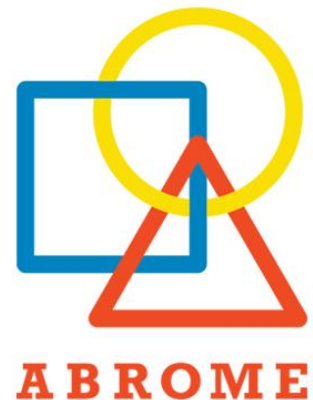


A Way Forward

Building community during Covid-19

Abrome is a Self-Directed Education community in Austin, TX, that serves young people and their families. Abrome provides Learners with a psychologically safe space that is anti-oppressive and consensus based, where young people have the autonomy to engage in meaningful learning experiences and unlimited free play in a mixed-age environment.





Updated Foreword

Dear Abrome Learners and families,

We published the first version of this contingency planning document on June 9, 2020. This document outlined our plan for how we could more safely be together during the pandemic, and allowed our community to have more certainty about what the 2020-2021 academic year would look like. It also made clear that we were going to place community care before convenience, and people before profits. We would err on the side of centering the needs of those people who were most at risk of serious illness or death: the elderly, those with certain underlying medical conditions, BIPOC communities, those without material resources.

Our approach to the pandemic set us apart. We took everything outdoors in small cohorts of Learners and Facilitators. We prevented cross exposure by keeping cohorts physically distant from each other, and never having siblings in different cohorts (no matter their ages). We also held firm to stage based standards for coming together, to include shutting down in-person meetups when we hit the highest risk stage level of the pandemic in January and February of 2021. And our focus on community care extended beyond Abrome--Facilitators, Learners, and family members were all asked to adhere to Covid-19 protocols at home, and to be transparent and honest about situations that could put others at risk of exposure.

The people who make up the community at Abrome are as unique as our approach to the pandemic. Everyone at Abrome fundamentally agrees that children and adolescents should have autonomy over their lives and that they should be treated as full human beings. They recognize that the most important things young people can learn are completely left out of schoolish curriculum, such as how to find meaning in the world, how to build relationships with others, how to manage conflict, how to discover their own interests and gifts, and how to be with and enjoy oneself. They also understand that building community and being in community with others is vital to human flourishing.

There are not many parents and guardians who trust their children enough to allow them to experience Self-Directed Education in lieu of schooling in the best of times. And Abrome's vigilant approach to protecting one another and the public during this pandemic shrunk that pool even further. But our collective focus on community care has allowed us to navigate this pandemic year in the most admirable of ways. Not only have we not had a single infection within our community (which means we have not contributed to the growth of the pandemic in any way), we have been able to support and hold one another through economic recession and hardship, an uprising centered on rejecting police brutality and racial injustice, right wing street violence and an attempted coup, and a debilitating winter storm that left millions without energy or water.

The pandemic is not over. As of March 27, 2021, the national 7-day moving average of new cases and deaths were still over 60,000 and 1,000, respectively. While much of society is eager to "return to normal," we recognize that "normal" was never good enough. We will be able to loosen protocols as vaccinations increase and when community spread becomes rare. Eventually, we will be able to come back together indoors, although it may be limited to vaccinated Learners at first. This continues to be a living document. Thank you for your continued vigilance, your concern for others in our community, and your concern for broader society.

With love and gratitude,
Antonio Buehler
March 28, 2021

Foreword

Dear Abrome Learners and families,

These past couple of months, since we physically separated for Spring Break, have been challenging for all of us. We have suffered from a lack of the connectedness that comes from being together in community with people we love and care about. But I am proud of the many different ways that the members of our community have shown up to support each other, and the resiliency that you have shown in the face of great uncertainty. Despite the uncertainties that abound, and the concerns we have for the health of our community, especially the members who carry greater risks of severe illness from Covid-19, I feel lucky and privileged to be going through this experience with you. We originally came together as an intentional community focused on liberating young people and improving the human condition. Never has the opportunity to do just that been more ripe than it is right now.

The threat of Covid-19 on the members of our community and on the wider public is real. As of Memorial Day weekend, 100,000 people had died from the disease in the United States alone, whereas there were only six deaths nationwide when our Spring Break began. Many more have survived but suffered through a very painful recovery process, and those who needed intensive hospital care likely had to recover alone. It is incumbent upon all of us to take prudent steps to protect each other, our families, and the broader public from this disease.

While we are fortunate that thus far no Abrome Learners or their immediate family members have contracted Covid-19, this pandemic has been particularly difficult on some. Some are struggling mightily from the loss of friends or family members, or the fear that friends and family will contract Covid-19. Others are struggling financially because of lost jobs, working hours, and income. And for others, the lifestyle changes this pandemic has brought about, which have been vital to saving lives, may have fueled harmful habits or behaviors, or exacerbated interpersonal conflicts. While we need to continue to act prudently to save lives, we also need to envision creative and safe ways that we can be together. This document lays out contingency plans that will allow for us to turn those possibilities into reality.

This contingency planning document is the result of insights gained from countless hours spent poring over the research and opinions of epidemiologists and other public health officials; analyzing forecasting models put forth by a wide range of institutions; reviewing the directives and guidance of federal, state, and local government agencies; reflecting on deep conversations with other educators; and taking into account the concerns raised by Facilitators, Learners, and Abrome families. We are proud of the progress that we have made with such a small team in such a short amount of time while still juggling all of our administrative and facilitation responsibilities.

We do not know if or when an effective vaccine will become widely available. Even if one becomes available, there is the possibility that many people will refuse to get vaccinated, which could prevent us from reaching herd immunity. Additionally, I believe that economic interests and political pressures are leading to a premature loosening of reasonable policies meant to limit the spread of the disease. I also believe that complacency, fear, frustration, and personal ideologies are intermixing in a manner that is compelling a growing segment of the population to reject behaviors that can protect the health of others. These conditions suggest that our community must be prepared to respond to multiple waves of infection over the next year or two. This planning document can help guide us through some of the uncertainty of this pandemic, but we will need to remain agile as assumptions and conditions will change. This is a living document, and we will be updating it based on the best evidence and research available, as well as evolving constraints placed upon us by the government and broader society.

With love and gratitude,
Antonio Buehler
June 9, 2020

Summary

Situation

The Covid-19 pandemic has vastly disrupted our lives. As of June 1st, [2020,] 1.8 million people in the United States have contracted Covid-19, with over 100,000 of those infected having subsequently died, while over 40 million people have lost their jobs. Countless others fear that they or a loved one will contract the disease or suffer economic devastation. Additionally, we have entered into a period of social unrest as people congregate at state houses with rifles in hand to protest social distancing guidelines and directives, while unarmed people protest in the streets against police brutality and systemic racism. The coming together of these circumstances will strain government and private institutions, social bonds, and even people's sense of ethics. These conditions will control us if we allow them to. However, the way that we respond will help shape our moral fiber, the strength of our communities, and the wellbeing of our society.

In addition, Covid-19 has begun to seriously challenge the public's perception of the purpose of schooling and how it should operate. Many are questioning the content and structure of schooling, while far more have lamented the loss of regular childcare, school lunches, and access to social services. When students return to school there will be widespread frustration and even despair over the quality of education, the increased reliance on online instruction and assessment, the restrictive social distancing measures that will be punitively enforced, and the misplaced priorities of schooling. This will be coupled with financial pressures that will result in reduced services for students, teacher furloughs or forced retirements, and the closure of many private schools. We need to be mindful of what is happening in broader society as we choose our way forward.

Our response

[Abrome](#) began to seriously monitor the developing Covid-19 situation in February and we gave our first pandemic related guidance to the community on March 1, 2020. Our last day together physically was March 6th when we departed for our scheduled two-week spring break. On March 13th we decided to extend spring break a third week so we could further assess next steps. On March 18th we told families that we would resume operations remotely at the end of spring break, keeping the physical space closed through April 24th, at the earliest. We rolled out a variety of remote supports for Learners and families to include zoom rooms and a discord channel for Learners to connect in, regular 1:1 check-ins for Learners, an offerings calendar that would include offerings from the ALC-network, weekly guardian drop-in calls, and a mutual aid spreadsheet. Recognizing that schools would not be able to safely reopen this year, and with the intention of minimizing uncertainty for families, on April 1st we became the first education community in Central Texas to close indefinitely. On April 17th, Governor Greg Abbott finally directed all Texas schools to close their physical spaces for the remainder of the 2019-2020 academic year.

Ever since we became aware of the threat of Covid-19 we have prioritized the health of our Learners, their families, our Facilitators, and the local community in our decision making. We have also sought to minimize uncertainty and stress on the part of our families through proactive planning and transparent communications. It is for these reasons that we promised to share this contingency planning document with families before asking them to fill out enrollment agreements for the 2020-2021 academic year. We released the initial draft of this document on June 9th. All of our [Covid-19 related communications](#) can be found on our website.

The way forward - what's changing

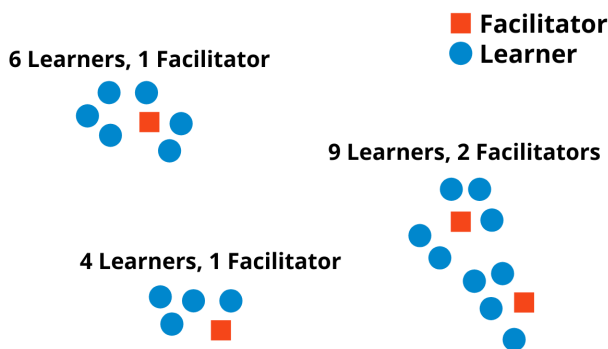
Our response to the pandemic moving forward can be compartmentalized in terms of what's changing and what's staying the same. What's changing are the logistics and practices that we will engage in in response to factors outside of our control so that we can protect our community. This summary should provide you with a general understanding of what that will look like in the coming year, while the body of this document will provide you with further details for what's changing, as well as the considerations, assumptions, and the reasoning that drove our decision making.

- **Calendar and hours of operation:** Abrome will shift to a three-week-on, one-week-off cycle schedule. This schedule will allow us to be together in a manner that substantially decreases the risk of Covid-19

spreading throughout our community. Learners and Facilitators will come together at a designated place from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day during the three-week on period. During some of the one-week off periods and breaks, we have scheduled 14 remote days where we will meet virtually and not in-person, as well as eight professional development days for Facilitators only. The academic year will begin on September 8, 2020, the day after Labor Day, and end on July 9, 2021.

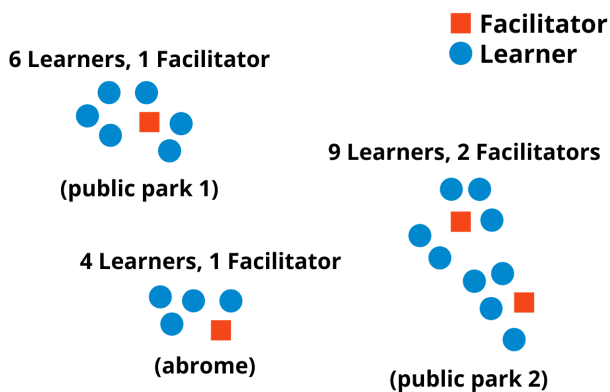
Key Dates		September			October			November															
		S	M	T	W	R	F	S	S	M	T	W	R	F	S	S	M	T	W	R	F	S	
First day of 2020-2021 AY	Sep 8	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Indigenous Peoples' Day	Oct 12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
Gratitude Break	Nov 26-Dec 1	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
Winter Break	Dec 23-Jan 1	27	28	29	30				25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30						
MLK Holiday	Jan 18																						
Spring Break	Mar 15-19																						
Juneteenth	Jun 18																						
Professional Development Day / Learner Holiday																							
Info Session *																							
Last day of 2019-2020 AY	Jul 9																						
ALF Training (tentative)	Jul 28-Aug 6																						
First day of 2021-2022 AY	Sep 7																						
Planned remote days																							
3:1 out of session days																							
175 Learner days (Learners and staff)																							
8 Professional Development days (staff only)																							
* Dependent upon COVID-19 response level																							
Field trips																							
Hours		March			April			May															
		S	M	T	W	R	F	S	S	M	T	W	R	F	S	S	M	T	W	R	F	S	
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.																							
Earliest drop off: 9:45 a.m.																							
Latest pickup: 4:15 p.m.																							
		June			July			August															
		S	M	T	W	R	F	S	S	M	T	W	R	F	S	S	M	T	W	R	F	S	

- Operating cells:** Abrome Learners and Facilitators rotate through separate operating cells that will not interact with each other for the duration of a cycle, the size of which will vary based on a variety of considerations. We plan to keep the Learner to Facilitator ratio at or below 7:1 during periods of moderate spread. Operating in cells will significantly reduce the potential spread of Covid-19 if a member of our community were to become infected. Listed below are examples of what potential cell groupings could look like:



- Remote support:** We will have one remote cell during Covid-19 risk Level stage 4, and we will be entirely remote during Covid-19 risk level Stage 5 ("widespread, uncontrolled transmission threatening our healthcare infrastructure"), as determined by Austin Public Health. We will also provide remote support for any cells that need to be quarantined or isolated. We will also provide remote support during inclement weather days, and on 14 scheduled remote days throughout the year. We will make ourselves available for Learners who are unable or unwilling to participate in the in-person operating cells, to include Learners who are at a higher risk of severe complications from Covid-19, as well as those who live with someone who is vulnerable.

