

Plans for the Restart of Odyssey Charter School

2023/2024 School Year

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Abstract

In March of 2020 the governor of Georgia closed all public schools due to a worldwide pandemic of SARS 2 Virus - Covid-19. Public school was opened again in September of 2020. While this represents a loss of teacher contact with the students during the months of March, April and May of 2020, the months of June, July and August of 2020 were scheduled for summer vacation. During the latter period, no summer school classes or remediation occurred as schools were still officially closed. The loss of time in the classroom and teacher lesson delivery will be referred to in this brief as “Lost Learning Time” (LLT). During this time the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Department of Public Health (DPH) continuously updated schools with information and recommendations for safe school operations. Odyssey Charter School established a School Restart Team (SRT) led by the Registered Nurse on staff, and developed Safe Practice Procedure for the school to restart. These Safe Practice Procedures were developed from research done by the team, recommendations from the CDC, the DPH, and updated research from Johns Hopkins Medical University as well as data collected by the World Health Organization (WHO). Based on the success of these Safe Practices during the 2020/2021, 2021/2022, 2022/2023 school years, Odyssey Charter School will open its 2023/2024 school year following these guidelines.

Keywords: Lost Learning Time (LLT), Pandemic, SARS 2, COVID-19, CDC, DPH, WHO

Close of 2019/2020 School Year

In January of 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) announced a worldwide pandemic related to the SARS-2 virus. A new strain of the virus called COVID -19 had reached the pandemic stage. As of the date of this paper, COV-19 has killed 3,320,036 worldwide and 582,867 in the United States (Johns Hopkins, 2021). March of 2020 the Governor of Georgia closed all public schools as a component of an executive order issued to the state. No state exams or nationally normed testing was given to Georgia students in the 2019/2020 school year. The school year was closed and no summer remediation scheduled.

General Overview of the 2020/2021 2021/2022 2022/2023 School Year

Public school was reconvened for the 2020/2021 school year. Some scholars attended face to face classes and some remained home and dialed into classroom lessons utilizing school issued computers. The School Restart Team (SRT) developed safety protocols for the staff and Scholars which minimized the treat of spreading the COVID-19 virus and allowed us to do contact tracing of scholars and staff who tested positive.

Restart of the 2023/2024 School Year

During the new school year 2023/2024 we intend to execute the policies and procedures established by the SRT in 2021. These practices meet and exceed the recommendations of the CDC, DPH and the GaDOE. Odyssey Charter School is offering a safe environment for teaching and learning as derived from the standards of the CDC and the DPH. There-fore scholars are expected to report to campus for face to face learning in the 2023/2024 school year. When it becomes necessary to quarantine a class or large number of scholars, the

teachers will establish a dial-in classroom so teaching and learning will not be disrupted. At the conclusion of the quarantine period, all scholars are expected to return to the classroom and face to face learning.

Facilities and Support Structure

Scholars will be expected to arrive at school on time and in uniform. Excused and Unexcused absences will be strictly adhered to as detailed in the parent manual.

Buses will maintain the current spacing and safety guidelines developed in 2021.

Thermal cameras will monitor the body temperature of all who enter the building. Any person with a body temperature of 100.7 F or higher will be directed to the nurses office for a closer examination. Those with any symptoms of a contagious infection will be isolated until transportation off campus can be arranged.

Safe spacing is marked on all floors and will be respected by all who enter the building.

Hand sanitizer dispensers are installed on every classroom door and office entry way. Hand sanitizer must be used when entering the room and when leaving the room.

Masks will be required for all who enter the building. Masks will be worn in every classroom and in the hall by everyone in the building.

Plexiglas partitions are established in-front of every teacher's desk to protect from virus transmission. Plexiglas partitions surround each scholar's desk to offer a safe zone for scholar learning and participation.

All water fountains are converted to individual bottle refilling stations.

The CDC has established five key prevention strategies' that are essential to a safe delivery of in-person learning:

1. Universal and correct use of Masks
2. Physical distancing
3. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette
4. Cleaning and maintaining a healthy facility
5. Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine

(CDC research study (2019).

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/more/science-and-research/transmission_k_12_schools.html)

Scholars and Parents Code of Conduct

Scholars are organized in a cohort group and remain in the group during the school day.

These groups only move from the classroom to the gym area or outside for mental health breaks. Teachers move from room to room and change classes. Scholars remain in the same room and do not mix with other scholars or move freely through the halls between periods.

Lunch period is completed in the cohort classroom and not in the cafeteria. Scholars are excused to use the restroom facilities on an individual basis. No groups of students should ever be congregating in the hall or restroom areas.

Scholars are expected to be in dress code at all times. This will be strictly enforced in the 2023/2024 school year.

Parents will need to comply with the parent code of conduct as published in the current parent handbook. Attendance rules will be strictly enforced in the 2023/2024 school year.

Dress code will be strictly enforced in the 2023/2024 school year as published in the current parent handbook. Parents will receive notice in the summer regarding the dress code standards and school enforcement in 2023/2024.

Academic policy will be strictly enforced as written in the current parent handbook. Odyssey Charter School is an academically accelerated school. Late work, incomplete work or academic fraud will not be tolerated.

