



Alhuda Academy

FALL 2020-2021

Reopening

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August 22, 2020

Dear Alhuda Parents,

History has reported many pandemics; as humans have spread across the world, so have infectious diseases. Living in a modern era, outbreaks are nearly constant; however, not every outbreak reaches the pandemic level as COVID-19 has. Today's visualization outlines history's most deadly pandemics, from the Antonine Plague to the current COVID-19. Nonetheless, being united at such unprecedented times, we shall overcome all challenges with the help of Allah (ST). Let us all stay united and healthy to overcome these formidable circumstances. Alhuda has served its student population from the beginning of this pandemic March 13 of 2020 and started the instructions from March 19 of 2020 a week after the pandemic hit, unmatched performance of our dedicated educators. We all learned to adjust and be creative, facing shared challenges. As Alhuda Academy principal, keeping you well-informed is my first and foremost responsibility. I've shared with you three learning platforms, which help you choose your preferred learning platform. Within this handbook, you will find a plethora of information, from revamping our educational system to meet our students' health/safety and educational needs with the newly introduced ELA curriculum on the digital platform. This handbook is developed with critical updates and resources, which includes "THE SCHOOL FACILITY PREPARATION, SOCIAL DISTANCING PLAN, STAFF AND STUDENT SANITATION AND HYGIENE, MONITOR STAFF AND STUDENT HEALTH, ENHANCED LEARNING SUPPORT, and EMERGENCY PLAN FOR OUTBREAKS. Guidelines are developed for a safe return to school—Alhuda skate to where the puck is going, not where it has been. We position for the future to achieve a competitive edge. Our primary concern is to keep everyone safe in the building, following CDC, DESE, and WPS guidelines. These guidelines are meant to address general safety concerns for all students and personnel during the COVID-19 pandemic by providing schools with recommendations for risk assessments, health and safety plans, social distancing, face coverings, disinfection, and personal hygiene. Within the handbook, you will find guidelines based on CDC, Department of Elementary & Secondary Education, the Department of Public Health, and WPS local school district.

I am genuinely indebted by the team of school board members and our educators who helped from the beginning of the pandemic period. We are committed to the 20/21 and beyond to keep our students on a good learning trajectory. May Allah help and bless Alhuda Academy parents, students, staff, and our community.

Sincerely,

Principal, Dr. Nadeem Sikandar

Our goal this Fall

Our goal for the fall is to safely bring back as many students as possible to in-person school settings, to maximize learning and address our students' holistic needs. There is a clear consensus from both education and medical groups: we must keep in mind not only the risks associated with COVID-19 for in-person school programs, but also the known challenges and consequences of keeping students out of school. While remote learning has improved over the course of the school closures, there is no substitute for in-person instruction when it comes to the quality of students' academic learning. In-person school plays an equally important role in our ability to support students' social-emotional needs, including their mental and physical health, and in mitigating the impacts of trauma. We also recognize how disruptive school closures have been to families trying to maintain regular work schedules and manage household needs, including childcare, while also facilitating remote learning. Therefore, we are trying to support the return of our students to in-person learning, with appropriate health and safety guardrails in place. With adherence to a comprehensive set of critical health and safety requirements, we can bring our students, staff, and families safely back to school.

Most of us are now quite familiar with the critical health and safety practices that reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. These include rigorous hygiene and handwashing, use of masks/face coverings, physical distancing, reducing interaction between groups, staying home when sick, protecting those most vulnerable to the disease, and expanding testing and tracing capabilities, among others. However, what can often get lost in long lists of practices is that it is not one mitigation strategy, but a combination of all these strategies taken together that will substantially reduce the risk of transmission. In other words, establishing a culture of health and safety in our school that focuses on regularly enforcing these important practices is more important than any one measure.

Recognizing the special role of families

Families, in consultation with their medical providers, will ultimately make the decision as to whether their children will attend in-person instruction, or whether their children will continue with remote learning. Families also play a critical role in supporting the new culture of health and safety that school must establish. Most importantly, families can help mitigate the transmission of COVID-19 in their school by checking their children daily for any COVID-19 symptoms and keeping them home from school if they are sick or have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19. Families can also contribute by supporting the use of masks in school and on the bus, arranging alternate transportation whenever possible, communicating with teachers and school leaders, and continuing to follow state guidance on health and safety outside of school.