- Locations:** Operating cells will spend most cycles wholly outdoors. By spending our days outdoors instead of indoors, the likelihood that an infected person spreads the disease to others decreases tremendously. This shift will require Learners to commit to consensus-based decision making (similar to our Flying Squad days) to meet the needs of all members of a cell. The flow of our day will slow down and shift as we rely less on the comforts of the Abrome facility (e.g., air conditioning, kitchen, electricity, toys, art supplies) and more on each other and the gifts of nature (e.g., bike rides, bird watching, survival skills). The cells may meet near large public parks, near the Abrome facility, at campgrounds, or at a private ranch or estate that grants us access. The locations where we may meet will be dependent upon a variety of internal, place-based, and pandemic related factors. Listed below are examples of what potential cell groups at different locations could look like:



- Additional areas of focus:** In order for us to carry out the above measures, we will need to amend or alter other practices. All families should review the details associated with the additional areas of focus before they sign enrollment agreements:
 - Safety protocols will include daily screenings for symptoms and proactively staying home when appropriate, wearing masks indoors and within six feet of others when outdoors, maintaining a 6-foot distance from others if indoors, frequent handwashing, and disinfecting surfaces and shared materials. We will self-isolate and quarantine when appropriate, and use clearly defined reentry protocols. We have also included clear, local community-based guidelines that will dictate when we can meet up outdoors (most often), indoors (unlikely), or remotely (during periods of widespread uncontrolled community transmission), as well as the number of Learners and Facilitators that each operating cell can accommodate.
 - We will resource a variety of materials to include cleaning supplies, personal protective equipment (e.g., masks, gloves), thermometers, first aid kits, and outdoor equipment.
 - We will detail the manner and timing in which Abrome and families will communicate with each other regarding daily at-home screening, quarantine and isolation, operating cell composition and location, and the need for cells to go remote due to sickness or inclement weather
 - We will increase compensation and implement new training for Facilitators to ensure they are able to carry out the aforementioned changes, and we will hire additional Facilitators to ensure that we have necessary coverage to operate in cells during a pandemic.
 - We will alter our admissions and enrollment processes so that we can sustainably operate under these new conditions. This includes eliminating part-time enrollment options, increasing tuition and fees, reinstating the five-day shadow requirement for prospective Learners, and the implementation of a waitlist.

The way forward - what's staying the same

The changes that we are implementing are relatively minor compared to what will stay the same. Abrome was founded with the purposes of (1) liberating the young people that we have the privilege of learning and growing



with, and (2) building a sustainable, inclusive, and anti-oppressive education community that can serve as a model for others to replicate. Although the pandemic will cause most schools to alter their primary functions, mostly to the detriment of students, and force many schools to permanently close, it will paradoxically simplify our efforts to support young people and bolster the health of our community.

Self-Directed Education (SDE) is integral to what we do. Learners at Abrome have always had the autonomy to choose how to engage with the world, and thereby the manner in which they learn. This made the transition to operating remotely easier for them than for most conventional schooled students. But while going remote was necessary, it also took a lot away from us. We lost the ability to look directly into each other's eyes, and share our thoughts and feelings. We were missing out on high fives, pats on the back, and hugs. The remote experience made clear that there is no substitute for human interaction and connection in a safe and welcoming community. The Learner-to-Learner and Learner-to-Facilitator interactions turn the potential of SDE into something akin to magic.

While we are an independent SDE community, we are affiliated with two groups that have influenced our approach to building community and supporting young people, which proved very beneficial as we navigated through the uncertainties and challenges of this pandemic. Our work with the [Agile Learning Centers](#) network has helped us stay agile and unwedded to processes that do not work for the people within our community. Our work with [Flying Squads](#) has helped us build community with each other outside of a designated education facility (e.g., school). So as we moved into the current academic year where we expected to be outside in public spaces for weeks at a time, in cells that required high levels of consensus and mutual support, we needed only to continue the work that we had been doing over the past few years.

This is a living document that will be updated as conditions and assumptions change. Thank you for being on this journey with us.

[Considerations and assumptions](#)

[Calendar and hours of operation](#)

[Operating cells](#)

[Remote support](#)

[Locations](#)

[Safety protocols](#)

[Communications](#)

[Staffing, compensation, and hiring](#)

[Admissions and enrollment](#)

[Appendix A: Daily at-home screening list](#)

[Appendix B: Daily to-dos](#)

[Appendix C: AY 2020-21 calendar](#)

1. Considerations and assumptions

Abrome plans to make decisions about how we operate during this pandemic based on the best available science; within the bounds of state directives; subject to financial and logistical constraints; and with a focus on protecting the health and welfare of Learners and their families, Facilitators, and the broader public.

In order to prepare for the widest range of possible scenarios, and to respond to unforeseen circumstances as they arise, we must lay out and continually update our assumptions. Our assumptions are informed by the most relevant research, scientific consensus, and current guidance from public health officials (local, state, and federal).

1.1 Covid-19

- Covid-19 will still be present in Central Texas during academic year 2020-2021
- Symptoms include cough, fever, sore throat, runny nose or congestion, chills, muscle or body aches, loss of smell, loss of taste, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, fatigue, vomiting, nausea, and/or diarrhea
- Transmission assumptions:
 - Covid-19 is contagious; adults and children can transmit the disease to others
 - Covid-19 spreads through person-to-person contact, especially in group settings
 - The virus must get into a person's nose, mouth, or eyes to cause infection
 - Pre-symptomatic individuals (infected but not yet exhibiting symptoms) can spread the disease
 - Asymptomatic individuals can also spread the disease
 - Airborne transmission via droplets and aerosols (e.g., breathing, talking, singing) is more likely than fomite transmission (e.g., touching a doorknob, handshake)
 - The higher the number of virus particles that enter into one's system ("viral inoculum"), the greater the likelihood they will develop Covid-19 (and the higher the viral inoculum, the greater the likelihood of severe illness)
 - Transmission is far more likely to happen in indoor environments than outdoors
- Groups of people that tend to have a greater risk of serious complication or death include older adults, people with certain underlying medical conditions (e.g., asthma, diabetes, obesity, lung disease, cardiovascular disease), and people with weakened immune systems due to medical conditions or treatments (e.g., cancer treatment)
- Non-pharmaceutical interventions that reduce risk of transmission include:
 - Increasing the distance between individuals; disperses the viral particles expelled into the environment, reducing the number of viral particles that any one person is exposed to
 - School closures, non-essential business closures, and stay-at-home orders; reduces the number of people an infected person can spread the disease to
 - Cohorting people into small groups or creating pandemic pods; reduces number of people a person can catch Covid-19 from or transmit it to
 - Quarantine or self-isolation; prevents infected people or those who may have come into contact with an infected person from further spreading the disease
 - Physical covering of the nose and mouth (e.g., wearing a mask); reduces the number of viral particles the wearer can expose others to
 - Moving interactions outdoors (e.g., outdoor school); quickly disperses viral particles in the air
 - Increasing air circulation indoors; helps prevent an accumulation of viral particles in the air
 - Regular hand washing and disinfecting of surfaces; reduces the likelihood of fomite transmission
- The benefits of vaccines in protecting individuals and reducing the spread of the disease are substantial:
 - The Covid-19 vaccines that are currently available in the United States are effective at preventing serious outcomes of severe disease, hospitalization, and death if you do contract the disease
 - Emerging data suggest lower effectiveness against confirmed infection and symptomatic disease caused by the Beta, Gamma, and Delta variants compared with the ancestral strain and the Alpha variant

- A growing body of evidence indicates that people fully vaccinated with an mRNA vaccine (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna) are less likely than unvaccinated persons to acquire SARS-CoV-2 or to transmit it to others
- Immunity and treatment
 - Herd immunity is extremely unlikely without widespread adoption of vaccines; vaccine hesitancy will likely prevent us from reaching herd immunity
 - Monoclonal antibody treatment, if taken within five days of onset of COVID-19 symptoms, substantially reduces the risk of hospitalization or death

1.2 Schooling related political pressures

- State directives and restrictions will loosen or tighten in response to health considerations and based on a variety of economic, political, and social considerations
- Business interests will continue to lobby for schools to remain open (state subsidized child care)
- Private and non-profit schools will continue to lobby for conventional public schools to open as early as possible and remain open so they can do the same to protect their tuition revenues and offset expenses
- Education agencies, foundations, and select corporations in the education sector will continue to pressure political entities to focus on academic instruction to prevent “learning loss”
- Politicians will push for a premature opening of schools, downplay the severity of the pandemic, or oppose closing schools during outbreaks to appeal to voters desiring a return to relative normalcy
- The debate over the severity of the pandemic from a public health and economic perspective will spill over into the question of whether or not schools should be open and what safety measures should be in place to protect students, staff, and the public

1.3 Schooling landscape

- Schools will implement a wide range of costly modifications to reduce outbreaks
 - Physical distancing requirements will force schools to serve fewer kids at any given time (e.g., some kids attend in the morning--others in the afternoon, some kids in-person--others remote)
 - To accommodate the lower density of kids on campus, schools will be forced to alter their calendars and schedules, resulting in increased demands on staff while decreasing the amount of time that students spend at school
 - Periodic Covid-19 testing for students and staff in public schools and well-resourced private schools
 - Strict enforcement of personal hygiene and physical distancing rules
 - Frequent screenings (e.g., temperature)
 - Frequent disinfecting of classrooms
- Schools will use online learning both for in-school instruction and assessment, and for remote learning
- Schools will provide students with the option of working fully online/remotely
- Schools will become a dreary place for students as academic and social experiences are diminished (e.g., fewer hands on learning experiences, sports and extracurricular activities cancelled)
- Many students will lose a sense of connectedness, contributing to an ongoing mental health crisis among youth nationwide
- Student and guardian frustration with reopening plans or the rollout of online learning will lead to a significant increase in families choosing homeschooling
- Public schools will suffer enrollment losses as parents refuse to send their children into schools
- Schools may need to operate in pandemic mode through the 2021-22 academic year, or longer
- Schools will need more teachers to implement social distancing measures but will experience a teacher shortage as many teachers will refuse to come into school buildings or leave the profession altogether
- The teacher shortage will be compounded by staff absences of 10-14 days at a time (e.g., isolation, quarantine) due to Covid-19 symptoms, infection, or exposure
- A substantial number of private schools will close due to financial pressures and insolvency

1.4 Continuum of risk

There is no risk-free way of educating young people during this pandemic. Covid-19 poses a risk to everyone who interacts with people outside of their households when there is community transmission, and bringing young people together for education purposes entails varying levels of risk based on how they are brought together. However, there are ways to drastically reduce that risk (e.g., not bringing students together indoors, mask wearing, physical distancing). From a conventional school perspective the safest way to educate students would be to do so virtually. At the same time, many argue that children will suffer from academic decline and mental health problems if schools are not reopened. The CDC has released a continuum of risk that illustrates how the various schooling practices impact the risk of spread among students, teachers, and staff. The continuum does not make space for the practices that Abrome is employing during this pandemic, so we have modified the continuum to represent where Abrome would sit within it.

CDC Continuum of Risk - By Model of Learning and Implementation of Proven Mitigation Strategies

(Updated May 13, 2021 for Abrome; all other risk levels copied verbatim from the CDC's Operating Schools During COVID-19 document updated Aug 21, 2020)

Lowest Risk

- Students and teachers engage in virtual-only classes, activities, and events [added note: does not account for social-emotional and mental health risks]

Abrome (not included by CDC)

- Outdoor learning: Learners and Facilitators come together in outdoor environments where risk of transmission is lowest
 - Remote support available for Learners who are unable or unwilling to participate in in-person operating cells, for those who get sick or have a member of their household who gets sick, and for any cells that need to be quarantined or isolated
 - Remote only during Covid-19 risk level Stage 5 ("widespread, uncontrolled transmission threatening our healthcare infrastructure") as determined by Public Health
- Operating cells: Learners and Facilitators will meet in physically separated groups of no more than 9 members (only 2 of which may be Facilitators) during risk level Stage 4, no more than 10 members (2 may be Facilitators) in Stage 3, no more than 18 members (4 of which may be Facilitators) during Stage 2, and no more than 24 members (4 may be Facilitators) during Stage 1
- Calendar cycles: Abrome will operate on a three-week on, one-week off (3:1) schedule
- No mixing of Learners or Facilitators from different operating cells during a cycle
- Learners and Facilitators follow all steps to protect themselves and others at all times including proper use of face masks, social distancing, hand hygiene
- Regularly scheduled (i.e., at least daily or between uses) cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched areas implemented with fidelity when an operating cell has access to the Abrome facility (risk level Stage 1)

Some Risk

- Hybrid Learning Model: Some students participate in virtual learning and other students participate in-person learning
- Small, in-person classes, activities, and events
- Cohorting, alternating schedules, and staggered schedules are applied rigorously
- No mixing of groups of students and teachers throughout/across school days
- Students and teachers do not share objects
- Students, teachers, and staff follow all steps to protect themselves and others at all times including proper use of face masks, social distancing, hand hygiene
- Regularly scheduled (i.e., at least daily or between uses) cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched areas implemented with fidelity

Medium Risk

- Hybrid Learning Model: Most students participate in in-person learning, some students participate in virtual learning
- Larger in-person classes, activities, and events
- Cohorting, alternating schedules, and staggered schedules are applied with some exceptions
- Some mixing of groups of students and teachers throughout/across school days
- Students and teachers minimally share objects
- Students, teachers, and staff follow all steps to protect themselves and others such as proper use of face masks, social distancing, hand hygiene
- Regularly scheduled cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched areas largely implemented with fidelity

Higher Risk

- Students and teachers engage in in-person only learning, activities, and events
- Students minimally mix between classes and activities
- Students and teachers share some objects
- Students, teachers, and staff follow some steps to protect themselves and others at all times such as proper use of face masks, social distancing, hand hygiene
- Irregular cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched areas

Highest Risk

- Students and teachers engage in in-person only learning, activities, and events
- Students mix freely between classes and activities
- Students and teachers freely share objects
- Students, teachers, and staff do not/are not required to follow steps to protect themselves and others such as proper use of face masks, social distancing, hand hygiene
- Irregular cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched areas

On August 25, 2020, researchers from Oxford and MIT released a new traffic-light system to help people understand the risk associated with various situations. The tool indicates that the lowest risk way to bring people

together is to do so in small numbers while practicing physical distancing, wearing masks near others, and meeting outdoors.

