

# OJAI VALLEY SCHOOL

## Roadmap to Reopening





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# Part I: Guiding Principles

## Introduction

As we deal with the changing landscape of the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic, it is important that our community prepare as well as possible for all scenarios as we move towards the reopening of school in the fall. Ojai Valley School plans to reopen with face-to-face classroom instruction, five days a week, at the beginning of the year. We do this because we believe being together is in the best interest of our students. They need personal interaction with peers and educators, and they need the hands-on learning experiences that have distinguished OVS for more than a century. At the same time, we recognize that the school must chart a new course for reopening that is healthy for students, faculty and staff while protecting the wellbeing of our broader Ojai community.

This Roadmap to Reopening creates a framework for positive learning experiences for the 2020-21 school year that builds upon the resilience, adaptability, and creativity of our students, faculty and staff. As we chart this course, we will do our best to provide a safe, fulfilling and engaging education while navigating an ever-changing landscape.

In developing our plan, the school seeks to:

- Take an adaptive approach to maintaining student health and wellness
- Remain committed to our school philosophy and program
- Minimize disruption to teaching and learning
- Encourage in-person learning whenever it is safe to do so
- Be adaptive when facing changing circumstances
- Encourage an open dialogue with frequent and honest communication
- Follow the guidelines and directives of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and Ventura County Department of Public Health (VCPH) to reduce risk of virus transmission

We all know and understand that the situation is still very fluid and requires us to continually monitor guidelines and modify plans as needed. This means OVS must be prepared to toggle between different learning models designed to fit a variety of circumstances. More details on these learning models are discussed below.

In the big picture, we are committed to providing the full breadth of the OVS program. This includes athletics, equestrian, outdoor education, and performing and fine arts. We will evaluate these events on an ongoing basis and while their formats may change, the experience and the opportunity to learn will remain intact.

Our Roadmap to Reopening was developed by a committee of administrators, teachers and medical specialists. It is organized into four parts: **Part I** begins with the principles and rationale for our decision making within the context of our school philosophy. **Part II** outlines the three potential models for the academic and co-curricular programs, and provides a daily schedule for the Lower and Upper Campuses. **Part III** discusses the health and safety protocols that will be implemented, including differences in the primary, elementary, middle and high school divisions. **Part IV** identifies the areas of enhanced protections to further reduce the risk of virus transmission.

## Commitment to Shared Values and Philosophy

Values matter, especially during a crisis. They inform our decisions, guide our actions, and provide the framework by which we adapt to changing circumstances. At OVS, we ask our students to act with kindness, integrity, and humility, to value collaboration and teamwork, and to pursue a healthy, balanced lifestyle. Those values ring as true today as ever before. As we navigate the coming academic year, we must all — parents, faculty and staff — act with kindness and integrity, and work collaboratively to provide the best possible school experience for our children and students.

# Part I: Guiding Principles

Ojai Valley School's philosophy is contained in the words *Integer Vitae* — meaning wholeness of life, symmetry of life, soundness of life, and, therefore, poise and strength of life. To accommodate the school philosophy, every effort is made to create an atmosphere for students and staff that is conducive to learning and growing through the framework of a warm family environment. As we prepare for the 2020-21 school year, our philosophy remains unchanged and provides the guardrails for operating amid a pandemic. Indeed, every effort has been made to create a safe environment for students and faculty.

Our intent is to reduce density with smaller classes that will create a tighter family atmosphere — one that continues to take advantageous use of Ojai's natural surroundings with outdoor classes and a continued commitment to experiential learning. While some activities and community events will need to be modified, we will strive to become more connected, even with the challenges of social distancing, to develop the academic strength, character, emotional well-being, and confidence of our students so that they are prepared to meet challenges in an ever-changing world.

## Expectations and Responsibilities within the OVS Community

As a community, our success at maintaining a safe virus-free environment hinges on the actions of all parents, students, faculty and staff. We rely on these reciprocal obligations to one another to follow the protocols in place. We expect all members of our community to act with integrity and use common sense.

