

Academy of Hope Mandatory COVID-19 Guidance

Last Updated: July 27, 2022

Overview

The Academy of Hope Adult Public Charter School (AoH) has developed this Mandatory COVID-19 Guidance to provide an overview of the COVID-19 components that govern the AoH practice during this pandemic. It is the intent of AoH to uphold the core values of the school, safeguard the health of our employees and their families, our learners and visitors, and the community at large from pandemic episodes.

We believe that pandemic episodes such as the COVID-19 pandemic may be mitigated through many of the protective measures described in this content. As such, all employees, interns, contractors, volunteers and students except for individuals with a religious or medical exemption will be required to adhere to this guidance and must receive COVID-19 vaccination(s) and or booster shots as per DC Health COVID-19 Guidance.

For additional information, including current District COVID-19-related public health data, please visit coronavirus.dc.gov.

Required COVID-19 Vaccinations

Academy of Hope has diligently worked to determine its policy on COVID-19 vaccinations. The decision to require vaccinations was made by the DC Health Department after review of information made available from national, federal, and local health officials and agencies and ongoing conversations. Emerging variants of the virus with higher transmissibility rates underscore the importance of minimizing the risk that unvaccinated individuals may pose in the workplace.

Currently, all people age 5 and older are currently eligible for COVID-19 vaccinations. COVID-19 vaccines are free, safe, and highly effective even against the circulating variants of the virus that causes COVID-19, including the Delta and Omicron variants. However, no vaccines are 100% effective and there are breakthrough cases of COVID-19 even in fully vaccinated people. Fortunately, if you catch COVID-19 when you are fully vaccinated, the infection will likely be mild. The vaccines are very effective at preventing severe illness, hospitalization, and death. At this point, most people who become very sick with COVID-19 are unvaccinated people.

Effective August 1, 2021, Academy of Hope Adult PCS requires all adult employees, contractors, interns, and volunteers working in the school to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 unless they receive an approved medical or religious exemption. Newly hired staff must be fully vaccinated and boosted, or obtain a medical or religious exemption, as of their first day of work. There is no test out option. All employees should have reported their vaccination status from an approved COVID-19 vaccine series to AoH Human Resources Department by August 16, 2021 and proof of full vaccination including a photograph or scan of the employee's vaccination card (front and back) should have been submitted to HR. The vaccination cards must include the required basic demographic information: The employee's name, date of birth, the vaccine manufacturer (name of the vaccine) with lot number, the date(s) that each vaccination shot

was administered, and the location that the vaccine was administered (Healthcare Professional or Clinic Site). This mandate is continuous and ongoing.

Effective August 2022, AoH has made the decision to require COVID-19 vaccinations for students that attend classes on campus unless they receive an approved medical or religious exemption.

Find out more about getting the COVID-19 vaccine in DC at coronavirus.dc.gov/vaccine. For detailed guidance for fully vaccinated people, see [Guidance for Fully Vaccinated People](https://coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance) at coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance.

For more information about the COVID-19 vaccine mandates, see Mayor's Order 2021-109, available on coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance.

Booster Vaccinations

As of Friday, October 22, 2021 boosters are now available for all three COVID-19 vaccines (Pfizer – BioNTech, Moderna and Janssen - Johnson and Johnson) in the U.S currently. Individuals may select any of the three vaccines to serve as a booster. As per the Mayor's Order 2021-147, all District of Columbia employees, contractors, interns, and grantees, shall obtain a booster shot against COVID-19 and shall submit documentation of their booster shot. As of February 7, 2022, Academy of Hope requires all members of our community who are eligible (six months past completing their initial Moderna or Pfizer vaccination; two months past the Johnson & Johnson vaccination) to demonstrate that they have received a COVID-19 booster shot, within 30 days of becoming eligible for the booster. Enforcement of this policy will begin March 1, 2022.

Photos of COVID-19 Vaccination cards with booster information can be uploaded starting 2/7/22 at [COVID-19 Vaccination and Booster Record](#). If you have trouble with the following, you may send a photo of your card to HR@aohdc.org.

