

*Last Updated 6/29/2020*

After our planning presentations, we created Q&A documents to share the questions asked in the session and our answers. These questions are organized by health & safety, programmatic, financial, and general questions. This is a living document to answer your questions and we will denote when new questions are added. Anything noted here is subject to change. For more, view our [Planning Scenarios Document](#) and checkout our [webpage](#) for 2020-2021 School Year Planning related information.

## Health and Safety Questions

### Facilities & Cleaning

**What cleaning strategies will the school use on campus? Noting the differences between sanitizing, disinfecting, and cleaning.**

Our process is based on [CDC standards](#) for cleaning (to remove germs, dirt, and impurities) and then disinfecting surfaces to kill germs on surfaces or objects in order to mitigate risks of COVID-19 or other viruses. Our new cleaning team is well versed on this subject and uses eco-friendly EPA Certified approved disinfectants against COVID-19. In addition, all staff members will be required to take an e-course to explain these processes.

### Health

**How will temperatures be taken? Will there be three attempts and take the average? What device will be used?**

Protocols are being created that will allow for temperatures to be taken at drop-off while students are still in vehicles/car seats with temporal scanners to allow for a no-touch experience. The staff members doing the screening will be in proper PPE. We are working on the process and have considered that a student could show a higher temp, even without a true fever. We are working on a process to accommodate this variation.

**I can imagine with these new procedures that drop-off might take longer. What efforts will be made to manage the line and flow?**

We are arranging for staggered drop-off times to help avoid congestion in the carpool lines. We will utilize multiple entrance points and additional staff will be on hand to increase the number of screenings that can be completed. We are also paying close attention to how the dropoff process works during summer camp so that we can fine tune the process for the opening of school.

**Will students be sent home for showing one symptom of COVID-19 or if coupled with a fever? For instance if they just had a rash or just had diarrhea without a fever or other COVID symptoms. Or if my child has asthma, allergies, or other common illnesses that present COVID-like symptoms?**

We are following up with a health advisory panel, as well as paying close attention to CDC guidelines related to symptoms of COVID-19 and appropriate steps. We feel it is best practice and consistent with our previous policies, to send home anyone who develops a fever over the course of the day, regardless of the illness that causes it. For other symptoms, we acknowledge that the CDC guidelines are a bit vague, and we are working to clarify specifics related to non-fever symptoms so that we can provide the best possible care, and also minimize disruptions for students and families. Students with documented conditions that have similar symptoms to COVID-19, like allergies, asthma, and students who are teething will be allowed to attend school with a doctor's note outlining their symptoms and the related cause.

**If children are sent home with symptoms what are the rules for letting them back into the classroom? No fever for 24 hours? Do they have to get a COVID-19 test? A visit to the doctor every time they are not feeling well?**

Please refer to the APH flow chart in the [Planning Scenarios Document](#) for when it is safe to return to campus after symptoms of COVID-19 or a positive test. Community members will be permitted back onto campus once all three of the following guidelines have been met: 1) Fever free for three days without medication. 2) Ten days from the onset of symptoms. 3) Reduction in other symptoms, like coughing or sneezing.

**What will be the procedure when a sibling that is attending another campus has been in close contact with someone who has the virus or has been exposed to the virus?**

If a member of our community on any campus has come into close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, we will report the situation to Austin Public Health, and they will assist in contact tracing and advise us of the best next steps, which will include looking at siblings across multiple campuses.

**If a child exhibits COVID symptoms, what is the protocol for quarantine and school attendance for other children enrolled in the class?**

If a child exhibits symptoms during the school day, they will be removed from the group and supervised in an isolation room (Susie's front office space on Springs, Virginia's office and the Olive on Creek, and 4.102 on River) until they are able to be picked up. We will report the instance to Austin Public Health, who will advise us on next steps, including possible closure of one classroom or the entire campus based on the particular circumstances and contact tracing. Part of this will be communication to parents with confidentiality of anyone involved.

**Are you going to ask parents to commit to actions (or nonactions) to help protect teachers and other students from exposure? E.g., not travel, reporting symptoms or contacts with exposed people?**

While the school is not in a position to mandate the behaviors of parents in our community, we ask that everyone be aware of CDC guidelines regarding travel and social activity. We do ask that any community member who tests positive for COVID-19 or comes into close contact with someone who tests positive inform the school so that we may take appropriate measures to mitigate the risk of spreading the virus. If you or a family member tests positive for COVID-19, please notify a school administrator or email [health@headwaters.org](mailto:health@headwaters.org). Your medical information is confidential.

