

# **AUDITORY ORAL SCHOOL OF NEW YORK'S RE-OPENING SAFETY & CONTINUITY of LEARNING PLAN DURING COVID-19**

As of July 31, 2020

## **Auditory/Oral School of NY's Reopening Safety and Continuity of Learning Plan**

The Auditory Oral School of New York /Strivright(AOSNY) has been working diligently with stakeholders and community members including Department of Health, Department of Education, AOSNY leadership team, staff members, parents, other Option Schools, health care workers and community members to create a reopening plan with the priority of safeguarding the health and well-being of our students and staff.

AOSNY is committed to maintain a regular, full-day school schedule for students per State and City guidelines. We will also continue to offer remote learning for families who are choosing to keep their child at home.

AOSNY is offering families 3 learning options for consistency and continuity of learning:

- a) Fully in-person learning
- b) Fully remote learning
- c) Hybrid Program (combination of in-person and remote learning) that would be individualized per child

Both in-person and remote learning will continue to ensure that we are meeting the Learning Standards and implementing each student's IEP, and all components of our specialized curriculum.

This plan, as well as all subsequent updates, will be communicated and shared with parents, staff, and stakeholders in publicly accessible locations, email, social media, virtual workshops, as well as signage with guidelines, trainings and reminders.

## **I. PEOPLE**

### **A. Social Distancing and Face Covering**

#### ***Social Distancing***

The Auditory Oral School of New York will ensure that appropriate social distancing is maintained

between individuals while in our school facility and on school grounds, inclusive of students, faculty, and staff, unless safety or the core activity (e.g., instruction, moving equipment, traveling in the elevator, common areas) requires a shorter distance or individuals are of the same household.

#### ***Face Coverings***

Any time or place that individuals cannot maintain appropriate social distancing, individuals will wear acceptable face coverings. Students who are unable to tolerate wearing the face covering due to adverse effect on their health, medical or mental/emotional, will not be required to use face coverings.

Parent orientation will include suggestions to introduce and practice the wearing of a face covering with their child.

Staff are required to wear face coverings when interacting with students and at times when social distancing cannot be maintained with adults. Staff may use their own PPE or PPE provided by AOSNY.

AOSNY will train all students, faculty and staff in how to adequately put on, take off, clean (as applicable), and discard PPE, including but not limited to, appropriate face coverings.

#### ***Social Distancing for Certain Activities***

AOSNY will encourage that a reasonable distance in all directions is maintained between individuals while participating in activities that require projecting the voice, or aerobic activities resulting in heavy breathing.

#### ***Space Configurations***

AOSNY assigns separate workspaces for individual administrative and clinical staff. Staff will not share workstations, desks, tables, or other shared surfaces without cleaning and disinfecting between use. A cohort model is being utilized so that children remain within their cohort to minimize exposure to others.

AOSNY will place measures to reduce bi-directional foot traffic with arrows in hallways and will post signage and distance markers denoting spaces of six feet in commonly used areas.

## ***Schedules***

AOSNY will schedule arrival and departure procedures in order to maintain proper Social Distancing.

## ***Signage***

AOSNY will post signage throughout the school to remind all individuals to:

- Stay home if they feel sick.
- Cover their nose and mouth with an acceptable face covering when unable to maintain social distance from others or in accordance with any stricter policy implemented by the school.
- Properly store and, when necessary, discard PPE.
- Adhere to social distancing instructions.
- Report symptoms of, or exposure to, COVID-19, and how they should do so.
- Follow hand hygiene, and cleaning and disinfection guidelines.
- Follow respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette.

## **Gatherings**

### ***Meals***

AOSNY students will eat food in the classrooms utilizing proper hand hygiene and cleaning and disinfecting of tables before and after meals. AOSNY prohibits the sharing of food and beverages (e.g., buffet style meals, snacks), unless individuals are members of the same household. Students will bring their own snacks and lunches from home. All allergy plans for the students will be followed. Adequate space will be reserved to observe social distancing while eating meals.

### ***Small Spaces***

AOSNY will limit gathering in small spaces (e.g., elevator, supply rooms, offices); unless all individuals in such space at the same time are wearing face coverings or are members of the same household. Occupancy will not exceed 50% of the maximum capacity of the space, unless it is designed for use by a single occupant.

### ***Faculty, Staff, and Parent Meetings***

All events will be held virtually via video or teleconferencing per CDC Guidelines to reduce the density of congregations. When videoconferencing or teleconferencing is not preferable or possible, AOSNY will hold meetings in open, well-ventilated spaces and ensure that individuals maintain appropriate social distance (e.g., leave space between chairs, have individuals sit in alternating chairs) and wear face coverings.

