



# APTS

Alternative Paths  
Training School

Education • Consulting • Programs

# REOPENING PLAN OF ACTION

August 27, 2021

## **ALTERNATIVE PATHS TRAINING SCHOOL**

Alexandria

Manassas

Stafford

This document is intended to be utilized as an outline of the practices and procedures APTS has in place to support student's instructional and behavioral needs while adhering to the COVID-19 safety requirements. This document will remain fluid and dynamic to address and remain in compliance with regulations that are put in place by the federal, state, or local governments.

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## Introduction

### **Alan El Tagi, CEO & Co-Founder**



The mandated closure of Virginia school buildings on March 17, 2020 presented many new challenges for APTS families and staff. While navigating alternative avenues of instruction and support for our students, APTS has looked forward to the day when our school buildings could safely reopen. That day has arrived. APTS resumed in-person instruction on September 8, 2020.

I am excited to share with you APTS' 2020 School Reopening Plan of Action. Please be assured that our top priority will always be the health and safety of the families we serve and our staff. We recognize the importance of reopening our school to in-person learning safely. Our plan has been developed thoroughly based on guidance from the state and local level as well as input from our families and staff members. This information will provide you with clear guidance on how we will continue to open our doors safely and in accordance with CDC and VDH guidelines.

In these quickly evolving times, please understand that this plan is fluid. Changes are expected based on any updated federal, state, and local recommendations and feedback from our families, staff, and partners. We look forward to continuing to serve our students, families, and community.

Sincerely,



Alan El Tagi

## **At a Glance**

Students and staff will continue to return to buildings with increased health and safety measures in place. APTS' leadership has received input from local health departments, families, and other stakeholders to create a reopening plan that prioritizes the health and safety of our students and staff. APTS is dedicated to providing high quality instruction and behavioral support regardless of the delivery model.

### **Schedule**

APTS students that chose to return to in-person learning on February 1, 2021, resumed full day in-person instruction from 8:10 am to 3:15 pm. APTS remains committed to making available 100% virtual learning to families who choose to continue receiving virtual instruction for their child after January 29, 2021.

### **Sanitation, cleaning, and disinfection protocols**

APTS follows the CDC guidelines for all cleaning and disinfection of schools. Teachers, staff, and contracted cleaning companies work together to ensure the building is thoroughly cleaned in accordance with the CDC guidelines. If a positive COVID-19 case is found, APTS will follow the guidance of the local health department to determine the areas of the school/building that require deep cleaning and determine if a school or office closure is needed to complete the cleaning.

### **Increased training for staff and students**

All APTS staff members are provided with a comprehensive building orientation in the following areas: cleaning, PPE, social distancing, symptom recognition, health screening and more. This training is delivered virtually and in-person. Families and students also receive important information throughout the reopening process via mail, email, the APTS website and social media.

### **Screening procedures**

Parents, caregivers, or guardians are strongly encouraged to monitor their children for symptoms of infectious illness every day through home-based symptom screening. Students who are sick should not attend school in-person. Any students exhibiting a fever or other symptoms of COVID-19 while at school will be escorted to the quarantine room; parents/guardians are notified to come pick up their child immediately. Staff are required to self-screen prior to coming to work and keep a record of their self-screening to be reviewed periodically at random.

## Face coverings

Face coverings are required for staff. Students are encouraged, but not required to wear a face-covering. Staff are provided with a cloth face mask to be washed daily. Personal protective equipment is also available for staff to wear when social distancing cannot be maintained including surgical masks, gloves, gowns, and face shields.

## Social distancing

Maintaining distance between individuals is one of the key strategies for reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. APTS staff and students are asked to maintain at least 3 to 6 feet of distance whenever possible. Environmental changes have been made, such as spacing desks, providing floor markings, and installing signage, to serve as a reminder that distance should be maintained.

APTS recognizes that social distancing may not always be possible to be maintained and has obtained a variance from the state of Virginia regarding the recommended social distancing measure as the population of students served by our program may require staff to be in closer proximity to provide necessary support.

APTS works to minimize movement of individuals within the school by: 1) limiting the interchange of students and staff between classrooms; 2) by having a designated staff complete noncontact lunch delivery; 3) by creating site-based procedures to direct foot traffic throughout the building; and 4) by ensuring that restrooms can be used with appropriate social distancing and cleaning protocols.

## Education

Signs are posted in highly visible locations (e.g., school entrances, restrooms) that promote everyday protective measures and describe how to stop the spread of germs, such as by properly washing hands and properly wearing a cloth face covering. Regular announcements are made to remind staff and students of appropriate hygiene and cleaning procedures.

When appropriate, students are provided with social narratives, visuals, and routines. Staff assist students in practicing new skills and reinforce appropriate social distancing and hygiene practices, as needed.

## Limited access to visitors

Visitors are only permitted into the building when school is in session with prior approval from a Campus Director. Visitors are required to be screened and wear masks while inside the building or if they are outside the building and not able to properly socially distance. Meetings, tours, observations, etc. will occur virtually utilizing Google Suites when possible.

## **Continuing to improve and further develop virtual instruction program**

As APTS continues to reopen its buildings, we remain committed to providing an increased, robust, and variable virtual experience for those students and families that are not currently available or ready to return to the physical buildings.

## **Schedule**

### Schedule and distance learning

APTS students that chose to return to in-person learning on February 1, 2021, resumed full day in-person instruction from 8:10 am to 3:15 pm. APTS remains committed to making available 100% virtual learning to families who choose to continue receiving virtual instruction for their child after January 29, 2021.

As of January 4, 2021, students access virtual instruction following a more rigorous academic schedule. Hours of direct instruction will increase to two 2-hour blocks per day, 9:00 am to 11:00 am and 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. Asynchronous materials are provided to students remaining virtual via post or online and should consist of 2 to 3 hours of per day. All completed asynchronous materials is reviewed and graded by the student's classroom teacher. Additional information on changes to the distance learning schedule can be found in the APTS COVID Response Learning Plan on the APTS website.