We edited the tool to highlight the risks of transmission associated with educating young people. We placed a rounded rectangle around the situations that students, teachers, and staff will most likely find themselves in if they attend a conventional school that brings students together indoors for any part of the day, even if they are operating in a hybrid learning model, with or without masks. We also placed a lightbox, bordered by a blue-dashed rectangle, around the situations that Learners and Facilitators will most likely find themselves in at Abrome.

Type and level of group activity	Low occupancy			High occupancy		
	Outdoors and well ventilated	Indoors and well ventilated	Poorly ventilated	Outdoors and well ventilated	Indoors and well ventilated	Poorly ventilated
Wearing face coverings, contact for short time						
Silent	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Medium
Speaking	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Medium
Shouting, singing	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
Wearing face coverings, contact for prolonged time						
Silent	Low	Low	Medium	Low	Medium	High
Speaking	Low	Low*	Medium	Low*	Medium	High
Shouting, singing	Low	Medium	High	Medium	High	High
No face coverings, contact for short time						
Silent	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
Speaking	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	High
Shouting, singing	Medium	Medium	High	High	High	High
No face coverings, contact for prolonged time						
Silent	Low	Medium	High	Medium	High	High
Speaking	Medium	Medium	High	High	High	High
Shouting, singing	Medium	High	High	High	High	High

Risk of transmission
 Low ■ Medium ■ High ■

* Borderline case that is highly dependent on quantitative definitions of distancing, number of individuals, and time of exposure

1.5 Needs of young people

- Human connection is vital to mental health and well-being
- Human connection is vital to a sense of psychological safety
- Human connection is vital to learning
- People of all ages need human connection
- Online learning platforms limit the potential for human connection
- Unreasonable and overly restrictive social distancing measures limit the potential for human connection
- Access to and time spent in nature produces physical and mental health benefits

1.6 Select resources and further reading

- [Austin Public Health Covid-19 information page](#) has the current risk stage for Travis county, a variety of Covid-19 indicators, and all relevant local orders

- [Westbank Libraries Covid-19 information page](#) pulls information from a variety of government sources to provide updated numbers at the local and state level, plus helpful links
- [San Francisco Department of Public Health Reopening TK-12 Schools for In-Person, On-Site Instruction](#) provides lots of advice and considerations for schools to consider as they plan to bring students and teachers back together
- [Harvard University T.H. Chan School of Public Health: Risk Reduction Strategies for Reopening Schools](#) provides a variety of suggested practices for bringing students and teachers back together
- [Austin Public Health Interim Guidance on Reopening for Austin-Travis County Schools](#)
- [Austin Public Health Frequently Asked Questions on Reopening Austin-Travis County Schools](#)
- [Austin Public Health Frequently Asked Questions on COVID-19 Operations for Austin-Travis County Schools](#)
- [Austin Public Health School Guidance \(v24\)](#)
- [Texas Education Agency SY 20-21 Public Health Planning Guidance](#)
- [Agile Learning Center-NYC Covid-19 Plan](#) took a bit from our plan, and we take a bit from theirs
- [Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools through Phased Mitigation](#) CDC's updated yet insufficient guidance to safely reopening schools
- [Operating schools during COVID-19: CDC's Considerations](#)
- [How to Form a Pandemic Pod](#) is a wonderful guide that helps us think about how we can more safely interact with others to meet our basic social needs during the pandemic
- [Two metres or one: what is the evidence for physical distancing in covid-19?](#) is an analysis that points out that the "6-foot rule" is insufficient and that it is best to stay outdoors, in small groups, and to wear masks when around others
- [Analysis published on The Lancet](#) shows that people with Covid-19 tend to be at their most infectious for about seven days—from two days before they first show symptoms to five days after—highlighting the necessity of NPIs (masking, distancing, going outdoors) and behaving as if we may already be infected
- [Why outbreaks like coronavirus spread exponentially, and how "to flatten the curve"](#) by The Washington Post is a great visual reference for explaining why social distancing matters
- [We Thought It Was Just a Respiratory Virus](#) is a fabulous article with an updated view of what Covid-19 does
- [A Supercomputer Analyzed Covid-19 – and an Interesting New Theory Has Emerged](#) provides a closer look at the Bradykinin hypothesis, which may help provide a better understanding of Covid-19
- [The impact of social isolation and loneliness on the mental health of children and adolescents in the context of Covid-19](#) is a review of 80 studies to help inform us on the potential mental health impacts of social distancing on young people
- [The Risks - Know Them - Avoid Them](#) is a very informative blog post by Professor Erin Bromage on how the virus is transmitted
- [239 Experts With One Big Claim: The Coronavirus Is Airborne](#) is an article that argues that the virus may be transmitted through aerosols which suggests that people should not be congregating indoors even if they are wearing masks and practicing social distancing
- [Masks Work. Really. We'll Show You How](#) has some nice visuals that illustrate how masks reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.
- [Universal Masking is Urgent in the Covid-19 Pandemic](#) is a report based on models highlighting that infections would plummet if people wore masks in public
- [An interview with a BYU researcher](#) who says the science is crystal clear: wear a mask
- [Updated mask guidance](#) says more layers is better, head ties trump ear loops, and fit matters
- [Indoor transmission of SARS-CoV-2](#) is a not yet peer-reviewed study that highlights that likelihood of transmission appears to be much greater indoors than outdoors
- [Outdoor transmission accounts for 0.1% of \[Ireland's\] Covid-19 cases](#) according to the Irish Times, which is consistent with extraordinarily low rates of transmission outdoors across the globe
- ["This is a virus you get by breathing. It's not a virus you get by touching."](#)
- [Targeted Social Distancing Designs for Pandemic Influenza](#) describes how social distancing strategies can be used to reduce pandemics (influenza in this case)

- [Real-time tracking of self-reported symptoms to predict potential Covid-19](#) is a study that suggests that the loss of taste and smell may be a more reliable indicator of infection than fever or cough
- [Temperature Checks, Symptom Screenings Not Very Effective in Detecting Covid-19 Infections](#) highlights how screenings (and testing) do not offset the need for us to act as if we may be infected, keeping our distance from each other, wearing masks around each other, staying outdoors, and keeping our exposure to people outside of our household as low as possible.
- [Screening K-12 Students for Symptoms of COVID-19: Limitations and Considerations](#) (CVC) provides updated information that has helped us refine our screening procedures
- [The CDC's pandemic planning scenarios](#) says its current best estimate is that 40% of infections are asymptomatic and 50% of transmission occur before symptoms occur.
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) information to include common symptoms, and advice on how to protect yourself and others, and what to do should you become sick by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- [What to do if you are sick](#) (CDC)
- [The Texas Department of State Health Services \(DSHS\) Covid-19 webpage](#)
- [Talking to Children About COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\): A Parent Resource](#)
- [Estimated Effective Reproduction Rate](#) for Texas

2. Calendar and hours of operation

Our intention is to maximize the amount of time that Learners can engage with other Learners and Facilitators in-person while minimizing the likelihood of transmission from one community member to another.

2.1 Calendar

- Abrome will generally operate on a three-week on, one-week off (3:1) schedule for the duration of the academic year
 - On-weeks refer to weeks that we plan to come together in person; an uninterrupted series of on-weeks is considered a cycle
 - Off-weeks consist of [virtual days](#), Professional Development days, and/or vacation days; no in-person interactions between community members will take place on off-weeks
 - Learners and Facilitators will be members of only one operating [cell](#) for the duration of each cycle; no one may switch cells in the middle of a cycle
 - The nine-day break from person-to-person interactions (one traditional week with a weekend on each end) between cycles provides us with the opportunity to observe if anyone develops symptoms before they rotate into a new cell; if guidance from public health officials and pandemic conditions require 10 or more days between rotations we will replace the necessary number of in-person days with virtual days
 - The final cycle of the year, which lasts four weeks from June 14th to July 9th, is the only cycle that extends beyond three weeks
- Flying Squads and field trip days will only take place if conditions would allow for the entire community to safely come together at the Abrome facility and safely share modes of transportation (e.g., car, bus)
- Fourteen days (Mondays and Tuesdays of selected off-weeks) have initially been set aside as virtual days where we will meet remotely as we did from Spring Break to the end of the 2019-20 academic year
- If government mandated shelter-in-place orders prevent us from meeting in cells, we will revert to meeting remotely

2.2 Hours of operation

- Abrome operating hours will remain 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. each day
- Facilitators will be available for early drop-off beginning at 9:30 a.m., and afternoon pick-up until 4:15 p.m.
- Operating hours will remain the same whether we are meeting in person at Abrome, in person somewhere in the community, or remotely from our homes (i.e., Learners cannot be dropped off before 9:30 a.m. even if we are meeting at Abrome)
- The first meeting of the day will begin at 10:00 a.m. and the final meeting of the day will begin at 3:30 p.m.; meetings will not be held at drop-off and pick-up locations

Discussion

The calendar we settled on maximizes safety for the community and ensures that each Learner and Facilitator will have relatively similar opportunities to interact in person throughout the year. However, we reviewed a variety of other potential options. For example, we considered a 5:1 schedule that would have allowed for longer breaks at points throughout the year. However, due to the breaks we couldn't really work around (e.g., Gratitude/Thanksgiving Break, Winter/Xmas/NYE Break, Spring/SXSW Break) we would be left with some 2-, 3-, and 4-week sessions that would have led to an inconsistent, uneven allocation of time between Learners and Facilitators based on the cell they were placed in for a given rotation.

We also considered operating on a condensed academic schedule, with minimal breaks throughout the year, so that the final day of the year would fall in early May. This would allow us to forgo operating remotely during government mandated shelter-in-place orders by pushing out our end date by one day for each day that we would be closed. However, we chose against this option to give families more predictability on what the academic year

would look like and to prevent a scenario where we ran out of possible meeting days in the summer if we were forced to shut down for extended periods of time during the year.

We also considered maintaining the same schedule we had last year with the understanding that we may need to go remote for periods of time due to shelter-in-place orders. However, such a schedule would not give us an opportunity to benefit from a 9-day break between cell rotations, compromising our ability to protect community members from transmission. The schedule would also lead to an inconsistent, uneven allocation of time between Learners and Facilitators based on the cell they were placed in.

We also considered starting the next academic year in early August in order to have an extended winter break (that many predict will coincide with another wave of infections on top of flu season). We opted against the early start date because we believed Facilitators needed the full eight weeks between the end of the 2019-20 academic year and the beginning of the 2020-21 academic year to decompress and recover, to properly plan and resource materials for next year, and to complete required training and professional development for the coming year.

We also considered a delayed start that would allow us to wait and see if students returning to conventional schools led to another wave of infections. However, this option would have increased the chances that we began the year in the unfortunate position of operating remotely, and it would have substantially decreased the time we would have to decompress, prepare, and train for the 2021-22 academic year in the summer of 2021.

For purposes of physical distancing and limitations on space, some schools chose to have half their student body come to campus in the morning and the other half in the afternoon, or one half on certain days of the week and the other half on the other days (e.g., Mon-Tue vs Thu-Fri), or one half attend full time while the other half attend virtually (e.g., “hybrid” model). No matter how schools try to reduce capacity, when the students are not physically at school they will most likely be expected to be in attendance virtually. We never seriously considered these options as they would not only greatly limit the opportunity for in-person connection, but they were also insufficient safeguards against the spread of disease.

There was little we needed to change with respect to operating hours. We considered staggered start times for younger and older Learners, but that would have resulted in limited mixed-age interactions as well as creating logistical challenges for Facilitators.

If families are running late, our morning meetings will become disrupted and delayed, while Facilitators will be placed in the unfair position of waiting around beyond the end of the workday in the afternoon. Please let us know as early as possible, and always before 10 a.m., if Learners are running late or if they will not be in attendance that day.

3. Operating cells

We want to implement prudent measures to minimize the likelihood that community members will be exposed to the virus at Abrome or at home, and to contain the potential spread of the disease if someone in our community contracts it.

