



*The* **DENVER WALDORF** *School*

## Reopening and Remaining Open Plan 2020-21 School Year



Updated  
October 1, 2020

## **Introduction**

We have prepared this comprehensive plan for reopening in compliance with the Colorado Department of Education (CDE), the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), along with the reopening standards from Metro Denver Partnership for Health for the 2020-21 school year. Our small class size, ample facility and outdoor space, in addition to our close-knit community allow us to be especially poised to address the educational needs of students for the coming year. We are ready to meet the challenges of delivering our curriculum in light of COVID-19 by offering an exceptional Waldorf curriculum during these unusual and trying times. Our primary goals are to keep our community of students together in person as often as possible while maximizing community safety and keeping our educational standards high. A Waldorf curriculum emphasizes the importance of social connectedness and relationship. Education should foster what it is to be human, cultivate lifelong curiosity and inspire love for the world. Throughout the 2020-21 school year, whether together or remote, we will continue our relational approach to learning.

This plan was created by the DWS COVID-19 Reopening Task Force, which includes Administrative Staff and Faculty to support every facet of our school. This group continues to meet weekly ensuring that safety and health of students and community remains paramount while holding fast to our mission, vision and values. The DWS Reopening Plan is divided into four sections for easy reference: Health and Safety, Curriculum and Instruction, Student support, Health, and Well-being, and Staffing and Human Resources. Questions on Health and Safety may be directed toward Christa Gustafson, Health and Safety Manager ([dws@denverwaldorf.org](mailto:dws@denverwaldorf.org)). Questions on other topics may be sent to Hannah Ronan-Daniell, Advancement Coordinator ([communicate@denverwaldorf.org](mailto:communicate@denverwaldorf.org)) and Hannah will ensure they are answered by the appropriate individuals.

## **Health and Safety**

The Denver Waldorf School is committed to offering in-person learning throughout the school year as much as is feasible. In order to be open and together we hold the health and well-being of our students, families and staff with utmost importance and follow current health guidance relevant to our school and greater community. We continue to receive guidance from the Colorado Department of Education (CDE), Colorado Health Partnership (including five regional health departments), and our Children's Hospital School Nurse consultant. We also follow recommendations and requirements from the Governor's Office.

As we return to school this year, all of us will notice the health and safety changes in our procedures, protocols and interactions. It is our goal that these procedures and protocols are implemented in a way that minimizes as much as possible any negative impact on our students

as we strive to maintain conditions for the healthy development, socialization, learning and play that is paramount to a Waldorf education.

### **Stages and relation to local government guidance and phases**

Over the summer DWS laid out a 4 Stage plan of re-opening [DWS 4 Stage Plan](#) that highlights the ways we envisioned coming together this year. A summary of stages are listed below, along with the factors that would determine which stage the school is in at any given time throughout the year.

#### **Stage 1 – “Together Again”**

This is the stage that most closely resembles our normal school programming. It is not yet clear what local measures would allow for a majority of the school’s pre-COVID-19 operations to resume. We anticipate the wider Denver community would need to be at least in the *Protect our Neighbor* phase as outlined by Governor Polis, and which corresponds with low incidence of community spread of COVID-19. To be “Together Again” we imagine sustaining or declining levels of disease transmission, wide-spread herd immunity, increased availability of testing and contact tracing, and medical resources.

#### **Stage 2 – “In Person”**

This in-person phase allows all children to have the opportunity for full-day learning in the school building and surrounding outside areas with proper protocols and safety measures in place. We are eager to begin the year in Stage 2 together. The school can remain in this phase of learning when the broader community is in the *Safer at Home* phase outlined by Governor Polis. This phase corresponds to limited outbreaks of COVID-19 in the broader Denver community and the ability for the public health system to treat current individuals experiencing cases.

The Denver Waldorf School will remain in Phase 2 as long as Denver continues to be in the *Safer at Home* phase and our school community transmission and exposure rates are low. This opening will occur with guidance from CDPHE and in alignment with CDPHE outbreak guidance . The School will additionally need to shift to Stage 3 or 4 in the event that 20% or more faculty/staff are unable to attend school due to Covid-19 related factors (quarantine, illness, testing results, or health risks).[CDPHE Outbreak Guidance](#)

#### **Stage 3 - “Blended”**

This phase would be a combination of in-person and remote learning. DWS will have a blended learning phase if we are unable to have all students on campus concurrently. Younger children are prioritized for full-day learning when we are in Blended learning at DWS. This could occur for three different reasons:

- 1) If entire facility is unable to be utilized due to health and safety concerns (cleaning, ventilation, etc.)