For those students accessing in-person instruction on February 1, 2021, the daily schedule begins at 8:10 am and end at 3:15 pm. The additional time that staff are onsite before and after the student school day, will be utilized to ensure the safe transition of students during arrival and dismissal procedures, allow for thorough cleaning of classrooms and supplies and provide increased training opportunities for staff.

For transportation information, families should reach out to their child's county representative. The schedule is subject to change based on the status of environmental conditions and input from students, families, staff, and counties.

## **Safety First**

### Maintaining healthy operations

Steps are place to protect all staff and children, as well as work to identify and support those at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Please see Appendix A for more information.

- The CDC identifies "high risk" candidates as those whose health or medical concerns or other status, such as age, creates vulnerability to COVID-19 exposure; persons in this category are in imminent danger for succumbing to the virus, with little chance of overcoming it. Staff who identify as "high risk" can request accommodations through Human Resources and be asked to provide doctor's notes identifying the condition as well as the accommodations they are requesting. Accommodations will remain on file and be reviewed on an individual basis.
- Students who have been identified as "high risk" or requiring an emergency medical action plan will be encouraged to consult with their doctor prior to returning to the

physical building. Equitable instruction will continue to be provided virtually during this time period as families consult with medical professionals. Parents and guardians of identified "high risk" students that request in-person instruction will be required to sign a medical waiver acknowledging the increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19 prior to their students' return.

Sick leave policies and practices (including return to school/work policies) are regularly reviewed and updated to address and include policies specific to COVID-19.

- Students who were attending class and who have either been exposed or who contract the virus will receive their educational services from home (virtual instruction) as they are physically able to, and until total recovery.
- Information on APTS staff leave practices and vaccine protocol can be found in Appendix I.

Continuity of services is maintained by having trained staff cross-trained to provide classroom support and step into new roles if need arises.

Practices for gatherings, field trips and volunteer restrictions adhere to all applicable phase guidelines and remain consistent with any Executive Order in place.

## Classroom modifications and structure

The classroom and building environment are set up to encourage proper social distancing and hygiene practices. Classrooms are decluttered to allow for easy cleaning; desks are spaced 3 to 6 feet apart, and common areas are closed for the time being. The use of shared items is discouraged unless thorough cleaning can occur. Teachers maintain inventory of their materials and additional supplies are ordered to minimize shared items.

Signs are posted in highly visible locations (e.g., school entrances, restrooms) that promote everyday protective measures and describe how to stop the spread of germs, such as by properly washing hands and properly wearing a cloth face covering. Regular announcements are made to remind staff and students of appropriate hygiene and cleaning procedures. Additional hand sanitizing stations are available, and regular breaks are provided for handwashing/sanitizing. Staff assist students in learning hygiene procedures as needed and reinforce any health and hygiene promoting behaviors such as increased tolerance for face masks, PPE, and social distancing.

Site-based modifications such as posted signage and floor markings have been established to encourage controlled movement and foot traffic throughout buildings. Walkie talkies are utilized to allow for quick communication without the need to travel throughout buildings.

## Evaluation of building

APTS currently maintains a comprehensive preventative maintenance schedule. Prior to opening, facilities evaluated and completed preventative maintenance on all systems including HVAC, plumbing, and lighting. Air filters were replaced at this time and will continue to be serviced more frequently. Water systems and features have been checked at each campus to ensure proper operation. Water bottle fill stations remain open, however, water fountains have been disabled or otherwise secured to prevent use.

## Initial cleaning

APTS has completed the process of organizing, decluttering, cleaning, and disinfecting the classrooms. This includes removing porous materials that cannot be easily disinfected. All cleaning has been completed using CDC and/or EPA approved disinfecting agents for COVID-19.

High touch areas:

- have been identified and explained to staff to ensure awareness.
- high tech touch areas (phones, copiers, light switches, etc.) have contact film placed over them to allow for easy and safe cleaning.

## Sourcing of cleaning supplies

APTS has been able to source approved disinfectants through a local supplier and has made arrangements to switch to another CDC and/or EPA approved disinfectant if the supply chain is interrupted. Each campus has enough disinfectant for 1 month, with resupplies scheduled to arrive regularly.

Additional cleaning supplies include folding tables to set up a 5 Basin Disinfecting System in each classroom for the end of the day procedures and additional basins. APTS has also sourced sprayers to simplify the disinfection process.

To maintain an inventory, cleaning supplies are given to each classroom in the morning in a clear plastic container. When a supply is empty, the classroom radios for a refill and turns in the empty container as they receive a new product.

## Cleaning responsibility

To ensure appropriate staffing, APTS implements an “all hands” approach where each staff member has a shared responsibility to maintain their zone or area while also cleaning after themselves. A facilities staff member is assigned for each building to assist with cleaning.

APTS is exploring hiring additional facilities staff to assist with school day cleanings. All APTS staff members receive additional training on how to appropriately clean following the CDC guidelines.

APTS contracts with an outside vendor for building cleaning after school hours.

If a positive COVID-19 case is discovered, APTS will follow the guidance of the local health department to determine the areas of the school/building that may require deep cleaning and determine if a school or office closure is required to complete the cleaning.

## Zone cleaning protocol

APTS has set up a zone cleaning approach where each classroom, office, hallway, and lobby acts as their own zone.

Staff assigned to a zone completes the appropriate level of cleaning required on a regular schedule.

Facilities is responsible for cleaning the hallways, hallway restrooms, and PRN cleaning. Please see Appendix B for details on cleaning levels.

## Staff, family, and student preparation

Staff are provided with a comprehensive building reopening orientation. Topics covered include proactive health strategies, cleaning protocols, responding to confirmed/suspected cases of COVID-19, behavioral supports for returning students, and supporting the social/emotional needs of students and yourself. Families and students also receive important information throughout the reopening process including information on hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, use of cloth face coverings, staying home when sick, and encouraging physical distancing.

Staff and students will receive ongoing training and information on proactive health strategies and cleaning protocols, mental health, as well as training to address any novel situations as they arise.