Simply put, this means all employees must stay home if sick and parents must keep children home if they are sick or exhibiting COVID symptoms, including fever or chills, 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, and diarrhea.<sup>1</sup> We are still learning about how the virus spreads and the severity of illness it causes. For now, everyone must take responsibility to practice good hygiene and prevent illness.

This includes:

1. Washing hands frequently
2. Wearing a protective mask
3. Using hand sanitizer
4. Frequently cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and objects
5. Maintaining social distancing and limiting exposure time when in enclosed areas

Our goal is to provide a healthy school experience that can be run safely in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. It will take a combined effort from the school, administrators, medical staff, teachers, parents, extended family members, and students to ensure the health and safety of everyone is protected.

# Part II: Academic and Co-Curricular Program

## Potential Models for Learning

OVS has more than a century of experience with in-person instruction, but only a few short months with online learning. We've taken what we've learned from the final months of the 2019-20 school year, along with best practices and models from other independent schools, to create three learning models for the 2020-21 school year. The goal is to operate with In-Person Learning provided it is safe to do so. In the event of heightened health risks, OVS has developed plans to move to a Distance Learning Model. Here is the rationale for each approach:

# Part II: Academic and Co-Curricular Program

## In-Person Learning Model

- (What) Campuses are open with face-to-face instruction, outdoor classrooms and other virus prevention measures
- (When) Guidance from federal, state and local authorities supports reopening
- (How) Campuses are open. At the Lower Campus, students are placed in small stable cohort groups with limited to no interaction with other cohorts. At the Upper Campus, classrooms allow ample social distancing and will include mixed grade classes. Students maintain a distance of 6 feet apart in classrooms and wear protective masks where appropriate.
- (Why) OVS is confident it can mitigate risks to provide for in-person learning

## Conditional Learning Model

- (What) Campuses are open with face-to-face instruction, yet some students attend remotely due to a COVID-related absence
- (When) Individuals or small groups are unable to attend in-person classes due to illness, exposure, or a pre-existing health condition
- (How) Campuses are open. Most students attend in-person classes while a few students attend remotely utilizing web cameras and other classroom technology
- (Why) OVS provides this learning model to support individuals and/or small groups who may be unable to attend in-person classes due to illness or exposure. This model provides consistency in enrollment by providing temporary accommodations in support of the greater goal of keeping our campuses open and safe for in-person learning

## Distance Learning Model

- (What) Campuses are closed due to state of emergency or other government orders
- (When) Infection rates locally are rising and/or remaining at concerning levels, or known infections within school community prompt closures
- (How) Campuses are closed. Instruction shifts entirely to online classes based on circumstances for each grade or academic division. OVS will provide on-campus accommodations for all residents
- (Why) OVS is not confident it can effectively mitigate risks to ensure safety for in-person learning on campus

**In-Person Learning Model:** This resembles a traditional OVS experience with students attending school in person five days a week. Students interact with grade level peers and teachers and follow a typical daily schedule that will include increased time in outdoor classroom areas. Rather than congregate in the dining hall for meals and snacks, fresh boxed lunches prepared by OVS Food Services will be delivered to designated areas. At the Lower Campus, students in grades PK-8 will eat with their cohort groups at their designated outdoor spaces. At the Upper Campus, students in grades 9-12 will have distanced outdoor eating areas. Throughout the academic day, students will be educated and monitored to ensure compliance with social distancing, mask wearing, and hygienic guidelines. In summary, in this model the overall risk of exposure to the virus that causes COVID is considered low enough that both campuses can operate with modifications that include reduced density in classrooms and in other areas.

**Conditional Learning Model:** This model combines face-to-face learning with coordinated online experiences for a small number of students who would use classroom web cameras and other remote technology to remotely access and attend classes from home. Circumstances in which students would use this model would include: individual students under quarantine due to potential COVID exposure or illness; students self-isolating after travel to an area with ongoing virus transmission; students with pre-existing medical conditions or heightened safety concerns, such as those living with people at higher risk for severe illness.<sup>2</sup> This model could also be used by a cohort group that may be unable to attend classes due to illness or exposure. The Conditional Learning Model provides another tool for supporting students and families while protecting the greater community from illness that could force a broader school closure. It would be challenging for classroom teachers to manage a large enrollment of both in-person and remote learners, which is why this model would be available only for a small number of students experiencing illness, exposure or those with pre-existing conditions.