### ***Ventilation***

AOSNY will increase ventilation with outdoor air to the greatest extent possible (e.g., opening windows) while maintaining health and safety protocols.

## ***Common Areas***

AOSNY will prevent congregation in elevator waiting areas and limiting density in elevators. AOSNY will encourage social distancing in kitchen and bathroom areas by limiting access through staggering schedules for breaks and signage for social distancing.

AOSNY will have hand sanitizer or sanitizing wipes available near such amenities or areas. We will not allow access to cleaning and disinfecting supplies to students, nor will students be present when disinfectants are in use.

## **B. Operational Activity**

### ***Cohorts***

AOSNY will cohort students to the extent practicable to limit potential exposure. Children will remain within their classes with their assigned teacher and aides. AOSNY will prevent intermingling across cohorts to the greatest extent possible and make reasonable efforts to ensure that cohorts are fixed throughout the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.

### ***In-Person Instruction***

While the goal is to return all students to in-person instruction, due to the dynamic nature and risk of community transmission of COVID-19, AOSNY is prepared for a combination of in-person instruction and remote learning to facilitate a phased-in approach or hybrid model (which may be necessary at various times throughout the 2020-2021 school year). In such approaches and models, AOSNY will use video or teleconferencing in lieu of in-person gatherings (e.g., classes, office hours).

- In cases where in-person instruction is not feasible, phased-in and hybrid models of education will be provided. AOSNY will consider if certain students will be prioritized for in-person instruction first or more frequently based on educational or other needs and will balance this with equity, capacity, social distancing, PPE, feasibility, and learning considerations.
- If COVID-19 cases develop, AOSNY will consider restricting access within school facilities and across school grounds, particularly in affected areas to avoid full school closures. In such instances, AOSNY may choose to temporarily move classes where an individual has tested positive for COVID-19 to remote/virtual format until all contacts can be identified, notified, tested, and cleared.

To maximize in-person instruction, AOSNY will consider measures that can be implemented to decrease density and congregation in school facilities and on school grounds, when possible, such as:

- adjusting class or work hours, where appropriate and possible;
- limiting in-person presence to only those staff who are necessary to be at the school during normal school hours;
- maintaining or increasing remote workforce to accommodate social distancing guidelines;
  - shifting design of class schedules to accommodate social distancing guidelines, including cohorts (e.g., alternative classroom schedules).

## **C. Movement and Commerce**

### ***Student Drop-Off and Pick-Up***

AOSNY will establish designated areas for student drop-off and pick-up limiting contact and entry of parents/legal guardians to the greatest extent possible.

### ***Deliveries***

AOSNY will establish designated areas for pickups and deliveries limiting contact to the extent possible.

### ***Faculty/Staff Entrances and Exits***

AOSNY will be limiting on-site interactions (e.g., designating separate ingress or egress for faculty and staff) to the extent practicable.

### ***Shared Objects***

AOSNY will be limiting the sharing of objects, such as crayons, scissors, glue and sensory materials. Students will have their own designated supply box of educational materials. Students, faculty and staff are required to perform hand hygiene before and after contact with shared surfaces.

Shared objects, including toys and materials, will be sanitized and cleaned before and after use. Toys and materials will be sanitized at the end of every day. Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized will not be used.

Toys that need to be cleaned will be placed in a separate container, inaccessible to students, marked "To Be Sanitized."

AOSNY will utilize individual bins for each child when available for sensory activities.

## **II. PLACES**

### **A. Personal Protective Equipment**

Acceptable face coverings for COVID-19 include but are not limited to cloth-based face coverings (e.g., homemade sewn, quick cut, bandana), and surgical masks that cover both the mouth and nose.

AOSNY is a school for children with deafness and hearing loss and thus AOSNY faculty will be encouraged to use alternate PPE (i.e., face coverings that are transparent at or around the mouth) for instruction or interventions that require visualization of the movement of the lips and/or mouths (e.g., speech therapy). These alternate coverings may also be used for certain students (e.g., hearing impaired) who benefit from being able to see more of the face of the faculty or staff member.

In addition to the necessary PPE required for certain workplace activities, AOSNY will obtain acceptable face coverings and provide such coverings to our faculty and staff who directly interact with students or members of the public while at work at no cost to the faculty or staff member, pursuant to Executive Order 202.16.