Informational guides and checklists are posted throughout the school building, sent to staff and student families, and made available on APTS website and social media platform(s).

A full training and information list is provided in Appendix C.

## **Health and Wellness**

### **Entering APTS buildings**

#### **Visitors:**

APTS has placed signage at all entrances requiring visitors to call front offices. Visitors are not permitted into the building when school is in session unless they have prior approval from a Campus Director. Visitors are required to be screened for COVID-19 symptoms including temperature checks and any COVID-19 contact. Visitors must wear masks while inside the building or if they are outside the building and not able to properly socially distance. Meetings, tours, observations, etc. occur virtually utilizing Google Suites when possible.

#### **Screenings:**

All staff and students (or their families) are asked to report if they have COVID-19 symptoms or if they have been exposed to COVID-19 prior to entering any APTS building. The CDC does not currently recommend schools conduct symptom screening for all students in grades K-12 on a routine (e.g., daily) basis. In accordance with these guidelines, parents, caregivers, or guardians are strongly encouraged to monitor their children for symptoms of infectious illness every day through home-based symptom screening. Students who are sick should not attend school in-person. Any students exhibiting a fever or other symptoms of COVID-19 while at school will be escorted to the quarantine room; parents/guardians are notified to come pick up their child immediately. Staff are required to self-screen prior to coming to work and keep a record of their self-screening to be reviewed periodically at random. Temperature screenings for staff may also be conducted for a period of days following breaks in instruction (e.g., winter break, etc.).

All staff are asked to self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms prior to coming to an APTS building by completing a screening card daily confirming that they are symptom-free and that they have not been exposed to COVID-19. Screening cards fit in employee ID badge holders and responses are spot checked regularly by administrative staff or school nurses. The badge clearly signals that the wearer has indicated that they are cleared to be in the building for that day. All staff are required to clearly display them on their person throughout their day. Staff are directed NOT to report to an APTS building if they do not pass the screening form. Staff are responsible for maintaining their own screening records.

Students and staff sanitize or wash their hands prior to or upon entering the building.

Students and staff are required to stay home and notify the campus immediately if:

- They are displaying symptoms of COVID-19 or a fever
- They have had close contact with a confirmed positive case of COVID-19 and are unvaccinated

- They have had frequent close contact (e.g., living in the same home) with an individual that is displaying COVID-19 symptoms and/or is awaiting COVID-19 testing due to symptoms

## Practices inside APTS buildings:

### Face Coverings:

All staff are required to wear masks within the building and while accompanying students into and outside of the building. Staff who do not arrive at school with a mask are provided with a disposable mask and encouraged to bring their reusable masks the following day. Staff refusing to wear a mask are sent home on administrative leave without pay for the day. Staff may remove their mask if they are outdoors engaging in physical activities (e.g., recess, physical education class outside) however social distancing should still strived to be maintained as much as possible.

Staff face coverings are evaluated by the administrative and school nursing team for appropriateness and safety. Staff may be asked to change their face covering if it is determined to not meet these standards. Recommendations for acceptable face coverings will continue to be re-evaluated as new information is presented. At this time, staff may NOT wear masks with valves or neck gaiters.

All students are advised to wear masks while in transition to and from APTS as well as within the building. Staff and students maintain appropriate social distancing while in APTS buildings whenever possible. Staff may remove face masks while alone in private offices with the door closed but must place masks back on while transitioning within hallways or other locations that others would populate.

If another staff member approaches the staff member's cubicle or office, both parties must be wearing their masks.

If social distancing cannot be maintained, then staff are provided with a surgical mask. Additional protective wear including goggles/face shields and gown may also be provided when social distancing cannot be maintained during activities such as instruction, behavioral emergencies, and/or daily living assistance.

When interacting with students who are hearing-impaired or who, during the provision of services, require a view of the staff member's mouth, staff may wear masks with a clear mouth panel.

Students are encouraged, but not required to wear face coverings during the school day. Student face coverings are also evaluated by the school nurses and administrative team for health and safety as well as appropriateness. If a face covering is determined to not be safe or appropriate, a student may be asked to change into a disposable mask or wear a different mask. APTS staff

continue to work on encouraging and teaching appropriate mask-wearing behavior with the students.

Based on best available data regarding effective face masks and in collaboration with the local health department:

- Students can wear masks with valves
- Students are NOT allowed to wear neck gaiters

The above recommendations regarding face coverings for students will continue to be re-evaluated and updated as new research and guidelines are presented.

It should be noted, if a student displays COVID-19 symptoms they are asked to wear a surgical mask and move to the designated isolation room until a parent/guardian arrives to pick the student up.

### **Social Distancing:**

Upon transitioning into the building, students and staff are asked to maintain appropriate social distancing whenever possible. Classrooms are also organized to maintain at least 3 to 6 feet of space between each student's desk. Floor markings and signage is installed to serve as a reminder that a social distance should be maintained.

Students and staff are discouraged from bringing outside items into the building. If students or staff bring personal items into the building, then they are provided with a bin in which to maintain their personal belongs throughout the day.

The movement of students and staff between classrooms is limited as much as possible. Site-based procedures have been created to establish entrance and exit routes and direct foot traffic throughout the building. Site-based procedures have also been created to ensure restrooms can be used with appropriate social distancing and cleaning protocols to minimize cross contamination. Students eat in their classroom while appropriately distanced from other students.

We recognize that social distancing may not always be able to be maintained. APTS has requested a variance from the state of Virginia regarding the recommended social distancing measure as the population of students served by our program may require staff to be in close proximity to provide necessary support. Please see Appendix G for detailed information.

### **Revised Guidelines and Procedures for Student Health Services:**

All classroom staff have been trained to administer first-aid to staff and students. School nurses may be called into classrooms on an as-needed basis.

School nurses wear cloth masks when providing any needed services within the classrooms unless additional PPE is required as set forth below.

