



THE
BiOME
STEAM SCHOOL

Safe Return to School and Continuity of Services Plan SY 2024

4471 Olive St.
St. Louis, MO. 63108
313-531-0982
www.thebiomeschool.org





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GUIDING VALUES FOR THIS PLAN

COMMUNITY SAFETY

The Biome prioritizes the safety of our learners, staff, and community

The following safety procedures are from the latest COVID-19 recommendations and infectious disease control guidance from local health officials and the CDC, and K12 education leadership organizations. It is important to note that COVID-19 related conditions can change quickly and may necessitate modifications to the following procedures and mandates.

COMMUNICATION

The Biome believes that proactive, precise, frank, and two-way communication is necessary for success

As you know, the conditions that impact our decision-making change rapidly. We are committed to sharing our decisions, changing needs, and rationale with parents in a transparent and honest matter.

Strong communication requires two parties for success. Hearing from our parent community is essential, and we urge all parents to attend community meetings, parent-teacher conferences and send comments or questions—your feedback matters.

PLAN REVIEW AND REVISIONS

The Biome will review this plan and make necessary revisions at least every six months, but it could be much more often to respond to changing situations.

PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

Each family is afforded an opportunity to provide on going input to our Safe Return to School and Continuity of Services Plan via our website at <https://thebiomeschool.org/current-families/reopening-the-biome/>. Additionally, a draft of the plan will be posted on the website for review by our stakeholders for a period of no less than 15 days upon the completion of revisions. Our community will be notified of changes by text, email, phone, and our internal school messaging service.



HEALTH AND SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

FACE COVERINGS

Effecting August 1, 2022, The Biome will utilize the CDC's system of COVID-19 Community Levels to determine face covering status in schools, as follows:

Low (green): Face coverings optional

We appreciate the community's understanding and respect for individuals who choose to wear face coverings based upon personal preferences and individual health needs.

Medium (yellow): Face coverings optional or masks required if the school is experiencing an outbreak (An outbreak is defined as 2% of more of the population tests positive or are presumed to be positive)

If you are at high risk for severe illness, talk to your healthcare provider about whether you need to wear a mask and take other precautions.

Face coverings, i.e. "masks" will be required indoors for students K- 12, and adults if our COVID-19 community level is classified as medium and a school experiences a "COVID-19 outbreak" as defined below. The goal is to limit additional spread during an outbreak, protect the health and safety of students and staff, and avoid having to close the school. Therefore, masks will be required for all individuals in the school building for two weeks (14 calendar days) once the positivity rate reaches the threshold stated above. If after two weeks, the building's positivity rate is below the 2% positivity threshold, then masks will once again become optional. However, if the positivity rate for the building remains at or above the 2% positivity threshold, then all individuals in the building will be required to wear face masks for an additional week or until the school building's positivity rate is below the 2% threshold.

High (red) Face coverings required

If our COVID-19 community level framework is classified as high, students K- 12 and adults will be required to wear face coverings.

NOTE: The Biome is required to provide a safe learning environment for all, including those with certain disabilities. Therefore, despite the threshold noted above, masks may be required in certain classrooms, depending upon the health and safety needs of individual students or staff members.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

In our schools and classrooms, seating and activities will allow for social distancing of at least three feet whenever possible.



COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PROTOCOLS

Staff Protocol

Staff members infected with COVID-19 or who have symptoms will not be permitted to come to work based on board policy and Missouri law. Staff members should remain in communication with their school nurse or designated building contact tracer and receive authorization prior to returning to school/work.

Student Protocol

Students infected with COVID-19 or who have symptoms will not be permitted to come to school based on board policy and Missouri law. Students should remain in communication with their school nurse or Principal and receive authorization prior to returning to school.

Close Contacts

Students and staff will not be excluded from school or work solely because of being a close contact with a positive case at school, regardless of vaccination status.

However, should the District receive evidence that a close contact (whether or not the exposure is at school) may be liable to transmit COVID-19 after exposure, then the District may exercise its authority to require testing of the student or staff member and to exclude the student or staff member if they refuse to take a test or test positive.

Contact Tracing

We will use contact tracing and continue to notify parents and staff if they or their child is exposed at school to an individual infected with COVID-19. Parents and staff will be asked to monitor their child and themselves for symptoms of COVID-19.

Keeping our Schools Safe

People with symptoms of infectious diseases, including COVID-19, [influenza](#), respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and gastrointestinal infections should stay home and get tested for COVID-19. People who are at risk for getting very sick with COVID-19 who test positive should consult with a healthcare provider right away for possible treatment, even if their symptoms are mild. Staying home when sick can lower the risk of spreading infectious diseases, including the virus that causes COVID-19, to other people.

Symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose



- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

IMMUNIZATIONS

There are no changes in the requirements for student immunizations for the 2021-22 school year. Under the Missouri Code of Regulations, Immunization Requirements for School Children 19 CSR 20-28.010, it is vital that our families partner with the school to ensure that every learner is protected.



MITIGATION STRATEGIES

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

- Large gatherings, school events and activities may be structured to reduce the risk of exposure whenever possible.
- Visitors may be limited inside the school and classrooms at the discretion of school leadership to minimize the risk of exposure.

SCREENING AND TESTING

- Before leaving for school, families should perform an evaluation of their students' health. If your student is feeling ill, do not send them to school.
- Contact the school immediately or report the COVID-19 positivity via our website at <https://thebiomeschool.org/current-families/reopening-the-biome/> under the "Help Keep our Community Safe" section.
- Call your health care provider for advice on managing illness.



CAMPUS SAFETY PROCEDURES

Enclosed are summarized procedures that The Biome will follow to support student learning while ensuring both staff and students' safety.

- Health screenings of all visitors entering the building
- Designated Wellness Room to quarantine ill persons
- Limiting visitors to maintain social distancing
-



LEARNING COHORT MODEL

Due to our small school population and class sizes, all learners at The Biome will be segregated into Learning Cohorts by grade level. The Learning Cohorts will ensure that classes include the same group of children each day and that the same classroom leaders remain with the same group each day. While mixing between two third grade classes is allowed, as they are in the same Learning Cohort, mixing between learners in the 3rd Grade Cohort and 4th Grade Cohort is not permitted.



Before and After Care services will mirror the established Learning Cohorts in the administration of those programs.



COVID-19 TESTING & ANTIGEN TESTING

City residents can obtain the test for free by visiting a Federally Qualified Health Center Site. Visit <https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/health/communicable-disease/covid-19/data/test-locations.cfm> for scheduling information. St. Louis County residents can visit testing sites in Berkeley and Sunset Hills. You are required to set an appointment for screening by calling (314)615-0574 or visit www.stlcorona.com to schedule your visit. You can also contact your primary care physician if that is your preference; however, that cost would be your responsibility.



OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES



FACILITY MAINTENANCE

We are increasing the scope of our custodial duties to meet the requirements and guidance for building and surface cleaning. The Biome provides all classrooms with all necessary supplies, including sanitizing wipes, hand sanitizer, and face coverings.

The primary mode of COVID-19 spread is from person to person, primarily via droplet transmission. For this reason, strategies for infection prevention should center around this form of spread, including physical distancing, face coverings, and hand hygiene. Given the challenges that may exist in children and adolescents in effectively adhering to recommendations, staff set an excellent example for learners by modeling behaviors around physical distancing, face coverings, and hand hygiene. Infection via aerosols and fomites is less likely.



MASKS

COVID-19 [spreads](#) mainly from person to person through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, talks, or raises their voice (e.g., while shouting, chanting, or singing). These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of nearby people or possibly inhaled into the lungs. [Recent studies](#) show that a significant portion of individuals with COVID-19 lack symptoms (are asymptomatic) and that even those who eventually develop symptoms (are “pre-symptomatic”) can transmit the virus to others before showing symptoms.

To reduce the spread of COVID-19, CDC recommends that people wear cloth face coverings in public settings when around people outside of their household, especially when other social-distancing measures are challenging to maintain.

Wear your Face Covering Correctly

- Wash your hands before putting on your face covering
- Put it over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin
- Try to fit it snugly against the sides of your face
- Make sure you can breathe easily



GLOVES

Wearing gloves is necessary for all staff who are interacting with sick or suspected sick individuals. Wear a fresh pair of gloves when working with each new individual. An individual should wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before putting on gloves and then once again after removing gloves.



In certain instances, classroom leaders or staff other than the janitorial staff may need to clean surfaces. Glove usage is mandatory when disinfecting any surface in the school or when using disinfectants. Be sure to wash your hands after you have removed and disposed of the gloves. **Gloves are not a substitute for hand hygiene.**



HANDWASHING

Classroom leaders will teach and reinforce handwashing with learners to practice norms and set expectations at the beginning of the school year or in-person learning. Handwashing expectations should be reinforced daily. Handwashing training will be implemented quarterly.

TIPS FOR PARENTS: HAND HYGIENE AND RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE

- Teach and reinforce **handwashing** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and increase monitoring to ensure learners' adherence.
 - Administrators should teach and reinforce handwashing with staff
 - If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol can be used.
- Classroom Leaders will instruct learners to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and throw the used tissue in the trash, and hands washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
 - If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol can be used

Follow Five Steps to Wash Your Hands the Right Way

Washing your hands is easy, and it is one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs. Clean hands can stop germs from spreading from one person to another and throughout an entire community—from your home and workplace to childcare facilities and hospitals.