3.1 Composition

- Facilitators and Learners will be assigned to one cell for the duration of a [cycle](#)
- Each cell will consist of some combination of one to four Facilitators and four to twenty Learners, depending on enrollment, our staffing capabilities, the needs of individual Learners, the needs of the community, the exposure levels of all individuals involved, and pandemic conditions at the beginning of each cycle
- No cell is expected to have a Learner to Facilitator ratio greater than 7:1
- Operating one cell remotely below APH risk stage level four will only be necessary if we have a significant number of Learners who cannot meet in person for a cycle, or if a cell that was scheduled to meet in person is forced to quarantine
- No more than one cell will meet [remotely](#) during a given cycle unless Abrome is [forced to operate remotely](#) due to government directives or for public health reasons, or if a cell that was scheduled to meet in person is forced to quarantine
- Siblings will always be assigned to the same cell unless (1) one sibling is in a cell that meets remotely, or (2) all siblings are fully vaccinated
- Learners may not switch to a different cell in the middle of a cycle, unless the cell they wish to switch to is meeting remotely and we have the capacity to add a Learner to that cell
- Any specialty cells (e.g., Flying Squads, camping and survival) are entirely voluntary and no Learner will be placed in a specialty cell unless they request to be placed in it

3.2 Operations

- Cells may meet at the Abrome facility, in the community at a designation [location](#) (e.g., public park), or remotely/online (e.g., zoom, discord)
- Learners will likely spend the overwhelming majority of their time this year outdoors
- Cells will use a consensus-based decision making process for collective decisions
- Learners will be able to explore outside of the supervision of Facilitators dependent upon maturity and agreed upon practices (e.g., buddy teams, walkie-talkies)
- Check-in and Change-up meetings will continue to be used to raise awarenesses and implement practices as we co-create culture among physically separated groups
- Learners in different cells cannot carpool together; Learners in the same cell may [carpool](#)

Discussion

The fewer people an infected person comes into contact with, the fewer people they can transmit Covid-19 to. The fewer people an infected person comes into contact with at any given time, the lower the likelihood that that gathering becomes a cluster or superspreader event.

By operating in cells that will consist of fewer people than conventional school classroom settings, Abrome is significantly reducing the potential spread of Covid-19 in or out of our community. Further, because our cells will be physically separated, even if someone in one cell were to be exposed to or contract the disease, the individuals in the unaffected cells would still be able to safely meet. This means that not only will this measure help protect the health of the community, it will also likely increase the number of days during the year that we are able to meet in-person.

Depending on pandemic conditions, Learners who live in households that have elevated levels of exposure to people outside the Abrome community may be required to interact with the community remotely.

4. Remote support

Abrome will be prepared to support Learners remotely under a variety of circumstances, if necessary.

4.1 Scenarios for remote support

- Learners who are immunocompromised or have underlying risk factors may choose to stay home and engage with the community remotely
- Learners may choose to stay home and engage with the community remotely in order to protect family members who are at risk
- All Learners (and Facilitators) who develop symptoms or test positive for Covid-19, or fall ill for some other reason, will need to stay home and engage with the community remotely
- All Learners (and Facilitators) who were in a cell with someone who develops symptoms or tests positive for Covid-19 will need to stay home and engage with the community remotely until it is determined that it is safe to return
- All Learners (and Facilitators) who have a member of their household who develops symptoms or tests positive for Covid-19 will need to stay home and engage with the community remotely until it is determined that it is safe to return
- All Learners (and Facilitators) who have been in contact with an individual who develops symptoms or tests positive for Covid-19 will need to stay home and engage with the community remotely until it is determined that it is safe to return
- All Learners (and Facilitators) who believe they may be coming down with a cold or flu, even if they do not believe they may have been exposed to a Covid-19 infected person, will need to stay home and engage with the community remotely until it is determined that they were not sick with the cold or flu, or until they have recovered
- All Learners within an operating cell will need to stay home and engage with the community remotely if the only Facilitator assigned to their cell is not able to facilitate on a given day (e.g., traffic accident, family emergency); not applicable if two or more Facilitators are assigned to an operating cell
- All Learners (and Facilitators) who are assigned to a remote cell will need to stay home and engage with their cell and the community remotely for the duration of that [cycle](#)
- All Learners who choose to be remote (opting out of belonging to an in-person cell) for a cycle will need to stay home and engage with the community remotely for the duration of that cycle
- Abrome may mandate that a Learner engage with the community remotely if Abrome determines that they or members of their household are engaging in practices that unsafely raise their exposure profile (e.g., going to parties, not wearing masks in public)

4.2 Remote support for individual Learners

- Learners who are assigned to an in-person operating cell and need to go remote during a cycle may have a different remote experience than those who are assigned to a remote cell
 - If there is a cell meeting remotely then those who are forced to go remote during a cycle will be invited to join the remote cell for meetings and offerings
 - If there is not a cell meeting remotely, then one Facilitator will be identified as the one responsible for supporting remote Learners
- Learners are encouraged to join the identified support Facilitator remotely through an agreed upon communication platform (e.g., zoom, discord, phone call) for check-ins
- Offerings
 - Learners are able to propose and organize online offerings
 - Learners are welcome to participate in any offering that is able to support virtual (not co-located) engagement (e.g., virtual field trips, reading circle, yoga)
 - Offerings should be limited to 30 minutes
 - Facilitators leading in-person operating cells will host no more than one offering per day
- Learners may be asked to participate in weekly 1:1 Check-ins with Facilitators if they are remote for more than five days

4.3 Remote support for a cell meeting remotely

- Learners will be expected to join the remote cell online through an agreed upon communication platform (e.g., zoom, discord, phone call) for morning meeting (10 a.m.) and afternoon roundup (3:30 p.m.)
- Learners are able to propose and organize online offerings at the Friday Set-the-Week meeting
- Learners in a remote cell may participate in virtual offerings hosted by individuals outside of their cell
- Learners in a remote cell may invite others to participate in their offerings as well
- Offerings do not have to be limited to 30 minutes when hosted by a Learner or Facilitator in a remote cell
- Learners will be expected to participate in weekly 1:1 Check-ins with Facilitators

Discussion

Connection is vital to the health and welfare of young people. Being with others in a caring community helps create opportunities for connection. It is therefore no surprise that Abrome Learners lacked connection during the remote period that forced us apart for the sake of fighting this pandemic last spring and this winter.

Remote instruction or online learning has its uses some of the time, but for most people most of the time it is not a good substitute for connecting and learning with others in-person. A global pandemic where people need to be separated can be one of those moments where online learning makes a lot of sense. But even when it makes sense, and even with the most well-designed courses, when the focus is on competitive academic achievement according to a standardized curriculum, the online learning experience will be lacking. For example, in order to keep students on task in a remote setting, conventional schools are required to be even more authoritarian in their limited interactions with students who are not finding connection with classmates, teachers, or their studies. Of course, some students will benefit from being free to move more slowly or quickly through courses that are offered asynchronously, or from being able to avoid the unhealthy social situations (e.g., bullying) that are common in competitively oriented, age-segregated environments. And while the priority of most conventional schools was to support students emotionally when they went remote in March; with many of them laudably dropping or loosening requirements on attendance, homework, testing, and grading; this year most conventional schools reverted to testing, grading, and ranking students again.

Remote learning is even less up to the task at Abrome where our focus on Emancipated Learning means being in community with one another in a way that allows for deep, meaningful, and enduring learning experiences to develop emergently. Our philosophy of education allows young people to come as they are and to take what they need. We have always been anti-authoritarian in our approach to interacting with Learners, unwilling to force them to go down a path that is ordained by others. We step back and allow Learners to forge their own paths according to their own needs and the needs of the community. Instead of directing young people, we pour our energy into facilitating (e.g., learning experiences, conflict resolution, consensus processes) and preserving a psychologically safe space where Learners can thrive.

Any place-based institution that prioritizes the health and welfare of students, their families, staff, and the wider community will shut down facilities, even without being directed to by the state, in instances where they cannot isolate those in the building who come in contact with infected persons or those who contract Covid-19, or if there is uncontrolled community spread (people in the local community becoming infected without knowing the source). Even though we are meeting outdoors, we go remote during periods of uncontrolled spread of Covid-19. But when we can safely come together we will. We are not interested in a hybrid mix of online and in-person learning, and we do not intend for remote operations to be considered a sufficient alternative to the magic that happens when Learners come together. We will prioritize connection and community over convenience as long as it is safe to do so. But it must be safe to do so.

5. Locations

One of the most impactful measures we can take to protect each other from the spread of Covid-19 is to leave behind the comfort of the indoors. Abrome will have most [operating cells](#) spending most of their [cycles](#) wholly outdoors, and rarely, if at all, at the Abrome facility.

5.1 Meeting places

- Abrome Learners and Facilitators may come together as operating cells at any of the following locations for each cycle (non-inclusive):
 - Outdoors
 - Public parks
 - Private parks
 - State campgrounds
 - Private estates or raches
 - The Abrome facility (only the restroom would be accessible)
 - Indoors
 - Public facilities with large volumes of well-circulated air space
 - The Abrome facility (in the case of no to minimal community transmission)
 - Remotely / online
- Operating cells may be required to meet at more than one location during a cycle if there is limited access to public spaces due to pandemic conditions (e.g., Monday-Wednesday at a public park, Thursday-Friday at a private estate)

5.2 Outdoor activities

Being outside without toys, art supplies, or electronic devices does not mean that Learners will be at a loss for things to do. This is a non-inclusive list of potential activities that Learners or entire cells may participate in while meeting outdoors:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| ● Bike rides | ● Community service projects |
| ● Picnics | ● Swimming |
| ● Nature watching (e.g., bird watching) | ● Water collection and conservation |
| ● Gardening | ● Journaling |
| ● Navigation skills | ● Sports and games |
| ● Writing stories, essays, and poems | ● Sketching |
| ● Fitness activities and workouts | ● Scavenger hunts |
| ● Camping | ● Crocheting or knitting |
| ● Creating or playing musical instruments | ● Creating a campfire |
| ● Plant identification and foraging | ● Preparing meals |
| ● Storytelling | ● Essential knots |
| ● Building shelters and forts | ● Reading circles |
| ● First aid training | ● Making nature art |

5.3 Outdoor logistics and transportation

Outdoor operations during the pandemic will impact the way that Learners dress, what they need to bring with them each day, and how they are able to commute.

- Learners must bring a water bottle with them each day (32 ounces or more suggested)
- Learners must bring a mask or face covering with them each day
- Learners should bring lunch and snacks with them each day
- Learners cannot share water bottles or unpackaged food
- Learners may want to pack sunblock and insect repellent
- Learners are encouraged to bring water resistant clothing and shoes (e.g., poncho, galoshes) on days when rain is possible

- Learners are encouraged to wear an outer layer of clothing (e.g., sweater, jacket, coat) on chilly or cold days, and may want to consider wearing gloves and a warm hat, as well
- Learners should *not* wear a cotton-based first layer of clothing (e.g., shirt, jeans, underwear, socks) on rainy, chilly, or cold days; wool is a better option as it will keep Learners warm even if it gets wet
- Learners are encouraged to wear closed toe shoes, preferably boots, when meeting outdoors outside of urban settings
- Learners are encouraged to wear pants instead of shorts if they plan to play in or traipse through tall grass, shrubs, and thick vegetation
- Learners should bring swimming gear and a towel if they plan on swimming
- Other items Learners may want to bring include toilet paper (in a plastic bag), hand sanitizer, extra clothes (in a plastic bag), an extra mask or face covering (in a plastic bag), pocket knife, charged phone, journal (in a plastic bag), writing utensils and art supplies, and/or a book to read (in a plastic bag)
- Families of Learners who may require the use of an EpiPen in the case of allergic reaction or sting need to provide one
- No carpooling among Learners who are in different cells
- Carpooling for Learners in the same cell is allowed but discouraged, particularly if there are any at-risk individuals in their households or pandemic pods; all occupants should be masked when carpooling
- If Learners in the same cell choose to carpool together the Learners and their families should discuss what safety precautions meet the needs of everyone in the vehicle, in their households, and in their pandemic pods (e.g., driving with the windows open, no shouting or singing)
- No shared transportation at Abrome unless we are wholly contained (e.g., camping trip after self-quarantine, not mingling with the public) or no evidence of community spread of Covid-19

Discussion

Being outdoors, instead of indoors, all day, every day, for the duration of a three-week cycle will allow us to better protect each other and the broader community from the spread of Covid-19, most likely by orders of magnitude. It will also allow us to practice freedom and community in ways that are liberating relative to being indoors. Similar to our Flying Squad days, being outdoors will require us to communicate better, participate in more consensus building activities, be more physically active, and find more time to listen to each other. In many ways, Abrome will be operating as full-time Flying Squads, minus perhaps the urban setting. It would also be fair to assume that certain aspects of what we will do will resemble forest schooling or nature schooling (minus the schooling part) or an adventure playground (minus the tires, wooden boards, and hammers).

The look of our days will shift considerably. Before the pandemic, most of our days were spent at the Abrome facility, and after our morning meeting and meta session the Learners typically scattered to engage in a variety of joint and individual activities. These activities included having conversations with friends, playing on the playscape, reading alone, playing video games, or joining in on scheduled offerings such as yoga, reading circle, or gardening. Given much more space to roam and without the distractions of the space-based tools that were usually at our disposal (e.g., electricity, LEGO bricks, library of books, art supplies), we will likely find more ways to be together, even though we will have more spacing in between us. We will discuss some of those different ways of being together at the morning meeting, and agree to plans for how we will spend our time through consensus based decision making. These plans may last for a couple of hours, a couple of days, or even for a period of weeks.