School nurses exclusively deliver medications to students. If a school nurse is not available, a single back-up staff that is trained in medication administration is identified to deliver medications for that day.

Medical grade PPE is worn by nurses if:

- A student has COVID-19 symptoms and the nurse is needed to provide services to them and/or to wait with them until a parent arrives.
- A nurse is helping a student with using an inhaler or performing any other assistance creating a risk of airborne particulates.

Nurses request all students with prescribed nebulizer treatments bring their prescribed rescue inhaler to school. Nebulizer treatments are only to be delivered if the rescue inhaler does not work and the student's oxygen level is dropping.

### **Practices for Behavioral Emergencies:**

Staff receive proactive and reactive strategy training while working with students in a least to most restrictive presentation. Physical proximity as well as physical interventions is utilized only when immediate health or safety is compromised.

Staff members work to maintain the appropriate usage of PPE during a behavioral episode. Another staff member is available to switch if safety is compromised or PPE is removed. Staff have access to protective eyewear, masks (including surgical masks), and gloves.

While By-My-Side interventions have not be altered, an emphasis is placed on body positioning, angling of staff facial proximity, use of PPE and communication between staff to encourage best practices.

Once health and safety within the environment is restored, staff members can access identified cleaning locations to clean themselves and ensure disinfection occurs.

### **Related Services**

Services that require transitional staff (Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy) to present instruction to students within their respective classrooms. Related service providers are encouraged to provide instruction virtually while the student remains in the classroom. If a related service provider works directly with a student, they do so in the student's classroom and are responsible for ensuring they have properly washed and sanitized prior to entering the classroom. They try to minimize their movements from classroom to classroom as much as possible and wear a mask at all appropriate times.

**Food preparation:**

Students and staff are encouraged to use cold packs to keep their lunches cold enough to be kept in the classroom or office. If a lunch requires additional refrigeration, a designated food service staff places it in a separate plastic bag, label it and put it in the school refrigerator. Staff preparing food are trained through ServSafe to ensure safety while preparing and distributing food.

Staff assigned to food preparation minimize contact with other staff and have no contact with students. Staff preparing food wear masks, gloves, and hair covering while preparing or handling food. Food prep staff do not enter the classrooms throughout the day and classroom staff do not enter the kitchen.

Cleaning schedules and procedures are posted and reviewed. Please see Appendix D.

**Mental health services and monitoring**

School counselors provide mental health training and resources to staff, students, and their families.

Mental health resources are made available to staff, students, and their families on a regular basis.

School counselors meet student counselling needs in-person and virtually. School counselors also provide evidence-based resources and lessons for teachers to utilize to support the social and emotional needs of all students at APTS.

**Transportation:****Community-Based Instruction (CBI) Trips:**

Community-Based Instruction (CBI) Trips may occur with prior approval from a Campus Director. All locations are thoroughly evaluated for CDC compliance, appropriateness, and availability. Additionally, parental consent must be obtained prior to the trip.

**Transportation**

Alternative Paths operates both cars and vans at each location to transport students for CBI trips and for students who have engaged in behavioral episodes and are not safe to transport on county vehicles. If a student is not safe to board their afternoon transportation, Alternative Paths may attempt to stabilize the student's behavioral episode and contact the parent/guardian to arrange pick up. If the parent/guardian is not able to provide transportation due to lack of operational vehicle, an APTS car, van, or bus may be utilized if APTS administration determines that the conditions of the circumstance, including the student's behavior, are safe to allow transportation.

The student will be encouraged to maintain safety through proactive behavioral measures. Staff will attempt to maintain distance; dependent upon the type of vehicle used to transport. When available, APTS will attempt to utilize the larger vehicle to maximize social distancing.

Staff will be required to wear a mask during transportation and the student will be encouraged to wear a mask as well. After any use of APTS vehicles, the vehicle will be thoroughly disinfected. All seats and surfaces will be wiped down with a disinfectant. A cleaning checklist will be maintained to ensure all areas have been cleansed.

### **Bus Transportation:**

Alternative Paths does not currently provide bus transportation on a regular basis to students. Buses may be used in emergency situations/situations with prior approval from a Campus Director if it is required.

Social distancing will be in effect with assigned seating for staff and students. Staff will utilize proactive behavioral strategies to encourage safe and cooperative behaviors. Staff on transportation will always wear masks. Students will be encouraged to wear a mask when developmentally appropriate. If students are engaging in maladaptive behaviors on these buses, additional supports including staff presence and physical interventions may be utilized to maintain health and safety.

In bus emergencies, when health and safety is at risk, staff may be required to be in close proximity. Staff will wear a mask and utilize appropriate strategies to de-escalate the behavioral episode including verbal prompting, verbal redirection, and physical presence. By-My-Side strategies including possible physical restraint may have to be implemented to maintain health and safety. Staff will attempt to move back to the recommended social distancing when the behavioral episode has de-escalated.

Alternative Paths will document behavioral episodes and review behavioral episodes with both operations and the behavior department to ensure best behavioral and safety practices are followed.

After any use of APTS vehicles, the vehicle will be thoroughly disinfected. All seats and surfaces will be wiped down with a disinfectant. A cleaning checklist will be maintained to ensure all areas have been cleansed.

### **On-Call and in-home behavior support:**

Alternative Paths is committed to continuing to provide support to our students in the home setting when appropriate. In order to minimize risk, Alternative Paths is changing our current practices to allow for screening and to encourage safety.

Upon receiving a request for behavioral assistance in the home setting, the call-taker will first determine if this call is suited for APTS or if emergency services should be contacted. If the call-taker believes APTS can assist, then they will attempt to provide advice to the family or deescalate the behavioral episode verbally over the phone.

If deescalating the behavior by telephone is not possible, then the call-taker will again evaluate if emergency services should be contacted. If it is concluded that an APTS staff member can assist in the home, the call-taker will ask the family if anyone in the home has been exposed to COVID-19 or has had any symptoms of COVID-19. The call-taker will also ask that the family members in home wear a mask at all times, maintain a clean environment that has recently been disinfected, and inform the family that a signature page will need to be signed upon staff arrival.