Health and Safety Requirements and Related Guidance for In-Person Learning

Preparing our School

- Alhuda is following and staying up-to-date on guidelines and best practices for cleaning and sanitizing the school building.
 - Use of products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 :
 - Classroom will be cleaned during student mask breaks and at the end of the day
 - Building will be cleaned and sanitized professionally every day
- Floor markings will be placed to direct foot-traffic flow and help students and staff maintain a safe distance - One way traffic.
 - Special attention is being paid to arrival and dismissal times and passing periods to ensure that students in the facility and particularly in a classroom are able to be six feet apart.
- CDC approved signs will be posted to promote safe habits
- Protective panels will be installed in the office spaces.
- The HVAC system has been inspected, cleaned and the filter has been changed
- HVAC filters will be replaced every 3 months
- The heating & cooling system will be adjusted
- Classrooms and office spaces will be equipped with a HEPA filter air purifiers with UV light sanitizers.
- Touchless soap dispensers have been installed in the bathrooms
- Touchless hand sanitizer dispensers will be installed at the entrance, near the bathrooms, and throughout the school
- Paper towel dispensers will be installed in the bathrooms
- Cleaning supplies for each classroom
- Cloth masks for students and staff
- Filtered masks for students and staff
- Face shields for all teachers
- Classroom rugs and excess materials/ furniture will be removed
- Classrooms will be arranged to accommodate 3-feet with masks and 6-feet without masks based
- Protective panels will be installed for frontline office workers
- Medical room for sick children/staff members
- Sanitation station will be at the entrance of the school building, all arriving students/staff/guests must sanitize at the entrance of the building.
- Students and staff will be given regularly scheduled hand sanitizing and mask breaks
- Social distancing will be practiced and reinforced at all times*
- Modifications will be made according to the latest DESE and CDC guidelines

*The guidance from DESE, based on consultation with medical experts, indicates that a 3 foot physical distancing standard in schools is appropriate when combined with other mitigation measures such as mask wearing. Momentary or brief (less than 10-15 minute) contact such as passing in the hallway or moving about a classroom to check student work, gather supplies, etc. while wearing a mask is permitted and considered safe.

Daily Screening

Based on the best available evidence at this time:

- CDC does not currently recommend universal symptom screenings for all students
- Parents or caregivers should be strongly encouraged to monitor their children for signs of infectious illness every day.
- Students who are sick should not attend school in-person.

Therefore, It is critical that parents and caregivers check their child (ren) for symptoms daily. Symptoms can include:

- Fever or chills - child with fever 100.0°F or higher stays home
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat ○
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/COVID19-symptoms-24x36-en.pdf>

This list does not include all possible symptoms and children and youth with SARS-CoV-2 infection may experience any, all, or none of these symptoms.

A student who shows COVID-19 symptoms during the school day should be moved to an isolation room until he/she can be picked up by a family member. The pick up has to be done within 30-45 min from initial contact. Additional contact should be provided to ensure a timely pick up.

Parents are asked for their cooperation to report any cases of Covid 19 that occur in the household. If someone in the household is suspected to have COVID-19, keep the child home and inform the school.

What counts as close contact?

- You were within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more
- You provided care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19
- You had direct physical contact with the person
- You shared eating or drinking utensils
- They sneezed, coughed, or somehow got respiratory droplets on you

- For extra precautions, any student or staff who has a confirmed positive test for COVID-19, the entire cohort to which that student/teacher belonged will be considered as “close contact”. That cohort and Staff will remain home and monitor symptoms. The return will follow the process below.

EVENT	LOCATION OF EVENT	TEST RESULT	QUARANTINE
Individual is SYMPTOMATIC	<p>If an individual is symptomatic at home, they should stay home and get tested.</p> <p>If an individual student is symptomatic on the bus or at school, they should remain masked and adhere to strict physical distancing. Students will stay in the medical waiting room until they can go home. They should not be sent home on the bus.</p> <p>If a staff member is symptomatic at school, they should report to the office, then go home and get tested.</p>	<p>Individual tests negative</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Individual tests positive</p>	<p>Return to school once asymptomatic for 24 hours.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>All close contacts should be tested but must self-quarantine for 14 days after the last exposure to the person who tested positive, regardless of test result.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Remain home in self-isolation for 14 days from symptom onset OR Must provide a note from the health care provider with the date the student is cleared for return to school AND the alternate medical diagnosis for symptoms.</p>
Individual is exposed to COVID-19 positive individual	If an individual is at home when they learn they were in close contact with	Individual tests negative	Return to school, if asymptomatic or once asymptomatic for 24 hours. Must provide to the school

