



DA VINCI TREE ACADEMY

COVID-19 Handbook and Policy Guide

2020-2022

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Da Vinci Tree Academy

A Public Charter School of STEM Arizona

Handbook Acknowledgements

A portion of this handbook is based on a template created by The Arizona School Risk Retention Trust. The remainder of the handbook was written and compiled by the staff of Da Vinci Tree Academy and the Governing Board of Science Technology Engineering and Math Arizona.

Edited by Matt Roll.

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Introduction

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), The Arizona Department of Health Services (AZDHS), and the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) recommend that reopening decisions be driven by the current prevalence of COVID-19 in the community. (Please review ADE's Roadmap for Reopening Schools, page 30, for more information.) The protocols that follow do not address whether a district should reopen, but instead include recommendations for mitigating risk for in-person education.

These protocols were set in place during the summer of 2020. In 2021, we wanted to continue basing our protocols off of the CDC "step" guidelines—specifically, Steps 2 and 3. Step 2 protocols, which include enhanced social distancing measures, should be followed until guidance from the CDC indicates that a transition to Step 3 protocols is appropriate.

This original plan was made illegal with the passage of a recent bill. It changed Arizona law to state that:

Section 12, title 15, chapter 3 of the Arizona budget: Notwithstanding any other law or order, a county, city, town, school district governing board or charter school governing body may not require the use of face coverings by students or staff during school hours and on school property; and

A school district or charter school may not require a student or teacher to receive a vaccine for COVID-19 or to wear a face covering to participate in in-person instruction.

Health experts have universally condemned this law as having no scientific merit. This law is in stark contrast to recommendations and rules set up by the federal Centers for Disease Control (CDC), American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), The Arizona Department of Health and Safety (AZDHS), the Maricopa County Department of Public Health (MCPDH) and the Pima County Health Department (PCHD). Dr. Elizabeth Jacobs, a University of Arizona professor of epidemiology has stated, "Banning schools from adopting a simple, cost-effective and scientifically-proven safety measure like mask-wearing while we are still in the midst of a pandemic makes absolutely no scientific or public health sense..."

Given the fact that we are a STEM school, we respectfully disagree with the State of Arizona's non-scientific and dangerous new law. School districts such as the Peoria Unified School District and Catalina Foothills District, and schools such as Phoenix Union High School are openly defying the new law and are continuing to require masks while on school campus.

Da Vinci Tree Academy has decided not to join these many schools in their peaceful protest of the this non-sensical law despite our agreement with their position. Our reasons are as follows:

- Da Vinci Tree Academy will be strongly encouraging and educating all students and staff to follow health agency guidelines every day. Although we can not enforce it as a mandatory part of our attendance (with the exception of field trips), we will be demonstrating to our students how we acknowledge and respect ALL authorities put in place over us by doing our best to balance these conflicting messages.
- These dozens of schools acting in the best interest of their communities' health and well being will most likely be subjected to a loss of state funding for their efforts until a (possibly) lengthy legal battle will be settled for the Arizona State Treasurer. At which point, they will likely reimburse the schools for the lost revenue. As a small, non-profit, independent charter school, we do not have the resources to join in this likely upcoming class action lawsuit. While we budget conservatively and have a responsible amount of savings, we don't feel that this decision would be productive to furthering the mission and vision of the school. It would be taking an important symbolic stand, but the risk of this symbolic gesture would put our entire organization, and most importantly our children's education, at stake.

Therefore, the following updated protocols are to be implemented throughout the school.

Staffing Assignments

The school's administration will coordinate all messages to students, parents, staff, and the community regarding opening, possible closure, and other COVID-19- related information. The administration will ensure that each building has posters with messaging on hand-washing and covering of coughs and sneezes located throughout, along with posters at site entrances reminding individuals not to enter if sick.

At each school building, an administrator or designee will coordinate social distancing protocols and/or current guidance from health agencies.

At each building, the lead custodian will coordinate implementation of cleaning protocols, including ensuring that sufficient cleaning supplies are available to janitorial staff and, as appropriate, students and staff.

School administrator or other designee will coordinate and implement the protocols set forth in the **Step Two Protocols: Employees** section of this document for screening of staff. That individual will be responsible for:

- communicating any reported case of COVID-19 among the school population to Principal Roll, and
- informing Principal Roll if absences of students and staff on any given day are above 10%, or if there appears to be a cluster of respiratory- related illnesses.

The special education director will coordinate with paraprofessionals to ensure that the needs of special education students and students with special needs are being met in the context of implementation of these safety protocols.

