



# **Odyssey Health and Safety Under Covid-19**

## **For the Academic Year 2020-2021**

Covid-19 has changed a great deal about the way education functions today.

Odyssey school is looking forward to the start of our 2020-2021 school year with enthusiasm and optimism for what we can accomplish. The challenges of Covid-19 are real and are serious, but rising to meet them will cause us to be more creative and flexible than ever, and can only serve to strengthen Odyssey in the long run as we learn new skills and develop new methods of teaching and learning. Odyssey is an expeditionary school. With our light footprint, outdoor readiness, and expeditionary team strengths we are well suited to scale this mountain!

The purpose of this document is not to describe our distance learning or our on-campus learning program in detail, but rather to describe how the on-campus program will function in a way to maximizes safety and minimizes risk for students, families, and staff under the current Covid-19 environment.

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## Distance Learning vs. On-Campus Learning

Odyssey believes that the best learning occurs face to face and in person. Odyssey will do everything it can to achieve on-campus learning if it is possible to do so safely, responsibly, and legally, and has made extensive preparations over the summer for just this. When California State and San Mateo County regulations require distance learning (remote learning), we will do so with an eye towards returning to on-campus learning at the earliest possible time, *i.e.* our distance learning program is designed with the objective of pivoting as quickly and efficiently as possible back to on-campus learning.

### Distance Learning Program

Our distance learning program will use a schedule that is almost identical to the on-campus learning schedule. This allows us to move back and forth between distance learning and on-campus learning if the coronavirus rates and San Mateo County regulations change or if an all-school quarantine is needed.

Distance learning will take place over Zoom and be primarily synchronous, to mimic in-person teaching as closely as possible. It will also include biking and hiking, which will serve as a bridge between distance learning and on-campus learning. *See schedule for further details.*

As of today, Friday August 21<sup>st</sup>, San Mateo County regulations require distance learning and Odyssey will begin the school year on August 31<sup>st</sup> in this way.

### On-Campus Learning Program

Our on-campus program is designed to be as safe as possible, adhering to State and County guidelines and erring on the side of exceeding both. Classes will be held outdoors in the open air, with students separated into cohorts by grade level, and with one grade biking and biking off campus each day to keep the total number of students on campus lower. Masks, physical distancing, and hygiene will be encouraged by careful campus and program design and mandated by staff on campus. *See below for further details.*

The on-campus learning program is a hybrid program that minimizes Zoom-based teaching and has students with in-person instruction for 80%-90% of the week. *See schedule for further details.*

The schedule places more emphasis on exercise than in typical years. This is by design. We believe that students who have been at home for the spring semester under Covid-19 shelter-in-place orders and many of whom have had restricted movement over the summer will benefit from having more exercise and movement. In addition, exercise is good for physical health, for maintaining a healthy immune system, and for mental health. *See below for further details.*

Because all classes will be held outdoors in the fresh air and the elements, the on-campus academics will feel much like an expedition event in and of itself. Students will need to arrive on campus properly dressed with all-weather clothing that is similar to our expeditions. *See below for further details.*

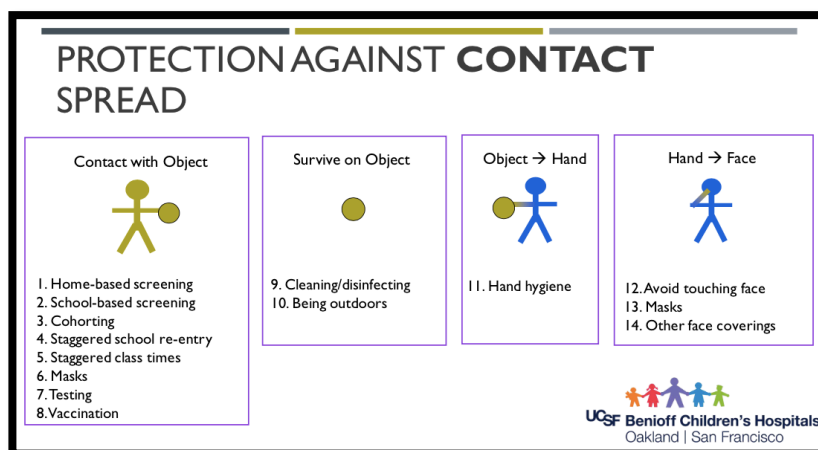
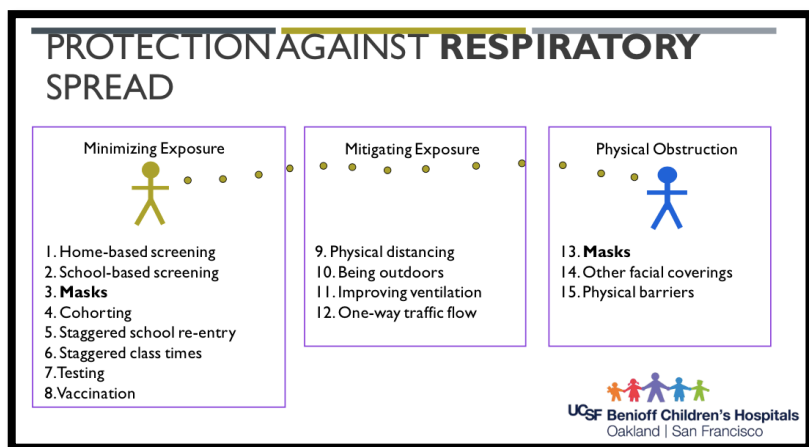
## Safety Under Odyssey's On-Campus Learning Program

Odyssey's on-campus design under Covid-19 follows guidance from the CDC and UCSF Benioff, and regulations from the State of California State and the County of San Mateo.

