

the Spanish Academy



COVID-19 Policies & Procedures

2020-2021 School Year

Welcome Back to School

Dear Parents,

We are very excited and looking forward to welcoming our students for the 2020/2021 school year. For the past few weeks, we have been able to see our hallways brought back to life during summer camp. Both teachers and directors have been filled with joy being back with some of our students again.

Since school has been out, our administration has been in continuous contact with the GA Department of Public Health, DECAL (Department of Early Care and Learning), CDC, as well as, our COVID-19 Task Force while working diligently to adapt our policies and procedures to best protect the health and safety of our students and teachers with the evolving COVID-19 situation. Our goal is to create an environment where our students have a sense of normalcy in our loving and caring environment while prioritizing the health and safety of our community.

We have updated our policies and procedures to prepare for different scenarios that might arise throughout the school year. As you know, the situation is continually changing, and we will remain nimble and adapt our policies as necessary. We ask for the same adaptability from you.

This school year will certainly look different than prior years, but I feel strongly with flexibility and patience, we get through this together as a school community.

Kindly,

DeShea Brooks
Program Director



Community Commitment

We are committed to opening our doors to our students and making decisions regarding school closures independent of our local school districts with the guidance from our COVID-19 Task Force and following the recommendations from local health authorities.

In order to successfully be able to implement this and be able to give our students a safe learning environment, we need your help and transparency as it pertains to exposure to COVID-19. As a community, we would like our families and staff to partner with us in a “social contract of transparency.” We are depending on you to help us keep our campus open by following our health and safety best practices and keeping your child at home as needed. Your commitment to TSA will be critical to our ability to remain open and best serve all our families. **We are all in this together!**

On-Campus Learning



A carpool system will be used for drop off and pick up. Parents are asked to wear masks and remain in their vehicle during carpool. Carpool times will be staggered by family to allow time for health screenings.



Students and staff will have a daily health screening including a temperature check, screening questions, and visual inspection for signs of illness will be conducted upon arrival in carpool. Persons with temp. over 100 will not be allowed to attend school. Persons with temp. over 99.0 will be rechecked within 15 minutes of arrival to ensure their temperature is not rising. The school will monitor and track all absences.



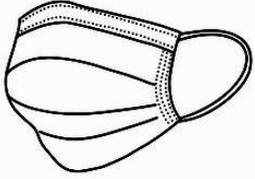
Students and staff will sanitize their hands upon arrival and take frequent breaks throughout the day for hand washing and sanitizing. Students will be reminded of proper hand washing procedures and assisted when necessary to practice good hygiene. Proper hand washing is preferred over hand sanitizer.



Students or staff exhibiting a cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, other respiratory symptoms, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, red eyes and/or drainage, nasal discharge of any sort, or loss of taste or smell will not be allowed to attend school. Should symptoms arise while at school, student will be separated from the group and must leave the facility as soon as possible.



Until further notice, only staff and students will be allowed to enter the building. Parents and all non-essential visitors will be restricted from entering the building.



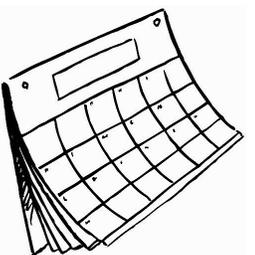
All staff members will be required to wear face masks when inside the building. Students are able but not required to wear face masks while at school (masks are not recommended for children under 2 year olds). We are currently researching mask options (including clear) for our teachers.



High touch surfaces such as door handles, sink handles and toilet handles and toys will be disinfected frequently throughout the day. Toys and materials can not be easily cleaned and sanitized will not be used. All classrooms surfaces and bathrooms will be sanitized thoroughly at the end of the day as well throughout the day as needed.



Bathroom breaks will be scheduled by class in order to limit interaction with other classes during this time.



In order to make up missed days due to schoolwide closures (not classroom closures) due to COVID-19, the school reserves the right to adjust the school calendar as needed including but not limited to extending the school year by 3 weeks with the last day of school being June 4th. Our goal is to get in as much in person time as possible.

To the extent possible, classrooms will remain together and not mix with other classrooms during times like recess to limit exposure to other groups.