In conjunction with administration and our athletic coordinator, we will develop protocols that incorporate applicable Arizona Interscholastic Association (AIA) and CDC recommendations for athletic activities.

Training and Communication

Training

Prior to students returning to campus, all staff will be trained on implementation of these protocols. Training will include proper use of PPE and supplies; cleaning and disinfecting; and other measures.

Communication

Prior to students returning to campus, parents will be sent a copy (or directed to review a copy on the district or school website) of the portions of these protocols that relate to students and visitors. As part of this process, the district will send communication to all parents that outlines the symptoms for which parents must screen each morning, as well as the expectation that students will not be sent to school or placed on the bus if they are exhibiting any symptoms. The district will require a signed acknowledgement from parents regarding these protocols.

The designated COVID-19 point of contact shall be Office Registrar Jade Marshall, which will be communicated to parents prior to the first day of school. This person will be responsible for answering parent questions regarding implementation of COVID-19 protocols.

STEP 2 PROTOCOLS: Students on Campus

Step 2 protocols are established based on community monitoring that reveals low levels of community spread of COVID-19. These practices are put in place as part of a general scale-up of operations.

Daily Health Screenings

At Home

Inform students and parents that students must not come to school if they exhibit any of the following symptoms:

- fever of 100.4 F or 38 C or higher, or chills (please do not give students medicine to lower a fever as later in the day students are sent home when the fever returns);
- shortness of breath or difficulty breathing;
- muscle aches;
- sore throat;
- headache;
- congestion or runny nose;
- cough;
- vomiting (must not have vomited from sickness for 24 hours before returning to school);
- diarrhea; or
- new loss of taste or smell.

Also, inform parents on the school website, and via email reminders that they should screen students for the above symptoms each morning, should self-report symptoms, and must keep

students at home if any symptoms are present. Assure parents that students will have the opportunity to make up work missed due to symptoms of COVID-19.

****Note:** Da Vinci Tree Academy along with all schools in Arizona have been instructed not to give out attendance awards for the duration of the COVID-19 health crisis. ******

We will be implementing and respecting a system of “work submitted” to teach students who are unavoidably out of school the values of hard work and communication. These students will be rewarded with attendance credit. More information to be found in the general Parent Student Handbook.

At School

A staff member will visually check each student and take temperatures with a non-contact thermometer prior to students entering the school. Any student with visible symptoms of runny nose, cough, shortness of breath, or vomiting, or one who has a fever at or above 100.4* F (38* C), will be taken to the office. Parents may be contacted for pick-up with the following exceptions:

- If the student has a runny nose and the office staff observes that there are no other symptoms, the office staff will contact the parent to inquire as to whether the student has had any other symptoms or there have been any COVID-19 exposures in the home. If not, the student may return to class.

- If the student has health information on file that confirms a diagnosis of asthma or other respiratory condition and the office staff observes that there are no other symptoms, the office staff will contact the parent to inquire as to whether the student has had any other symptoms or there have been any COVID-19 exposures in the home. If not, the student may return to class.

Face Coverings

Students and staff are required to wear face coverings while traveling on the school bus. This is a **FEDERALLY MANDATED RULE** that supersedes the recent law passed in Arizona due to Article VI, Paragraph 2 of the US Constitution (commonly known as the Supremacy Clause).

Face coverings for the bus include:

- Cloth masks (top picture)
- Surgical masks (second picture)
- Face shields (third picture)
- Powered Air Purifying Respirators (PAPRs), only recommended for immunocompromised students (bottom picture)

Any student who has difficulty breathing or who is incapable of physically removing the face covering on his/her own will not wear cloth face coverings, and alternate methods of protection will be discussed by parents and staff.

Students may bring their own face coverings to and from school. Da Vinci Tree Academy will also have a supply of cloth face coverings available to provide students who cannot afford or do not have their own. Cloth face masks should be laundered daily. Cloth masks maintained by the school will be washed nightly in a washing machine using non-scented detergent as prescribed by the CDC. Face shields and PAPRs should be cleaned and disinfected daily when in use.

Note: Cloth face coverings are designed to protect other individuals rather than the individual wearing the covering. Accordingly, the greater number of students wearing cloth face coverings, the greater the overall transmission mitigation that will be achieved. Plastic face guards, which provide protection for the wearer are also permitted. If you have any questions or concerns about these requirements, please contact Mr. Roll at mroll@davincitree.academy.