If the parent confirms no COVID-19 exposures, positive tests, or symptoms, and agrees to the use of a mask and signing a document, then the staff member may provide in-home support.

If upon arrival the family is not wearing masks or the staff member feels that safety is at risk, the APTS staff member shall exercise the right to discontinue support and request that the family contact emergency services.

At the conclusion of the behavioral services, the staff member will complete a Serious Incident Report and debrief with their POD Manager, Behavior Specialist, and Regional Program Director. These departments will evaluate if the family can benefit from additional support or training.

## Use of building for afterschool activities and public use

APTS does not have after school, extracurricular activities, or student drivers. The school building is not open to the public or rented for any use. We continue to monitor access to the building during non-school hours. Approval from an administrator is required for any individual to be onsite when school is not in session. Any staff arriving on campus must always wear a mask, maintain social distancing when possible, and disinfect any high touch areas with which they may have come into contact.

## Participation in community response efforts

Practices for gatherings, field trips and volunteer restrictions remain consistent with all federal, state, and local guidelines. Additionally, further restrictions may be implemented based on APTS' internal evaluation of the ability to maintain a safe, healthy environment during outings, parent/guardian approval, and county representative and community input.

## **COVID-19 Response**

### **COVID-19 Response Team members**

APTS has created a COVID-19 Action Team consisting of employees from the nursing department, central office administration, regional campus administration and Executive Level Directors. Please see the complete list in Appendix H.

The Action Team meets weekly to develop, review, and revise the following practices and procedures.

### **Contact information for local health departments**

APTS adheres to all Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Virginia Department of Health (VDH), state, and local guidelines for contacting and reporting all suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases to the local health departments. APTS submit reports to the proper health department based on the residence of the student or staff. The phone numbers for the local health departments can be found in Appendix E.

### **Staff and student health and absentee monitoring**

Staff and students or their parents/guardians are required to sign a disclosure form indicating that they shall promptly notify the school nurse if they have a positive COVID-19 test, if anyone living at their residence is diagnosed with COVID-19, or if they have a known exposure to COVID-19. Additionally, all staff and student families shall notify the campus as soon as possible if the staff or student are absent for any reason.

If a staff member has an unplanned absence and does not notify his/her direct supervisor, then campus staff will call the individual and ask specific screening questions developed by the nursing department to ascertain if the staff member is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19. If the staff member is unable to be reached, then APTS will contact the individuals listed as the staff member's emergency contact.

If a student has an unplanned absence, the student's parent/guardian will be contacted immediately to ascertain if the student's is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19. If the student's family is unable to be reached, the student's county representative will be contacted. The student's county representative will be updated on any COVID-19 related health concerns.

### **Communication strategies**

Staff are trained on the updated practices and procedures within their campuses.

All COVID-19 practices and procedures are made available by e-mail to APTS families and are located on the APTS website.

APTS follows the direction of the local health department to communicate suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 to families and staff while maintaining and adhering to HIPAA and FERPA regulations.

## Procedures for those suspected of contracting COVID-19

APTS follows detailed procedures if a staff member or student is suspected to have been exposed to COVID-19 or is displaying symptoms of COVID-19 per the local area health department's recommendation. COVID-19 Response Teams established at each campus/building assists with quick, efficient, and informed responding. These procedures include:

- Immediately removing the student/staff to the designated quarantine area, with staff support, as needed;
- Notifying the parent/guardian to pick up the child in the designated time frame;
- Collaborating with the local health department to complete contact tracing;
- Notifying staff and families in accordance with the health department's recommendations; and
- Providing guidance on criteria to return to school based on guidance from the local health department.

Comprehensive COVID-19 response procedures can be found in Appendix F.

## Virtual Instruction

APTS continues to provide an increased, robust, and variable virtual experience for those students and families who are not currently available or ready to return to the physical buildings.

For those families accessing virtual instruction, the hours of direct instruction increased to 2 2-hour blocks per day, 9:00 am to 11:00 am and 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm starting January 4, 2021. Asynchronous materials continue to be provided to students remaining virtual via post or online and should consist of 2 to 3 hours per day. All completed asynchronous materials are reviewed and graded by the student's classroom teacher.

Our dedicated staff continue to encourage students' critical and creative thinking while providing engaging and interactive activities that allow for review, practice, and continued learning of knowledge and skills through virtual learning sessions and assignments mailed/mailed to students' homes. In addition, lessons and activities will address IEP goals, as appropriate to each student to meet their areas of academic needs.

Lessons may assist students in learning hygiene procedures as needed and reinforce health and hygiene promoting behaviors such as increased tolerance for face masks, PPE, and social distancing. Lessons may also work toward increasing task completion/attention to task in a virtual learning model.

Please refer to APTS distance learning plan for more detailed information.

## **Planning for the Future**

APTS will follow the guidance of the local health departments as well as any directives from the Commonwealth of Virginia to determine which conditions will trigger a reduction in in-person classes as well as a complete school building closure.

Multiple options may be considered including but not limited to: Students attending in-person instruction for less time/days per week, reducing the number of students attending in-person instruction, and a return to complete virtual instruction until circumstances allow the physical buildings to reopen.

**Appendix A: Students and staff at risk for severe COVID-19 disease**

Children and staff with underlying medical conditions are at higher risk for severe cases of COVID-19 disease. Underlying medical conditions considered to be at increased risk include:

- Cancer
- Chronic kidney disease
- Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from solid organ transplant)
- Obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 30 or higher)
- Serious heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies
- Sickle cell disease
- Type 2 diabetes
- Over the age of 65

Current data and information on COVID-19 is continuing to develop. People with the following conditions might be at an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19:

- Asthma (moderate-to-severe)
- Cerebrovascular disease (affects blood vessels and blood supply to the brain)
- Cystic fibrosis
- Hypertension or high blood pressure
- Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from blood or bone marrow transplant, immune deficiencies, HIV, use of corticosteroids, or use of other immune weakening medicines
- Neurologic conditions, such as dementia
- Liver disease
- Pregnancy
- Pulmonary fibrosis (having damaged or scarred lung tissues)
- Smoking
- Thalassemia (a type of blood disorder)
- Type 1 diabetes mellitus

More information is available [here](#). The CDC also states, “Children who have medical complexity, who have neurologic, genetic, metabolic conditions, or who have congenital heart disease might be at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19 compared to other children.”