While the Learners will decide how we spend our days, what follows are some illustrative possibilities for what that might ultimately look like:

- Starting at 9:30 a.m., Learners meet their Facilitator at the agreed upon drop-off/pick-up spot at a local park. At 10 a.m. we move toward our setup location, with each Learner and Facilitator helping to transport

critical items (e.g., water jug, canvas tarp, walkie talkies). Once we are at our setup location we begin our morning meeting where we share our intentions for the day and make necessary decisions on how we will spend time together. Following the meeting we may participate in an optional meta session, or the required Set-the-Week and Change-up meetings, depending on what day it is. Some Learners may choose to help the Facilitator prepare the setup location, while some may decide to hike to the waterfall, and others may begin to collect materials to build a fort. As the day progresses some Learners may choose to swim in the lake, while others sit in the shade and discuss future plans, and a few other Learners are about 30 meters away and continue building their fort. Later in the day some Learners may drop in on a knot tying offering while others journal. One of the Learners leads a group back to the waterfall to investigate some animal tracks they saw earlier in the day. Toward the end of the day other Learners are eating a late lunch while three Learners are sketching together. At 3:30 p.m. we have our afternoon roundup where we reflect on the day and begin to lay the groundwork for future opportunities. By 4:00 p.m. we pack everything up and return to the drop-off/pick-up spot.

- Like the prior possibility, Learners and Facilitator meet each other at the drop-off/pick-up spot, but this time at a private park, and we then move to our setup location and participate in our shared daily meetings. On this day some Learners help prepare the setup location while others begin picking up trash in the local area. Some Learners decide to try to climb up a rocky embankment while one Learner chooses to read before others are available for a hike. Later, while some Learners are on a hike, the Facilitator is leading a free writing offering. As the middle of the day approaches, a Facilitator is having a conversation with a Learner who is trying to process some difficult feelings they are working through. Not too far away two Learners are tinkering around with harmonicas they brought with them. It is a particularly hot day so most Learners stay relatively close to the setup location and the water jugs. Learners flow in and out of the setup location for snacks and check-ins with the Facilitators but most spend the bulk of the day engaging with other Learners in twos and threes. Everyone comes together at 3:30 p.m. for the afternoon roundup and then we head back to the drop-off/pick-up location by 4 p.m.
- Learners and Facilitators meet at Abrome by 10 a.m., where we have our morning meeting under the large oak tree. This day we scheduled for a group bike ride so we grab our bikes and begin to make our way down toward the lake. By the time we get to the lake, most are ready to jump in the water. The Facilitator is positioned nearby to watch the Learners at play, while two Learners hang out on the dock chatting with each other. Later, some of the Learners decide that they want to organize a game of zombie tag while others take a nap in the shade. Around 2p we decide to head back to Abrome, but the ride uphill back is much more difficult than the ride downhill to the lake. We break into two groups--one that rides their bikes all the way back and another that pushes their bikes up the hill. By the time the second group returns to Abrome, the group that returned first is sitting on lawn furniture talking to each other. We eventually come back together for reflections and everyone is ready to leave by 4 p.m.
- Learners and Facilitators and some guardians have decided to spend one week of their cycle at a state campground. All the Learners and Facilitators in this cell, as well as participating guardians, have isolated themselves from outside contact for the nine days between cycles. Everyone meets at Abrome by 10 a.m. on Monday, and then the Learners jump into the Abrome van or their guardian's vehicle, and we depart for the campground that is located two hours away. Similar to our trips to visit other Self-Directed Education centers, the Learners on the trip have unbounded time to be with each other. When we get to the campground we set up our space and review our agreements and practices. At night we set up a campfire and engage in conversation until everyone drifts off to sleep. In the morning we eat breakfast, clean up ourselves and our campsite, and hold our morning meeting. While the Learners could engage in a variety of offering-like activities, they spend most of their time just being with and talking to each other. Each day the Facilitator provides a few offerings, but they keep most of their time open for reading, writing, and conversation with Learners. By the end of the week everyone is fairly tired and ready to go home. We do



one last sweep of the campground to make sure that we are not leaving any garbage behind, and we return to Abrome by Friday afternoon at 4 p.m.

6. Safety protocols

Overview

Most of this document has centered on how Abrome altered the way that we come together as a community. Because of our unique bias toward Self-Directed Education, children's rights, and culture co-creation, our plans have been radically different than those of conventional and progressive schools. However, our safety protocols have had more similarities than differences to what local schools are doing (for the ones that are following the guidance of public health officials), although there are still some significant differences given the manner in which we interact with each other. These protocols will evolve as we learn more about Covid-19.

6.1 Attendance

- Learners will stay home and inform Facilitators if:
 - They feel sick or someone in their household is sick (cold, flu, or Covid-19)
 - They do not pass the [at-home screening checklist](#) in the morning which currently includes a recorded temperature of 99.6 degrees Fahrenheit or above using the under-the-tongue method, or a temperature of 98.6 degrees or above recorded from the forehead or under-the-arnpit method
 - They have tested positive for or believe they have Covid-19, whether or not they have/had symptoms (see [isolation, testing, tracing, and quarantine](#) procedures)
 - They are unvaccinated and have had known close contact (whether or not either party was wearing a mask) with someone who displays symptoms or has been confirmed to have Covid-19 (see [isolation, testing, tracing, and quarantine](#) procedures)
- Learners will stay home if:
 - They choose to interact with the community remotely
 - They have been assigned to a cell that is meeting remotely
 - They have been told to engage with the community remotely due to unsafe exposure concerns
- Facilitators will stay home if:
 - They feel sick or someone in their household is sick (cold, flu, or Covid-19)
 - They do not pass the [at-home screening checklist](#) in the morning (same as for Learners)
 - They have tested positive for or believe they have Covid-19, whether or not they have/had symptoms (see [isolation, testing, tracing, and quarantine](#) procedures)
 - They are unvaccinated and have had known contact (whether or not either party was wearing a mask) with someone who displays symptoms or has been confirmed to have Covid-19 (see [isolation, testing, tracing, and quarantine](#) procedures)
 - They have been assigned to a cell that is meeting remotely
 - They receive an appointment for the Covid-19 vaccine or a booster shot (and if they are the only Facilitator in a cell the entire cell will be remote for that day)

6.2 Individual hygiene and behavior

- At the Abrome facility:
 - Learners should be dropped off outside; unvaccinated guardians and unvaccinated visitors will not be permitted to come inside while any persons that do not live in their households are present
 - Vaccinated guardians and vaccinated visitors must wear masks while inside the facility
 - Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after using the restroom, and before and after preparing and eating food
 - Use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol when soap and water is unavailable
 - All individuals must wear a mask or cloth face covering over both their nose and mouth when indoors or within 6 feet of others when outdoors
 - Face shields are not an acceptable substitute for masks or cloth face coverings

- Cough or sneeze into the crook of the elbow or on the inside of the shirt (not uncovered or into the hands)
- Limit or minimize close contact with others (e.g., shaking hands, hugging)
- Maintain a distance of 6 feet from others
- Eat all meals outdoors; do not share food, drink, or utensils
- When meeting with a cell in the community:
 - Avoid physical contact with people outside of their cell
 - Maintain a distance of 6 feet from people outside of their cell
 - All individuals must wear a mask or cloth face covering over both their nose and mouth when within 6 feet of others
 - All individuals must wear a mask or cloth face covering over both their nose and mouth when indoors (e.g., public library, convenience store)
 - All individuals must wear a mask of cloth face covering when they use a restroom, outhouse, or portable restroom
 - Face shields are not an acceptable substitute for masks or cloth face coverings
 - No individual should wear a mask when swimming (distancing while swimming will still be expected)
 - Cough or sneeze into the crook of the elbow or on the inside of the shirt (not uncovered or into the hands); walk away from others if possible
 - Avoid physical contact with people outside of their cell (e.g., shaking hands, hugging)
 - Learners in different cells cannot carpool together; Learners in the same cell may [carpool](#)

6.3 Entering the Abrome space

- For this section the Abrome space is defined as the Abrome facility or any space that an Abrome operating cell is occupying outdoors
- Learners, Facilitators, and their housemates (e.g., siblings, guardians, roommates) should limit their contact with those outside of the household and bubble. Activities such as eating out at an indoor restaurant or a crowded outdoor restaurant, going to a bar, attending an indoor birthday party, or any activity that results in close or extended contact (more than 15 cumulative minutes over a 24 hour period & within 6 feet) with someone outside of the household and immediate bubble (e.g., a haircut at a salon) increases the likelihood that one becomes infected and becomes a vector for the disease
- Before arriving, Facilitators must pass the [at-home screening checklist](#)
- Guardians must ensure that Learners also pass the at-home screening checklist each morning; mature Learners may self-screen
 - A printable screening checklist is available in [Appendix A](#)
 - Families will need to invest in a household thermometer and make it part of their daily routine to check their Learner's temperature before coming to Abrome each day
 - Families should not bring their Learners to the Abrome space if they fail to screen their Learners
- Unvaccinated family members should not enter the Abrome space during drop-off or pick-up
- Any visitors (except emergency fire or medical personnel responding to a 9-1-1 call) will be screened when they arrive at the Abrome space to include having their temperature taken if body temperature is still recommended as an effective screening measure by the CDC
- The screening questions for visitors are as follow (and require a no for each question):
 - Have you had a positive Covid-19 test within the past 14 days?
 - Have you had close contact with anyone diagnosed with Covid-19 within 14 days of symptom onset? [A close contact is defined as someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated.]
 - Do you have any of the following symptoms?

- Fever (99.6 degrees Fahrenheit or higher when taken by mouth)
 - Sore throat
 - New uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (for individuals with chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline)
 - Diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal pain (including stomach aches)
 - Shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, or painful breathing
 - Fatigue (including tiredness)
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Loss of taste or smell
 - New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever
- All visitors (including fire or medical personnel) will be required to wear face coverings in the Abrome space
- Visitors to the Abrome space will be rare, and requests to visit will be handled on a case-by-case basis
- Abrome will not offer in-person open houses or tours in the Abrome space to prospective families or prospective Facilitators while Learners are present

6.4 Daily at-home screening for Learners and Facilitators

- Families should complete both sections of the following short checklist (also shared in [Appendix A](#)) each morning and report your Learner's information to Abrome in the morning before your child leaves for the Abrome space
 - Section 1: Symptoms [For Learners with chronic conditions, a positive screening should represent a change from their typical health status.]
 - Temperature 99.6 degrees Fahrenheit or higher when taken by mouth
 - Sore throat
 - New uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (for individuals with chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline)
 - Diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal pain (including stomach aches)
 - Shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, or painful breathing
 - Fatigue (including tiredness)
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Loss of taste or smell
 - New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever
 - Section 2: Close Contact/Potential Exposure
 - Had close contact with a person with confirmed Covid-19; close contact defined as any of the following:
 - being directly exposed to infectious secretions including being sneezed, coughed, or somehow getting respiratory droplets on oneself;
 - being within 6 feet of someone for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated (whether or not either party was wearing masks);
 - providing care to the person at home;
 - having direct physical contact with the person (e.g., hugged or kissed them);
 - having shared eating or drinking utensils; or
 - living in the same household (e.g., roommates, family members)
 - Believe you may have traveled to an area of high community transmission or where the local, Tribal, territorial, or state health department is reporting large numbers of Covid-19 cases

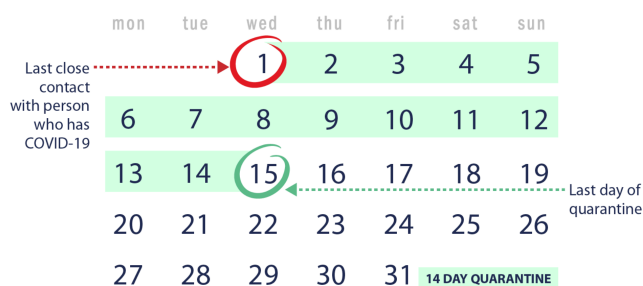
- If the answer is NO to all questions in both sections the individual should text the Abrome Facilitator assigned to their operating cell with **“daily screen successfully completed”** prior to drop-off, and come to Abrome
- If the answer is YES to any question in Section 1 but NO to any questions in Section 2, Abrome should be notified to determine if the individual should stay home and begin the [isolation protocol](#), and if the Learner should seek out an evaluation by their healthcare provider or possible testing; Learners who receive a negative test will be allowed to re-enter according to the [post-isolation re-entry criteria](#)
- If the answer is YES to any question in Section 1 and YES to any question in Section 2, Abrome should be notified to determine if the individual should stay home and begin the [isolation protocol](#) or the [quarantine protocol](#), and is encouraged to seek out an evaluation by their healthcare provider and possible testing; Learners who receive a negative test will be allowed to re-enter according to the [post-isolation re-entry criteria](#)
- If the answer is NO to any question in Section 1 but YES to any questions in Section 2, Abrome should be notified and the individual should stay home and begin the [quarantine protocol](#)

