

Updated 1-5-2022



Unity
Christian
Academy

Covid-19

Updated

Policies and Procedures

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Dear UCA Family,

If you are like me, this pandemic has left you overwhelmed and uncertain. However, I am certain of who is in control. I know the Lord is with us and we will not be afraid.

Uncertainty breeds fear, but preparation cultivates hope. 2020 did not look like what any of us could have imagined, but we can rest in the fact that our God is still sovereign, still on His throne, and still in control. I am excited for another school year to begin, but aware that things will still look a little different. We all have to do our part this school year to ensure the safety of our students, staff, and families. I am asking for your cooperation and participation in our efforts to keep everyone safe and healthy. Our goal is the same - to provide a quality education in a safe environment in a way that is pleasing to the Lord. In order to be prepared for this school year, we have tried to make our expectations and policies related to COVID-19 as clear as possible. I believe that with God's blessings and your partnership, we will have a successful school year! We serve a God who is omnipotent. In John 16:33, Jesus encourages his disciples "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart, I have overcome the world." I look forward to another great school year with our UCA family!

In Christ,

Will Chancellor

Head of School

Introduction

This document outlines Unity Christian Academy's guidelines, policies, and procedures in response to the Covid-19 outbreak for the foreseeable school years. If changes are made to this policy, an updated policy will be emailed to all families. We feel we have an obligation to our students, parents, and staff members to provide a safe environment without compromising our purpose as a school. Herein details the answers to the following questions: What is UCA's philosophy of reopening? How does UCA plan to provide a safe environment for its community during the reopening? By providing this information, we hope to do three things this school year. First, we want to assure our community that there is hope in Beaufort County for normalcy in our daily life, tenacity in our ideals, and most importantly, prosperity in our young people's future. Second, we want to create an environment that encourages social responsibility both in the cleanliness of our facilities and also in the practices of our people. Third, we want to provide our families with a plan that does not compromise the education of their child.

The Philosophy of Reopening

To reopen or not to reopen? Every school has to answer this question. To send or not to send? Every parent, likewise, must answer this question. These are not easy questions to answer because there are serious implications on both sides. We want our community to understand why Unity has decided to reopen.

The Pros

- Children need to be in school. While it is true that the greatest teacher is the parent, most are in a position that they cannot or do not want to homeschool their child. They, as parents, should have the choice whether to send or not to send.
- Parents need to work. Providing a place for children to come and learn also allows for parents to work. The local community is successful and prospers when people provide products and services for one another.
- Children are at a lower risk for complications with Covid-19. According to the CDC, children are less likely to have serious symptoms with most exhibiting no symptoms at all. In addition, the average age of a parent with a child in K-12 is far below the high-risk ages suggested by the CDC with 8 out of 10 deaths being older than 65.
- By reopening we provide an option for some who may not have considered a Christian education. We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who are in accordance with His will.

The Cons

- This is a very contagious disease. The most widely accepted thought of how to contract this disease is through the transmission of droplets within six feet. This is problematic in a school where virtually all interaction comes within six feet.

- While most children and their parents are at a low risk, they have loved ones who are at a high risk.
- By allowing the gathering of people at schools, we increase the potential of spreading the virus. Thus, this may be socially irresponsible in terms of fighting the spread of the disease.
- The liability of contraction. There is a great deal of liability associated in risk management. Waivers, responsibility, and proper insurances are things that will have to be addressed in the event of contraction.

The Conclusion

The three main ideas for the decision to reopen revolve around infection data among children, freedom of choice, and primary purpose. Taking into consideration the risks of operating under the current conditions, we feel it should be up to the parents whether or not they would like to send their children to Unity. There are inherent risks in every choice a person makes. Some choices affect many, some affect a few, but it is not our calling to take away that choice. In addition, our primary purpose is to educate our students and to divide that focus would be to compromise who we are. While theoretically there can be a split, or dual-purpose school, it is seemingly impossible to allocate focus to one without having the other suffer, and as we have seen, alternative learning, while it may give statistically the lowest probabilities of contraction, does not guarantee the highest quality of education.

It is in this reasoning why Unity Christian Academy plans to open its doors for the upcoming school year. We feel that it is our responsibility to provide our parents an option for an education that is primarily focused on their student's actual education. Every person, in some way, should contribute to controlling the spread of the coronavirus, but as far as the school's purpose, it must remain firmly planted in providing an education. With this being said, it is the intent of UCA to provide our parents an in person, five-day, schooling option.