If you currently have a medical or religious exemption to AoH's vaccine requirement, the booster mandate does not apply to you. However, you must continue to follow required health protocols. Persons who enter the school on a one-time basis are not covered by this directive, but if a person's ordinary duties or practices include regularly entering schools, such as off-site administrators who regularly visit school sites, or contractors who regularly service schools, they must comply with this vaccination requirement.

Religious or Medical Exemption Process

Staff and or learners who receive a Religious and or Medical Exemption approval through HR are exempt from certifying that they have received a full course of a COVID-19 vaccination series. These individuals have provided required documents to support the request, and the request has been approved.

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Religious Exemption

- a. Persons who object in good faith and in writing, pursuant to procedures established by the City Administrator or his or her designee, their employer, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board (PCSB), or The Academy of Hope Adult Public Charter School that the person's vaccination would violate their sincerely held religious beliefs; and the vaccination would violate a sincerely held religious belief of the person; and the granting of the religious exemption would not impose an undue burden consistent with federal law; or

Medical Exemption

- b. Persons who have obtained and submitted written certification from a physician or other licensed health professional who may order an immunization, that being vaccinated for COVID-19 is medically inadvisable due to the person's medical condition, and it is medically inadvisable for the person to receive a COVID-19 vaccine due to the person's medical condition.
 - i. If the condition making the vaccine medically inadvisable is temporary, the physician or other licensed health professional must specify in the certification the date on which, or the change in condition upon which, taking the vaccine would no longer be medically inadvisable, and the person must receive their first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine within 30 days after the specified date or event when taking the vaccine would no longer be medically inadvisable and their second dose (if applicable) within the time period established in the dosing schedule for the vaccine.

Those individuals who are unable to receive the vaccine for specific medical or religious reasons must file a request for exemption form with HR for review. A decision will be made regarding the request once all required documents are reviewed, and the established criteria are met. Individuals must submit a completed Request for Vaccine Exemption Accommodation Form to HR@aohdc.org for consideration.

Mandatory COVID-19 Testing for Unvaccinated Individuals

As of August 20, 2021, individuals granted a medical or religious exemption are required to take a weekly COVID-19 test (every seven days). Testing should be done Friday, Saturday, or Sunday and results should be submitted to HR@aohdc.org before returning on-site. Testing should not interfere with normal working hours or required duties.

Mandatory weekly testing and reporting of testing results shall be required until further notice. Acceptable test results are:

- Evidence of a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test. (Rapid tests will not be acceptable), OR
- Evidence of a past positive COVID-19 test result within 90 days.

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Prevention of COVID-19 in schools

AoH has been encouraged to stay open for in-person learning during the COVID-19 pandemic by utilizing multiple layered prevention strategies. Vaccination is the most important public health intervention for ending the COVID-19 pandemic. The continued use of layered prevention measures will help prevent the spread of COVID-19 at AoH as vaccination coverage increases. Additionally, AoH will implement a clear plan for virtual learning options to support changes that may be needed due to spikes in community case rates or spread or outbreaks occurring within our Ward 5 and Ward 8 campuses.

Elements of Prevention

AoH will continue to institute universal indoor masking regardless of vaccination status.

AoH will implement the following elements in our COVID-19 prevention strategy:

- Mandate COVID-19 vaccination
- Staying home when sick
- Physical distancing

Other key elements include:

- Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette
- Screening testing
- Contact tracing, testing, quarantine, and isolation
- Cleaning and disinfection
- Ventilation

Masking Requirements

Indoors: Masks must be worn by all people indoors (including staff, teachers, learners, and visitors), regardless of vaccination status. Masks may be removed for eating or drinking.

Outdoors: In general, people do not need to wear masks when outdoors. However, particularly in areas of substantial to high transmission, CDC recommends that people who are not fully vaccinated wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact with other people who are not fully vaccinated.

Physical Distancing

- People who are not fully vaccinated should maintain physical distance from people not from their household, whether indoors or outdoors.
- At least 3 feet of distance is recommended between learners who are appropriately masked in classrooms (regardless of vaccination status).
- 6 feet of distance (or greater) is recommended (especially indoors) between:
 - Learners outside of the classroom setting including during school common areas.
 - All people during activities when masks cannot be worn, such as eating and drinking,
 - Learners and visitors to the AoH (unless a student and visitor are from the same household)

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- Between all adults who are not fully vaccinated.