## **Appendix B: Zone Cleaning Protocol**

### Level 1: Initial and 2 Hour Interval Cleanings

- High touch areas:
  - Door handles, light switches, tables/desks/counters
  - Restroom touch points
  - Sinks, handles

### Level 2: Cleaning between sessions/groups of students and/or staff

- Thorough cleaning and disinfecting of
  - High touch areas
  - Restroom touch points
  - Student areas
  - Sweeping of floor
  - Computers, manipulatives, and other rotated objects
  - Keyboards, iPads, augmentative communication devices

### Level 3: End of day cleaning

- Level 1 & Level 2 items
- Wet mopping of floor
- 5 Basin Disinfecting System for manipulatives

### PRN Cleaning:

- Facilities will be available to clean of large spills on an as needed basis

## Appendix C: Training List

All staff complete/be given information on the following topics:

- Proactive health strategies including mask wear, handwashing, and social distancing
- Reactive health strategies including cleaning protocols for the buildings
- Procedures for suspected COVID-19 cases
- Visitor entry/screening procedures
- Supporting the social emotional needs of oneself: homeostasis after trauma, seeking professional help, resources for mental health support
- Technology cleaning and care
- APTS response procedures for reporting cases of COVID-19

Staff supporting students in the classroom or in administrative roles complete these additional trainings/receive information on the following topics:

- Food service procedures
- Revised procedures for school health staff: medication administration, responding to accidents, injuries, and signs of illness
- Supporting the social emotional needs of students: trauma-informed care
- Behavior basics and proactive procedures for student success

COVID-19 Response Team members complete this additional training:

- APTS response procedures and reporting cases of COVID-19

All students and their families are asked to complete the following trainings/receive information on the following topics:

- Proactive health strategies including mask wear, handwashing, and social distancing
- APTS procedures for suspected COVID-19 cases
- APTS visitor entry/screening procedures

Following return to the school building (prior to students entering), staff received additional training and information on:

- By My Side physical deflection and redirection procedures
- Health and safety precautions during physical intervention procedures
- Student-specific information and updates
- Student arrival and dismissal procedures
- Additionally, staff completed a “dry run” of daily procedures prior to students returning to the school buildings

## **Appendix D: Food Preparation Cleaning Protocol**

### Pre-Cleaning:

- All High-Contact surfaces are disinfected prior to any food prep
- High-Contact surfaces include but are not limited to refrigerator handles, microwaves, sink and soap dispensers, food carts, drawer and cabinet handles, door handles, etc.

### Prep Areas:

- All cutting boards and counter surfaces are cleaned and disinfected prior to usage
- Kitchen counters, floors, and sinks will remain clear of trash at all times

### Post-Cleaning:

- All High-Contact surfaces are disinfected after food is distributed, including countertops, and cutting boards
- All food carts are wiped down and disinfected
- Bowls, plates, utensils, trays, and any other kitchen items used during food preparation and distribution are washed, dried, and returned

Hands are washed before, during, and after food prep and gloves will be properly worn and disposed of.

**Appendix E: Local Health Department Contact Numbers**

**Campus Health Department Contacts**

**Alexandria Campus: Fairfax County Health Department  
Savita Sood, 703-533-5797**

**Manassas Campus: Prince William County Health Department  
Lynda Woods, 703-792-6320**

**Stafford Campus: Rappahanock Area Health Department  
Madison Griemsman, 540-684-4732**

**County Health Department Contacts**

Health Department	Covid Phone Number	Main Phone Number
Alexandria City Health Department	703-746-4988	703-746-4996
Arlington Health Department	703-228-7999	703-228-7400
Colonial Beach Health Department (Westmoreland County)		804-493-1124
Culpeper Health Department	540-316-6302	540-829-7350
Fairfax Health Department	703-267-3511	703-246-2411
Fauquier Health Department	540-316-6302	540-347-6400
Fredericksburg City Health Department	540-899-4797	540-899-4142
King George Health Department	540-899-4797	540-775-3111
Loudoun County Health Department	703-737-8300	703-777-0234
Manassas City Health Department	703-872-7759	703-792-6300
Manassas Park Health Department	703-872-7759	703-792-6300
Orange Health Department	540-316-6302	540-672-1291
Prince William Health Department	703-872-7759	703-792-7300
Rappahannock Area Health Office	540-899-4797	540-675-3516
Spotsylvania Health Department	540-899-4797	540-507-7400
Stafford Health Department	540-899-4797	540-659-3101

**Appendix F: APTS Response to a Suspected or Confirmed Case of COVID-19**

The following protocol is based on the input and guidance of local area health departments. Many APTS campuses have rapid COVID-19 tests available on-site for use at the discretion of the school nursing staff to allow for faster and more accurate COVID-19 responding. Signed consent must be obtained prior to testing.