6.5 Isolation, testing, tracing, and quarantine

- Isolation
 - Isolation is used to separate people infected with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, from people who are not infected
 - Learners and Facilitators should isolate if they have symptoms of COVID-19 and are able to recover at home, or if they have no symptoms (are asymptomatic) but have tested positive for infection with SARS-CoV-2
 - Learners who become sick or develop symptoms at Abrome will be isolated and their guardians will be contacted to take them home
 - If a Facilitator leading an in-person operating cell becomes sick or develops symptoms at Abrome they will immediately isolate themselves (while maintaining auditory and visual contact with Learners) and contact guardians to take their Learners home
 - Facilitators leading in-person operating cells will immediately schedule a Covid-19 test if they develop symptoms
 - People who are in isolation should stay home until it’s safe for them to be around others
 - While in isolation:
 - Monitor your symptoms; if you have an emergency warning sign (including trouble breathing), seek emergency medical care immediately
 - Stay in a separate room from other household members, if possible
 - Use a separate bathroom, if possible
 - Avoid contact with other members of the household and pets
 - Don’t share personal household items, like cups, towels, and utensils
 - Wear a mask when around other people, if you are able to
 - Post-isolation re-entry criteria:
 - Any Learner or Facilitator who (a) is lab-confirmed to have Covid-19; or (b) experience the symptoms of Covid-19 (listed below) must stay at home throughout the infection period, and cannot return to the Abrome space until Abrome screens the individual to determine if any of the below conditions for campus re-entry have been met:
 - In the case of a Learner or Facilitator who was diagnosed with Covid-19, the individual may return to Abrome when all three of the following criteria are met:
 - at least one day (24 hours) has passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications);
 - the individual has improvement in symptoms (although the loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation); and

- at least ten days have passed since symptoms first appeared
- In the case of a Learner or Facilitator who has symptoms of Covid-19 and who is not evaluated by a medical professional or tested for Covid-19, such individual is assumed to have Covid-19, and the individual may not return to the Abrome space until the individual has completed the same three-step set of criteria listed above
- If the individual has symptoms that could be Covid-19 and wants to return to the Abrome space before completing the above stay at home period, the individual must either:
 - obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis; or
 - obtain an acute infection test at an approved testing location (<https://tdem.texas.gov/covid-19/>) that comes back negative for Covid-19
- If the Learner or Facilitator has a weakened immune system due to a health condition or medication, they might need to stay home and isolate longer than 10 days and should consult with their healthcare provider
- Testing and tracing
 - Learners, their families, Facilitators, and any household members with symptoms of Covid-19 are encouraged to get tested promptly
 - Abrome will notify local health officials when someone in the community is confirmed positive, or presumed to be positive for Covid-19
- Quarantine
 - Quarantine is used to keep someone who might have been exposed to Covid-19 away from others. Quarantine helps prevent spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms. People in quarantine should stay home, separate themselves from others, monitor their health, and follow directions from their state or local health department.
 - Learners and Facilitators should quarantine if they have been in close contact with someone who has Covid-19 during the infectious period
 - The exceptions to this are if the Learner or Facilitator had been fully vaccinated (e.g., both shots of the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine, plus 14 days, or a shot of the J&J vaccine, plus 14 days) or if they previously tested positive for Covid-19 in the past three months, in which case they do not need to quarantine or get tested again during the 3 month window as long as they do not develop symptoms again; this must be cleared with Abrome Facilitators
 - Close contact is defined as any of the following:
 - being directly exposed to infectious secretions including being sneezed, coughed, or somehow getting respiratory droplets on oneself;
 - being within 6 feet of someone for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated (whether or not either party was wearing masks);
 - providing care to the person at home;
 - having direct physical contact with the person (e.g., hugged or kissed them);
 - having shared eating or drinking utensils; or
 - living in the same household (e.g., roommates, family members) will initially be considered close contact (and assumes the person with Covid-19 immediately goes into isolation)
 - Having participated in the same in-person operating cell at Abrome

- The infectious period is defined as either:
 - two days prior to symptom onset to 10 days after symptom onset; or
 - two days prior to the confirming lab test for asymptomatic individuals and continuing for 10 days following the confirming lab test
- While in quarantine:
 - Stay home for 14 days after the last contact with a person who has Covid-19 (14-day quarantine period explained in greater detail below in post-quarantine re-entry criteria)
 - Watch for fever (99.6 degrees Fahrenheit or above using the under-the-tongue method), cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of Covid-19
 - If possible, stay away from others, especially people who are at higher risk for getting very sick from Covid-19
- Post-quarantine re-entry criteria:
 - Any Learner or Facilitator that has entered the quarantine protocol cannot return to the Abrome space until Abrome screens the individual to determine if any of the below conditions for campus re-entry have been met:
 - If the Learner or Facilitator had close contact with someone who has Covid-19 and will not have further contact or interactions with the person while they are sick (e.g., another Learner, neighbor, or friend), the last day of quarantine is 14 days from the date they had close contact



Please note if your quarantine starts at noon on day 1, then it would end at noon on the last day.

- If the Learner or Facilitator lives with someone who has Covid-19 (e.g., roommate, partner, family member), and that person has isolated by staying in a separate bedroom and the Learner or Facilitator will have no close contact with the person since they isolated, the last day of quarantine is 14 days from when the person with Covid-19 began home isolation



Please note if your quarantine starts at noon on day 1, then it would end at noon on the last day.

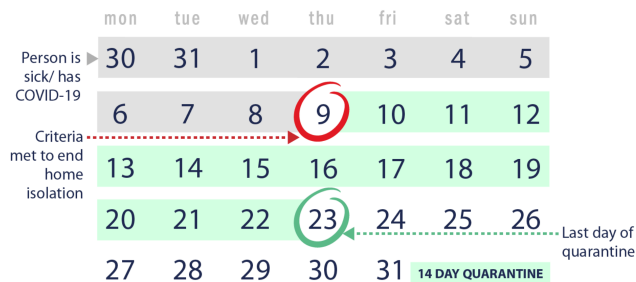
- If the Learner or Facilitator lives with someone who has Covid-19, and that person began isolation by staying in a separate bedroom and the Learner or Facilitator will have no close contact with the person since they isolated, the last day of quarantine is 14 days from when the person with Covid-19 began home isolation
 - If the Learner or Facilitator has close contact with the infected person during the quarantine period the Learner or Facilitator must restart their quarantine

- Anytime a new household member gets sick with Covid-19 the Learner or Facilitator must restart their quarantine



Please note if your quarantine starts at noon on day 1, then it would end at noon on the last day.

- If the Learner or Facilitator lives with someone who has Covid-19 and cannot avoid continued close contact (e.g., the person cannot isolate in a separate bedroom or they live in close quarters where physical distancing is not possible) then the Learner or Facilitator should avoid contact with others outside the home while the person is sick, and quarantine for 14 days after the person who has Covid-19 meets the criteria to end home isolation



Please note if your quarantine starts at noon on day 1, then it would end at noon on the last day.

- Holiday gatherings and travel, parties, dining out
 - For the safety of your families, chosen families very much included, all unvaccinated community members are encouraged to quarantine for 14 days prior to visiting grandparents and other at-risk individuals, flights to vacation spots, and similar events where one has the potential to spread the SARS-CoV-2 virus to others
 - For the safety of the Abrome community, and the broader Central Texas community, unvaccinated Abrome members returning from holiday gatherings (with people outside of their household or dedicated pod) or travel (outside of Central Texas) must quarantine for ten days, and can return on day 11 if there are no symptoms during daily monitoring; monitor symptoms until day 14
 - Alternatively, unvaccinated members who return from holiday gatherings or travel may quarantine for seven days if they take a PCR or antigen test on days 5, 6, or 7 of the quarantine, if the test is negative, and there are no symptoms during daily monitoring. If the test is negative, quarantine can end on day 8 with continued daily monitoring for symptoms until day 14
 - Dining at an indoor restaurant or other indoor gathering (e.g., party) is discouraged; if a Learner dines at an indoor restaurant or other indoor gathering they need to quarantine for ten or seven days, according to the steps laid out in the prior two bullets; this assumes that the Learner was masked the entire time except for when they were eating or drinking, else they should quarantine for 14 days
 - For the safety of the Abrome community, and the broader Central Texas community, Abrome Learners who share close quarters with unvaccinated visitors (e.g., extended

family), or unvaccinated individuals (e.g., household members) who are returning from gatherings or travel, should closely monitor themselves for any symptoms of COVID-19, and self-quarantine if they develop symptoms or if the person they are sharing close quarters with develops COVID-19. This is under the assumption that the visitors or individuals engaged in proper risk mitigation practices during travel to include mask wearing and social distancing (to include on buses, airplanes, in airports, etc.). If the visitors or individuals were lax about such practices the Learners should quarantine for 14 days

- Learners and their families are encouraged to communicate with us about holiday and travel plans so that we can balance the composition of the cells for Learners who will continue to meet in-person

6.6 Operating cell meeting triggers

- Stage 1 according to [Austin Public Health](#), but only if the local 7-day moving average of new cases is below 10 per 100,000, and the local 7-day moving average positivity rate is below 5%
 - Operating cells must have no more than 24 total members (no more than 20 Learners or four Facilitators; prospectives who are shadowing at least three days may fill out the rest of the spots)
 - One operating cell consisting of no more than 9 fully vaccinated members (no visitors or shadowers, and no more than 2 Facilitators) will be able to meet inside the Abrome facility
 - Facilitator/s must be fully vaccinated (e.g., both shots of the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine, plus 14 days, or a shot of the J&J vaccine, plus 14 days) to be indoors
 - Learners must be fully vaccinated; currently the Pfizer vaccine is available to people 12 years of age, while both the Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines are available to people 18 years of age
- Stage 2 according to Austin Public Health
 - Operating cells must have no more than 18 total members (no more than 14 Learners or four Facilitators; prospectives who are shadowing at least three days may fill out the rest of the spots)
 - No operating cells will be able to meet inside the Abrome Facility
- Stage 3 according to Austin Public Health
 - Operating cells must have no more than 10 total members (no more than eight Learners or two Facilitators; prospectives who are shadowing at least three days may fill out the rest of the spots)
 - No operating cells will be able to meet inside the Abrome Facility
- Stage 4 according to Austin Public Health
 - Operating cells must have no more than 9 total members (no more than 7 Learners or 2 Facilitators; prospectives who are shadowing at least three days may fill out the rest of the spots)
 - No operating cells will be able to meet inside the Abrome Facility
 - At least one cell will meet remotely and that cell will be comprised primarily of Learners who are (1) at higher risk for serious complication for Covid-19, (2) who have members of their household who are at-risk, or (3) live in households with higher rates of exposure to those outside the Abrome community
- Stage 5 according to Austin Public Health
 - All cells will meet remotely
- The composition and meeting of all operating cells will be determined by the Saturday before each cycle
- If the stage level as determined by Austin Public Health *increases* during a cycle, Abrome may shift operations to meet the constraints of the new stage
- Abrome may further restrict operating cell meeting standards based on the seven-day moving average percent positivity rate, or the seven-day moving average number of new cases per day
- An operating cell will immediately go remote if any member of that cell is diagnosed with or tests positive for Covid-19

- An operating cell may go remote if there is uncertainty surrounding whether or not a member of the cell may have been in close contact with someone who has Covid-19 during the infectious period

6.7 Cleaning, disinfecting, and ventilation protocols

- At the Abrome facility:
 - Wash or disinfect common surfaces and frequently touched items (e.g., door knobs, faucets, toilets, light switches, handles) with a bleach-free disinfectant two times per day and as needed
 - Mop floors once per day
 - Place hard to clean items (e.g., LEGO, marble run) in storage
 - Cover or place hard to clean surfaces in storage
 - Limit sharing of high-touch materials as much as possible
 - Regularly replace air filters
 - Open windows and doors to increase circulation of outdoor air
 - Use outdoor space as much as possible
- Outdoors
 - Wash or disinfect frequently touched items (e.g., walkie talkies, water dispensers) between uses and at the end of the day
 - Limit sharing of high-touch materials as much as possible
- After a suspected or known case of Covid-19
 - Open windows and use fans to increase outdoor air circulation in the areas to be cleaned (if at the Abrome facility)
 - Clean and disinfect all surfaces in the areas used by the ill person

6.8 Materials and supplies

- Abrome will resource and maintain inventory for select PPE
- Abrome will resource and maintain inventory for cleaning and disinfection supplies (e.g., soap, hand sanitizer, bleach-free disinfectant, cleaning rags)
- Abrome will ensure that sinks and handwashing stations do not run out of soap or single use towels, and that hand sanitizer does not run out
- Abrome will resource and maintain inventory for first aid supplies (e.g., bandaids, cold packs, gauze)
- Abrome will resource a variety of products and supplies that will support cells operating outdoors (e.g., water jugs, tarps, ropes)

6.9 Outdoor safety protocols

- Facilitators will help educate Learners on the various risks that may be found outdoors (e.g., inclement weather, weather related injuries, select plants, select animals) at the beginning of each cycle
- Learners should not eat any wild plants without proper identification of the plant and confirmation from a Facilitator that the part of the plant that they wish to eat is safe and edible
- No member of the community shall eat wild mushrooms or root vegetables
- Community members should verify that a snake or other animal is non-venomous before handling it; community members should not harass wildlife
- Water safety
 - Learners and Facilitators will not wade through moving water that is above knee level
 - Learners and Facilitators will not wade through still water that is above waist level (swimming areas excepted)
 - Learners may not at any time swim without express permission from a Facilitator who agrees to oversee the activity; a Facilitator must be present for any swimming activity
 - All families must agree to one of the following swimming permissions:
 - You consent to your Learner(s) wading or swimming at any depth, under the supervision of a Facilitator, with no life jacket.