## Part II: Academic and Co-Curricular Program

**Distance Learning Model:** This is the same model our community experienced in the final months of the 2019-20 school year. Campuses are closed for in-person instruction until such time as it is safe to resume face-to-face instruction. The school remains open through online classes and other remote learning experiences. Students attend school virtually through live or recorded classes, activities, and projects. This option is one that would only be used as a last resort, likely following stay-at-home directives from state or local authorities. In the past six months, we have spent significant time and resources to ensure we can deliver a great remote learning experience. We will continue to train students on how to use remote learning tools to ensure they are able to navigate them independently.

Regardless of our learning model, instruction and assessment will continue without interruption. We are committed to providing students with high-quality content, instruction, and assessment appropriate to the model employed.

### Academic Schedules

Both campuses are creating new academic schedules based on enrollment and available classroom space. Scheduling is a complex puzzle in any given school year, and it is especially complicated when we now factor in social distancing and reduced density of classrooms. As such, detailed schedules will not be available until closer to the start of school. Generally, however, we expect the academic day for Lower and Upper Campuses will look like this:

#### *Lower Campus Schedule*

7:30-8:00 a.m. Student Drop Off and Daily Temperature Checks  
8:00-3:30 p.m. Academic Day for Primary, Elementary and Middle School  
3:30-4:00 p.m. Student Pick up  
3:30-5:00 p.m. Aftercare by Appointment  
3:30-9:30 p.m. Resident Student Programs

#### *Upper Campus Schedule*

7:45-8:10 a.m. Student Arrival and Daily Temperature Checks  
8:10-5:10 p.m. Academic Day for High School, including Sports  
5:10-5:30 p.m. Student Departure  
5:30-10:00 p.m. Resident Student Programs

### Technology in the Classroom

Classrooms will look different for the 2020-21 school year. In addition to desks being spaced apart, students will see a “computer classmate” — a device with a small web camera — that will be utilized as needed to live-stream or record classroom instruction if a student is absent. In addition to these new tools, students will utilize Learning Management Systems and instructional tools appropriate to their age group.

### After-School Programs and Childcare

At the Lower Campus, aftercare has traditionally been provided for children in grades PK-5 at no additional cost. This option is needed and appreciated by many working families. In reopening for the 2020-21 school year, Ojai Valley School is committed to continuing to provide after-school programming, but with modifications due to COVID. Specifically, we will require parents to sign up for aftercare in advance so we can anticipate the number of participants and better manage after-school programming to ensure children stay in their stable cohort groups. More information on aftercare sign-ups will be available closer to the start of school.

# Part II: Academic and Co-Curricular Program

## Athletics, Equestrian and Outdoor Education

All high school students are expected to participate in sports, or equestrian, as part of the academic day. The high school is waiting for a decision from CIF as to what the fall holds for competitive athletics. All guidelines from CIF will be followed as it pertains to athletics.

Fitness options will be added to ensure physical activity for the high school students. At the middle school, students will continue to participate in P.E., equestrian and sports.

In holding to our core values, we are committed to continuing to provide a vibrant OVS Outdoor Education program to get students in grades PK-12 outside to experience, appreciate, and gain a respect for the natural world. Students will continue to participate in outdoor education activities. Because every trip at OVS presents unique opportunities and challenges, individual risk management protocols will be developed specifically for the terrain, targeted activities, and transportation requirements of each adventure. All trips will maximize social distancing, minimize exposure, and limit the sharing of group gear.

# Part III: Health and Safety

## Introduction

In reopening school we are taking steps to prevent potential transmission of COVID-19. We now know the virus spreads mainly from person-to-person<sup>3</sup>, and the CDC recommends that the best way to prevent infection is to avoid exposure and stop transmission through everyday practices, such as maintaining social distancing, wearing protective masks, washing hands and routinely cleaning and disinfecting surfaces.