Enhanced Social Distancing

Basic Social Distancing Practices

Have staff members educate and remind students regularly to maintain at least 3-6 feet of distance between individuals at all times possible.

Where possible, have students remain with the same groupings and the same staff throughout the day. Design schedules for middle and high school students to allow the same groupings of students to move from subject to subject as much as possible. Consider reducing class sizes as much as possible within the constraints of the number of students enrolled and the physical layout of the school.

Hand Washing

Every classroom/class area at Da Vinci Tree Academy is equipped with one or more hand washing sinks. All students are required to wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol at the following times:

- upon arrival at school
- after being outside for physical activity,
- before and after lunch,
- prior to leaving school for home, and
- after sneezing, coughing, or blowing nose.

Lunch

With the exception of students situated in outdoor classrooms, students will be eating in public spaces designated for lunch along with markers to encourage social distancing at the benches. Students purchasing hot lunch will have their lunch packages brought to them individually to encourage social distancing. Break time (after eating) and lunch time will be done outside unless it is raining.

Trips and Activities

School-wide assemblies may be held outside with students assembled in the same physical location. Social distancing will be observed as much as possible.

Specialized Classes

Some classes, such as science labs, choir, PE, and others, may require alternative lesson plans to limit contact and the sharing of supplies, and to reduce the spread of respiratory droplets.

STEP 2 PROTOCOLS: Employees

Step 2 protocols are established based on community monitoring that reveals low levels of community spread of COVID-19. These practices are put in place as part of a general scale-up of operations.

Visitors to School

Limit nonessential visitors and volunteers at school during the COVID-19 health crisis. Volunteers or visitors to the school must wear masks.

Daily Screenings

Employees will not be allowed to work onsite if they exhibit any of the following symptoms: fever of 100.4 F or 38 C or higher (unmedicated), or chills;

- shortness of breath or difficulty breathing;
- muscle aches;
- sore throat;
- headache;
- congestion or runny nose;
- cough;
- vomiting (must be away from work for 24 hours if related to sickness);
- diarrhea; or
- new loss of taste or smell.

Each employee's temperature will be taken by a designated staff member when employees report to work. A non-contact thermometer will be used. Have the designated on-site staff member keep a daily checklist of employees who have affirmed that they were symptom-free upon arrival. Maintain these records in a confidential file.

Hand Washing

Require employees to wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol at the following times, at minimum:

- upon arrival at school;
- after being outside for student physical activity;
- before and after lunch;
- after sneezing, coughing, or blowing nose; and
- after physical contact with other staff or students.

Enhanced Social Distancing

Social distancing will be observed as much as possible.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

Arrange for daily cleaning and disinfecting of all frequently touched surfaces in work areas, such as door handles, sink handles, drinking fountains, desks, and learning tools. The playground, sports equipment, and any other shared items (if they are being used) must be cleaned between uses by groups of students.

Inform staff that they are expected to clean and disinfect workspaces when they arrive at work and just before leaving work.

Assign schedules to janitorial staff for increased cleaning of surfaces and bathrooms throughout the day.

STEP 3 PROTOCOLS: Students on Campus

Social Distancing

Social distancing protocols may be relaxed somewhat during Step 3. Staff members should continue to educate and regularly remind students to maintain 3 feet of distance between individuals at all times possible. However, increased social interaction among classes is permissible.

Note: Nonessential visitors and volunteers at school may continue to be prohibited if deemed necessary by the school administration or the STEM AZ Board of Directors. If volunteers and visitors to school are permitted, they should be limited in number and must agree to adhere to the district's social distancing and other protocols.

Communal Spaces

Playgrounds. Permit classes to have staggered use time on playground equipment. Assign no more than three classes to a specific time slot.

Trips and Activities

Field trips that can comply with the protocols in this document will be permitted only if the area to be visited is at a Step 3 of community mitigation. Teachers should continue to use virtual learning opportunities (such as virtual tours of museums) to enhance students' educational experiences.

School assemblies may be held in distanced groups outside to ensure that social distancing protocols can be maintained. Unless social distancing can be maintained with all students in the same room, school-wide assemblies must be held virtually with student groups remaining in their classrooms.

COVID-19 INFECTION PROCEDURES

The following procedures will be implemented in both Stage 2 and Stage 3 in the event of COVID-19 symptoms or a COVID-19 positive test.