	<p>an individual who tested positive for COVID-19, they should stay at home and be tested 4 or 5 days after their last exposure.</p> <p>If an individual is at school when they learn they were in close contact with an individual who tested positive for COVID-19, they should be masked for the remainder of the day and adhere to strict physical distancing. At the end of the day, they should go home and should not take the bus home. They should stay at home and be tested 4 or 5 days after their last exposure</p>	<p>-----</p> <p>Individual tests positive</p>	<p>Admin, a note from a healthcare provider including evidence of a negative test. Adhere to school procedures. If symptoms develop they must be reported immediately and re-testing will be required.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Remain home (except to get medical care), monitor symptoms, notify the school, notify personal close contacts, assist the school in contact tracing efforts, and answer the call from the local board of health or MA Community Tracing Collaborative. Most people who have relatively mild illness will need to stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days and until at least 3 days have passed with no fever and improvement in other symptoms.</p> <p>Prior to returning to school, the student's family or staff member must communicate with the school Admin regarding the end date of the isolation period and plan for return to school.</p>
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In case of any confirmed COVID-19 case in the school, the school will take necessary measures to mitigate and inform all families.

Wearing of Mask

Masks or face coverings are among the most critical components to reduce the transmission of COVID-19.

- Staff and students in grade 2 and above are required to wear a mask/face covering that covers their nose and mouth at all times, with the exception of meals and mask breaks.
- Whenever possible, students in pre-kindergarten through grade 1 who can safely and appropriately wear, remove, and handle masks should do so. Even if students are spaced six feet apart in classrooms, the use of masks is still required unless students are eating lunch or taking a mask break.
- If masks can't be worn for medical reasons the remote learning will be an option.
- Mask breaks will occur throughout the day. Breaks will occur when students can be six feet apart.
- Masks must be worn correctly for maximum protection
- Masks/face coverings should be provided by the student/family, but extra disposable face masks will be made available by the school for students who need them.
- Reusable masks should be changed and washed daily.
- Disposable masks have to be changed daily
- Masks should be labeled with your child's name clearly in a permanent marker so that they are not confused with those of other children
- Provide your child with a container or a labeled resealable bag where to store the mask while having lunch or snack
- Provide your child with an extra clean mask
- Explain the importance of wearing a mask and how it protects people from getting sick.
- Have multiple masks, so you can wash them daily and have back-ups ready. Choose masks that
 - Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
 - Completely cover the nose and mouth
 - Are secured with ties or ear loops
 - Include multiple layers of fabric
 - Allow for breathing without restriction
 - Can be washed and machine dried without damage or change to shape

Sanitation and Hygiene

- Stocking classrooms with cleaning and disinfecting supplies.
 - Face tissues
 - Hand sanitizer
 - Disinfecting wipes
- Educate students and their families on proper personal hygiene and sanitation practices.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/checklist-household-ready.html>

- Prohibiting the number of shared items in the classroom.
 - Students will have personal supplies (i.e. pens, pencils, crayons, scissors, glue sticks, etc.).
 - Limiting the touching of certain items such as remotes, light switches, projectors, other technology items to the teacher.
 - Ensuring items are not being shared and if they must be shared then must be wiped after each use.
- Developing the practice of having teachers and students clean their personal workspace and tools.
 - Incorporate a daily routine of having students help clean their classroom belongings and learning tools.
- Providing students with the opportunity to have mask break and handwashing throughout the day frequently.
 - Teachers will incorporate hand washing and mask-breaks into their daily schedules and especially before and after consuming food.
- All students are required to come with their own lunch, snack, and water.
 - No food sharing allowed
 - Water fountain won't be used
 - No snacks or pizza on sale
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, desks, light switches, supplies, play equipment, and teaching aids used by children

Classroom Setup

- Desks will be set 3 - 6 ft apart, approximately an average of 10 students per class.
- Maintain a small size class - Limited number of students in one classroom.
- All students will face same direction
- Assigned seats for the full school year to minimize transmission and to assist with contact tracing.
- Assigned classroom - Students will stay in one classroom throughout the day, while teachers move between classrooms.