- 2) If local regulations limit the number of students on site or in classrooms at a given time, thus forcing DWS to use their facility in a different way to accommodate students
- 3) Individual cohorted classes are at home due to COVID exposure or outbreak while others are still in school.
- 4) Some students are learning from home due to health and safety concerns while others are at school. The Denver Waldorf School encourages children to be in a social environment when possible. Teachers will provide main lesson content for students learning remotely. We cannot guarantee that all special subjects or other class periods will be available, but will do our best to provide curriculum when feasible.
- 5) Some teachers have telework arrangements that allow teaching remotely from home while students are in the classroom with a class monitor.

#### **Stage 4 – “Distance Learning”**

When students are unable to be at school based on [outbreak guidance](#), local regulations or more than 20% of DWS faculty and staff unable to be on campus, school students are engaged in distance learning. All families are provided with a class schedule and a distance learning schedule and DWS will provide a full curriculum for students when the school is in Stage 4.

Our remote program this year will closely align with our in-school options so that it is easy for parents and students to follow the rhythm of the school day. This year DWS is utilizing a combination of Zoom, Google Classroom and the Google Suite for more streamlined use of online tools. Accountability of students online is expected and attendance and uploading of assignments is easier for students and parents to navigate. Behavior standards for students when online are provided and students are expected to follow all standards set forth by the school.

The DWS ECE program will remain in session, when possible, even if the remainder of the school has to go remote.

#### **Facilities, ventilation, signage, room use**

Following best practices, and OSHA guidelines, the DWS facility and campus is being transformed to provide a safer campus for students and staff. The following improvements are continuing to be made:

- Modified ventilation to allow for increased and continuous fresh air intake and quality throughout the building and in classrooms: This includes improvements and replacements to inefficient HVAC units, replacement of all thermostats, and air filtration upgrades. Rooms that are unable to be modified will remain closed this year.
- Temporary hand sinks have been built and are located throughout the school to allow for increased handwashing throughout the school day.
- Dedicated health office and rooms are provided to allow for students who have COVID-related symptoms to remain separate from other students.

- Signage located throughout the building to indicate patterns of student movement and flow throughout the building and ensure that only the correct number of adults or students are in any given space at a time.
- In some cases specific classroom use is eliminated or modified. Classroom size and number of students per class has been considered for room assignments and only a few classrooms are open for rotating use of student groups - any classrooms utilized for multiple groups are cleaned between student use.
- There are dedicated outside classroom spaces for use of students in ECE through high school and these spaces are used throughout the year as weather permits.

## **Protocols**

To slow the spread of COVID-19 many health protocols are in place for students and staff as we begin the school year.

### **Cleaning**

- Cleaning of classrooms and building are maintained each night by our professional cleaning crew. Throughout the day high touch areas, restrooms, health rooms, and any rooms that students are moving through are cleaned multiple times. All students in grades 1-8 are dismissed one Friday a month for additional cleaning.

### **Handwashing**

- [Handwashing](#) for a minimum of 20 seconds proves to be effective against germs of all kinds including COVID-19. DWS will continue to promote handwashing throughout the day upon arrival, before snack and lunch, after using the bathroom, and at dismissal. Although hand sanitizing stations have also been added throughout the building as an additional preventive, handwashing proves to be most effective.

## **Health Screening**

All families are required to submit a health screening for their students every morning. This screening includes the following questions:

- COVID-19 diagnosis or exposure in the last 2 weeks
- Presence of major symptoms of COVID-19 (fever of 100.4 or above), new or unexplained persistent cough, new loss of taste or smell, vomiting, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Presence of minor symptoms and whether they are usual: fatigue, muscle/body aches, headache, sore throat, nausea or diarrhea, runny nose or congestion
- Temperature

DWS has guidance from our Nurse Consultant regarding minor and major symptoms and return to school. DWS parents and guardians have received this guidance and the Health and Safety Manager follows up with families regarding symptoms, test results, doctor's notes, etc.

The Denver Waldorf School's Illness Policy still applies, and can be found [here](#) or on our website. Symptoms related to COVID-19 are handled differently this year.

\*\*Please note: guidance changes periodically as more is learned about COVID-19. The above screening process and the process for handling symptoms are current as of October 1, 2020.

