



School Health Policy: School Improvements for Pandemic Times

Introduction

In keeping with the CRIA mission to serve the expatriate and the local community in the Santa Cruz Canton region, this School Health Policy for Pandemic Times (SHP) is intended to ensure that we minimize absences from schooling and maintain healthy and safe campus-based and remote learning environments. Therefore, the SHP policy has protocols focused on the campus-based and Remote Learning programs to maintain high academic standards and foster a love of learning. In addition, we are committed to teaching students to understand, respect and protect the most vulnerable within our community, whether in their home life or at school.

CRIA is acutely aware of our school's responsibility in providing critical infrastructure for the functioning of the local economy of the *Gold Coast* region; our families depend on CRIA to provide a safe learning environment for 170+ days a year. The childcare/supervisory aspect of having a campus-based school is required for most of our families to be able to work and make a living to support their families. During pandemic times where the government mandates campus shutdowns in our region, CRIA has implemented, and is continuously improving, a Remote Learning Program using the same CRIA teachers that your student has during campus-based learning. We understand that the remote learning program puts undo pressure on the home life and business operations of our families. Therefore:

We are committed to only using the Remote Learning Program when there is a government-mandated quarantine of individuals (or a community member's self-quarantine because of possible exposure) , or a *force majeure* (earthquake, fire, flood, etc.); it is our intention under these new SHP protocols to give comfort to our parents, students, staff and the Costa Rican authorities that we are well-prepared to safely handle a campus-based school community during pandemic times.

The action steps and policy/protocols herein are adapted from the United States CDC and Costa Rica Ministry of Health guidelines. These guidelines are an addition to the approved CRIA Health and Safety policies and procedures already in place.

Actions Steps to Prepare CRIA for Pandemic Times

Under our 7-year strategic plan, we have prioritized and added some action steps to address the immediate needs of school improvements for pandemic times. The following list of actions have been approved by the CRIA Board as priority for the August 2020-21 school year:

- **New School Entry Health Stations**
 - Temperature check stations at entry
 - Disinfectant stations at entry
 - Handheld infrared thermometers in homerooms



- **Upgraded School Health Office**
 - Dedicated processing space for those presenting with symptoms strategically located in Administration Offices area
 - Automated external defibrillator (AED)
 - Basic diagnostic instruments (blood pressure monitor, thermometer, pulse oximeter, etc.)
 - Weight and height scales
 - Partnership with Beachside Clinic for handling potential cases
 - PPE equipment and masks for potential cases; mandatory use of a mask for potential cases identified on campus, and the immediate health care givers in contact with the potential case, until parent pick-up or case leaves campus

- **Health Curriculum Enhancements**
 - Respectful physical distancing skills
 - Self-directed health monitoring skills
 - Visible hand-wash stations placed strategically outdoors for teacher-supervised usage by classes of students with minimal disruption to the daily schedule
 - Respect for and protection of those community members most at risk
 - Counseling for growth mindset to be mentally prepared for pandemic times
 - Mandatory faculty CPR training and options for student CPR training

- **New Physical Distancing Campus Protocols (dependent on extent of virus spread)**
 - Implementing government-mandated smaller class sizes and face protection
 - Limiting class movements; some specialist teachers float into homerooms for primary (e.g. Spanish teachers)
 - Recess *Play Zones* for physical distancing between classes
 - *Cafeteria Zones* for physical distancing between classes

- **Enhanced Cleaning/Disinfecting Protocols**
 - Quality assurance checks for effective daily disinfecting of campus
 - Two-day cleaning and disinfecting protocols for times when a confirmed case on campus is identified

- **New Calendar Days Parameters**
 - Remote Learning Program attendance is required to maintain good standing during mandatory campus shutdown
 - The first day of a government-mandated shut-down period will be for faculty preparation—no remote classes and does not count toward Emergency Days policy
 - In the event of extended closure of campus for other emergencies (earthquake, fire, flood, etc.), the Remote Learning Program policy will be implemented



Entering Campus for Pandemic Times

Little or no COVID-19 Spread in Santa Cruz Canton	Significant COVID-19 Spread in Santa Cruz Canton
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Optional handwashing and temperature check stations available for visitors, parents and students at entry ○ Mandatory temperature check for those who present and/or complain of illness upon entry to campus ○ Those with temperature are isolated and sent home immediately; to re-enter, students must be fever-free for 24 hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mandatory temperature checks for staff/students, and parents at drop-off who exit their automobile ○ Mandatory temperature checks and hand wash station for all visitors ○ Those with high temperature are isolated and sent home immediately; to re-enter campus, written clearance from a local clinic is mandatory ○ Non-essential visitors banned