1. School nurse (back-up staff will be identified and trained as well):
  - a. Is notified and takes the lead on actions to be taken.
  - b. Asks student or staff person to change their cloth mask for a surgical mask (if applicable).
  - c. Escorts student or staff person immediately to the designated quarantine room established in each building. Staff may be asked to exit the building if possible.
  - d. For all children, a staff member may be identified to monitor the student. Staff will be wearing appropriate PPE and will do their best to remain 6 feet apart.
  - e. Notifies the parent/guardian and asks them to pick-up the child.
  - f. Informs school administration.
  - g. Upon arrival, nurse or designated staff escorts child to parent's car and gives written instructions to parents regarding:
    - i. the need for PCR/diagnostic testing.
    - ii. available testing sites in the area, including no cost options.
    - iii. the requirement that the child must be COVID-19 free prior to returning to school.
  - h. Calls the local area health department of the individual's residence as soon as time allows.
    - i. Makes them aware of possible COVID-19 situations.
    - ii. Reviews signs and symptoms with Task Team lead.
    - iii. Develops a case specific plan with the local health department on process and notification to parents/staff.
    - iv. Works with the local health department staff to conduct transmission risk assessment. This may include assisting with identifying other students and/or staff who were in close contact\* with the symptomatic individual.
2. Local Area Health Department Staff (School Investigation Team Leader or School Point of Contact):
  - a. Determine if a student or staff satisfies the definition of a patient under investigation based on signs and symptoms reported by school nurse and student or staff.
  - b. In partnership with school designee, conduct a transmission risk investigation and recommend quarantine for close contacts\* until test results are known (typically within 24-48 hours). Ideally, this will be limited

to the classroom only, assuming school is set up to minimize movement of students during the school day.

- c. Follow-up on test results:
  - i. For symptomatic student/staff:
    1. Parents/staff with symptoms should report test results to the school as soon as they are received.
    2. If COVID-19 test results are negative, then the student/staff will need to continue to self-isolate as directed by the local health department and may return if they have not had continued symptoms of COVID-19 and have a doctor's/health department note clearing them to return.
    3. If COVID-19 test results are positive, the local health department will contact the parents/staff and advise them on the necessity of isolation and the criteria to return to school.
    4. Quarantine of household contacts (e.g., siblings) until confirmed negative or positive COVID-19 test results.
  - ii. For others in classroom:
    1. When a student/staff member becomes symptomatic, a risk assessment will be conducted in collaboration with the local health department staff to determine transmission risk to students and staff per CDC guidelines (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/public-health-recommendations.html>).
    2. Students or staff meeting CDC criteria for "close contact\*" will receive a letter (and a phone call to parents as well) notifying them to quarantine their student at home until test results are received for the symptomatic student. Students or staff determined to be low risk may remain at school, but a letter will still be sent home regarding the situation.
      - a. If the student/staff has a note from their physician or verified permission from the local health department, those in quarantine may return to school the following day.
      - b. If the symptomatic student/staff's test results are positive, then all those identified as having a risk of exposure will be quarantined for a specified amount of time past the last day of exposure\*\*. During this time period, parents, students and staff will be asked to self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19.
        - i. If asymptomatic following the quarantine period, they may return to school.

- ii. If the student or staff have symptoms consistent with COVID-19 then it may be recommended that they obtain a COVID-19 test at the provider of their choice.
            - 1. If the test is negative, they should continue to quarantine until the quarantine period has ended\*\*, at which point they can return to school if they remain asymptomatic.
            - 2. If the test is positive, the local health department will provide instructions regarding isolation and seeking medical care if necessary.
3. School administration:
  - a. Upon recommendation of the local health department as a result of the transmission risk investigation, send a letter home with students/staff in the classroom regarding investigation and notification about possible quarantine.
  - b. Upon recommendation of the local health department, sends a letter to parents of all students in the school regarding the incident, the risk to their child/staff and what the local health department recommends they do.
  - c. For students outside the classroom of the suspect case, guidance will likely be that only those with a transmission risk exposure need to remain at home. School will not be closed, and students and staff should continue to monitor for symptoms. Anyone showing symptoms of COVID-19 should stay home.
  - d. APTS will maintain and adhere to all HIPAA and FERPA guidelines during these communications to maintain the individual's privacy rights.

**In the case of a student displaying COVID-19 symptoms at school:**

If APTS staff are unable to contact a guardian, staff will continue to support the student in the quarantine location and continue to attempt to contact the family. APTS staff will also notify the county representative that the student is displaying symptoms and staff are attempting to contact the family.

If a parent is unable to pick up their child, who is displaying potential COVID-19 symptoms, we will contact the county representative to determine appropriate transportation options: if the student is able to utilize county transportation within isolation or if appropriate APTS transportation (buses or larger vans) is available to transport the student.

If the parent is unwilling to pick up their child, APTS will inform the county representative that the student is displaying COVID-19 symptoms, and that the guardian is not willing to support their child.

Based on the presence of symptoms being reported a student will be advised to obtain a COVID-19 test or self-quarantine. If the family is unwilling to access appropriate health services, APTS may need to suspend services until the family can provide a doctor's note or negative COVID-19 test.

\*As of October 21, 2020, the CDC updated the definition of close contact to the following: Someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period\* starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated. \* Individual exposures added together over a 24-hour period (e.g., three 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes).

\*\* January 8, 2021 update: The CDC currently recommends a quarantine period of 14 days for close contacts of individuals with COVID-19. However, based on local circumstances and resources, options to shorten the quarantine period have been proposed.

Based upon the recommendations of local health departments, CDC guidelines and input from other health professionals:

- APTS students and staff will be required to quarantine for a full 14 days following close contact with an individual with a confirmed/probable case of COVID-19.
  - The decision to maintain the full 14-day quarantine period was made based upon the diverse needs of the population that APTS serves as well as evidence that children may be more likely to be asymptomatic carriers of COVID-19.
- Fully vaccinated persons with an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 are not required to quarantine if they meet all of the below criteria (APTS may request proof of full vaccination):
  - Are fully vaccinated (i.e.,  $\geq 2$  weeks following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series, or  $\geq 2$  weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine)
  - Have remained asymptomatic since the current COVID-19 exposure
- In the event an exposure occurs on campus, fully vaccinated, asymptomatic individuals may remain at work/school.
- The ability to utilize public-school provided transportation for fully vaccinated, asymptomatic students who have had an exposure to someone with a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 will be determined by the student's respective city/county.

