

Spring Branch Academy – Preparedness Plan

August 2020

As a Christian school, we submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, who reigns now as “the ruler of the kings of the earth” (Revelation 1:5). In His Great Commission, He directed us to make disciples who would obey *everything* that He has commanded (Matthew 28:19-20). This total obedience to Jesus includes submitting to the government authorities (Romans 13:1-4; Titus 3:1-2; and 1 Peter 2:13-17), except where the government has become an idol or has commanded us to do something contrary to the will of God (Daniel 3; Acts 4:19; 5:29). In other matters of disagreement, we may respectfully make an appeal, based upon the principles and spirit of the law (cf. Daniel 1).

With regard to this year’s pandemic, the Lord Jesus does not require the school to pronounce upon the exact nature of the disease nor upon the worth of certain safety precautions; therefore, we will pray for our medical personnel and state officials, and then commit ourselves to God’s loving care in seeking to act in faith and love, not in fearful isolation nor in proud disregard of others (cf. Romans 14). We aim to keep the total welfare of our students in mind, especially their spiritual welfare and the effectiveness of our overall instruction. Given our small size, we believe that we can provide in-person instruction within a healthy environment. We also believe that the Lord Jesus has a good purpose in all these things (Ecclesiastes 3:11; Romans 8:28; Ephesians 1:21-22).

Acting as “free men” (1 Peter 2:16), we submit the following **Preparedness Plan for Spring Branch Academy**, as requested by the Michigan Department of Education in accordance with Michigan Executive Order 2020-142.

Decisions are based upon the reentry phase for Region 7, as described in the **Michigan Safe Start Plan**:

per Jackson Region

- Phase 1 – Uncontrolled Growth
- Phase 2 – Persistent Spread
- Phase 3 – Flattening
- Phase 4 – Improving
- Phase 5 – Containing
- Phase 6 – Post-pandemic

Guiding Principles of the Michigan Return to School Roadmap

Minimize physical contamination: face covering, handwashing, and cleaning.

Minimize close contact: social distancing, small groups, staggered schedules, and supervised movement.

Phases One, Two, and Three

As a nonpublic school, we are exempt from the subsection of the executive order that closes school buildings. Therefore, we will continue to offer in-person instruction in accordance with the plan for Phase Four.

Phase Four

The school does not have busing or athletics, so recommendations in these areas are absent from the plan.

Regarding Required Safety Protocols

The executive order specifies that face coverings must be worn by all staff and students, except during meals.

Face coverings may be homemade (washed daily) or level-one surgical masks (disposed at the day’s end).

The executive order specifies that these shall be worn in classrooms, and in indoor hallways and common areas.

No specification is made regarding staff or students in outdoor spaces.

The executive order exempts those who cannot medically tolerate a face covering.

The executive order exempts K-5 students who remain together in what the health department calls a *pod*:

A *pod* consists of students who remain together all day without close contact with students of other classes.

Because our entire student body is smaller in size than a typical grade-school class in a public school:

We respectfully appeal to the spirit of the law in treating our entire student body as a pod.

Even so, we plan to require face coverings of students in the building, except during meals or as seated in class.

We also plan to spread out our course scheduling and student seating in order to reduce the risk of close contact:

Freshman and sophomores typically meet all day on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Juniors and seniors typically meet on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoons.

All courses are scheduled according to the university model, as in dual enrollment.

With regard to hygiene, the school plans to do the following:

Daily ensure adequate supplies of soap, hand sanitizer (minimum 60% alcohol), paper towels, and tissues. Teach, reinforce, and post signs for handwashing with soap and water (20 seconds) and for hand sanitizer.

We do not plan to schedule handwashing every few hours or to have portable handwashing stations. Have highly-touched surfaces cleansed with diluted bleach solution or EPA-approved disinfectant.

Given our size and spread-out scheduling, we appeal for cleaning daily, rather than every four hours. Have any desk or lab equipment cleansed with the same method before a new student uses it.

We plan to assign seating, but not necessarily to close off classrooms for 24 hours before cleaning. Ensure the safe storage and correct use of cleaning products, including adequate ventilation when cleaning. Staff must wear gloves, surgical mask, and face shield in cleaning—it is recommended for cleaning staff.

With regard to cooperating with the local public health department, the school plans to do the following:

Implement protocols for a daily screening of students and staff.

Students or staff with symptoms of sickness or with a temperature above 100.4F should remain home.

Empiric testing for all students or staff is not recommended. Only those with symptoms require testing. Collect the contact information for any close contacts of a confirmed case of COVID-19.

This applies from two days before the person showed symptoms to the time last present at school.

The health department asks those having been in close contact to self-quarantine up to fourteen days.

Note: A “close contact” is being together more than fifteen minutes and less than six feet apart. The school also plans to prohibit indoor assemblies that bring together students from more than one classroom.

Regarding Recommended Safety Protocols

Most of the recommended safety protocols have been incorporated into this preparedness plan in some way.

With regard to students, the school plans to:

Educate students on how to cough/sneeze into one’s elbow or into a tissue (disposing and washing hands).

Discourage students from unnecessarily sharing personal items and supplies (e.g. balls, pens).

Limit classroom materials to small groups and disinfect them afterwards (e.g. lab equipment).

Keep student phones in a cubby and other personal items at a designated table in the study hall area.

Have students eat their meals at their designated study hall table.

Encourage students and staff to wash their hands before and after every meal.

Encourage that care be taken in using the refrigerator, microwave, or the water cooler.

Limit restroom use to one student at a time, with disposable wipes available for cleansing surfaces.

Discourage students in school hours from loitering in the parking lot or being isolated without staff supervision.

Family is allowed to enter the church building as are church staff and other guests, but the school plans to:

Require those who are visiting students to sign in and be screened, and to wash hands and wear a face covering.

With regard to physical layout and movement, the school plans to:

Arrange seating with one student per eight-foot table (“desk”)—all facing toward the center or front of a room.

Maintain six-foot distancing between staff and students in class, except for limited times of interaction.

Minimize congestion in hallways and doorways—floor markings and signage, however, may be necessary.

Encourage staff to open windows and to use outdoor activities and settings for instruction.

With regard to sick students or staff, the school plans to:

Quarantine students or staff who come down sick during school hours, until they can be transported home.

An area will be designated, and a staff person appointed to care for students who get sick.

Prohibit those students or staff from returning to school until either of the following is true:

They test negative, or they recover per CDC guidelines as instructed by the health department.

Notify our families of any laboratory positive or clinically diagnosed case of COVID-19 at school.

Staff should be informed to omit names due to confidentiality about protected health information.

Local health officials may also be notified of any possible case of COVID-19, yet within legal confidentiality.

Phase Five

We plan to utilize the same plan as Phase Four, except that face coverings will be optional, not mandatory.

Phase Six

Safety protocols are no longer required.

In the case of a lab or clinically diagnosed case of COVID-19 among staff or students, the plan includes:

Exposed areas and classrooms shall be immediately closed for cleaning and disinfecting.

Short-term dismissals may be required, but the decision must be made with the health department.