In planning for reopening, we started by asking: What would an average school day look like in our “new normal”? How would it be different for a Kindergartner compared to a ninth grader? We walked through both campuses, taking measurements to determine the placement of safely distanced desks. We mapped out how students would arrive in the morning and get to class. We evaluated how and where students would eat lunch, how electives and co-curricular classes might need to change, and how day students riding the bus would get home safely at the end of day. With a goal of maintaining a healthy school environment with in-person classes, we identified the following approaches:

- Reduced Density and Physical Distancing
- Frequent Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting
- Enhanced Health Screening, Face Masks, Preventative Hygiene, and ongoing Health Education
- Air Travel and Arrival Requirements for All Students
- Resident Life
- Day Student Precautions
- Communication and Coordination

## Reduced Density and Social Distancing

Infectious disease experts have promoted “social distancing” as a key strategy in preventing the spread of COVID-19. According to the CDC, “limiting face-to-face contact with others is the best way to reduce the spread of coronavirus disease.”<sup>4</sup> Social distancing, also called “physical distancing,” simply means keeping space between yourself and other people outside of your home. At OVS, we want students to maintain social connections, but we also recognize the importance of physical distancing to prevent transmission.

<sup>3</sup> CDC; <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-covid-spreads.html>

<sup>4</sup> CDC; <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html>

## Part III: Health and Safety

Our benchmark will be to keep a distance of 6 feet apart. This can be accomplished in most school settings. However, when classrooms are small — like many of the historic buildings at Lower Campus — this is harder to achieve and will necessitate reducing the density of classes by enrolling fewer students. Parents should expect to see limited enrollment with generally 10-12 students per class in grades PK-3 for the 2020-21 school year. In the grades 4-12, class sizes will vary based on available classroom areas.

At the Lower Campus, students in grades PK-8 will remain in the stable cohort groups for most of the day. Students will move between their core classrooms and other campus facilities, such as Art, P.E. and Woodshop while other specialty teachers (technology, music, library, Spanish) will come to each cohort's primary location to teach their lessons.

At the Upper Campus, classes will operate similar to how they have in the past, but with potentially smaller numbers, generally 6-12 students in both indoor and outdoor classrooms. Unlike the lower grades, the stable cohort model does not work at the high school because students are typically a mix of grade levels in math, foreign language, art and other classes. Students will be distanced in classrooms, seated six feet apart, and will wear protective masks when unable to socially distance themselves.

For all students, we appreciate that fresh air helps decrease the spread of illness.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, each grade will be provided indoor and outdoor classroom areas to work. These spaces will be arranged to meet physical distance recommendations. Outdoor areas will be used for academic lessons, snack time, lunch and other activities. Both indoor and outdoor areas will be frequently cleaned and sanitized. Each community is unique, and OVS is fortunate to have many outdoor areas in which students can socialize and learn. For now, however, students and families should not expect to see any large gatherings on campus. We will continue to provide videos and virtual meetings to connect as a community.

Students should bring their own classroom supplies (pencils, pens, pencil cases, cloth face masks, etc.). School supply lists for primary, elementary and middle school students are posted on the OVS website.

### Frequent Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting

Classrooms and frequently-touched surfaces will be frequently cleaned and disinfected by the maintenance and housekeeping staff. Students will be educated and encouraged, as age appropriate, to participate in frequent cleaning of their own personal space, including desks, dorm areas, and sports equipment.

Bathrooms will be cleaned and disinfected multiple times throughout the day. Play structures will be disinfected after every use. This includes grab bars, railings, and slides. Teachers will have bottles of hand sanitizer available for students everyday as they enter class. They will also wipe down classroom surfaces, toys, and equipment. Hand-washing stations and water bottle refill stations have been added to both campuses and will be available for students.

### Enhanced Health Screening, Face Masks, and Preventative Hygiene

Temperature and COVID-symptom assessments will be taken daily upon arrival to each campus at designated entrances and again during the day. If a student has a temperature greater than 100.4 F, and/or COVID symptoms<sup>6</sup> (cough, shortness of breath, fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea), or has recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19, the student will be sent home immediately and not permitted to attend school until cleared by a medical professional.