- Students will have their own pencil box with their personal items - No sharing allowed.
- Desks will be emptied at the end of the day - No supplies will be stored.
- A sanitation station will be placed in each classroom in a supervised area, where the students can sanitize their hands to minimize frequent trips to the bathroom.
- Students (grade3 and up) are encouraged to have their own hand sanitizer
- Hand sanitizing will be recommended upon entering the school, the classroom, before and after eating lunch and every time the student returns from recess or bathroom break.
- Alternate lunchtime and break times to minimize contact with students from other groups

Gatherings and Building's Visit

- Restricting the use of spaces that don't allow for social distancing.
 - No one is allowed in an area where social distancing isn't possible.
- Prohibiting large groups of students, faculty and family members from gathering in shared spaces until it has been deemed safe to do so.
 - Award ceremonies and graduations, School assemblies, Class field trips, and other social events.
- Developing guidelines and protocols for school guests and visitors
 - Parents or visitors won't be allowed in the building.
 - Parents wishing to contact a member of school staff can schedule a phone call or a zoom meeting

Transportation

School buses will be provided for students that reside Worcester and If your child rides a bus, plan to talk to your him/her about the importance of following bus rules and any spaced seating rules.

- The capacity on buses was reduced by at least half, to maintain 3-foot distancing.
- Students will be assigned to a seat, and seat locations will be marked in advance.
- Students should be seated no more than one student per bench, alternating sides for each row, which allows students to maintain physical distance. Children from the same household may sit together and in closer proximity (e.g., two students per bench).
- All adults and students on buses will be required to wear a mask.
- Windows on buses will be kept open to circulate fresh air.
- It is critical that families and caregivers check students for COVID-19 symptoms each morning before they arrive at the bus stop. This check will serve as the primary screening mechanism for COVID-19 symptoms.
- Bus drivers and monitors will be appropriately trained to observe students upon entry. If students appear symptomatic, and a parent/caregiver is present to take them home, they

will not be permitted to enter the school bus. If a parent/caregiver is not present to take them home, the student will be spaced at least six feet from other students and referred to the nurse immediately upon arrival at school.

- Everyone waiting at a bus stop must wear masks that cover the nose and mouth at all times and must maintain physical distancing of 6 feet.
- Hand sanitizer will be provided to students as they board the bus and as they disembark.
- All buses will be disinfected for high touch surfaces between runs, and full disinfection will occur at the end of all morning runs and after all afternoon runs.

School Hours

- School hours will be as follows for in-person students:
 - 8:00 a.m. - 8:15 a.m : Arrival
 - 8:15 a.m. - 3:10 p.m. : Instructional time
 - 3:10 p.m. - 3:30 p.m: Dismissal time.
- Students on Remote or students at home on the hybrid schedule will follow the synchronous schedule (Schedule will be shared later).

Lunchtime, Recess and Prayer

- Lunch will be in the classrooms, students have to bring their own lunch, snack as well as a supply of water.
- Students will have recess at different times while maintaining the social distancing.
- Prayer will be performed in the classroom . Personal prayer rug is required.

Extra-Curricular Activities and After School Care:

Student after school programs will be postponed until further notice.

Vaccinations

According to the Department of Health, Immunizations are required in all models of learning. This is equally important for students who are enrolled in remote or hybrid schooling models.

According to the new immunization requirements, beginning with the 2020-2021 school year, influenza vaccine will be required for all students except for medical exemptions with a doctor's note.

Students must receive the influenza vaccine before December 31, 2020.

Learning Models

In- person	Remote	Hybrid
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In this model, students will receive an in-person full time school experience Mondays through Thursdays. Fridays will be asynchronous. ● Classroom arrangements have been reconfigured in such a way and extraneous furniture has been removed as to facilitate appropriate physical distancing between students. ● The master schedule was revised and includes scheduled bathroom breaks and masks breaks. ● Art and PE will take place in the classroom. The Art and PE teachers will travel to each assigned classroom. ● The maximum number of desks in each room will be based at 6 feet apart. ● Students will have individual passes, book bags, and manipulatives. ● No Paper passing, and all paper materials will be prepared and handed out ahead of time. ● Outdoor spaces: Recommended, when feasible, the use of outdoor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In this model, students will receive a full online school experience from home Mondays through Thursdays. Fridays will be asynchronous. ● Alhuda will be using ZOOM to deliver classes and Google Classroom as our overarching platform for communication among faculty, parents and students. ● Teachers and students will have regular contact, and it is an easily manageable system where teachers can upload their assignments, students submit assignments and a record of grades can be kept. ● Google Classroom interfaces easily with a number of platforms our teachers have already employed. ● Students will be accountable for attendance and will be graded. ● Greater parental support is required for students in the full remote program to ensure student engagement. ● Remote learning expectations of teachers, parents and students were 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In this model, students will receive two days in person and two days synchronous remote, and Friday will be asynchronous. ● While they are remote, they will follow remote learning guidelines and when they are in-person, they will follow in-person guidelines. ● Hybrid models are M-Tue for Cohort-A and Wed-Thursday will be for Cohort-B. ● Students will be accountable for attendance and will be graded. ● Cohorts A & B will be decided based on the student last name and based on the number of student per classroom.