Our understanding of how the virus works and how it is transmitted changes rapidly and it is not the purpose of this document to give an exhaustive explanation. However, enough of the basics are understood to allow for schools to plan broadly.

The primary transmission modes for SARS-CoV-2, the virus which causes Covid-19, are respiratory and contact, of which respiratory is by far the most prevalent. In both cases, minimizing exposure to the virus follows seven principles: **regular screenings, being outdoors whenever possible, physical distancing, cohorting, masks, practicing careful hygiene, and testing.** Odyssey's on-campus program is designed around these seven principles.

In the sections below the safety protocols for on-campus learning are detailed. Students will receive instructions on this in their orientation week, including safety lessons for how to wear masks, how to properly wash hands, *etc.* This will be done both by Zoom and when students return to campus in person.



## Safety Protocols for On-Campus Learning

- **Health Screening:** Daily health screenings each morning and as needed during the day.
  - Each student will perform a self-assessment at home before leaving each morning, using a form provided by Odyssey.
    - If a student is not feeling well, exhibiting Covid-19 symptoms, or has had a possible exposure to the coronavirus, they should stay home.
  - Each student will undergo a health check on campus as their first event on arrival, which constitutes measurements (temperature, oxygen levels) and an interview for symptoms.
  - A spot-check may occur during the day if someone feels poorly or shows symptoms.
    - Each staff member has a hip pack with a thermometer, oximeter, and other items to aid with a spot check.
    - A new full time staff member, Laurel, is available to work with any student who becomes ill during the day or shows symptoms.
  - If a student shows symptoms compatible with Covid-19 or may have had exposure to the virus, they will wait in a designated quarantine area for a parent to pick them up and must be picked up as soon as possible.
- **Outdoor Classrooms:** All classes take place in outdoor classrooms under a sunshade (no walls)
  - This allows maximum airflow and ventilation.
  - Students spend the entire day outdoors.
  - Outdoor touchless water-bottle refilling station, restrooms, and hands-free hand washing facilities (pedal driven) will be provided.
  - Outdoor classrooms include wireless connectivity.
- **Physical Distancing**
  - Staggered drop-off and pick-up times to avoid large gatherings and keep grades separate.
  - Six feet distance maintained between each person all day
    - Outdoor classrooms are sufficiently large to maintain six feet between desks.
    - One-way walkways will be in use through the campus.
    - Lunch takes place outdoors and with at least six feet distance between people.
  - Students will use one classroom for the day, and teachers will move from classroom to classroom.
  - No all-school meetings or gatherings.
- **Cohorting:** physical separation into cohorts will take place all semester by grade level
  - 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders are physically separate on the campus throughout the day
    - One grade will be on the upper campus.
    - One grade will be on the lower campus.
    - One grade will be biking with teachers off campus.
  - These cohorts remain separate during breaks, at lunch, and during all activities on campus. The campus is split between upper and lower campus, including the back hillside, so that cohorts remain separate. *See map at end of document.*
  - Upper and lower campus each has separate bathrooms, washing stations, *etc.* minimizing the chance of one cohort coming into contact with another.

- **Masks:** all students and staff must wear a face masks at all times when not drinking or eating.
  - Students and staff are to bring **three freshly cleaned masks each day**: one of which is worn when arriving, one to change into at noon (masks become moist with use), and one as a backup.
    - **Cloth masks must be double or triple ply, covering mouth and nose.**
      - Double ply if cotton, triple ply if synthetic.
    - **Masks with a valve are not allowed.**
    - **Neck gaiters or bandanas are not allowed.**
    - **No Neoprene masks are allowed.**
  - Odyssey has additional masks to use in an emergency.
  - *Aside on face shields: Odyssey has also set aside face shields. Given our current understanding of the virus it is not thought that face shields are needed at the moment in an outdoor classroom setting, but if a student or staff member desires a face shield one is available and if CDC or State recommendations change Odyssey is prepared.*
- **Hygiene** and minimizing contact sources
  - Hand sanitizer will be provided in each outdoor classroom
  - Outdoor soap and water washing stations will be positioned in both the upper and lower campus.
  - Each student has personal, non-shared classroom equipment
    - Personal, non-shared outdoor desk (provided by Odyssey)
    - Personal, non-shared outdoor chair (provided by Odyssey)
    - Personal, non-shared computer (Chromebook provided by Odyssey)
      - or a laptop provided by family if preferred
      - there are no outlets, so computers need to arrive fully charged or with an extra battery pack (provided by family)
    - Personal, non-shared school materials (provided by family)
      - Unlike the past, there cannot be sharing of paper, pencils, *etc.* between students. Each student must bring their own pencil case, notebooks, binders, *etc.* and cannot expect to share with another student.
    - Personal, non-shared headphones (provided by family)
      - To be used when doing computer work that includes audio.
    - Personal, non-shared water bottle (provided by family).
    - Students may wish to bring their own hand moisturizer.
- Each student and parent must sign a community compact before the start of the year.
- Any student who shows symptoms or has been exposed to the virus should contact their physician and must stay home in quarantine for two weeks, participate in contact tracing, and show a negative Covid-19 test before returning to campus.