- You consent to your Learner(s) wading at waist depth or below, under the supervision of a Facilitator, with no life jacket. This means standing at all times and not putting their heads underwater.
 - You consent to your Learner(s) swimming at waist depth or below, under the supervision of a Facilitator, with a life jacket. This means standing/sitting/swimming/putting their heads underwater.
 - You consent to your Learner(s) wading or swimming at any depth, under the supervision of a Facilitator, with a life jacket on at all times.
 - You do not consent to your Learner(s) swimming or wading at any time.
 - Abrome will maintain a ready supply of life jackets of varying sizes for operating cells that have access to bodies of water that Learners can swim in
- Inclement weather
 - Learners should [pack appropriately](#) each day (e.g., water, food, clothes)
 - Heat and dehydration
 - Learners will be encouraged to slowly sip water throughout the day, with a goal of 32 to 64 ounces per day for most Learners
 - Facilitators will bring a 2-gallon jug of fresh water each day so Learners can refill their bottles
 - Learners will be encouraged to stay in the shade as much as possible on hot days
 - Learners will be invited to wade or swim in water on hot days if water is accessible (e.g., lake, river, creek)
 - Facilitators and Learners will practice noticing dehydration and heat exhaustion, informing others, and stopping activities so people can cool down
 - Cold
 - If it is expected to rain with a temperature below 40 degrees Fahrenheit, Abrome will either cancel meeting in-person outdoors for the day, schedule a delayed start, or schedule an early pickup (depending on when the rain and cold weather are expected)
 - If roads are wet and the temperature is below 28 degrees Fahrenheit, Abrome will either cancel meeting in-person for the day, schedule a delayed start, or schedule an early pickup (because of the risk of icy roads)
 - Learners should not wear cotton undergarments during cool or cold weather
 - Rain, wind, lightning, tornadoes
 - If strong rain, wind, or lightning is forecasted, Abrome may cancel meeting in-person outdoors for the day, schedule a delayed start, or schedule an early pickup
 - Learners and Facilitators will not shelter under trees that are at risk of breaking or of falling branches during storms (e.g., pecan trees)
 - During or in anticipation of heavy rains, Learners and Facilitators will vacate river banks, stream beds, gullies (draws) and move toward elevated positions
 - If a tornado watch or tornado warning is forecasted, Abrome will cancel meeting in-person outdoors for the day, schedule a delayed start, or schedule an early pickup

Discussion

Attendance at Abrome has always been optional, as we are a non-coercive, non-oppressive community. However, during this pandemic it is important to reiterate that point. We care about the health and welfare of all the Learners and Facilitators, their housemates, their given and chosen families, and the broader community. For these reasons it is unacceptable for any Learner or Facilitator who may be sick, or unvaccinated Learner or Facilitator who may have come into contact with someone who is sick, to come into the Abrome space (at the Abrome facility or outdoors) and risk spreading the disease. It is also critical that anyone who believes they may be sick or may have come into contact with someone who is sick communicates that with Abrome so we can respond accordingly. We

will religiously adhere to isolation and quarantine protocols as a way of taking care of ourselves, taking care of others, and taking care of the community.

The overlap between Covid-19 symptoms with other common illnesses (e.g., strep throat, common cold, flu, asthma, seasonal allergies) means that many individuals with symptoms may not have Covid-19. This is even more likely in young children, who typically have multiple viral illnesses each year. Because of our commitment to taking care of each other and the community, we will err on the side of caution when determining whether a Learner with symptoms needs to stay home or quarantine. The determination will depend upon which symptoms the Learner has, whether the Learner has any chronic conditions that pass as Covid-19 symptoms, their exposure level (i.e., who is in their bubble and how often do they interact with people outside their bubble), and the degree of community spread in the Austin area. Requiring a Learner who is not infected to stay home will be inconvenient to the Learner and to their family. However, the practices we engage in to protect one another from Covid-19 will also help protect us from spreading other communicable illnesses. Facilitators get flu shots each year, and we encourage Learners to get flu shots as soon as possible this year to reduce the likelihood of being forced to miss time with an in-person cell. Should a Facilitator or multiple Facilitators need to stay home, isolate, or quarantine, some operating cells may need to meet remotely at times.

Next to staying at home, the most important behavior or practice we can engage to reduce the spread of Covid-19 from one community member to another is to [meet outdoors](#) where the virus is quickly dispersed. The next most important practice is the diligent wearing of masks or cloth face coverings. We wear masks or cloth face coverings to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected. Most masks and cloth face coverings, however, are not sufficient to protect someone from being infected by someone else. Individuals should not touch their face covering or mask too often, and should frequently wash their hands or use hand sanitizer if they do touch their mask. Physical or social distancing is also an important practice that allows for infected droplets to fall for the ground and allows infected aerosols to disperse. Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette also help reduce the likelihood of transmission. It is important to note that the wearing of masks or cloth face coverings, physical and social distancing, and hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette are not substitutes for each other, and we must practice all of them. Further, none of the practices are equally protective in indoor and outdoor environments. In each case, being indoors lessens the potential benefit of each preventative practice.

The Abrome plan does not incorporate certain practices that are commonplace in conventional school reopening plans such as the use of face shields, physical barriers, or modified seating arrangements. Such practices may be necessary for conventional schools to lower the risk of transmission due to their unwillingness or inability to take the learning outdoors. And in many cases the practices are nothing more than security theater. For example, face shields are not an acceptable substitute for masks or cloth face coverings because droplets and aerosols are still being spread into the air by the wearer. Physical barriers are little better than face shields in indoor environments. And setting desks six feet away from each other is of minimal benefit when students and teachers are breathing in the same classroom air for hours a day.

The Covid-19 vaccines that have been developed by Moderna, Pfizer, and Johnson & Johnson are among the safest and most efficacious vaccines ever produced. Widespread vaccination would allow us to move toward herd immunity which would effectively stop the spread of the disease, protecting those who are vaccinated as well as those who cannot or who refuse to get vaccinated. Widespread vaccination will also reduce opportunities for the virus to mutate into new variants. As of May 13, 2021, all Facilitators were fully vaccinated as well as four of the oldest Learners, and we encourage all members of the Abrome community ages 12 and up to get vaccinated for your wellbeing and for the wellbeing of broader society. As we loosen up our protocols as levels of community spread decrease, those Learners who are fully vaccinated will have the greatest latitude, followed by Learners who cannot get vaccinated but whose households are fully vaccinated. There is a possibility that unvaccinated Learners will need to remain fully outdoors come September 2021 if community spread is still present.

The risk stages system developed by Austin Public Health is represented in the chart below. The current risk stage level (Stage 3 as of May 13, 2021) is influenced by the regression and progress of several factors, including doubling time, healthcare capacity, and testing positivity rate on a seven-day moving average.

COVID-19: Risk-Based Guidelines

	Practice Good Hygiene		Maintain Social Distancing	Wear Facial Coverings	Higher Risk Individuals Aged 65+, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart, lung and kidney disease, immunocompromised, obesity			Avoid Gatherings	Avoid Non-Essential Travel	Avoid Dining/ Shopping	Workplaces Open
	Stay Home If Sick	Avoid Sick People			Avoid Gatherings	Avoid Non-Essential Travel	Avoid Dining/ Shopping				
Stage 1	•				Greater than 25		Except with precautions	Gathering size TBD			All businesses
Stage 2	•		•	•	Greater than 10		Except as essential	Greater than 25			Essential and reopened businesses
Stage 3	•		•	•	Social and greater than 10	•	Except as essential	Social and greater than 10			Essential and reopened businesses
Stage 4	•		•	•	Social and greater than 2	•	Except as essential	Social and Greater than 10	•	Except expanded essential businesses	Expanded essential businesses
Stage 5	•		•	•	Outside of household	•	Except as essential	Outside of household	•	Except as essential	Essential businesses only

Due to the uncertainty surrounding the prevalence of Covid-19 cases in Central Texas and the potential stresses that will put on the medical system we have established clear guidelines on when we can meet in-person versus remotely, whether we can meet indoors or outdoors, and how large our operating cells can be. These guidelines are intended to maximize opportunities for in-person learning and community building while minimizing the spread of Covid-19. These guidelines result in a drastically lower level of risk of spread for the Abrome community compared to conventional schools at every stage of risk as determined by Austin Public Health. A comparison between the ways that local schools will meet versus how Abrome will meet is illustrated below through our modification of an Austin Public Health exhibit from their [Interim Guidance on Reopening for Austin-Travis County Schools](#). [Abrome meetup posture was updated on May 13, 2021 to account for more developed understanding of how transmission takes place and the full vaccination of all three full-time Facilitators, a shadowing Facilitator, and four Learners: stage 1 max of 24 members, stage 2 max of 18, stage 3 max of 10.]

	CDC Level of Community Transmission	Travis County Schools On-campus Population	Abrome stage-based meeting posture
Stage 1	No to minimal transmission	Up to 100% on-campus learning	Up to 16 members per cell; one cell of up to 9 members may meet at Abrome facility
Stage 2	Minimal to moderate transmission	Up to 75% on-campus learning	Up to 16 members per cell; all cells meet outdoors
Stage 3	Substantial, controlled transmission	Up to 50% on-campus learning	Up to 8 members per cell; all cells meet outdoors
Stage 4	Substantial, uncontrolled transmission	Up to 25% on-campus learning	Up to 8 members per cell; at least one cell is remote; other cells meet outdoors
Stage 5	Widespread uncontrolled transmission threatening our healthcare infrastructure	100% virtual learning	All cells will meet remotely

Finally, being outdoors this year with Abrome will be safer than being indoors at any school. And for those enrolled at Abrome, statistically speaking, the commute will be the most dangerous part of a Learner's day. However, there are risks Learners can face outdoors that they would not face indoors, and it is natural for young people to test their ability to manage various types of risks. We encourage risk taking but we also will take reasonable precautions. We will be able to revisit and alter the practices outlined out in this section with the Learners at our weekly Change-up meetings.

7. Communications

Open, honest, and effective communication is essential in all healthy relationships and communities, but it takes on added importance during a pandemic. In order to protect and support one another we must be accountable for our behavior, dedicated to keeping our agreements, and share honestly and openly when we come up short. Given the logistical constraints we will face this year, we also need to have clear guidelines for how and when we communicate with each other.

7.1 Covid-19

- Families or Learners must complete both sections of the at-home screening checklist each morning before attending Abrome, share their results with Abrome via text prior to drop-off, and attend only if they answered NO to every question on the checklist
- If the answer to any question of the at-home screening checklist is a YES then Abrome should be notified to determine if the individual should stay home and begin the [isolation protocol](#) or the [quarantine protocol](#), and if the Learner should seek out an evaluation by their healthcare provider or possible testing
- No member of the community who enters into quarantine or isolation may return to the Abrome space until they satisfy the quarantine or isolation protocol, and are screened and cleared by Abrome
- Families are encouraged to proactively enter the quarantine protocol if they or any member of their household has engaged in risky behavior, and to inform the Facilitator assigned to their Learner's operating cell
- Learners who are not in the same cell who choose to meet up outside of Abrome hours (e.g., weekends, off-weeks) should wear masks and remain a distance of at least 6 feet from each other at all times (i.e., no hugging, touching), and notify Abrome when they meet up for purposes of contact tracing

7.2 Communication medium

Abrome will rely on different forms of communication to share information with families

- [Website](#) updates
 - A full listing of members in each operating cell, where they are meeting, and special instructions (posted by the Saturday before each cycle starts)
 - The current risk stage as determined by Austin Public Health which determines how our cells can meet
 - Any cancellation of in-person meetups (going remote), delayed start time, or mandated early pickup due to inclement weather (posted by 7:00 a.m. each morning)
 - Any cancellation of in-person meetups (going remote) for particular operating cells for quarantine purposes
 - Any cancellation of in-person meetups (going remote) for particular operating cells due to a sick Facilitator (posted by 7:00 p.m. the prior evening, or as early as possible)
- Texts and calls
 - Facilitators will create a group text to communicate with families in each respective operating cell prior to each cycle
 - Families should individually text (not using a group text) the Facilitator assigned to their Learner's operating cell with the result of their daily at-home screening before leaving home, and no later than 9:45 a.m., each morning
 - Facilitators will text guardians by 7:30 a.m. if Abrome needs to cancel an in-person meetup (going remote), delay the start time, or mandate an early pickup due to inclement weather
 - Facilitators will text guardians as early as possible if Abrome needs to change the meetup location for the day due to unforeseen circumstances (e.g., park closure)
 - Facilitators will text guardians as soon as possible if Abrome needs to cancel an in-person meetup (going remote) for a particular operating cell for quarantine purposes

- Facilitators will text guardians by 7:00 p.m. the night before or as early as possible if Abrome needs to cancel an in-person meetup (going remote) for a particular operating cell due to a sick Facilitator
- Families should call (not text) the Facilitator assigned to their Learner's operating cell in case of emergency
- Facilitators will text and call guardians in case of emergency
- Email
 - Facilitators will create a group email to communicate with families in each respective operating cell prior to each cycle
 - Facilitators will email guardians by 7:30 a.m. if Abrome needs to cancel in-person meetups, delay the start time, or mandate an early pickup due to inclement weather
 - Facilitators will email guardians as soon as possible if Abrome needs to cancel in-person meetups (going remote) for a particular operating cell for quarantine purposes
 - Facilitators will email guardians by 7:00 p.m. or as soon as possible if Abrome needs to cancel an in-person meetup (going remote) for a particular operating cell due to a sick Facilitator
 - Emails from families to Abrome should only be used for non-time sensitive communications

8. Staffing, compensation, and hiring

In order to effectuate the aforementioned changes, we will need to carefully manage our staffing levels and bring on new Facilitators as we grow. Facilitators are members of the community, and their needs and well-being must also be met. Therefore, we are modifying staffing, compensation, and hiring procedures to meet the challenges of this moment, and to build a stronger foundation for the future.