<p>spaces for classes, breaks, meals, and other activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Limit sharing: Alhuda discourages sharing of materials. In unavoidable circumstances when items are shared, they must be cleaned before being used by other students. ● Pre-K students will have their individual foam mats provided by the parents. 	<p>clearly outlined under “Digital learning Terms” below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Training for the use of Zoom and Google Classroom will be provided to our faculty and students. ● Some lessons will be live and some recorded. ● Students must have their personal working device with audio, video capabilities to ensure learning. ● Students will have a daily schedule to follow. ● Teachers will teach and support remotely. ● Staff will have office hours to support students and families. 	
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Please Note: If families choose the full remote program for their child and later wish to switch to hybrid or in-person, we will attempt to make that accommodation if space is permitted. There may be a waiting period to do so.

Considerations for Preschool-Age Students

Preschool-age students are particularly in need of in-person services so that they can develop the socialization, motor, and communication skills that are vitally important at this age. In-person instruction for this age group is prioritized but should also be prepared to adjust to remote services if necessary.

Description of Remote Learning Model

With the online components, there will be parts that are synchronous, meaning the teacher will be live streaming classroom instruction or teaching the students individually online. There will also be asynchronous parts, meaning that the students will be working independently on

assignments, videos, or activities that the teacher has assigned. The students will be provided with drop-in times with their teachers to receive feedback and ask questions.

Digital Learning Terms

We will be using Zoom to provide distant learning to students. In order to provide a safe and supportive remote learning experience, all parents, guardians, and students who participate must agree to the following terms: Terms of Remote Learning by Audio and Video Conferencing
By participating in this Zoom as part of your student's remote learning plan, you consent to the use of the Remote Learning by Audio and Video Conferencing technology, tools, and services and acknowledge that you have read, understand, and agree to all of the above requirements and restrictions.

1. Students and parents/guardians must not save, record, share, or post the attended session or any copies, recordings, materials, or photographs of/from this session.
2. Students must treat each other with respect. Students must obey school rules at all times. The student code of conduct applies to all remote learning sessions. Students may be disciplined consistent with the student code of conduct for violating school rules during the sessions. Parents/guardians are responsible for monitoring their child's use of the provided services and programs.
3. Alhuda reserves the right to remove a student from a session for inappropriate behavior or conduct.
4. During online instruction, information regarding students and/or their voice, image and writing may be shared with other students (e.g., group chats, shared assignments, video feeds) who are participating in the session. However, the school takes steps to ensure that student record information in its possession is maintained in accordance with applicable laws.
5. Alhuda assumes no liability and makes no representation regarding the quality of the audio or video conferencing service used.
6. Alhuda has in good faith attempted to ensure that audio and video conferencing platforms that are compliant with the state guidelines and all other applicable federal and state laws. The school will take all reasonable measures to preserve your privacy and the privacy of the student, and each of our educators will continue to maintain the privacy of student record information. Parents/guardians waive any and all claims against the school related to the use of these third-party vendors to provide audio and/or video conferencing services.

Notice

If state guidelines are required to move all students to full remote learning due to the conditions of the pandemic, Alhuda Academy will transition to be fully remote.

Also, if we have multiple cases of Covid -19 in the school building, school may transition to full remote teaching and learning.

All policies and guidelines are subject to updates and changes.

Summary

Alhuda Reopening Plan for 2020-2021 is knowledge-based and under the current guidance of DESE and DPH. We heavily relied on parents' disclosures for scheduling purposes and basing learning models aligned with preferred learning choice. All guidelines are based on the Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE) to ensure Alhuda complies with state mandates. We genuinely appreciate your adaptability to the current situation and accomplishing this mammoth task of safe school reopening. Needless to say, that 20/21 SY will be a different school year. Alhuda follows the recommendations of medical experts and public health officials (Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the Central MassHealth) Alhuda reopening plan relies on current public health data guidelines.

All parents who opted for in-person and hybrid schooling will be signing a waiver, acknowledging the contagious nature of COVID-19, voluntarily assume the risk that their child(ren), themselves, and any member of their family, may be exposed to or infected by COVID-19 by attending Alhuda campus and that such exposure or infection may result in personal illness. Since the situation is fluid, any change in conditions, Alhuda will safely shift the teaching and learning platform to full remote learning.