Procedures for COVID-19 Symptoms

If a person becomes sick with COVID-19 symptoms or reports a positive COVID-19 test, the procedures listed below should be followed:

1. Immediately report the situation to [designated district contact] ONLY. Confidentiality must be maintained to the greatest extent possible.
2. If an employee develops COVID-19 symptoms at work, separate the employee from all other students, staff, or visitors, then make arrangements to send the employee home in a safe manner. If the employee is able to self-transport, have the employee leave the site. If the employee is not able to safely self-transport, contact a family member, friend, or other method of transport to get the employee home or to a health care provider. If the employee appears to be in medical distress, call 911.
3. If a student develops COVID-19 symptoms at school, separate the student from all other students and staff, with the exception of one staff member to supervise the student. Have this staff member wear PPE or a cloth face covering and maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from the student at all times, unless there is an emergency. Immediately notify a parent or emergency contact to pick up the student, and call 911 if the student appears to be in medical distress.
4. Close off any areas that were exposed to the symptomatic employee or student for a prolonged period. Wait 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting those areas. During that time, if feasible, open windows or outside doors to increase air circulation. After 24 hours, thoroughly clean and disinfect all surfaces in the area, per CDC guidelines.
5. Determine whether other employees or students may have been exposed to the symptomatic individual within 6 feet and for a prolonged period of time (typically longer than 15 minutes). If so, notify those individuals (or, in the case of students, their parents) of the potential exposure. DO NOT disclose the name of the individual who has become sick.

Notification should recommend that exposed individuals monitor their health closely, contact their health care provider if possible, and self-quarantine if any symptoms develop.

6. Employees or students who have developed COVID-19 symptoms or had a positive COVID-19 test may not return to the site until either of the following two scenarios has occurred:

Scenario One

1. At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery, which is defined as: (a) resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications; and (b) improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and

2. At least 10 days have passed since the first symptoms emerged.

OR

Scenario Two

1. There has been a resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications; and

2. There has been improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and

3. The individual has received negative results of an FDA emergency-use- authorized COVID-19 molecular assay for detection of the virus that causes COVID-19 from at least two consecutive respiratory specimens collected ≥ 24 hours apart (total of two negative specimens).

Academic Procedures for a COVID-19 Positive Test: Student

In the event that a student tests positive for COVID-19, all of the families in the classroom will be notified within 24 hours while keeping the student's name confidential. The student with the confirmed COVID-19 case will be allowed to return to school after being cleared by a doctor or after conditions in "scenario one" or "scenario two" are met (described in the PROCEDURES FOR COVID-19 SYMPTOMS section).

In the event that a student was contagious while working in-person, the following steps will be taken per the guidelines set by the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) and our consultation with them on 11/2/2020.

The classroom with the prolonged exposure will be shut down for a period of two weeks from the last point of contact with the infected staff member. By “point of contact,” the ADHS clarifies that this means the last time students or staff had an exposure to the contagious individual for fifteen or more minutes in an indoor space (even with social distancing and mask wearing). Any staff members or students that came into contact with the individual while they were contagious will also quarantine in a similar fashion.

Academic Procedures for a COVID-19 Positive Test: Teacher

In the event that a teacher tests positive for COVID-19, all of the families in the classroom will be notified within 24 hours. Depending on related factors in the classroom, one of three things may occur:

1. The TA for the classroom will continue the classroom lessons as normal.
2. The TA for the classroom will continue the classroom lessons as normal with remote assistance from the teacher (in the event that the teacher is either asymptomatic or has a mild case of viral infection).
3. A substitute teacher will continue the classroom lessons as normal.

The classroom may become hybrid (some kids participating online) if parents express interest in hybrid learning. All students in the classroom will have the option of either participating online or in- person if the classroom turns hybrid. The teacher with the confirmed COVID-19 case will be allowed to return to school after being cleared by a doctor or after conditions in “scenario one” or “scenario two” are met (described in the PROCEDURES FOR COVID-19 SYMPTOMS section).

In the event that a teacher was contagious while working with students, the following steps will be taken per the guidelines set by the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) and our consultation with them on 11/2/2020.

4. The classroom with the prolonged exposure will be shut down for a period of two weeks from the last point of contact with the infected staff member. By “point of contact,” the ADHS clarifies that this means the last time students or staff had an exposure to the

contagious individual for fifteen or more minutes in an indoor space (even with social distancing and mask wearing).

5. Any staff members that came into contact with the individual while they were contagious will also quarantine in a similar fashion.

CIRCUMSTANCES FOR SCHOOL CLOSURE

The following section details the policies of the Science Technology Engineering and Math Arizona Board of Directors with regards to school opening and closure during the pandemic.