8.1 Staffing

With this plan we have a new set of expectations and requirements for Facilitators, and we need to be able to support these new expectations. This need will be directly reflected in the new [admissions and enrollment policies](#).

- Facilitators will be asked to work in a more physically demanding role, and in the time of a pandemic
- Facilitators will be spending full days outdoors for three-week cycles at a time
- We will be hiring new Facilitators as we grow
- We plan to keep the Learner to Facilitator ratio at or below 7:1
- We may staff two Facilitators per operating cell (with seven or more Learners), subject to pandemic conditions and standing state orders
- We need to avoid burnout of Facilitators by having adequate coverage
- We must allow for Facilitators to be able to take sick days, personal days, and quarantine when needed

8.2 Compensation & benefits

In order to train and develop our Facilitators while maintaining their wellness, we need to focus on increasing compensation and benefits. While we can't promise this path of growth, it remains our goal. We believe it will reduce stress, promote retention, and allow Facilitators to focus on being present for the Learners.

- We aspire to be able to remove barriers to growth by removing some basic worries
- Our goal is to incrementally increase pay of Facilitators to a livable wage
- We aspire to provide healthcare and benefits such as 401(k) when we are able to
- We will continue to set aside funds for professional development for each Facilitator

8.3 Hiring and training

As we grow, new Facilitators will need to be hired to make sure we have adequate coverage. Ideal candidates enjoy being around young people, respect and trust kids, are advocates for children's rights, are anti-authoritarian, and are committed to anti-oppression.

- Requirements for hiring:
 - All candidates will be required to submit to a background and reference check
 - All candidates will be required to go through a shadow period that will include additional training and reading on Self-Directed Education and Emancipated Learning before joining
 - All candidates will be required to participate in outdoor training covering topics of outdoor safety procedures, equipment usage, documentation and facilitation
 - All candidates must complete CPR and First Aid Certification
- Preferred qualifications include:
 - Prior experience working with young people in Self-Directed Education environments, autonomous youth in non-schooling environments, and young people in forest or nature schools, outdoor camps, or non-academic programs
- We currently do not hire guardians of enrolled Learners as Facilitators

Discussion

Continuity in Facilitator-Learner relationships is an important ingredient in Self-Directed Education. Unlike most conventional schools we do not pass students on to new educators at new grade levels each year. The ability to work with Learners from the moment they enroll (as young as 4-years-old) to the day they graduate (as old as



19-years-old) allows us to build deep trust with them so that we can serve as a reliable and supportive presence in their lives. We need to focus on ensuring that our current Facilitators remain at Abrome, while we also bring in new Facilitators to support our growth.

Coverage will also be essential in the coming year, particularly because we do not currently have the capacity to easily absorb a Facilitator getting sick or taking a job elsewhere. If a Facilitator becomes infected or is exposed to Covid-19 they will be expected to be out for 10-14 days, at a minimum. Although we have never exceeded a 6:1 Learner-to-Facilitator ratio as a community, there were many instances where one Facilitator was responsible for eleven or twelve Learners at the Abrome facility while the other Facilitator was meeting with a prospective family or supporting a Learner offsite. But as we move into physically separated operating cells that meet outdoors for three-week cycles at a time, we must increase our capacity so that we have coverage for all Learners without exceeding a 7:1 Learner-to-Facilitator ratio. Additionally, the more coverage we have, the lower the likelihood of burnout by Facilitators.

While Abrome has always invested in training and development for Facilitators, primarily through Agile Learning Facilitator training and skill sharing opportunities at other Self-Directed Education communities, moving outdoors in physically separated small operating cells will require a different level of preparation. Current Facilitators have already participated in CPR and First Aid training this summer, and are scheduled to participate in a three-day outdoor training from the 11th to the 13th of August. From August 17th to the 21st the Facilitators and select Learners will participate in an outdoor training session where we will practice meeting up, setting up, holding space for each other, playing, co-creating culture, and honoring our agreements and commitments. Prospective Facilitators will also participate in the trainings so that we can build the capacity necessary to grow the community this fall.

Our Facilitators have been committed to building a healthy and sustainable community, and in doing so they have worked at grossly below market rates, effectively helping us to lessen the financial shortfall that comes with the early years of operating a community that falls well outside of the imagination of most people who are looking at private schools. More specifically, this past year our founder was not compensated and our Facilitators earned between \$0 and \$2,000 per month. Therefore, for their sake and the sake of the community, it is incumbent upon us to support a livable wage and make sure Facilitators can meet their basic needs.

We are asking Facilitators to meet the challenges of this moment, and to build a stronger foundation for the future. We are asking Facilitators to grow, learn, and contribute to these new ways of being together. Abrome needs to meet the challenge of fostering this growth.

9. Admissions and enrollment

The changes we are putting in place will increase our operating costs. And because we are fully reliant on tuition, and with logistical considerations regarding staffing in mind, we have reconsidered and adjusted our admissions and enrollment practices.

9.1 Admissions process

- Abrome uses a rolling admissions process in reviewing candidates, allowing candidates to apply at anytime throughout the academic year
- All applicants from Central Texas who wish to enroll after September 8th, the first day of the next academic year (AY 2020-21), are required to shadow with an Abrome operating cell for five days, while applicants from outside Central Texas will be required to shadow for three days
 - Applicants will be expected to quarantine prior to shadowing
- This coming year we will implement a waitlist in order to manage our ability to properly staff operating cells, to ensure we can meet our financial obligations, and to promote diversity within our community

9.2 Tuition and fees

- Part-time enrollment and tuition will not be an option, although attendance is still optional
- We have updated the [Family Financial Worksheet](#) (FFW) which includes increasing the minimum tuition from \$600 per year to \$1,600 per year
- The FFW will provide families with the contracted fee (tuition amount) that will be used to complete the enrollment agreement
- Families may submit a proposed tuition (that increases the contracted fee) that better reflects their financial situation
- We reserve the right to deny the contracted fee or place the applicant on the waitlist if the proposed tuition does not meet the needs of the community at that time
- We may require families to fill out ACH payment paperwork to automatically transfer scheduled tuition payments from their checking account
- The annual education resource fee has been increased from \$400 to \$500 to help us absorb the added costs of cleaning materials, personal protective equipment, and outdoor supplies necessary for the coming year
- Tuition discounts will not be available if we are forced to operate remotely due to changing pandemic conditions

Discussion

The staffing, compensation, and hiring section explained substantial employment cost increases that Abrome will have to absorb in order to become a healthier and more sustainable community, especially in light of the practices we will need to implement in response to Covid-19. As a tuition-funded education community we relooked at our sliding scale tuition policy to determine if it is able to meet our needs as a community. While we remain committed to inclusivity and access for as many people as possible, it became clear to us that we needed to increase both ends of the tuition range. We also added an option for applicants to propose a tuition amount that is greater than the calculated fee from the Family Financial Worksheet. It is our hope that families will propose a reasonable but generous amount that allows us to thrive as a community.

Our increased costs will require us to take into account the tuition and fees that a Learner's family would be able to pay when making admissions decisions. With Facilitators having a limited number of Learners they can be responsible for at any given time, we will need to manage admissions so that our average tuition is high enough to cover all of our costs. This may lead us to rejecting otherwise strong applicants, or putting them on the waitlist



until we are able to absorb them into the community. We may also make admissions decisions based on the likelihood that a Learner will be with the community long-term, as well the impact they may have on diversity.

Appendix A. Daily at-home screening checklist

Families should complete both sections of the following short check each morning and report your Learner's information to Abrome in the morning before your child leaves for the Abrome space

Section 1: Symptoms [For Learners with chronic conditions, a positive screening should represent a change from their typical health status.]

- Yes No Temperature 99.6 degrees Fahrenheit or higher when taken by mouth
- Yes No Sore throat
- Yes No New uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (for individuals with chronic allergic / asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline)
- Yes No Diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal pain (including stomach aches)
- Yes No Shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, or painful breathing
- Yes No Fatigue (including tiredness)
- Yes No Muscle or body aches
- Yes No Loss of taste or smell
- Yes No New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever

Section 2: Close Contact/Potential Exposure

- Yes No Had close contact with a person with confirmed Covid-19; close contact defined as any of the following:
 - being directly exposed to infectious secretions including being sneezed, coughed, or somehow getting respiratory droplets on oneself;
 - being within 6 feet of someone for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated (whether or not either party was wearing masks);
 - providing care to the person at home;
 - having direct physical contact with the person (e.g., hugged or kissed them);
 - having shared eating or drinking utensils; or
 - living in the same household (e.g., roommates, family members)
- Yes No Believe you may have traveled to an area of high community transmission or where the local, Tribal, territorial, or state health department is reporting large numbers of Covid-19 cases

- If the answer is NO to all questions in both sections the individual should text the Abrome Facilitator assigned to their operating cell with **“daily screen successfully completed”** prior to drop-off, and come to Abrome
- If the answer is YES to any question in Section 1 but NO to any questions in Section 2, Abrome should be notified to determine if the individual should stay home and begin the [isolation protocol](#), and if the Learner should seek out an evaluation by their healthcare provider or possible testing; Learners who receive a negative test will be allowed to re-enter according to the [post-isolation re-entry criteria](#)
- If the answer is YES to any question in Section 1 and YES to any question in Section 2, Abrome should be notified to determine if the individual should stay home and begin the [isolation protocol](#) or the [quarantine protocol](#), and is encouraged to seek out an evaluation by their healthcare provider and possible testing; Learners who receive a negative test will be allowed to re-enter according to the [post-isolation re-entry criteria](#)
- If the answer is NO to any question in Section 1 but YES to any questions in Section 2, Abrome should be notified and the individual should stay home and begin the [quarantine protocol](#)

Appendix B. Daily to-dos

Families and Learners may find the following checklist helpful in preparing their Learners to make the most of each day at the Abrome space

Morning

- ✂ Check the Abrome website to check for a cancellation of in-person meetups (going remote), delayed start time, or mandated early pickup due to inclement weather; quarantine or isolation purposes; changing pandemic conditions; or a sick Facilitator (after 7:00 a.m.)
- ✂ Double check items to bring each day
 - ✂ full water bottle (mandatory)
 - ✂ lunch and snacks
 - ✂ hand sanitizer
 - ✂ sunblock and insect repellent
 - ✂ water resistant clothing and shoes (rainy days)
 - ✂ raincoat or poncho (rainy days)
 - ✂ sweater, jacket, or coat (cold days)
 - ✂ gloves and warm hat (cold days)
 - ✂ socks, shirt in plastic bag (rainy or cold days)
 - ✂ extra mask or face covering (in plastic bag)
 - ✂ swimming gear and a towel (if swimming)
 - ✂ toilet paper (in a plastic bag)
 - ✂ pocket knife
 - ✂ journal (in a plastic bag)
 - ✂ writing utensils and art supplies
 - ✂ book to read (in a plastic bag)
 - ✂ charged phone (in a plastic bag)
- ✂ Items Learners should *not* wear
 - ✂ cotton-based first layer (e.g., shirt, jeans, underwear, socks) on rainy or cold days
- ✂ Complete at-home screening checklist prior to leaving home (mandatory)
- ✂ Text the Facilitator assigned to your Learner's operating cell with the result of their daily at-home screening prior to leaving home, and no later than 9:45 a.m. (mandatory)
- ✂ Drop off Learner at the Abrome space from 9:30-10:00 a.m.

Afternoon & evening

- ✂ Pick up Learner (from 4:00-4:15 p.m.)
- ✂ Empty and clean backpack
- ✂ Prepare lunch for the next day
- ✂ Collect items for the next day and place them near the front door
- ✂ Charge phone or other electronic devices
- ✂ Go to sleep at a reasonable hour (Learners will ideally get 8 to 9.5 hours of sleep per night)



ABROME

Appendix C. AY 20-21 Calendar

Tentative 2020-2021 Academic Year Calendar

Key Dates

First day of 2020-2021 AY	Sep 8
Indigenous Peoples' Day	Oct 12
Gratitude Break	Nov 26-Dec 1
Winter Break	Dec 23-Jan 1
MLK Holiday	Jan 18
Spring Break	Mar 15-19
Juneteenth	Jun 18
Professional Development Day / Learner Holiday	
Info Session *	
Last day of 2019-2020 AY	Jul 9
ALF Training (tentative)	Jul 28-Aug 6
First day of 2021-2022 AY	Sep 7
Planned remote days	
3:1 out of session days	

175 Learner days (Learners and staff)
 8 Professional Development days (staff only)
 * Dependent upon COVID-19 response level

Hours

10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
 Earliest drop off: 9:45 a.m.
 Latest pickup: 4:15 p.m.

September						
S	M	T	W	R	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

October						
S	M	T	W	R	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

November						
S	M	T	W	R	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

December						
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		1	2	3	4	5
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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

January						
S	M	T	W	R	F	S
					1	2
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17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

February						
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14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

March						
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28	29	30	31			

April						
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25	26	27	28	29	30	

May						
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						1
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

June						
S	M	T	W	R	F	S
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20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

July						
S	M	T	W	R	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

August						
S	M	T	W	R	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				