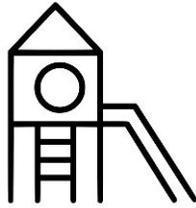
Maximum class ratios will be (students:teachers):

- Toddlers 10:2
- 2 year olds 12:2
- 3 year olds 14:2
- Pre K 16:2
- Kindergarten 16:2

The school reserves the right to combine age groups when appropriate before the school year begins to form classes. Parents will be notified of any changes.



Each child will have his/her own set of high touch school supplies and materials. Examples: scissors, crayons, glue, play dough, etc. A small additional supply fee will be added to cover this cost.



We will do our best to move activities outdoors as much as possible, weather permitting. We will open windows and interior doors when possible to enhance classroom ventilation.



There will be modifications made to traditional large group events. There will be limits on crowd sizes and social distancing requirements. Social distancing is near impossible in the preschool classroom but will be enforced during school events as necessary.



In the Toddler, 2, & 3 year old classes, each child will bring his/her own snack each day. We will not have class shared snacks. Classes will not be combined for Lunch & Learn. Shared food will not be permitted at classroom events such as birthday parties and holiday celebrations.



All extracurricular programs such as STEM, Soccer, Playball, Art, etc will be permitted as long as classes and age groups are not combined.



Community commitment and transparency are vital to being able to keep the school open and give our students and staff a safe and healthy environment. We will need open communication as it pertains to COVID-19 from all members of our TSA community, families and staff. We will ask our families and staff to sign a Covenant Letter agreeing to be honest and upfront in regards to illnesses, COVID-19 exposure & diagnosis, and to notify the school of any reason for absences. Absences will be monitored and followed up by the school.

COVID-19 Diagnosis & Exposure to COVID-19

Students and staff members should not come to school and should notify the Director immediately if they or a family member have tested positive for COVID-19, taken a COVID-19 test, or have reason to believe they have been directly exposed.

In case of diagnosis or known exposure, we will immediately notify the local health department and follow their recommendations (classroom closure and disinfection, school closure, self quarantine, among other things) while protecting confidentiality.

We will also notify the families in the classroom and anyone who has been exposed to the person while protecting confidentiality.

The student or staff member may return to school after testing positive when they have met the following four criteria:

- Fever free (without fever reducing medicine) for 72 hours
AND
- Symptom free for 72 hours
AND
- 10 days have passed since the onset of symptoms
AND
- Has Doctor release to return to school/work

Any student or staff member who has confirmed exposure to someone with COVID-19 will be required to self quarantine for 14 days.

Should a student or staff member develop symptoms while at school, they will be isolated from the group until they can be picked up from school.

School Closure due to COVID - 19

Should conditions pertaining to COVID-19 worsen and a decision needs to be made to temporarily suspend on campus learning again, we will seek advice from our COVID-19 Task Force while following the guidance of the GA Department of Public Health, DECAL (Department of Early Care and Learning), and CDC to make the decision campus by campus.

Calendar Adjustments & Delayed Start of School Year

There are three weeks at the end of the school year: May 17, May 24, & June 1 (excluding Memorial Day) and that we can use as make up days when possible (see virtual learning scenarios pg. 9).

Should we not be able to begin the school year on August 24th, we will extend the school year for each day missed up to three weeks concluding the year on Friday, June 4th (excluding Memorial Day, Monday, May 31st).

Should the delay extend beyond three weeks, see plan for each age group.

- **Toddlers, 2s, & 3s** - We will not start the school virtually with these age groups - only in person. We will prorate at the full daily rate to account for any missed days after September 14th and apply the credit to the 3rd and 4th tuition payment. We will begin school in person as soon as it is deemed safe to do so.
- **Pre K & Kindergarten** - Virtual classes will commence on Monday, September 14th and finish June 4th. Children will return to in person school as soon as it is deemed safe to do so.

Tuition Adjustments

As cliché as it sounds, we all are in this together. The administration has debated tuition adjustments for months trying to come up with an equitable way to move forward, but the truth is there is no perfect solution.

The majority of the tuition you pay goes directly to payroll among other fixed expenses. While we realize virtual learning is not the same as in person learning, it is impossible to retain our wonderful teachers who make *The Spanish Academy* what it is and refund tuition simultaneously. In order for our teachers to be available when we return to campus, we have to continue to meet our financial obligations to them.

In the event of a schoolwide closure (not a classroom closure), we will offer the following tuition adjustments **per day closed after more than ten consecutive days** based on the original published calendar in the form of an account credit which can be applied to future tuition payments or any of our programs. We will not refund any tuition or fees paid, only credits will be given.