Physical Distancing for Pandemic Times

Little or no COVID-19 Spread in Santa Cruz Canton	Significant COVID-19 Spread in Santa Cruz Canton
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mandatory handwash stations required for students after recess-before lunch ○ All community members effectively use self-directed health monitoring for the avoidance of contagion ○ Respect for and protection of the physical space for at-risk community members who self-identify as person with comorbidity issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mandatory handwash stations required for students after recesses ○ Those with temperature are isolated and sent home immediately; to re-enter campus, written clearance from a local clinic is mandatory ○ Ban non-essential visitors

Illness in Pandemic Times: Identifying and handling potentially ill community members

Little or no COVID-19 Spread in Santa Cruz Canton	Significant COVID-19 Spread in Santa Cruz Canton
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All community members effectively use self-directed health monitoring skills for the avoidance of contagion ○ Mandatory temperature check for those who present and/or complain of illness ○ Those with temperature are isolated and sent home immediately; to re-enter, 24 hours must pass and present after that period fever-free 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mandatory isolation in school Health Office until campus exit is completed for those with symptoms ○ Mandatory masks for those identified and isolated including the immediate care givers within the health office ○ Written clearance from a local clinic is mandatory for re-entry ○ Ban non-essential visitors



Protocols When a Confirmed Case has Entered our School

Coordination with local health officials

Once learning of a COVID-19 case in someone who has been in the school, CRIA immediately notifies local health officials. These officials will help administrators determine a course of action for campus-based learning.

Communication with staff, parents, and students

School administration coordinates with local health officials to communicate dismissal decisions and the possible COVID-19 exposure:

- This communication to the school community aligns with the communications protocols in the school's emergency operations plan;
- The communications will include messaging to counter potential stigma and discrimination;
- It is critical that CRIA maintains confidentiality of the student or staff member while the school cooperates with our partner clinic or the Ministry of Health for any contact tracing protocols approved by the government;
- Administration shares information with staff, students, and their families through normal communications channels including WhatsApp and email;
- Communications include information about steps being taken by the school and how additional information will be shared; and
- Frequent use of communications channels to reiterate steps staff, students, and families can take to stay healthy.

Dismiss students and most staff for 2-days

This initial short-term dismissal allows time for the local health officials to gain a better understanding of the COVID-19 situation impacting the school. This period also allows the local health officials to help the school determine appropriate next steps, including whether an extended dismissal duration is needed to stop or slow further spread of COVID-19. Deep cleaning and disinfecting of all buildings occur during this 2-day dismissal.

- If local health officials mandate a closure of campus-based learning, the Remote Learning Program policies are immediately implemented after a one-day in-service teacher and administrator preparation day (may be handled remotely)
- During campus-based learning closures, we also cancel extracurricular group activities, school-based after school programs, and large events (e.g., assemblies, spirit nights, field trips, and sporting events)



Clean and disinfect thoroughly

- Close off areas used by the individuals with COVID-19 and wait as long as practical before beginning cleaning and disinfection to minimize potential for exposure to respiratory droplets. Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area. If possible, wait up to 24 hours before beginning cleaning and disinfection.
- Cleaning staff shall clean and disinfect all areas (e.g., offices, bathrooms, and common areas) used by the ill persons, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces.
- If surfaces are dirty, they shall be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- For disinfection at home, most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective.
 - Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).
 - Additionally, diluted household bleach solutions can be used if appropriate for the surface. Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation.
 - Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date.
 - Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser.
 - Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted.
 - Prepare a bleach solution by mixing:
 - 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water or
 - 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water

Make decisions about extending the school dismissal

Temporarily dismissing the on-campus programs is a strategy to stop or slow the further spread of COVID-19 in communities. This will only be undertaken with mandates issued by the Costa Rica Ministry of Health, or other such CR government authority.

- During school dismissals (after cleaning and disinfection), CRIA may stay open for staff members (unless ill) while students stay home, to undertake the Remote Learning Program Policies. Keeping facilities open: a) allows teachers to prepare delivery of lessons and materials remotely, maintaining continuity of teaching and learning; and b) allows other staff members to continue to provide services and additional response efforts. Decisions on which, if any, staff are allowed in the school are made in collaboration with local health officials
- **School administrators work in close collaboration and coordination with local health officials to make dismissal and large event cancellation decisions.** School dismissals and event cancellations may be extended if required by local health officials. The nature of these actions (e.g., geographic scope, duration) may change as the local outbreak situation evolves
- Administrators shall seek guidance from local health officials to determine when students and staff should return to schools and what additional steps are needed for the school community. In addition, students and staff who are well but are taking care of or share a home with someone with a case of COVID-19 should follow instructions from local health officials to determine when to return to school



When There is Little or no COVID-19 Spread in Santa Cruz Canton

Administrators reinforce healthy practices among their students and staff. The school maintains a prepared state for the possibility of community-level outbreaks. CRIA shall **be ready** if COVID-19 does appear in the community.