## **Springs Flexible Calendar Questions**

**What constitutes a school closure? Are there plans to help communicate and support the kids during the start/stop disruptions? Will they provide any resources in physical form?**

A school closure would be any day that was a regularly scheduled school day on the Springs Campus where no Springs students are able to attend school due to the virus. That could be because we have a case in our community and are required to close the campus entirely and disinfect, or because the government has required schools to close. Our ability to remain open will be dependent on a variety of factors. If the state government or state licensing chooses to close schools or childcare centers, we will likely be required to comply. This spring, child care centers were only allowed to be open if they met a minimum percentage of essential workers, which Headwaters did not meet. If a similar restriction is put in place, it is unlikely that we will be able to remain open. However, if AISD is closed because they have confirmed cases of COVID-19, but our population remains healthy, we will remain open. The flexible calendar allows for an extension to the school year and we will be asking guides to forgo some of their summer break. This means that during periods of closure, the guides will effectively be on their summer break, even if it is the fall or winter. While guides will not be available during any shelter in place time, there will be a variety of online resources that parents can access, and we are also exploring options related to Montessori "go bags" of materials that families can use at home.

**What guideline are we following if we have to shut down? Who determines a shut down?**

If we have an individual case, we will follow Austin Public Health's guidance. We are required to report to them if we have a case or symptoms. If the governor chooses to close all schools, we'll be required to comply. In addition, Headwaters School can decide on closure as deemed necessary without ruling from any other body. We are carefully monitoring all national, state, and local authorities, and closely monitoring local statistics like infection, transmission, and hospitalization rates.

**If circumstances change for the better, will the school resume a normal schedule at some point? Or do we expect it to remain this way for the entire year.**

The basic school calendar is a normal schedule, and we will stick to that plan as closely as we are able given the course of the virus. If the overall health of our community improves and guidance from TEA and other authorities loosens the restrictions on cohort size and square footage, we may increase class sizes and/or daily schedules at that time.

**If school closures are more extensive than anticipated, what is your current thinking if you are unable to meet a minimum number of classroom days?**

We are discussing several options if we find ourselves in that unfortunate situation. We will communicate at least quarterly about any updates to the school calendar, and will include options available to families if and when it is determined that we will not be able to fully make up the time in person. As a reminder, with the flexible calendar, we can extend the school year until July 30 and can utilize previously scheduled holidays (with a few exceptions).

## Program Questions

**In each classroom/cohort, will the children be broken out into small groups and have one guide per group, or will the children have an opportunity to work with each guide?**

The guides will work with the entire cohort.

**Will the guides rotate within each cohort so they work with all 22 students or will they only work with their one smaller group? Thanks!**

In order to create stable cohorts, guides will stay with their group of students throughout the day and will not rotate.

**If guidelines stay the same from TEA, what do you think the total student enrollment/classroom will be AND what will be the staffing structure for each class?**

The total number of students per classroom and the staffing of each room will be based on the size of the space. We will meet the TEA guidelines of 45 sq. feet per person in each classroom, and also maintain our standard childcare ratios as determined by the state licensing agency. Specifics for each family's staffing and classroom space will be sent once we have determined cohorts.

**I'm confused about what the 22 students per classroom refers to, if no classroom will have that many students?**

So the number 22 is for the maximum individuals allowed in a classroom, per TEA Guidelines. However, it's also dependent on square footage of 45 sq. ft. per person in that classroom. TEA also figures in desk spacing.

Using these requirements, for example, would mean that:

- + An 800 square foot room could serve 17 individuals ( $800 \text{ sq. ft} / 45 \text{ sq. ft} = 17.8$ ; round down to 17), so long as the room configuration allowed for desks to be placed six feet apart; and
- + A 1,200 square foot room could serve 22 individuals, so long as the room configuration allowed for desks to be placed six feet apart ( $1,200 \text{ sq. ft} / 45 \text{ sq. ft} = 26.67$ ; however, 22 individuals is the maximum in a classroom space).

**Are you bringing teachers back early to pilot some of the new instructional practices?**

Headwaters faculty will report to school two full weeks before the start of the year. A variety of professional development will be included in that time, including training on sanitizing and disinfecting, donning and doffing PPE, how to notice symptoms of COVID-19 and other respiratory issues, social-emotional support of students, diversity and equity training, and transitioning between distance learning and in person learning for campuses that will utilize distance learning. This training time is planned to be in person, but we will change to virtual we deem necessary.