Background

As of September 1st, 2020 when this section was last updated, Da Vinci Tree Academy operated under a hybrid model. 60% or more of the student population were working online while about 40% or less worked in-person. Given this reality, the Board of Directors modified their guidance to for the "Opening Requirements" to rather be "Closing Requirements."

Again, since the school was already reopened when this policy was last updated, rather than title this section "Re-Opening Benchmark Conditions," we are titling it "Re-Closing Benchmark Conditions."

Re-Closing Benchmark Conditions

Under the following two circumstances, the Da Vinci Tree Academy will shut down hybrid and in-person learning for a minimum of two weeks (with no defined maximum timeframe) and shift all learning online.

If a state or regulatory agency with authority over the school mandates it.

In this circumstance, the school is committed to honoring the authorities put in place to keep our staff and students safe. The school will only reopen when the same authority or authorities allow us to do so.

If the school has eight or more employees out long-term.

If the school has five or more staff members out with a long-term sickness due to COVID-19 or otherwise. This number has been specifically chosen as the benchmark since it would be impractical or impossible to safely continue in-person learning with this number of staff on leave.

Informing Families Of Shutdowns or Openings

The school will use its standard method of informing families of any shutdown or opening. This method includes a mass email to all families followed by a phone call and/or text message to make sure that everyone was informed and had as much advance notice of the closure as possible.

During this two (or more) week shutdown, the school would also:

1. Continue with online learning. If classes had to be combined due to illness, teachers assuming the responsibility of teaching another class will be given appropriate compensation and/or bonus pay for the added workload and responsibility.
2. Complete a full facility deep-clean and disinfection following the cleaning protocols suggested by the World Health Organization.
3. Recommend to all families that they take their child's temperature at home daily. Families who participate would report this information back to the school in a manner that would be prescribed by the school.

This method of informing the community has been in place since before the school year began.

REQUIREMENTS FOR MAINTAINING ENROLLMENT

Attendance

Regular attendance and being on time are two things that help students have a good attitude toward school. The parent/guardian is charged with the responsibility for his/her child's attendance at school. (A.R.S. 15-802, policy section 5.1.1)

Absences and tardiness are upsetting for students. Both disrupt their schedules, require readjustment to the class routine, and slow down learning. Boys and girls should be in class every day unless they are ill. It is very important that the school is notified as soon as possible if a student will be absent or tardy. Please call the attendance line if your child is ill and will be absent. Your message should include your name, the child's name, classroom teacher, date(s) of absence, and a reason for the absence. An early call to the school will save time and help protect your child. If the school is not notified before noon of an absence, a call is made to check on student's attendance, and reason he/she is absent.

Students with absences in excess of 10% of the entire year will be reviewed for extenuating circumstances by school administration. If no extenuating circumstances exist, school administration will warn parents that any further unexcused absences will result in the grade level retention of their student. Since the typical school year at Da Vinci Tree Academy consists of 200 school days, this would represent a student missing more than 20 days of school (an entire calendar month).

Attendance -J-0511 JE-R Student Attendance

The right and privilege of attending public schools carries with it certain responsibilities on the part of both the parents and students. Parents and students must recognize the direct relationship which exists between academic success and regular school attendance.

Excessive absences by our definition are 5 days in one quarter/trimester; 10 days in two quarters/trimesters and 15 days in three quarters/trimesters of the school year. School administrators are authorized to excuse students from school for necessary and justifiable reasons. The parent(s) of students with excessive absences may be considered truancy, therefore; communication with school administration staff is important when your student is absent. Failure to meet this standard will lead to a loss of credit unless extenuating circumstances exist. Compliance is ultimately the responsibility of the student and his/her parents or guardians.

Students, ideally, should remain in school. Only when absolutely necessary should they be absent, as much of the classroom activity cannot be duplicated or repeated. Regular attendance is the key to much of the success a student may gain from his/her school program.

Definition of Absences:

A student who is not seated in their assigned seat when a teacher is taking attendance will be considered absent. A student not in his/her assigned class 10 minutes after the tardy bell is considered absent. According to A.R.S. 15-803, absences may be considered excessive when the number of absent days exceeds ten percent of the number of required attendance days as prescribed in A.R.S. 15-802.B.1. After 10 consecutive absences, the student will be withdrawn unless a serious medical condition documented by a medical doctor is filed with the school. Da Vinci Tree Academy Board Policy specifies that "excused absences are subject to approval by the PRINCIPAL. However, the parent must notify the school concerning the absence."