Summer reading programs will be required by all scholars to prepare for the 2023/2024 school year. Assessments of all five readings will be given and recorded as grades for the first quarter of the new school year.

Teachers and Staff

Teachers and the staff are expected to be at their duty stations from 8:00am to 4:00pm every school day. Any adjustment to this schedule needs the approval of the Human Resources department. Part time staffs are scheduled individually based on assignment.

Teachers and support staff will greet incoming scholars daily as they enter the building.

Teachers and staff will dress professionally and within expectations for a professional educator.

Lesson plans will be reviewed weekly in curriculum meetings and posted on the door way to the classroom. Multiple classes in grade levels will work to achieve the same standard during the same week.

Professional development plans will be individually reviewed during curriculum meetings and requested through administration. Additional assignments will be available in the 2023/2024 school year which were curtailed due to the COVID-19 virus. March Madness

tutoring assignments, Summer School programs, Model Schools Team, and additional paid duty assignments will be available during the 2023/2024 school year for teachers and staff.

Online Policy for all Scholars

A new and more specific set of policy was drafted and voted in by the Odyssey Charter School Board of Education in January 2021. These policies are specific to the required performance of the online scholar and established specific expectations for academics and attendance. Scholars, who violate these performance policies, will no longer be allowed to participate in the online programs (attachment A).

Odyssey Charter School begin the 2021/2022 school year 100% on campus with no online exemptions available. This continues through the 2023/2024 school year. Hospital Homebound scholars will be monitored by the Special Education Department and will qualify for multiple levels of lesson delivery as detailed in their Individualized Education Plan (I.E.P.).

Academic Standards and Lost Learning

All scholars are expected to perform at grade level or above on all standardized testing. The grade level averages and College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI) scores of Odyssey Charter School must be superior to the scores of similar grade level students in Coweta and Meriwether Counties. A structured period of tutoring and remediation will be scheduled into the school day to identify and assist with grade level recovery from the Lost Learning Time (LLT) which occurred during the school shutdowns of 2020/2021. A remediated school day schedule could look like this:

Sample Bell Schedule		
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Period 1	8:25 – 9:07	42 Minutes
Period 2	9:07 – 9:49	42 Minutes

Period 3	9:49 – 10:32	42 Minutes
Break	10:32 – 10:52	10 Minutes
Period 4	10:52 – 11:34	42 Minutes
Period 5	11:34 – 12:16	42 Minutes
Lunch	12:16 – 12:48	30 Minutes
Period 6	12:48 – 1:30	42 Minutes
Period 7	1:30 – 2:12	42 Minutes
Period 8	2:12 – 2:54	42 Minutes

Sample Teacher Schedule

Example : Math

Period 1 6th grade
 Period 2 6th grade
 Period 3 7th grade
 Period 4 7th grade
 Period 5 Prep Period
 Lunch
 Period 6 8th grade (Remediation Period)
 Period 7 8th grade
 Period 8 8th grade

Positive results from one-on-one, peer to peer and direct tutoring have rendered incremental growth when a schedule is adjusted to dedicate a specific time in the school day for such tutoring. There is significance to utilizing portions of the school day dedicated to covering the LLT materials and subjects which are far more successful than before school or after school programs. Scholars and teachers have a more productive lesson when delivery occurs during a regularly scheduled classroom environment (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2018; Bowman-Perrott et al., 2014). Specifics regarding the productive use of classroom schedules and positive remediation results can be found in “Dealing with Learning Loss and Planning for Remediation 2021/2022 School Year” available upon request for the principal.

Overview

Odyssey Charter School offered a safe, “Face to Face” school option for its scholars during the 2021/2022 school year. This was repeated for the 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 school years. The facilities have thermal cameras at all entrances, and the temperature of all individuals entering the school is monitored. The floors are clearly marked with indicators for safe spacing while walking in the hall or waiting to utilize a restroom. All water fountains have been replaced with water bottle refill machines with auto fill functions. Hand sanitizing dispensers are mounted in front of every classroom and all who enter or leave the room must utilize the hand sanitizer. Scholars are grouped in cohorts and remain in their room all day, while the teaching staff rotates to each room for new classes. Lunch is served in the classroom for scholars and teachers. No one is in the hall with the exception of bathroom use. Plexiglas partitions surround each desk shielding the scholars from each other, and creating a safe zone for each scholar.

All schools will need a plan to deliver lessons to scholars who are off campus and home quarantined due to the SARs-2 virus and other illness. Odyssey Charter School will accomplish this task by utilizing the same dial –in system currently in place. However, the current system is slow in delivery and cumbersome for the gifted students who have a significant challenge remaining engaged in the lesson delivery. A self-paced, yet monitored *school within a school* would allow the Gifted scholars to excel and utilize their abilities to remain engaged in their learning and grow academically at an accelerated pace. This would better differentiate lesson delivery in the classroom and improve the overall engagement of all scholars across the enrollment.