AOSNY has an adequate supply of face coverings, masks, and other required PPE on hand should staff need a replacement, or a student be in need.

AOSNY will advise students, faculty, staff, and visitors that they are required to wear face coverings in common areas or situations where social distancing may be difficult to

maintain, such as riding in the elevator, entering and exiting classrooms, walking in hallways and travelling around the school building.

AOSNY will allow students, faculty, and staff to use their own acceptable face coverings, but we are not requiring faculty and staff to supply their own face coverings. Further, this plan shall not prevent employees from wearing their personally owned protective coverings (e.g., surgical masks, N-95 respirators, face shields), as long as they adhere to the minimum standards of protection for the specific activity. If applicable, AOSNY will comply with all applicable OSHA standards.

AOSNY requests that students bring their own face covering, but we do not require it and we will procure, fashion, or otherwise obtain acceptable face coverings and provide such coverings to any student who does not have their own, at no cost to the student.

Face coverings will be cleaned or discarded after use and must not be shared. Students and parents/legal guardians will be advised to take responsibility for maintaining their face coverings.

## **B. Hygiene, Cleaning and Disinfection**

### ***Hygiene***

AOSNY will ensure adherence to hygiene and cleaning and disinfection requirements as advised by the CDC and DOH. AOSNY will maintain logs that include the date, time, and scope of cleaning and disinfection. Our school will identify cleaning and disinfection frequency for each facility type and assign responsibility.

AOSNY will train all students, faculty, and staff on proper hand and respiratory hygiene, and will provide information to parents/legal guardians on ways to reinforce this at home.

AOSNY will provide and maintain hand hygiene stations around the school, as follows:

For handwashing: soap, running warm water, and disposable paper towels.

For hand sanitizing: an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol for areas where handwashing facilities may not be available or practical.

Student use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers will always be out of reach and supervised by adults to minimize accidental ingestion and promote safe usage. Parents/guardians will be informed to notify the school if they do not want their child to use alcohol-based hand sanitizers by sending a written notice to the school. (We will provide accommodations for students who cannot use hand sanitizer, to allow for their use of handwashing stations.)

Staff will perform proper hand hygiene upon entering and prior to leaving the premises. prior to and after eating and drinking. in-between clinical sessions. prior to and after the playground, after diapering/toileting children, before and after preparing food or drinks, after coming in contact with bodily fluid, when hands are visibly dirty.

Students will perform proper hand hygiene under adult supervision upon entering and prior to leaving the premises, prior to and after eating and drinking, prior to and upon leaving the clinical sessions, prior to and after the playground, prior to and after toileting, and in between activities.

We will make hand sanitizer available throughout common areas. It will be placed in convenient locations, such as at building, classroom, elevator entrances and exits. Signage will be placed above sinks describing handwashing steps.

AOSNY will place signage that visibly soiled hands should be washed with soap and water; hand sanitizer is not effective on visibly soiled hands.

AOSNY will remind individuals that alcohol-based hand sanitizers can be flammable and may not be suitable for certain areas in school facilities and on school grounds.

AOSNY will place receptacles around the school for disposal of soiled items, including paper towels and PPE.

### ***Cleaning and Disinfection***

AOSNY will ensure that cleaning and disinfection are the primary responsibility of the school's custodial staff. AOSNY will also provide appropriate cleaning and disinfection supplies to faculty and staff for shared and frequently touched surfaces:

AOSNY will provide disposable sanitizing wipes to faculty and staff so that commonly used surfaces (e.g., keyboards, desks) can be wiped down before and/or after use, followed by hand hygiene.

To reduce high-touch surfaces, AOSNY has touch-free amenities, such as trash receptacles where feasible. AOSNY has made hand sanitizer available near high-touch surfaces.

AOSNY will conduct regular cleaning and disinfection of the facilities and more frequent cleaning and disinfection for high-risk areas used by many individuals and for frequently touched surfaces which should be cleaned and disinfected between each individual's use, when shared. Cleaning and disinfection will be rigorous and ongoing and will occur at least daily, or more frequently as needed.

AOSNY will ensure regular cleaning and disinfection of restrooms. Restrooms will be cleaned and disinfected more often depending on frequency of use.

AOSNY will ensure that materials and tools used by employees are regularly cleaned and disinfected using registered disinfectants. Disinfectants will be based on the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) list of products registered in New York State and identified by the EPA as effective against COVID-19.

AOSNY will ensure distancing rules are adhered to by using signage, occupied markers, or other methods to reduce restroom occupancy at any given time, where feasible.