Information-sharing systems with health officials and clinic partners

- Information-sharing systems can be used for day-to-day reporting (on information such as changes in absenteeism) and disease surveillance efforts to detect and respond to an outbreak
- Local health officials should be a key partner in information sharing
- CRIA does not **screen students or staff to identify cases of COVID-19**. If our community has potential cases of COVID-19, local health officials will help identify those individuals and will follow up on next steps

Teach and reinforce healthy hygiene practices

- Mandatory CPR training for all faculty and train staff on healthy hygiene practices so they can teach these to students
- Ensure handwashing stations for classes include washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing, and after recess. Use of an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol is recommended for all community members
- Ensure adequate supplies (e.g., soap, paper towels, tissue) to support healthy hygiene practices

Intensify cleaning and disinfection efforts

- Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched. This includes but is not limited to doorknobs, light switches, classroom sink handles, countertops, desks and chairs). Use all cleaning products according to the directions on the label. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.)
- Ensure adequate supplies to support cleaning and disinfection practices

Monitor and plan for absenteeism

- Ensure that the Remote Learning Program is implemented in such a way as to avoid any absenteeism beyond the normal policy guidelines of absences allowed per semester
- Have alternative coverage options by cross-training staff



When There is Significant COVID-19 Spread in Santa Cruz Canton

Implementation of physical distancing strategies

- During a significant outbreak, field trips, assemblies, and other large gatherings may be postponed or canceled
- **Modify classes where students are likely to be in increased contact.** Specialist classes (Spanish, health and music classes, teachers come to primary classrooms to prevent classes mixing with others on the greater campus)
- **Increase the space between desks.** Rearrange student desks to maximize the space between students. Turn desks to face in the same direction (rather than facing each other) to reduce transmission caused from virus-containing droplets (e.g., from talking, coughing, sneezing)
- **Avoid mixing students in common areas.** Allow students to eat lunch in their classrooms rather than mixing in the cafeteria. Limit the extent to which students mix with each other, and particularly with students from other classes (segregate lunch and recess area by class, send a few students into the library to pick out books rather than going as a class, etc.). Restrict hallway use through homeroom stays or staggered release of classes. Avoid taking multiple classes to bathrooms at once (e.g., avoid having all classes use the bathroom right after lunch or recess). In the primary program, stagger playground usage rather than allowing multiple classes to play together and limit other activities where multiple classes interact
- **Reduce congestion in the health office.** Use the Health Office for children with flu-like symptoms and a satellite location for first aid or medication distribution
- **Ban nonessential visitors.** Ban the presence of volunteers for classroom activities, mystery readers, cafeteria support, and other activities
- **Limit cross-school transfer for special programs.** For example, if students are brought from multiple schools for special programs (e.g., sports, robotics, academic clubs)
- **Teach staff, students, and their families to maintain distance from each other in the school.** Educate staff, students, and their families at the same time and explain why this is important

Potential illnesses identified at home during significant spread of COVID-19 in Costa Rica

For parents, students and staff, please do not come to campus if any of the following symptoms are present:

- Fever--- temperature of 100°F/ 38°C or higher
- Vomiting, sickness or strong stomach-ache
- Diarrhea
- Acute cold, sore throat, and/or strong cough
- Thick mucus in nose/eyes or inflamed eyes
- Suspicion of contagious infection (chicken pox, scarlet fever, skin rash, impetigo, COVID-19, etc.)



If your child is unwell (but does not have any of the symptoms or illnesses mentioned above) we ask that you do not send him/her to school until he/she is fit again. In assessing whether or not your child is well enough to be in school, please ask yourself if he/she is well enough to attend PE and play outside, as they will be expected to take part in these activities if they come to school. Students who vomit, have a temperature, have diarrhea, a strong cough or a rash at school will be sent home.

Provide new ways to accommodate the needs of children and families at risk for serious illness from COVID-19.

Develop and implement semester long online learning program options for parents who have concerns about their children attending a campus-based school due to underlying medical conditions of their children or others in their home.

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