## Part III: Health and Safety

Protective face coverings must be worn by all staff, teachers, and students while indoors in school buildings and classrooms in addition to physical distancing. Face coverings are most essential when physical distancing is not practicable, such as school buses or other settings where space may be insufficient.<sup>7</sup> This recommendation will be continually evaluated based on updated information as we approach the start of school. The school will provide one cloth face mask for every employee and student, and additional masks will be available at the Student Stores. We recommend that families obtain multiple masks for students, label them, and launder them frequently.

All students and staff are **strongly encouraged** to limit their interactions, self-isolate and monitor their temperature daily for 14 days prior to the start of school. As previously stated, our success at maintaining a safe virus-free environment hinges on the actions of all parents, students, faculty and staff. We rely on these reciprocal obligations to one another to ensure that we can provide in-person classes.

The OVS Health Center will provide a temperature reporting log to families to be completed and returned prior to arrival on campus. **All other Health Forms MUST be returned prior to the start of school or students will not be permitted on campus.**

The OVS Health Center will play a key role in providing health screenings, answering questions and educating the school community regarding COVID. Personal Protective Equipment will be updated and prepared to handle illness concerns. If you have questions, contact the Health Center at (805) 640-2591 Ext. 1238.

### Travel and Arrival Requirements for All Students

As we prepare to reopen, OVS is asking families to minimize travel, especially from areas with widespread virus transmission. Because travel increases your chances of getting infected and spreading COVID-19, staying home before the start of school is the best way to protect yourself and others from getting sick.<sup>8</sup> As such, we ask that all students traveling by air self-isolate for two weeks after their flight and prior to arriving at school. Car travel is preferred if feasible. Residents will have a health screening upon arriving on campus and then will be able to move into the dorms. If residents are traveling from outside the state, they must reduce the risk of transmission by arriving two weeks prior to the start of school and self-isolating with family members or a local guardian. If residents are unable to secure accommodations in which to self-isolate, the school will provide housing starting on August 14.

### Resident Life

OVS is reducing density in its dormitories to ensure that resident students can safely and comfortably be housed, and will be taking extra precautions concerning arrival in the fall to prevent virus transmission. Most boarding students in the 2020-21 school year will have their own individual rooms while continuing to share common areas, bathrooms, and shower houses, which will be cleaned frequently to mitigate the spread of viruses. There is the possibility of two students sharing a larger room in which they can social distance from each other. If a shared room exists, precautions will be taken to alternate the direction in which students sleep, and during study hall students may be asked to study in an outside area or a common room with social distancing measures in place.

Throughout the fall, we will continue to evaluate safety and travel protocols for our boarding students. If there is a virus resurgence that necessitates a move to online learning, OVS will provide on-campus accommodations for all residents. We do, however, strongly recommend that all international students have an in-state guardian who can collaborate with the school in the event of an emergency.

7 CDPH, Guidance for Schools

8 CDC; <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-in-the-us.html>

# Part III: Health and Safety

## Day Student Precautions

During weekends and holidays, day student families should consider the health of the OVS community by limiting participation in potentially risky activities where COVID precautions are minimal or impossible. If students or families do find themselves in a situation where exposure may have been likely, they should notify the Head of School for either campus who, in consultation with nursing staff and public health professionals, will determine whether a student should return to the campus for in-person classes.

## Frequent Communication and Coordination

We will communicate frequently with families as plans evolve. We ask families to let us know what is working, and what needs improvement, as we navigate reopening school amid the current health crisis. We also ask parents to support our health protocols by monitoring their child's temperature and overall health before going to school each morning. No child or staff member should attend school if they have symptoms of illness or have a temperature.