### ***Cleaning and Disinfection Following Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 Case***

AOSNY will provide for the cleaning and disinfection of exposed areas in the event an individual is confirmed to have COVID-19, with such cleaning and disinfection to include, at a minimum, all heavy transit areas and high-touch surfaces.

AOSNY will follow CDC guidelines on "[Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#)," if someone is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19:

AOSNY will close off areas used by the person who is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19. Operations will not be closed and ASONY will instead close off the affected areas (e.g., classroom, restroom, hallway), and will consult with the NYCDOHMH, open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area, wait 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting(when feasible), clean and disinfect all areas used by the person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, such as offices, classrooms, bathrooms, and common areas.

Once the area has been appropriately cleaned and disinfected, it will be reopened for use.

Individuals without close or proximate contact with the person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 will return to the area and resume school activities immediately after cleaning and disinfection.

If more than seven days have passed since the person who is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary, but routine cleaning and disinfection will continue.

### **C. Coordination and Phased Reopening**

AOSNY will designate a COVID-19 safety coordinators, who will have the responsibility of continuous compliance with all aspects of the school's Reopening Plan, as well as any phased-in reopening activities necessary to allow for operational issues to be resolved before activities return to normal or "new normal" levels.

### **D. Communications Plan**

AOSNY has engaged with school stakeholders and community members (e.g., administrators, faculty, staff, students, parents/legal guardians of students, local health departments, local health care providers, and affiliated organizations, such as Option Schools) when developing our reopening plan.

AOSNY has developed a communications plan for students, parents/legal guardians of students, staff, and visitors that includes applicable instructions, training, signage, and a consistent means to provide individuals with information. AOSNY utilizes their website, social media, phone calls, emails and text to communicate with families.

AOSNY will ensure all students are taught or trained on how to follow new COVID-19 protocols safely and correctly, including but not limited to hand hygiene, proper face covering wearing, social distancing, and respiratory hygiene.

AOSNY will encourage all students, faculty, staff, and visitors through verbal and written communication (e.g., signage) to adhere to CDC and DOH guidance regarding the use of PPE, specifically acceptable face coverings when a social distance cannot be maintained.

AOSNY has designated a coordinator to be the main contact upon the identification of positive COVID-19 cases and to be responsible for subsequent communication.

The coordinator will be responsible for answering questions from students, faculty, staff, and parents or legal guardians of students regarding the COVID-19 public health emergency and plans implemented by the school.

The coordinator will also work closely with local health departments and other schools to monitor public health conditions and jointly develop monitoring strategies.

## **III. PROCESSES**

### **A. Screening and Testing**

#### ***Health Screening and Temperature Checks***

AOSNY will implement mandatory daily health screenings, including temperature checks, of students, staff, and, where applicable, visitors to identify any individuals who may have COVID-19 or who may have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus. Employees and parents (for their child) will submit one-time attestations agreeing to complete daily

self-initiated health screenings (OCFS 6040) indicating they will not enter the school if they answer "yes" to any screening question.

Temperature checks will be conducted per U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or DOH guidelines. Specifically, all individuals will have their temperature checked each day ideally, at home, prior to departing to school. If an individual presents a temperature greater than 100.0°F, the individual will be denied entry into the facility, or sent directly to a dedicated area prior to being picked up or otherwise sent home.

AOSNY will also use a daily screening questionnaire for staff and visitors reporting to school and use a questionnaire for students and require their parents/legal guardians to answer.

AOSNY is prohibited from keeping records of student, faculty, staff, and visitor health data (e.g., the specific temperature data of an individual), but are permitted to maintain records that confirm individuals were screened and the result of such screening (e.g., pass/fail, cleared/not cleared).

Remote screening will be coordinated to identify individuals who should not come to school and should be referred to their health care provider for further evaluation and COVID-19 testing.

On-site screening will be coordinated in a manner that prevents individuals from intermingling in close or proximate contact with each other prior to completion of the screening.

Screening for all students, faculty, staff, and, where practicable, visitors, contractors, and vendors, will be completed using a questionnaire that determines whether the individual has:

- (a) knowingly been in close or proximate contact in the past 14 days with anyone who has tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 or who has or had symptoms of COVID-19;
- (b) tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 in the past 14 days;
- (c) has experienced any symptoms of COVID-19, including a temperature greater than 100.0°F, in the past 14 days; and/or
- (d) has traveled internationally or from a state with widespread community transmission of COVID-19 per the New York State Travel Advisory.

AOSNY will implement health screening practices for unscheduled visitors as well.