## Campus Building

At present there is uncertainty as to how easily middle schoolers might contract Covid-19 or spread SARS-CoV-2. Some health experts have suggested that young adolescents might have advantages over adults in both, however the data are mixed and more recent data cast increasing doubt on this idea. Odyssey will err on the side of caution and assume that middle schoolers are as likely to catch and spread the virus as anyone else.

What is clear from the data is that adults are at higher risk of a severe case of Covid-19. Adolescents may develop a severe case as well, but this appears to be far less frequent in the data. For this reason, to avoid both contact and respiratory risks, the Odyssey campus building is being carefully zoned off such that:

- No students may enter the building at any time without explicit permission.
- No adult drop-in visits are allowed. Visitors must make an appointment by phone.
- Each staff member has a separate room of their own.

## Drop-Off, Pick-Up

All persons must be wearing a mask *before* entering campus. This means a mask should be put on in the car before entering campus.

Drop-off and pick-up times are staggered by grades, as explained in the schedule. There is a 15 minute window for each grade. Because of the narrow window and because any backup on Polhemus Road would be dangerous, families must be very careful about arriving on time.

### Drop-Off

- Drop-off will occur at the lower traffic circle.
  - The upper driveway will be blocked off.
  - Parents are to *pull all the way through and up to the end of the circle.*
  - Only the student may exit the car.
  - An Odyssey staff member will be there to direct and assist.
  - It is extremely important that this process happen quickly, without extended conversations. Any backup onto Polhemus Road could be very dangerous.
- Immediately after exiting the car the student will get in line for the morning screening.
  - This line forms on the upper driveway, with spots marked for six foot distance.

### Pick-up

- Pick-up also occurs at the lower traffic circle and mirrors drop-off procedure (minus screening).

## Access to Campus

In the past Odyssey has had very open access to the campus. This year, however, we will be closing the main gate after drop-off and opening it shortly before pick-up time. Visitors will need to phone the main desk if they wish to enter campus.

## Outdoor Classrooms and the Elements

Students will need to come to campus prepared for the elements. In the Bay Area our weather is fairly mild relative to Minnesota or Vermont. However, it can change rapidly here as well, and the fog and rain can be cold if one doesn't have appropriate gear. Luckily Odyssey students are already expedition ready and are used to this kind of gear! We simply need to adjust to using it on campus now.

The outdoor classrooms will function as sunshades, with no walls. Appropriate student dress for the classrooms includes:

- Hat for sun protection
- Outer shell
  - waterproof and windproof jacket
  - waterproof pants
- Mid layer
  - Fleece jacket
- Waterproof boots
  - These will be especially important because the grass can be damp from morning dew.
  - On a rainy day the upper parking lot will have a wet ground and the grass will become muddy.
- Gloves
  - These might be the same as your PE gloves, or could be more comfortable fleece gloves.
- Sunblock

If weather is particularly inclement or a storm front is forecast, school will take place over Zoom as a temporary shift to distance learning.

## Physical Exercise

Odyssey's on-campus schedule includes more exercise than years past, and that is by design. It will also look very different from years past because many activities (*e.g.* swimming, hockey) are simply not possible under Covid-19.

Central to this new physical education program is a half-day biking program, from 12 noon to 3:30pm, which includes integrated Science and Social Studies instruction. Odyssey has purchased bikes for student use and these classes will depart from Odyssey campus to ride through designated trails in our surrounding area. It is an exciting new part of the program and an example of Covid-19 pushing us into positive areas that might improve Odyssey's program for years to come. Additionally there are morning classes in Karate and Boxing, and in Yoga. These three areas of exercise have been chosen because they strengthen the body in a variety of ways while maintaining physical distancing.

Students will need to bring with them the following equipment for PE

- Biking gloves (also to be used for boxing)
- Biking helmet

Odyssey will provide bikes, boxing bags, karate equipment, and yoga mats. All such equipment will need to be cleaned by students under instruction from teachers, both before and after using.

## Campus Plan

### Odyssey Campus Plan With Outdoor Classrooms/Sunshades