Follow these five steps every time.

1. **Wet** your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. **Scrub** your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
4. **Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water.
5. **Dry** your hands using a clean towel or air dry them

Key Times to Wash Hands

The daily schedule allows adequate time during the day to direct learners to wash their hands during the following key times:



- **Before, during, and after** preparing food
- **Before** eating food
- **After** eating food
- **Before and after** treating a cut or wound
- **After** using the restroom
- **After** blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- **After** touching garbage
- **Before** touching your eyes, nose, or mouth because that is how germs enter our bodies

Using Hand Sanitizers

You can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available. Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to get rid of germs in most situations. If soap and water are not readily available, learners and staff can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

- **Caution!** Swallowing alcohol-based hand sanitizers can cause alcohol poisoning if more than a couple of mouthfuls are swallowed. Keep it out of the reach of learners and supervise its use.

Sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in many situations. However,

- Sanitizers do **not** get rid of all types of germs.
- Hand sanitizers may not be as effective when hands are visibly dirty or greasy.
- Hand sanitizers might not remove harmful chemicals from hands like pesticides and heavy metals.

How to use hand sanitizer

- Apply the gel product to the palm of one hand (read the label to learn the correct amount).
- Rub your hands together.
- Rub the gel over all the surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry. This process should take around 20 seconds.

Information to Share with Learners About How Germs Spread

Washing hands can keep you healthy and prevent the spread of respiratory and diarrheal infections from one person to the next. Germs can spread from other people or surfaces when you:

- Touch your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Prepare or eat food and drinks with unwashed hands
- Touch a contaminated surface or objects
- Blow your nose, cough, or sneeze into hands and then touch other people's hands or everyday objects



RESTROOMS

Learning Cohorts will follow the restroom schedule to avoid mixing. Classroom Leaders or their designee will handle learners who need to use the restroom outside of the schedule. Each Classroom Leader will remind learners to only to enter the restroom when it is unoccupied.



WATER FOUNTAINS

- Water fountains will be closed except for the bottle filling stations
- Learners should bring water bottles to school each day. Water bottles are required to be taken home each night.

EXCLUSION GUIDELINES

The Biome will send home or deny entry to children, care providers, or staff with illness symptoms. For symptoms consistent with COVID-19, reference the exclusion criteria below to determine when individuals may return.

QUARANTINE GUIDELINES

The CDC states that individuals who are sick should isolate from others until the receipt of COVID-19 test results. If the result is negative, the individual may return to school once symptoms improve and they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of medication. If the COVID-19 test result is positive, the individual should isolate for five (5) days. Isolation may be ended at this point if symptoms have improved and they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of medication. The individual should wear a high-quality mask through day 10. Individuals with a moderate or severe illness due to COVID-19, who are immunocompromised, need to isolate through day 10. Anyone who has been infected with COVID-19 should avoid being around people who may get very sick from COVID-19 until the end of day 10.

ISOLATION FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH A COVID-19 INFECTION

The CDC states that individuals who are sick should isolate from others until the receipt of COVID-19 test results. If the result is negative, the individual may return to school once symptoms improve and they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of medication. If the COVID-19 test result is positive, the individual should isolate for five (5) days. Isolation may be ended at this point if symptoms have improved and they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of medication. The individual should wear a high-quality mask through day 10. Individuals with a moderate or severe illness due to COVID-19, or who are immunocompromised, need to isolate through day 10. Anyone who has been infected with COVID-19 should avoid being around people who may get very sick from COVID-19 until the end of day 10.



ADDITIONAL PREVENTION TIPS

There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The best way to prevent illness is to avoid exposure to this virus. However, as a reminder, the CDC (Center for Disease Control) always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

Wash your hands often

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after being in a public place or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, **use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol**. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth** with unwashed hands.

Avoid close contact

- **Avoid close contact with people who are sick, even inside your home.** If possible, maintain 6 feet between the person who is ill and other household members.

Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when around others

- You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick.
- Everyone should wear a cloth face cover when they have to go out in public, for example, to the grocery store or to pick up other necessities.
 - Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- The cloth face cover is meant to protect you and other people from respiratory droplets.
- Do NOT use a facemask meant for a healthcare worker.
- Continue to keep about 6 feet between yourself and others. The cloth face cover is not a substitute for social distancing.