### **Physical Distancing**

- Class sizes are limited to 19 students in each ECE classroom, 24 students in Grades 1-4 and 23 students in Grades \*5-8 based on the size of the classrooms. Physical distancing between students in and outside of class is promoted when possible and is prioritized in 5<sup>th</sup> -8<sup>th</sup> Grade. \*Our current 7th grade we placed in an alternative classroom to accommodate current size.ill be
- Excess furniture has been removed from classroom areas in order to allow for increased distance between students.

### **Mask wearing**

- All students, staff, and faculty wear masks daily while inside and outside the building unless 6 ft. apart. Mask wearing is a proven way to prevent COVID-19 transmission and works when both individuals interacting are wearing masks. Our priority is to be together in-person, and because we can only support physical distancing, and not guarantee it we will all wear masks. The school will provide a healthy rhythm where students can be physically distanced and outdoors in order to be mask free at times throughout the day – including. Families who supply additional masks should purchase masks that are school appropriate and not distracting to others. Neutral patterns and solid colors are allowed. Masks should be well fitting to cover the nose and mouth and need to be washed regularly.

### **Cohort/class size**

Cohorting is the practice of keeping the same students and children in the same group during the school day. By utilizing the practice of cohorting we aim to have fewer dismissals, quarantines and school closures. DWS will work with CDPHE and follow the [outbreak guidance](#) in relation to cohort dismissal.

- Each class/Grades K-8 is considered an individual cohort. Each cohort of students in Grades 1-4 will have exposure to no more than 3 visiting teachers per day, while each cohort in Grades 5-8 will have no more than 2 visiting teachers per day. For consistency and rhythm of curricular content, cohorts of students and teachers will remain together for one block (4 weeks) at a time.
- K-8 cohorts remain primarily in their own classrooms with the majority of special subjects teachers rotating to the students' classrooms as needed.
- The High School is considered one cohort with a limited number of teachers in any given block.
- High School and grade school teachers will not be shared in any given block.

- If there is a COVID-19 case or probable case within a cohort, the entire cohort will quarantine with remote learning for 14 days.
- 1<sup>st</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade class sizes have been capped at \*23-24 students in order to maximize physical distance within each classroom space. \* The 7<sup>th</sup> grade is an exception and is having class in the Eurythmy room.
- A partnered cohort will share teachers and recess time (maintaining physical distance), but will not mix as a group of students during classroom time. Partnered cohorts are 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Grade, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade, and the High School.
- We recognize that with students throughout our Denver community back in school, cohorting within our school groups remains important in order for DWS to remain open consistently and safely. We ask community members to take necessary precautions outside of school when interacting with children from other DWS cohorts or from other schools to minimize the potential spread of COVID-19 within our school so we can continue being together for in-person learning.

### **Visitors on Campus**

For the health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff DWS will limit the amount of visitors, including parents, to our campus during the 2020-21 school year while we remain in any of the current public health phases designated by the Governor's Office. Established protocols are in place by the start of school for pick-up and drop-off, and we will take into account new students and ECE children to ensure they feel welcomed and comfortable.

Any visitors who are on campus this year will follow the school health screening process and procedures as well as be asked to remain in the reception area of the school.

### **Curriculum and Instruction**

Throughout the summer months the Dream Team (a task force made of faculty and administration) has been specifically focused on developing this year's DWS curriculum plans. This group has been working diligently to provide guidelines that allow for maintaining a full curriculum in a rhythmic way whether students are in person or accessing school remotely. Families will receive both an in-person and remote schedule prior to school that can be followed throughout the year.

### **School Calendar**

Although we were hopeful to begin school on the previously scheduled day of August 25<sup>th</sup>; it was necessary to delay our opening in order to finalize the preparation of the inside and outside spaces with the above stated changes. These changes will maximize the educational experience of the students and create a safer environment.

The Denver Waldorf School plans to begin in-person instruction on:

- Tuesday, September 8: Grades 5<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup>
- Wednesday, September 9: ECE and Grades 1<sup>st</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup>

This staggered start ensures that we are able to manage our protocols with smaller groups of students and make changes as needed during the first week of school in order to prioritize health and safety. **Due to the delay of the school schedule, DWS will no longer have a February break and will remain in school until June 3, 2021 for ECE and June 4, 2021 for the remainder of the school.**

A new school calendar has been provided next week along with individual class schedules. During this school year students in ECE - 8th grade will have an additional Friday off a month, and high school students are dismissed at half day each Friday. These days are shown on the calendar you will receive next week. This time has been prioritized to allow for the the following:

- Cleaning of school and individual classrooms.
- More in-depth analysis and data management of community health and safety trends.
- Time for teachers to manage any personal or professional business due to extremely limited substitution opportunities outside of COVID-19 health-related reasons
- Allow visitors to enter or work in the building (maintenance, deliveries, school tours) without exposing students or staff through direct contact.