➤ **Toddlers & 2 year olds - 75 % credit**

Although virtual learning is a challenge at all ages, it is most challenging for our youngest students. We are committed to providing educational experiences that are meaningful and developmentally appropriate; therefore, we have decided not to offer a virtual program for our toddlers and 2 year olds during a schoolwide closure lasting longer than ten consecutive days.

➤ **3 year olds, Pre K, & Kindergarten - 10% credit**

In addition to a tuition adjustment for older students, we will offer an improved, developmentally appropriate virtual learning program everyday the child is enrolled in school.

Virtual Learning

Based on our experience and your feedback from our spring virtual learning program, we have made some modifications and improvements to our virtual learning program. Should it be necessary to transition to online learning, it will be a different experience from last spring. We will transition to distance learning if either of following two scenarios occur:

1. Single Classroom Closure
2. Schoolwide Mandatory Closure

Updates to Virtual Program

- **Toddlers & 2 Year olds:** Virtual learning will not be offered for toddlers and 2 year olds during a schoolwide closure - only in event of an individual classroom closure.
- **Packet Pick Up for 3 year olds, Pre K, & Kindergarten:** Every two weeks packets with materials needed for center activities in the lesson plan will be prepared for student pick up.
- **Updated Weekly Digital Lesson Plan:**
 - Links to virtual meetings
 - Pre-recorded videos and music for the week
 - 3 centers a the day (2 academic and 1 special center)
- **Increased Virtual Meetings:** 2 or 3 virtual meetings a day with the teacher (either group or 1:1) depending on age of child (see daily schedule.)

Sample Daily Schedule Toddlers & 2s

for classroom closures only

10:00 - 10:20:
Morning Circle Time

Sample Daily Schedule 3s

9:00 - 9:30:
Morning Circle Time Academic
Center I

11:00 - 11:30:
Closing Circle Time
Academic Center II
Specials

*Times may vary slightly depending on schedules.

Sample Daily Schedule Pre K & Kindergarten

9:00 - 9:30:
Morning Circle Time
Academic Center I

10:30 - 11:00:
Closing Circle Time
Academic Center II
Specials

12:30 - 1:00:
Closing Circle Time
Academic Center II

Specials: Art, Music, Science, PE, &
Social Students

Virtual Learning Scenario 1: Single Classroom Closure

Should the local or state health department advise us to close a classroom due to COVID-19 exposure, we will immediately transfer to online learning and will follow the stated schedule.

Virtual Learning Scenario 2: Schoolwide Closure

We are aiming at having the most in person class time as possible. In the event of mid-year mandatory shutdown, we will present parents with three possible options.

We have three weeks at the end of the school year (last two weeks of May and the first week of June ending on June 4th) that we can add to our calendar in person if we have not used them due to a delayed start. Make up days will be considered for days that virtual classes were not offered.

Should we have a mandatory schoolwide closure for more than ten consecutive days we will offer the following options:

1. **Two Week Virtual/One Off Rotation:** Virtual learning for two weeks then, one week off. The weeks off will be made up in person at the end of the school year for up to three weeks. After the third week off, we will continue with our virtual learning schedule for 3 year olds, Pre K, and Kinder.
2. **Three Weeks Off:** Take three weeks off virtual learning and make up the three weeks at the end of the school year. After the third week off, we will continue with our virtual learning schedule for 3 year olds, Pre K, and Kinder.
3. **Continued Virtual Learning Schedule:** Continue with the virtual learning schedule for 3 year olds, Pre K, and Kinder, and finish the school year on May 18th, no in person make up days.

Should this scenario arise, we will email a survey to all parents to vote for their choice and proceed with the results.

Frequently Asked Questions

Will school feel strict and cold? Will TSA lose the warm, loving, caring environment that we are used to?

Absolutely not! We have implemented most of our policies this summer, and the children have adapted well and the feedback from parents has been positive. Just because the teachers have masks on, doesn't mean the children can't see them smile! Our goal is to create a healthy and safe learning space with a fun and relaxed environment. We want our students to feel loved and connected to their teachers. We are happy to put anyone in touch with parents who experienced it this summer.

Can students still free play together?

Yes, socialization is an important part of preschool. Children will be allowed to free play with their classmates in the classroom and on the playground; however, classrooms will not combine for activities. Again, our goal is to have as normal of an environment as possible during an abnormal time.