Cover coughs and sneezes

- **When you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue or use the inside of your elbow, and do not spit.
- **Throw used tissues** in the trash.
- Immediately **wash your hands** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

Clean and disinfect

- **Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.** These surfaces include tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- **If surfaces are dirty, clean them.** Use detergent or soap and water before disinfecting.
- **Then, use an EPA-registered household disinfectant.**

Monitor Your Health

- **Be alert for symptoms.** Watch for fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other signs of **COVID-19**.



- Especially important if you are running essential errands, going into the office or workplace, and in settings where it may be challenging to keep a physical distance of 6 feet.
- **Take your temperature** if symptoms develop. Do not take your temperature within 30 minutes of exercising or after taking medications that could lower your temperature, like acetaminophen.



COMMUNICATION PLAN

The COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic has caused enormous disruptions for all schools, including The Biome. With little notice, we may need to make a quick decision regarding a wide range of topics related to school closings, online instruction, and deciding whether to cancel or postpone events. Families and other school stakeholders should expect communication through a variety of channels, as outlined below.

Communication Tactics

All communication messages must be reviewed and approved by the President and CEO. The President and CEO will communicate all closure/postponement decisions to the School Board or, when appropriate, coordinate with the Board Chair to convene an emergency board meeting.

Send communication to families using the following channels:	
Channel	Responsibility
Email, text, and automated voice communication through Tyler SIS	Principal or designee
Publish an update to social media	Principal or designee
Post an update to the school web page with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on how community members can connect to meetings via Zoom • Recorded video updates from the President and CEO • Any schedule changes 	President and CEO or designee

The City of St. Louis Department of Health Communicable Disease Bureau can be reached at (314) 657-1499. The Biome will report all active cases or quarantine due to contact with a known case of COVID-19 to the St. Louis Department of Health.

The Biome website, www.thebiomeschool.org, will be used when community health concerns are amplified. Information will be highlighted on the website and through social media as updates are made available.

The President and CEO is the designated individual to issue information and updates on school dismissals to staff, parents, and community (media).



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

Are staff and learners required to wear face coverings?

See Page 5 for mask (face coverings) guidance.

Will learners and staff be provided face coverings?

Staff and learners will be offered 3 face coverings. Disposable coverings will be available on a limited basis to replace lost or damaged masks. Staff members and learners may also provide their own face coverings.

What is being done to keep learners and staff safe?

The Biome is instituting state-of-the-art cleaning measures, social distancing, changing structures in buildings to comply with local health department guidelines and providing additional recommended mitigation measures. It is our mission and responsibility to keep staff and learners safe and operate school based on health department guidelines

What if there is a positive case at The Biome?

The Biome will contact the City of St. Louis Health Department and comply with all local health department recommendations based on the level of infection/exposure. Additional cleaning and sanitation procedures will also be followed. Individuals with direct close contact will be notified of any additional directions/requirements.

What if my child doesn't feel well?

Your child should remain at home. You will still need to report your absence in accordance with school policy. If you believe the symptoms are consistent with COVID-19, contact your local health provider for further evaluation.

What if my child is sick but it's not COVID-19 related?

Your child should remain home and notify the school of their absence. Because of COVID-19, we must follow return to school protocols.

What if I don't feel comfortable sending my child to school?

The Biome recognizes that every family has different needs and there is a lot of information out there regarding COVID-19. The Biome is implementing safety procedures in accordance with current health department guidelines to ensure that our staff and learners are safe. If at any time the guidelines are relaxed or tightened based on the data, then we will adjust to those changes. If your family has a low risk tolerance for COVID-19 exposure and your child does not return to school on campus during the 2021-22 school year, you should enroll in the virtual MOCAP course offerings. The virtual MOCAP courses will be 100% online for the entire semester.

Where can I find testing sites if I do not have a health/primary care provider?

There are several locations open to the public in St. Louis City. Visit <https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/covid-19/data/test-locations.cfm> or call (314) 612-5100.



CONTACT INFORMATION

Reporting positive COVID-19 case in learner or member of learner’s household:

Visit: <https://thebiomeschool.org/current-families/reopening-the-biome/>

SCHOOL PERSONNEL CONTACT CHART (Who to contact about what)

Concern	Contact	Email	Phone Extension
General Academic Program Questions – COVID-19 Questions	Julie Harris (Principal)	jharris@thebiomeschool.org	201
Attendance	Keonna Shelton	kshelton@thebiomeschool.org	200
Device needs or technology issues	Myles Keough	Mkeough@thebiomeschool.org	210
Special Education	Megan Jones	mjones@thebiomeschool.org	209
Literacy Support	Carolyn Jordan	cjordan@thebiomeschool.org	203
Specifics about your child’s Academics	Contact your classroom leader		