread of COVID-19.

Operational Activity

In the event of a mandatory closure, Middle Way School will continue to provide an education that integrates Buddhist wisdom traditions with a progressive methodology. We are committed to finding ways to give students and families the magic of the school from afar. So much of that magic comes from interpersonal relationships and the atmosphere of the school. So much of what we do is about presence. The content of education is the relationship. We began our journey into remote learning last spring by providing tools and support for parents and teachers to stay grounded during uncertain times. Through open lines of communication we will continue to develop new practices and procedures that will address the needs of our community while allowing us to remain close from a distance with our students.

To address the atmosphere, we will ask each family to spend time either setting up or refreshing a sacred space at their home. By focusing on making sure our own social-emotional field stays clear and calm we are able to meet our students and families where they are at. With teachers modeling awareness and compassion, students naturally create foundations for their own community. If we are required to close our physical campus, we will continue to establish new ways of connecting, with limited screen time, that allow us to participate in academic, social-emotional and mindful movement instruction one on one, in small groups and as a whole school.

If there is substantial transmission in the local community, local health officials may suggest extended school dismissals (e.g., dismissals for longer than two weeks). This longer-term, and likely broader-reaching, dismissal strategy is intended to slow transmission rates of COVID-19 in the community.

Communication

As a learning environment that values digital wellness, we will continue to promote connection, exploration, and play during close from a distance. MWS plans to communicate internally and externally throughout both the in-person and virtual closure process.

MWS plans to communicate with all relevant parties including parents, legal guardians, faculty, staff, and students through Red alert emails that are followed by phone text messages sent via the Remind App using the “urgent” key that breaks through anyone’s settings.