Unity Christian Academy Reopening Plan

Outlined below is the Unity Christian Academy Reopening Plan. To ensure a safe environment for our students and staff we ask that all of our UCA family abide by the policies and procedures herein. Be honest, diligent, and intentional with your interactions, communications, and behaviors. The Plan is divided into three main sections: Prevention, Identification, and Education. The Prevention portion details the new procedures we have put in place to prevent the spread of germs. Some have been catered specifically with the new coronavirus in mind, while others are a re-emphasis on smart and practical healthy communal interaction. The Identification section outlines the steps that are to be taken in the event that someone exhibits symptoms, is exposed to the virus, or contracts the virus directly. Lastly, the Education portion will give an overview of the school options UCA is offering, covering guidelines for teachers, expectations for students, and information for parents.

Prevention

UCA currently has many policies that address the daily interactions of our students and teachers. However, we feel it necessary to add specific procedures for the new coronavirus. Outlined below are the key areas where these procedures are applied.

Screenings

No one is allowed to come on campus unless first screened by one of our staff. Screening consists of a temperature check and a short, three question survey. Non-entry personnel, such as delivery personnel, people paying, or people doing routine business do not require a screening as long as they stay in the front office.

Screening Staffer

- The staff member is to conduct the screening process under the awning, before the child exits the vehicle.
- The Screening process consists of the following steps:
 - o Forehead Temperature check of 99.9 or below
 - o Survey questions asked and an answer of no to all three
- Staff member is to be consistent and never assume
- Children that come in late to the front entrance must also be screened so parents should not leave until a staff member clears the child.

The Survey

The survey will consist of three simple and easy questions that will be posted at the two entrances. The purpose of the survey is to help parents self-screen both themselves and their child. The survey must have a "no" answer to all three questions to be cleared.

The questions are:

- 1) Have you, or anyone in your household, been in contact with someone who has tested positive for the coronavirus in the last 10 days?
- 2) Have you, or your child, had a fever in the last 24 hours?
- 3) Is anyone in your household currently being tested for the coronavirus and awaiting results?

Hygiene

Hand sanitizer stations have been placed around the school in easy to access areas for students and teachers to use. In addition, each teacher is obligated to three hygiene related responsibilities.

- First, each teacher is to teach proper handwashing techniques: that is using soap, water, and scrubbing for roughly 30 seconds.
- Second, is to provide sanitation breaks throughout the day as needed.
- Third, limit the sharing of personal items such as pencils, paper, and books.

Facility Cleaning

The school has invested in a disinfectant machine designed to kill surface bacteria and viruses including the new coronavirus. This machine is to be used to disinfect surfaces of the school. Daily duties include bathroom cleanings, dry mopping, and surface disinfecting.

Social Distancing

Limiting interactions within six feet has been suggested by the CDC and the NCDHHS.

While isolation is statistically the safest possible condition, this is not possible in a school setting nor is it desired. UCA, therefore, will limit how often and for how long students are within six feet of one another in the following ways:

- Desks will be placed six feet apart in all classrooms.
- Water fountains will only be used to fill personal containers..
- Additional lockers have been added in the upper school and students have been spaced evenly between the lockers.
- There is to be no sharing of personal items such as pencils, paper, books etc.
- Physical contact is to be at a minimum.
- Lower school students will only be in contact with their primary and resource teacher for the duration of the school day.

Masks

UCA welcomes the use of masks by staff and students. UCA supports any family or individual who desires to wear a mask. Masks are optional. This policy is always subject to change based on current data.

Vaccinations

UCA does not require a COVID vaccination in order to attend school. That choice is and should be up to the discretion of each individual and/or families.

In Home Responsibilities

The procedures put into place at UCA are by nature only going to have an impact on the campus of UCA. In order to truly lower the probabilities of spreading the coronavirus, there must be a proactive, diligent, and intentional effort on the part of our families at home. Here are several things to think about:

- Limit interactions with those individuals that you do not know or who have a large sphere of contact.
- Use proper hygiene practices away from school.
- Be honest and detailed with your tracking and communications.
- Be considerate of the elderly and their personal space.

Keep in mind that the school is doing much to make a safe environment, but we do not control the environment and actions in homes. If our community is not conscientious outside of the school, then the steps taken inside the school will be compromised.

Identification

No matter how safe we are there is still a chance that someone will contract the virus, and it is for this reason that UCA must be prepared. Below are the protocols for this and other instances where the threat for contraction is increased.

Symptoms

We felt it important to list the main symptoms associated with COVID-19 not only to provide our staff the ability to identify them, but also our parents. These symptoms are really all we have to go on at this time. Try not to overlook or dismiss them just because they are similar to seasonal allergies and other common ailments. The more of these symptoms a person is exhibiting, the higher the concern may become. The main symptoms can also be found [here](#) at the CDC website.