Who is on the COVID-19 Task Force?

Our task force is made up of 2 pediatricians, 2 pediatric nurses, 2 epidemiologists, and our 5 school directors.

What happens if a child tests positive in a classroom to the child as well as the class?

The child may return to school after testing positive when they have met the following four criteria:

- Fever free (without fever reducing medicine) for 72 hours
AND
- Symptom free for 72 hours
AND
- 10 days have passed since the onset of symptoms
AND
- Has Doctor release to return to school

We will notify the local health department, and they will advise us on necessary classroom closures but likely all students will have to self quarantine for 14 days, and we will immediately begin with distance learning.

What if a family member tests positive?

Any student or staff member who has confirmed exposure to someone with COVID-19 will be required to self quarantine for 14 days and monitor for symptoms. If they test positive at any point, follow guidelines for positive test. Please immediately notify the school.



Why are you offering a greater tuition adjustment for toddlers and 2s than 3s, Pre K, & Kinder during a schoolwide closure? After our experience last spring and feedback from parents and teachers, we have decided not to offer a virtual program during an extended closure for these age groups. It was clear that this age group struggled the most being engaged with their teachers during distance learning. We always want to provide an educational experience that is purposeful and developmentally appropriate.



Why are you not offering a larger tuition adjustment for 3s, Pre K, and Kindergarten? The overwhelming majority of the tuition paid goes to payroll expenses, and during virtual learning, teachers are actually working more hours. Although you may not see all of the hours, they are necessary to provide a developmentally sound learning experience. Therefore, it is impossible to both provide for our teachers, who truly want to be there when we are able to return to the classroom, and refund full tuition. Not to mention, fixed expenses (rent, insurance, utilities, etc) do not change during a pandemic. A reasonable assumption would be that expenses are lower during virtual learning, when in fact, they are higher.



Why are you offering 75% vs 100% credit for toddlers and 2s? Parents want us to be able to open the classrooms when we are able to do so; therefore, we have to compensate our teachers with a stipend during closures so they will remain available and be ready to go when we can open safely. Simply put - we can not refund all tuition and retain our amazing teachers at the same time.



Is parent involvement still appreciated and encouraged? The short answer is of course; however, at least in the beginning of the year, it will look different as we are not allowing visitors in the classrooms. We will have to be creative and figure out ways for parents to be involved, but we are up for the challenge.



If I chose to withdraw now, can I re-enroll later in the year? Possibly. Honestly, we can't answer this. We would happily welcome any families back if we had space in the desired class; however, we can not guarantee space. It is impossible to keep all of our staff if our enrollment numbers change drastically. Our plan is to scale our classes and staff to the number of students we have on July 15th (the deadline for tuition payment).



If we can not go in the school, how can we communicate with our teachers? Our teachers will be available for any questions, comments or concerns via zoom meeting or email.



Will you still offer Early Drop and Lunch & Learn? We are planning on offering Early Drop and Lunch & Learn; however, age groups and classes will not be able to be combined. Each child will meet in their classroom. More information to come in August.



Will we still be able to enjoy the fun and memorable activities that are part of the preschool experience? We know many of the preschool performances, mom/dad events are memorable, once in a lifetime moments. Although indoor group activities are currently prohibited, we promise to come up with creative alternatives to celebrate special events.



Part of learning, plus the learning of a new language is the ability to communicate and view facial gestures, how will you teach with face mask? We are looking into clear masks. Our priority is effective protective gear for our teachers to be able to teach while still keeping them safe and healthy.



With so many COVID-19 symptoms similar to regular childhood illnesses, what do I do when my child has mild symptoms such as sore throat, stomach ache, sneezing but they do not have fever, diarrhea and/or vomiting or known exposure to COVID-19? When in doubt, keep your child at home for 72 hours. In this climate, we need to assume it is COVID-19 and work backwards. There is no harm other than a minor inconvenience for keeping your child home for a few days in order to protect others. A Doctor's note may be required to return to school.



Will you have virtual options available for families who are not comfortable sending their child in person? We are not certain of the answer at this time. It is possible, if there is enough demand for a specific age group for a full year of virtual. The challenge is classroom planning should these children want to rejoin the class because there might not be space in the in person classroom. We are working through this now based on demand.