**So if an individual student is having to stay home for a prolonged period due to quarantine because of possible COVID contact, what type of learning will they receive during that time?**

This is a great question. During the two week quarantine and possible further quarantine if ill, we encourage families to seek out testing and let the school know the results. Hopefully, this can permit a child to return before the end of a two week quarantine with a negative test.

While a student is out, we do want the focus to be on getting well if sick. Guides, just as they sometimes do for long term illnesses, will check in with parents and recommend appropriate resources that we have developed and continue to develop in the way of asynchronous lessons, stories, and activities as well as providing a suggested schedule to maintain some normalcy for the child.

**If the maximum children allowed in school is reduced from current guidelines and there are more enrolled children than allowed, what is your current thinking on how to address this?**

Our goal is to have as much face to face interaction with students at this age as possible. If the guidelines require us to further reduce our capacity, we will need to adjust our schedule to some sort of rotation with deep cleaning and disinfecting between groups. We know that this situation is not ideal for families who count on Headwaters for childcare, so every effort will be made to maximize our capacity as safely as possible.

**How will the cohorts be built? Diversity of age etc...**

Returning students will be as much as possible in their same class, it will just be smaller in numbers.

**Will our children still be in the same classroom they were in last year in Primary?**

Yes, we plan on making sure students are in the same classroom if they are continuing on in Primary or YCC. We do have a small group of primary students changing classrooms who are aware of that change.

**Early Arrival and After Care****How will drop off work for early arrival**

Students will go directly into their classroom or extended classroom yard - one of the two guides will arrive early to accommodate those students. so you will be able to drop off early AND we'll be able to

maintain the stable cohorts. In addition, we usually have fewer people doing early drop-off so we can manage that differently than with regular drop-off.

**On Wednesdays with school ending at 12 noon, will CC still be offered or will Wednesdays always end at noon no matter what? Thank you!**

Currently we are not planning to offer CC on Wednesday afternoons, as the staff that normally supports CC will be involved in planning, collaboration, and cleaning. Pickup times will be staggered between Springs and Creek so that families with students on both campuses can arrange their pickups.

**Is there CC on Wed? Also, can you select certain days of the week for CC? Or will all students on Sprigs and Creeks need to be picked up at noon?**

Currently we are not planning to offer CC on Wednesday afternoons, as the staff that normally supports CC will be involved in planning, collaboration, and cleaning. Pickup times will be staggered between Springs and Creek so that families with students on both campuses can arrange their pickups. We are currently accepting enrollment for full CC, and if we do not completely fill the program, we will offer part-time CC once school begins in August.

**Will the CC cost reduce since there's no Wednesday CC?**

If we are able to offer CC, but are not able to offer it on Wednesday, it is unlikely that we will be able to reduce the cost of the program, given the increase in staffing costs that will be necessary to maintain stable cohorts.

## Financial Questions

**Understood about the additional costs and appreciate y'all going the extra mile for our kids. Is there an implication that these additional costs will somehow increase our tuition or fees this next year?**

Because families have already signed their enrollment contracts and plans are already in place, we will not increase tuition for 2020-21.

**From a tuition perspective, what happens for families who, upon opening of school, simply are not yet comfortable sending their child to school?**

I believe this question is asking about the ability to defer your enrollment. We are exploring this option in an upcoming enrollment meeting, and want to be as flexible as possible for our families while also taking into consideration cohort stability and individual developmental needs. More information will be available in the next communication

**The plan for parents who are interested in holding the child's place but don't feel comfortable starting in August, could it be presented before the June 30th deadline?**

Families who are interested in a later start than August can reach out to Director of Admissions Krista Phillips ([k.phillips@headwaters.org](mailto:k.phillips@headwaters.org)) to talk about options.

**Why not extend the withdrawal date to July 2 or a couple days later after the next planned update from the School?**

We believe that the current plan represents our best thinking about the opening of school at this time, and we know that the situation will continue to evolve over the summer. The deadline of June 30 gives families and the school the best opportunity to plan for the fall ahead.

## **General Questions**

**Is Camp Headwaters starting as planned ?**

Yes, camps are scheduled to run starting Monday, June 29 with smaller numbers in our groups. We've done a ton of preparation and planning, and we're confident we can provide an excellent program!