Absences shall be considered excused when they result from:

1. Doctor or dental appointment verified with an appointment slip or note.
2. Serious family illness or bereavement verified by parental contact or note.
3. The student is absent due to a prearranged event whereby the parent/guardian notified the school office of the date/time of the absence and school administration approves the absence. An excessive amount of prearranged absences during a school year, however, could result in a student being placed on an attendance contract.
4. Court appearances verified with an appointment slip or note.
5. A phone call or note from a parent excusing the student from school is necessary to inform the school that the student is not ditching.
6. A phone call or note from a parent excusing the student from school is necessary to inform the school that the student is not ditching, but it's not considered excused according to state law ARS 15-803.

Unexcused Absences:

Absences which do not satisfy items 1-5 above will be considered unexcused. Each ditch/truancy represents an unexcused absence.

Procedure for Reporting Absences:

Documentation must be provided within 24 hours of a student's return to class. Failure to verify an absence within one school day will result in the absence remaining unexcused. An administrator may accept a documented absence (excused) for an unforeseen circumstance if presented within 72 hours.

Absences can be reported via email or the schools automated phone system as well. The email parents/guardians should contact is both the front office and their student's teacher. The front office's

email is info@davincitree.academy. Teacher's emails are listed in the introduction to this handbook. To access the school's phone-based attendance system, a parent or guardian should dial 520-355-5880 extension 5 to be connected to the voicemail box of the schools attendance registrar.

Parents/guardians are required to call the school or provide notes to explain absences.

Makeup Work from Absences:

Students returning from an excused absence will have an amount of time equivalent to the number of days absent to make up work assigned during the absence. It will be the student's/parent's responsibility to see his/her teachers about arrangements to make up missed work and assignments immediately upon returning to school.

Leaving Early

For the safety and protection of all children, students are not allowed to leave their classrooms before our regular dismissal time without the parent or guardian personally signing the child out. When taking students from school early, please keep disruptions to a minimum since this is instructional time. The adult checking the child out of school must provide a picture ID and be listed as an emergency contact. We are unable to excuse students early on the basis of a note or telephone call from parents.

Tardiness

A student who arrives at school after the school day begins will be considered tardy and must be signed in by a parent or guardian. Tardy students need to report to the front office to receive a tardy pass to class. Repeated instances of tardiness will result in disciplinary action. K-5 students may receive three tardies per quarter without consequences. Students must be present 50% of the school day in order to participate in athletics and extra- curricular activities. Students who arrive to school after the start of the day must be signed in by a parent or authorized adult. Ten minutes after the tardy bell/class begins, a student may be considered absent.

Truancy/School Attendance

Arizona State law (A.R.S. 15-803) states that it is unlawful for any child between the ages of six and sixteen to fail to attend school during the hours school is in session, unless there is a valid excuse. Please refer to the following Arizona Revised Statutes for more information:

A.R.S. 15-346 Policies and procedures concerning pupils with chronic health problems; definition
15-802 School instruction; exceptions; violations; classification; definitions
15-804 Attendance officer; appointment; salary

15-805 Attendance officer; powers and duties

15-807 Absence from school; notification of parent or person having custody of pupil; immunity

15-873 Exemptions, nonattendance during outbreak

Absences will affect eligibility for participation in extra-curricular activities. If a child is home ill during the day, they will not be allowed to practice, play in a game, or attend an after school activity that day.

All In-Person Students

Students attending school all in-person do not need to do anything differently other than follow the precautions and preventive measures detailed in this handbook. Students attending in-person will be counted as present for school just as they always are.

Hybrid Students

When attending classes online, students must be present for attendance and must be able to respond that they are “in class” with either a verbal response or a text response in the synchronous meeting’s chat. Students must also participate in classroom discussions and activities using those methods. Teacher’s are allowed to request that a student turn on their webcam or turn off their mute. Students are allowed to refuse the webcam request, but they must explain the reason why later (in private) to the teacher or school administrator. Students are not allowed to refuse to unmute themselves, and refusal to do so will result in loss of participation points or even loss of attendance. This is the case since the school can not tell if a student is actually participating/paying attention to a class if their camera is turned off and they are unresponsive.

Handbook Adoption

This handbook was originally adopted in June 2020 by the Science Technology Engineering and Math Arizona Board of Directors. An updated version of this handbook was reaffirmed and readopted on August 28th, 2020 by the Science Technology Engineering and Math Arizona Board of Directors.

The most recent version of this handbook was considered in a board meeting on August 1st, 2021. It was voted upon and accepted unanimously by the Board of Directors.