### **Early Dismissals**

As we have opened school and gone through a few weeks, we've realized that our resources are thin this year with all of our extra duties. We understand there are reasons for early dismissals, however we have put some parameters in place:

For non-urgent appointments (6 month dentist appointments, physicals, etc.) please schedule those on breaks, independent work days, or outside of school hours.

If your student must be dismissed early, please get them at their lunch time. Remember to communicate with your teacher and the DWS receptionist about early dismissals.

### **Outside classrooms**

The school is providing outside classrooms for students in ECE through the High School in order for students to participate in outside learning opportunities. These classrooms are used on rotation and during times when classes are outside additional cleaning and fresh air can be utilized to assist with increased classroom cleanliness. Families should plan for appropriate attire for outside learning. This should include, as always – sturdy shoes, sun hats, water bottles and appropriate clothing layers for changing weather.

### **Athletics, Aftercare and Camp**

The Denver Waldorf School participates in Middle School and High School Girls Volleyball, High School Boys Volleyball, Middle and High School Boys and Girls Basketball, Middle and High School Ultimate Frisbee, and Middle School Cross Country. CHSAA (Colorado High School Activities Association) has altered their calendar reflecting low-risk sports for fall, and Girls



Volleyball has been moved to the spring. We may still move forward with Middle School Cross Country this fall and will communicate the decision once we know.

Any athletic team is considered an additional cohort and be subject to cohort guidelines in terms of COVID cases, probable cases, and quarantine.

The school ran a successful Summer Camp program and will monitor regulations and guidance as to whether we are able to have a Thanksgiving Camp, or Spring Break Camp. We will send communications via email as we know more.

### **Student Support/Health and Well-being**

We are fortunate to have a student support team at DWS that includes literacy support for 1<sup>st</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade, math support for the Middle School, and overall support for all grades. The student support team includes Dr. Sarah Boyer – Student Support Coordinator, Milandra Pfister, Literacy Support Teacher, and Stephanie Urban, Math Support Teacher. We recognize that all students have different learning styles, strengths, and challenges and that these challenges faced in the coming year along with unpredictable scheduling could adversely affect some students more than others. Although navigating these scheduling challenges and learning needs related to remote learning is new to us as well we will do what we can to work with individual students in a way that is most supportive to them.

Even with the cohort restrictions on the number of teachers per group, teachers offering literacy support, math support, counseling, and therapeutic support and assessment will still be able to work with students one-on-one to help them with their individual learning goals.

In addition to the learning supports offered, our counselor, Jenny Thompson, will continue to work with the mental and emotional health of all students through online and in-person support groups, individual student check-ins by referral from the teachers, and by providing online resources to families. This time is unprecedented for all of us and it is important that we as adults help our children navigate this challenging time in any way that we can.

### **Staffing and Human Resources**

We are confident that you feel the same when we acknowledge that our teachers and staff are our greatest resources allowing us to offer this incredible education. The safety and protection of adults who serve and teach our children is paramount to a successful year. Ensuring that our faculty and staff can stay home when needed, have proper PPE, and necessary accommodations is critical to navigating this year and coming back together as a strong community in future years. We anticipate that this year we will need to have patience and understanding around teacher changes, substitution limitations, and the probability that we will occasionally be short on staff. To accommodate our current guidelines some classes are offered from a teacher working remotely even when the students are together. When this occurs, these classes are moderated by an adult in the classroom.

The Denver Waldorf School provides COVID-19 testing to faculty and staff on a regular basis and all employees are encouraged to test every two weeks.

As mentioned above, in addition to factors determined by guidance from outside agencies The Denver Waldorf School will switch to remote learning when 20% or more of adults are unable to be physically at school.

### **Conclusion**

DWS believes that with the plan detailed above, we are prepared and eager to begin the school year together. Our strong community and educational foundation support the flexibility and adaptability we all must practice to have a successful and healthy return to in-person schooling. In reopening together we take the very real risks associated with bringing groups together and weigh them with the importance of community and social education. We ask members of our community to practice patience, understanding, and flexibility while we navigate this year together.

We anticipate that the further release of local guidelines will call for revision of this document; updated versions of our Reopening and Remaining Open Plan is available on the DWS website.

Respectfully submitted by Kelly Church, School Director  
On behalf of The Denver Waldorf School