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Exhibit A

Odyssey Charter School Online Program Class Policy

Parents must attend a virtual meeting with their teacher and sign this document prior to enrolling in the Odyssey Charter School Online Program. Because a safe, in-person option is available for all Odyssey scholars, participation in the school's Online Program is considered a privilege and comes with expectations and requirements for continued participation. Please read the following policy and sign this document at the conclusion of the virtual meeting. A signed copy of this document is required for registration in the Odyssey Charter School Online program.

NOTE: By enrolling your scholar in Odyssey's Online Program, you are agreeing to ensure your scholar is actively engaged in class and that he/she is completing/submitting their own work, on time, and in compliance with the assignment's guidelines. Scholars are expected to respond to all questions and/or prompts from the teacher during the session to the best of their ability.

Online Briefing Meeting

A schedule will be supplied when parents request participation in the Odyssey Charter School Online Program. This meeting is required to explain the policy and procedure for the program and confirm capacity to participate in the online program. This document must be completed and returned to the school registrar as a requirement of for registration into the online program.

Required Attendance

Scholars are required to follow the school calendar, which includes one hundred eighty (180) school days. Scholars are expected to login to the online program each scheduled school calendar day. If attendance is not recorded on a school day, as listed on the school calendar, the scholar is marked as having an unexcused absence. Therefore, if the calendar indicates Monday through Friday in a given week are school days, attendance must be entered each day to not result in absences being recorded. Scholars who are unable to login to the online program must notify their teacher as to the reason for the absence.

¹ All documentation for excused absences must be emailed to the scholar's teacher.

Attendance Monitoring and Participation

Documenting that a scholar has logged into the online program is not sufficient, by itself, to demonstrate academic attendance by the scholar. A teacher will confirm that a scholar

participated in class or was otherwise engaged in an academically related activity, such as by contributing to an online discussion or initiating contact with a teacher or class member to ask a course-related question. This level of participation must be consistent throughout the entire class period to receive daily credit for each class and extends to all classroom activities and daily assignments. The classroom teacher will log the activity of each scholar participating in the online program. Scholars who are not participating in the classroom discussion and assigned activities will be marked as “Non-Participating” for that day, and no credit will be assigned for this period. All attendance policies currently published in the Scholar and Family Handbook will apply to the online program attendance. Should a scholar become ill or miss a class, the guidelines published in Odyssey Handbook under “Attendance” will also apply to the online program. Non-participating will be considered an unexcused absence from this class period. Four “Non-Participation” marks will be equal to one (1) unexcused absence.

Tardy to Class

There is no reason to be tardy to an online program. Tardies will not be accepted for online programs. Should you experience a technical issue with your equipment or a local power outage; the parent will need to submit a letter to the principal explaining the details of the issue. This contact must be made directly to the principal and not to the teacher of the class affected. If the scholar has not logged in to the class in a timely manner then he/she will lose credit for that class for that day and be marked “Non-Participating” during that period.

Classroom Work and Assignments

Daily participation is required in the online program. Daily assignments will be completed on the day of class. Just as with in-person scholars, homework assignments are due for the online program, on the day assigned by the teacher. Should an online scholar become ill or have an excused absence, he/she will follow the same rules and policy as written in the current Scholar and Family Handbook. Here you will find a specific number of days allowed to make up work from excused absences, based on the grade level of the scholar.

¹ State guidelines for an attendance overview are available at http://archives.gadoe.org/pea_policy.aspx?PageReq=PEASchoolAttendance

Passing Grades Required

Scholars must be in good academic standing to participate in the online program. A scholar who has a failing grade in an academic class at the end of the semester will no longer be considered for participation in the online program. Should the scholar allow his/her grade to

drop below the accepted standard for a passing grade as detailed in the current Scholar and Parent Handbook, the registrar will contact the family and assist in scheduling a campus based school day for the scholar. When the scholar has established passing grades in all academic classes for one continuous semester, the scholar may be reconsidered for the online program, provided that the online program continues to operate and has space available. This approval will need to be approved by the assigned home room teacher and the administrator for the grade level prior to enrolling.

Grade Level Promotion

Scholars failing one or more online program classes will be reviewed by administration and the grade level team prior to any grade level promotion under the same standards applied to in-person scholars. A failing grade will be determined by the standard published in the current Scholar and Parent Handbook.

Dress Code

All online program scholars are expected to follow the Dress Code as published in the current Scholar and Parent Handbook. Teachers will note any dress code related issues and communicate the incident to the parents. Scholars will be given the opportunity to comply with the current dress code and return to class activities. Scholars who are repeatedly out of dress code can lose their privilege of being enrolled in the online program.

Online Program Affidavit

I have read the policy for the online program of Odyssey Charter School and I understand and have no additional questions regarding:

Initials Policy

- Online Program Brief Meeting
- Required Attendance
- Attendance Monitoring and Participation
- Tardy to Class
- Classroom Work and Assignments
- Passing Grades are required
- Grade Level Promotion
- Dress Code Requirements

By initialing each of the above policies, and signing this document, I confirm my desire to enroll my scholar in the online program of Odyssey Charter School, and I agree to follow the above listed policies as detailed.

Parent Signature

Date

Scholar Name

Exhibit B