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

Isolation

If anyone starts to exhibit any of these symptoms, our staff is to isolate them for monitoring. We have set up two isolation stations located in the main church building on either side of the front office. There the students are to wear a mask and will be given a safe, quiet place to evaluate their symptoms. If any of the first, four, highlighted symptoms are present, the parent will be called, and they must come get their child. Please make sure you explain these protocols with employers just in case there is an isolation where your child is involved. The unhighlighted symptoms will be monitored and if they persist, or if there are two or more, then the same protocol will be initiated as above. A parent will be called, and the child will be dismissed. Not all children or staff isolated will be dismissed, but it is likely if multiple symptoms are present. Please communicate with your child to be as honest and specific as they can be with their self-evaluations due to the strictness of these procedures.

Quarantining

If a staff member or child is dismissed from school, then there is a mandatory quarantining that takes place. They are not allowed back on campus until the qualifications of the quarantine are met. For the convenience of parents, we have broken quarantining into two kinds:

- First, there is a self-quarantine or the 24-hour quarantine. This is done by the parent in conjunction with the three-question survey asked at every screening.

- 1) Have you, or anyone in your household, been in contact with someone who has tested positive for the coronavirus in the 10 days?
- 2) Have you, or your child, had a fever in the last 24 hours?
- 3) Is anyone in your household currently being tested for the coronavirus and awaiting results?

If you can answer no to all of these questions, but your child is exhibiting any of the symptoms on the above list, you should self-quarantine for a symptom-free 24 hours before bringing your child back to campus.

- Second, is a full-quarantine or 10-day quarantine. This is done if a student is dismissed from isolation for exhibiting several symptoms (both highlighted and unhighlighted), is exhibiting symptoms and has been exposed to someone who has tested positive for the coronavirus in the last 10 days, or who has tested positive for the coronavirus.

Test Negative Qualification

UCA plans to accept a negative test result, done by a qualified and reputable testing agency. Your child may be allowed back on campus if they have had a negative test result after day five of exposure (or first symptoms), and they have not exhibited any symptoms for the past 24 hours.

Education

This section overviews UCA's schooling option for the upcoming school year.

Face-to-Face Learning

This is UCA's primary option for schooling. It is our intention to allow students on campus for school in a manner that is as normal as possible. We plan to continue face-to-face learning as long as there is no legislation that prohibits us to do so. All expectations for face-to-face learning are the same as in normal years.

Overview

Virtual learning will only take place if a quarantine is in effect. Virtual learning options for the Pre-K through 12th grade will consist of similar components, but some are not suitable for all ages. This portion of the manual will outline the platforms and expectations of our virtual learning option when needed. UCA plans to use three platforms for online learning: Zoom, YouTube, and Email. Any student participating in virtual learning will need to have access to a computer as well as an internet connection.

Online Platforms

1. Zoom is a multi-user, face conferencing application that allows the teacher to visually connect with the student over the internet. Zoom allows for there to be one-on-one connections as well as multiple users to log in for a more class-like

interaction. It is easy to use and allows a student at home to log on directly to the class in real time. Parents will need to download a free app on a computer or a device for their child to use.

2. YouTube is a very popular website that allows UCA to upload video lessons for the student to consume at their convenience. These videos contain the core aspects of the curriculum and therefore must be watched in order to participate in virtual learning.

3. Email is the primary mode of communication for virtual learning. Parents and students are to email their teachers directly for all assignments and to ask questions concerning the assignments, lessons, and assessments. In turn, teachers are to check and respond in a timely manner to parents and students.

Packets

In addition to the online components of virtual learning, there may be a scenario that requires us to send home assignments and assessments in packets for the student. These packets can be picked up by the parent or the school can mail them directly. The student is expected to complete the packets as assigned and returned. Acceptable methods of return may be scanning and emailing, mailing, or drop off.

Assignment Expectations

All assignments given are to be completed. Students do not have the option to not do them. All online videos are to be watched. A student will not be able to participate in the

curriculum if they do not first watch the lesson. Assignments are to be turned in via one of the outlined methods above.

Grading

Students will be held accountable for their work. Grades are to be compiled and tallied the same as face-to-face. The teachers are expected to have grades recorded in Renweb in a timely manner.

Quarantine Interruptions

Due to the nature of the virus, quarantines are likely. It is important that the transition from face-to-face to virtual is as seamless as possible. We are asking all parents to be prepared for this transition just in case it arises. We realize this is not ideal. We will work together with you as we adapt to these trying times.

Athletic Policy

Unity Christian Academy values athletics and is committed to maintaining its programming throughout the pandemic as long as interactions can be conducted in a safe and orderly manner. The following outlines the policies that will ensure an appropriate level of responsibility towards the safety of our athletes, coaches, and fans.

Athletic Screening

All on campus athletic events will comply with the Screening Protocol listed above.

Masks

Masks are not mandatory for UCA athletes or guests. However, some schools may require the wearing of masks in order to compete and UCA is willing to accommodate their policies.