AOSNY is aware that quarantine of students, faculty, or staff may be required after international travel or travel within certain states with widespread community transmission of COVID-19, pursuant to current CDC and DOH guidance.

### ***Positive Screen Protocols***

Any individual who screens positive for COVID-19 exposure or symptoms, if screened at the school, will be immediately sent home with instructions to contact their health care provider for assessment and testing.

Students who are being sent home because of a positive screen (e.g., onset of COVID-19 symptoms) will be immediately separated from other students and supervised until their parent/legal guardian or emergency contact can retrieve them from school.

AOSNY will provide such individuals with information on health care and testing resources, if applicable.

AOSNY will immediately notify the state and local health department about the case if diagnostic test results are positive for COVID-19.

AOSNY will require individuals to immediately disclose if and when their responses to any of the aforementioned screening questions changes, such as if they begin to experience symptoms, including during or outside of school hours.

AOSNY will establish policies, in consultation with the local health department(s), about the requirements for determining when individuals, particularly students, who screened positive for COVID-19 symptoms can return to the in-person learning environment. This returning to learning protocol will include at minimum- documentation from a health care provider evaluation, negative COVID-19 testing, and symptom resolution, or if COVID-19 positive, release from isolation.

AOSNY will designate a central point of contact which may vary by activity, day or shift who is responsible for receiving and attesting to having reviewed all screening activities, with such contact(s) also identified as the party for individuals to inform if they later experience COVID- 19-related symptoms or COVID-19 exposure, as noted on the questionnaire.

### ***In-Person Screening***

AOSNY will ensure that any personnel performing in-person screening activities, including temperature checks, are appropriately protected from exposure to potentially infectious individuals entering the facilities. Personnel performing screening activities will be trained to be familiar with CDC, DOH, and OSHA protocols.

Screeners will be provided and use PPE, which includes at a minimum, an acceptable face covering or mask, and may also include gloves, a gown, and/or a face shield.

## **B. School Health Offices**

AOSNY has developed protocols for caring for a student, faculty, or staff member who develops COVID-19 symptoms during the school day. These protocols include:

Identification of a dedicated area to separate students, faculty, or staff with symptoms of COVID- 19 from others until they can go home or to a health care facility, depending on severity of illness;

Plans to ensure that symptomatic students who are waiting to be picked up remain under the visual supervision of a staff member who is socially distanced and/or donning PPE;

PPE requirements for school health office staff caring for sick individuals, which must include both standard and transmission-based precautions. In areas with moderate to substantial community transmission, eye protection (i.e., goggles or face shield) may be added. When caring for a suspect or confirmed individual with COVID-19, gloves, a gown, a surgical face mask and face shield will be worn.

Required guidelines for cleaning and disinfection.

AOSNY protocols for asthma-related acute respiratory treatment care using updated standard of care include:

Calling Emergency Responders for a student in distress; Consulting with students' healthcare providers for alternate asthma medication delivery systems; and Consulting with school maintenance and facilities department for environmental controls.

### **C. Tracing and Tracking**

#### ***Metrics***

AOSNY will identify warning signs that the level of COVID-19 transmission may be increasing in the school setting beyond an acceptable level, as defined by state and local health departments.

AOSNY will if/when COVID-19 cases are discovered at school, include closing areas or classes where individuals were infected or more broadly the entire school in consultation with the local health department.

AOSNY will decide whether or not to modify operations prior to instituting school-wide closures to help mitigate a rise in cases.

#### ***Notification***

AOSNY will notify the state and local health department immediately upon being informed of any positive COVID-19 diagnostic test result by an individual in school facilities or on school grounds, including students, faculty, staff, and visitors.

#### ***Tracing Support***

In the case of an individual testing positive, AOSNY will support local health departments in tracing all contacts of the individual, in accordance with the protocols, training, and tools provided through the New York State Contact Tracing Program. Confidentiality will be maintained as required by federal and state law and regulations. AOSNY will cooperate with state and local health department contact tracing, isolation, and quarantine efforts.

#### ***Quarantine, Isolation, and Return to School***

AOSNY will ensure that reporting plans are in place for individuals who are alerted that they have come into close or proximate contact with a person with COVID-19, and have been alerted to such exposure via tracing, tracking or other mechanism.

AOSNY will refer to DOH's "Interim Guidance for Public and Private Employees Returning to Work Following COVID-19 Infection or Exposure" regarding protocols and policies for faculty and staff seeking to return to work after a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 or after the faculty or staff member had close or proximate contact with a person with COVID-19.