- Fully vaccinated staff who have a known exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 are to be tested 3-5 days after exposure, and to wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days or until they receive a negative test result.
- People who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 3 months and recovered do not have to quarantine or get tested again as long as they do not develop new symptoms. APTS may request proof of the positive COVID-19 test. Guidance may differ regarding the quarantine period if the positive individual resides with the staff/student and they are unable to isolate.
- For individuals returning to APTS schools following international travel:
  - Fully vaccinated individuals must get tested with a viral test 3-5 days after travel and turn in negative test results prior to returning to school.
  - Unvaccinated individuals must quarantine for 14 days after travel (in accordance with the CDC recommendation that unvaccinated individuals avoid being around people who are at increased risk for severe illness for 14 days), regardless of test results.
- For vaccinated staff that reside with a COVID positive individual and cannot physically isolate from said individual:
  - Staff will be required to quarantine at home (not return to work) for two days from the date of confirmed household member's onset of COVID symptoms or positive test if they are asymptomatic.
    - Staff will be required to obtain a negative COVID test on the third day prior to entering the building. Staff may contact the school nurse to test at the campus.
    - Additionally, staff will be required to obtain a negative COVID test on days four and five prior to entering the building.
- For vaccinated students that reside with a COVID positive individual and cannot physically isolate from said individual:
  - Students will be required to quarantine at home (not return to school) for five days from the date of confirmed household member's onset of COVID symptoms or positive test if they are asymptomatic.
    - Students will be required to obtain a negative COVID test on the sixth day prior to entering the building. School nurses may be available to assist with testing.
  - Alternatively, students will be required quarantine at home (not return to school) for ten days without testing.

- Students will access learning virtually during the quarantine period, as health allows.

## Appendix G: Variance Request

Alternative Paths Training School (APTS) is a year-round special education day school offering a highly structured classroom setting for students with disabilities, including students with Autism and other Emotional, Learning, and Developmental Disabilities. APTS specializes in an intensive and highly individualized delivery of services to students who engage in self-injurious behavior (SIB) as well as physically aggressive behavior.

Alternative Paths Training School (APTS) hopes to transition its year-round schooling program from 100% virtual instruction to a combination of virtual and in-person instruction on September 8, 2020.

APTS is requesting a variance from the Commonwealth of Virginia regarding the recommended social distancing measure of 6 feet. While APTS will strive to maintain a 6-foot separation between individuals whenever possible, the population of students served by the program may require staff to be in close proximity to provide necessary support. Anticipated activities where social distancing of 6 feet may not be feasible include but are not limited to:

- Individual instruction where physical / close gestural prompting is needed to teach new skills;
- Physical redirection/deflection procedures to maintain student and staff safety as trained in our By My Side © Manual. Physical redirection/deflection represents a sequence of prescribed and confined therapeutic passive physical intervention movements in response to another's aggression toward others, self, or property;
- Assistance with daily living skills such as eating, toileting, and handwashing;
- Transitioning students with a history of elopement / sudden physical behavioral outbursts into and out of the building; and
- Assistance and application of approved devices including helmets, hand guards, and safety harnesses for bus transportation.

APTS has been working with the Rappahannock Area Health Department to determine the safest way to mitigate the potential spread of COVID-19 during situations of closer proximity. In accordance with federal, state, and local recommendations, APTS will operate on a modified student schedule utilizing a combination of in-person and virtual instruction to allow for fewer students in classrooms and increased distancing. APTS will also attempt to ensure that a 6-foot distance is maintained between student desks. Additionally, APTS will provide face coverings to be used during times that a 6-foot separation cannot be maintained. Additional PPE such as face shields, gloves, gowns, and surgical masks will be available to staff. Rigorous cleaning procedures will also be maintained including a staff handwashing station at every campus.

While APTS seeks to provide in-person instruction for its students with disabilities, APTS also recognizes there are families who desire to have virtual instruction made available. APTS is committed to making available virtual instruction to those families during this time.

Students and families will be given the option to continue receiving 100% virtual instruction in keeping with their respective county's options. APTS expects that a student's return to in-person instruction will be an IEP team decision and will consider many factors including the student and family risk factors, presenting behaviors and family preference.

## **Appendix H: COVID-19 Response Team Members**

### **Alexandria Campus**

**Assigned Contacts: Donielle Thorward, School Nurse  
(703)7668708  
dthorward@aptsprograms.org**

Kristie Adams, Regional Director of Behavioral Services  
Stephanie Kennedy, Regional Education Director  
Christopher Smith, Regional Program Director

### **Manassas Campus**

**Assigned Contact: Jen Benzel, Nurse Manager  
(703) 365-7494  
jbenzel@aptsprograms.org**

Josh Browne, Regional Program Director  
Tiffany Seal, Regional Education Director  
Fojan Taheri, Regional Behavior Director

### **Stafford Campus**

**Assigned Contact: West Campus-Sue Iseminger, School Nurse  
(540) 479-1701  
siseminger@aptsprograms.org**

**East Campus- Amina Cooks, School Nurse  
5403738760  
acooks@aptsprograms.org**

James Merideth, Regional Behavior Director  
Jesse Naccarato, Regional Program Director  
Michael Williams, Regional Education Director

**Central Office**

**Assigned Contact: Jen Benzel, Nurse Manager  
(703) 365-7494  
jbenzel@aptsprograms.org**

Alan El Tagi, CEO & Co-Founder  
Ellen Brosh, Director of Behavioral and Community Services  
Wren Griffith, Director of Operations  
Howard Johnson, Director of Special Services Administration  
Tim Bochat, Deputy Director of Operations  
Tim Hall, Deputy Director of Special Services Administration  
Kaitlin Pence, Deputy Director of Behavioral Services  
Wendy Foster, Recruiting Coordinator

**Appendix I: APTS COVID-19 Vaccine Protocol for Staff**

Fully vaccinated people who have a known exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 are to be tested 3-5 days after exposure, and to wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days or until they receive a negative test result. APTS will provide staff with onsite testing to be conducted by the campus nursing staff if tests are available.

APTS is working towards becoming a fully vaccinated organization. New staff are required to be fully or at least partially vaccinated prior to their first day of training. Current staff must be fully vaccinated on or before October 29, 2021. Medical and religious exemptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.