Other Key Healthy Practices

Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

- Promote proper hand washing technique: Washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Promote frequent hand hygiene (with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer).
- Key times to perform hand hygiene include:
 - Before and after eating food,
 - Before and after group activities,
 - After using the toilet,
 - Before and after putting on, touching, or removing your mask or touching your face,
 - After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Avoid touching your face, eyes, mouth, and nose with unwashed hands.
- Cover coughs and sneezes
 - Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you sneeze or cough. Dispose of used tissues into the trash.
 - If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow.

Screening Testing

Screening testing is an effective tool for reducing transmission in AoH by identifying people with COVID-19, including asymptomatic individuals, so that prompt measures can be taken to prevent transmission. Use of screening testing is particularly recommended:

- For unvaccinated staff regardless of level of community transmission.
- For unvaccinated learners if DC is experiencing moderate to high community transmission levels.
- Learners will not be required to participate in screening testing in order to attend school.

During times of medium to high community transmission and based on the availability of funding, AoH will test at least 10% of the student and staff population to assist in addressing positive COVID-19 cases and individuals who have been exposed to the virus.

Testing results will be available 24-48 hours after the sample is received and processed at the contracted laboratory vendor. For more information, refer to Overview of Testing for SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) at [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/testing-overview.html#print](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/testing-overview.html#print).

People who have a history of COVID-19 infection (and recovery) within the past 90 days should not participate in screening testing.

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Guidance for Sick Staff and Learners

Symptoms of COVID-19 may include: fever (subjective or 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or greater), 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 or diarrhea. Any person experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 or who is required to isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19 diagnosis or exposure must not attend, work at, or visit the Ward 5 and Ward 8 campuses of AoH to minimize the risk of exposing others.

All persons 18 and older, regardless of vaccination status, who are experiencing any of the symptoms listed above, that are new or unexplained, must stay home and not enter Wards 5 and 8 of the AoH. If a presumptive case, the individual should obtain a COVID-19 test. In the case of a positive test:

- if mild to moderate symptoms, the individual must quarantine for at least 5 days from when symptoms started if able to wear a mask or at least 10 days if unable to wear a mask. The individual must be fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever lowering medication and have a negative antigen test on day 5 or later to return to school.
- if severe symptoms, the individual must quarantine for 10 days.

A person who is awaiting a COVID-19 test due to symptoms of COVID-19 must not return to AoH until their test is negative.

Learners and staff should also get tested if anyone in their household develops symptoms of possible COVID-19, even if they themselves do not have symptoms. The household exposed student/staff member can use either a NAAT or antigen test. If the result is positive, the student/staff member must not attend or work at AoH and quarantine accordingly. They should isolate at home.

Unvaccinated people who have traveled should follow travel-related COVID-19 testing and quarantine recommendations outlined in Guidance for Travel at coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance.

Communication and Response

If AoH identifies a student or staff member with COVID-19 who is in the building, the individual will be dismissed as well as any other individuals that the school identifies as potential close contacts (including household members of the positive person).

- AoH will ensure that the privacy of the staff or student will be maintained.
- Refer to Guidance for Close Contacts of a Person Confirmed to have COVID-19: Quarantine and Testing, available at coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance.
- Information on options for COVID-19 testing in the District of Columbia, available at coronavirus.dc.gov/testing.

Reporting

AoH must notify DC Health Department if:

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- There are 25 or more cases within 10 days of a single event
- An investigator from DC Health will follow-up within 24 hours to all appropriately submitted notifications. Please note this time may increase if cases of COVID-19 increase in the district.
- While awaiting DC Health follow up, AoH will conduct preliminary contact identification. All potential close contacts will be notified, must not visit Wards 5 and 8 of the AoH and must quarantine.

AoH shall maintain the confidentiality and information provided as required by applicable law.

The guidelines above will continue to be updated as the district's pandemic response evolves. Please visit coronavirus.dc.gov regularly for the most current information.