# Part IV: Areas of Enhanced Protections

## Transportation

Although ridership will be reduced on school buses and vans to ensure students are physically distanced, OVS will continue to provide bus transportation, with modifications, for students commuting from Ventura and Oxnard, as well as the Day Bus offering daily trips between Lower to Upper campuses for local high school students. Our goal is to take proper measures to stay within the CDC guidelines and to maintain safety for our passengers when transported. Our transportation department has taken all the necessary precautions to customize our buses with seating arrangements. Vehicles will be cleaned and sanitized before and after students pick up and drop off. Face masks will be worn by drivers. Riders must also wear masks and they will be able to sanitize their hands before entering the bus.

There will be new loading procedures for bus riders. Students will have a temperature screening before boarding in the morning. If a student has a temperature greater than 100.4 F, and/or COVID symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, loss of taste or smell), the student will not be permitted to board the bus. Seats will be marked with every other seat labeled and color-coded with simple instructions, in order to keep the physical distance at 6 feet apart. Riders with siblings may sit next to one another or in the same row. When the bus arrives on campus, riders will unload seat by seat starting from the front, row by row, one at a time, following the instructions of the bus driver. Riders may use the sanitizer that is displayed by the front door or given by the driver before exiting the bus. For questions, please contact Connie Zehm, Transportation Coordinator at (805) 640-2591 Ext. 3030.

# Part IV: Areas of Enhanced Protections

## Food Services

OVS will continue to provide freshly prepared meals for students, faculty and staff members while following strict health and safety protocols. As with teachers, all food service employees will have daily temperature checks before work begins. They will wear facemasks, gloves and follow social distancing protocols. Staff will clean and sanitize the kitchen before and after each food preparation. Food deliveries will come to the loading dock and be fully sanitized before entering the kitchen and being stored. Stickers will be placed on items to indicate they have been sanitized. All meals will be prepared in the kitchen and packaged for students.

At Lower Campus, snacks and boxed lunches will be delivered to each cohort group at its outdoor classroom area and distributed by teachers. The students will wash and sanitize their hands before and after meals. The table where the meal is consumed will also be cleaned and sanitized before and after each meal or snack. Students will be provided a morning snack, which may include a small carton of milk or water, fruit and small yogurt cup, granola bar or baked goods. Fruit and snack items will be rotated daily. Boxed lunches will be provided and, similar to past years, will include a variety of OVS menu items, including turkey sandwiches, PBJs, chef salads, veggie and rice bowls, chicken or hummus wraps, fruit, cookies, and other items throughout the week. Students will also be provided an afternoon snack.

At Upper Campus, boxed meals will be provided in the dining hall for day and resident students. The academic schedule will now include staggered meal times to allow students to pick up their meals and then eat outside. By offering staggered meal times we will be able to reduce density in the dining hall and ensure social distancing. Boxed lunches will include fruit or vegetables, chips or bread, and a fresh baked good. Students will be provided morning snacks as well. There will be new and expanded outdoor dining areas when students return in the fall. As with Lower Campus, boxed lunches will include a variety of OVS menu items for vegetarians and nonvegetarians.

On both campuses, students will dispose of recyclables and trash, and it will be collected by the sanitizing staff after mealtimes. All food will be prepared as individual meals. There will be no buffet or communal dining unless CDC, CDHP, or VPHD revise current environmental health orders. If you have a student with medical dietary restrictions, please contact the OVS Health Center. If you have questions, contact the Health Center at (805) 640-2591 Ext. 1238 and/or Food Services Director Gina Fontana at (805) 640-2591 Ext. 1231.

## Visitors and Campus Access

The Upper and Lower campuses will be restricted to only students, faculty and staff members. Parents will be asked to drop off and pick up their students at designed drop-off areas. Respectfully, we ask that parents stay in their cars and wear protective face coverings during drop off and pick up. We know this represents a dramatic change from the open nature and welcome culture of our two campuses. But our ability to provide in-person classes depends on maintaining a safe environment with limited access.

To reduce potential exposure of our students and staff members, visitors will not be allowed during school hours. If a visitor needs to come to campus, the visitor must call in advance and have a temperature screening at their vehicle before entering campus. If the visitor has a temperature greater than 100.4F and/or COVID symptoms, the visitor will not be permitted on campus.





# Ojai Valley School

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(805) 646-5593

[www.ovs.org](http://www.ovs.org)