



Phase II Return to School Frequently Asked Questions (“FAQs”) For Families and Students

Introduction

The University of Chicago Charter School (UCCS) has announced plans for a phased return to in person learning, pending CPS review, to invite all students in grades Pre-K through 8 to return in person to UCCS campuses beginning Monday, April 12, 2021. This document addresses frequently asked questions. Directors are available to answer additional questions

1. School Calendar. Will Spring Break and other holidays remain the same?

Yes. Nothing has changed in the UCCS School Calendar.

- Spring Break is March 26 - April 4, 2021.
- The week after Spring Break, April 5 - 9, 2021, is a remote work and learning week.
- The Memorial Day Holiday is May 29 - 31.
- The last day of school for students is Friday, June 18, 2021.

2. How can I best prepare my child for their return to in person learning?

We recommend the following:

- Wear face coverings regularly especially when you go to stores, restaurants, and other public places.
- Teach your child to thoroughly wash their hands for at least 20 seconds (see these videos on proper technique for [older children](#)) and to use hand sanitizer when a sink isn't available.
- Practice physical distancing. (One handy rule of thumb is to use “airplane arms” by having two children reach out their arms toward each other. Their fingertips should not touch.)

The more children practice these routines, the better prepared they will be for successfully transitioning back to school.

3. If I choose remote for my student for Phase II, can I switch to in-person learning later in Phase II or vice versa?

No. To ensure adequate planning and stability for the educational environment, families will need to remain in the option that they chose for Phase II: either fully remote or return in person for a 2 day a week hybrid schedule, with Wednesdays continuing as remote. Note that all UCCS students will learn remotely during the week after spring break, from Monday, April 5 through Friday, April 9.

Note: Your Campus Director will inform you of the exact schedule for your child depending on whether your child will be in Hybrid Group A or Hybrid Group B. Please contact your Director if you have any questions about your child's in-person learning schedule.

Face Covering

4. Are face coverings required at UCCS?

Everyone (i.e., faculty, staff, students, vendors, visitors, and parents) is required to wear a face covering over the nose and the mouth at all times while inside UCCS buildings. In addition, face coverings must be worn outside on the campus grounds when others are present. Students and staff will receive training on proper mask-wearing.

5. What face covering will my child use?

UCCS will provide two reusable cloth masks to every student on the first day of returning. Families also have the option to provide a reusable cloth face covering for their children provided it meets the requirements below:

- Cloth masks should be washed at home with detergent between uses.
- Masks may not feature distracting imagery, or profane, derogatory, sexually suggestive, or other offensive or inappropriate language, illegal activities, or inappropriate products.
- Reusable cloth masks are preferred, but single-use masks are an option as a backup.
- Face coverings that are **permitted** include:
 - » Store-purchased cloth masks,
 - » Masks meeting [CDC's specifications](#)

6. What if my child can't wear a mask due to a medical condition?

Students may seek an accommodation if they are unable to wear a face covering due to a medical condition. Any student seeking an accommodation must have their physician complete the Face Covering Accommodation Request Form and submit it to the Campus Director. Please contact the Campus Director to request this form.

7. Will students have to wear face coverings all day?

Students will be expected to wear their masks for long periods of time. Mask breaks occur during snack, lunch, and hydration breaks.

8. What happens if my child forgets, loses, or damages their face covering?

Disposable masks, in varying sizes, will be available for students who need a temporary face covering.

9. Will school security personnel be enforcing the face covering requirement for students and visitors?

School security staff will not allow anyone in the building without a face covering. Disposable face masks will be available for children and adults at entrances. It is the responsibility of all UCCS employees to remind students and adults about the importance of wearing face coverings for everyone's safety.

Hygiene

10. How often will students wash their hands?

Everyone is expected to wash their hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after being in a public place or bathroom, touching surfaces often touched by others, and after nose blowing, coughing, sneezing, or before and after eating. In grades Pre-K–5, handwashing will be scheduled.

- Hand sanitizer stations will be placed throughout our classrooms and buildings.
- Signs will be posted in 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 face covering).

11. How often will the schools be cleaned?

UCCS will partner with CPS and the University of Chicago to clean our spaces on a daily basis including high-traffic areas and high-touch surfaces, elevators, bathrooms, and stairwells. The school is professionally cleaned each evening. Bathrooms will be cleaned several times per day. Shared classroom materials and high-touch surfaces such as desks, chairs, and tables will be cleaned as needed with disinfectant provided in each classroom. On Wednesdays, special cleaning services will be provided.

12. Do I need to sanitize my child's belongings each day after school?

Cloth face coverings must be washed after each use. We recommend that belongings brought home from school be wiped down with disinfectant each day after school.

13. What is the available ventilation/air filtration in classrooms?

UCCS is working with CPS and the University to review all mechanical ventilation and air purifier systems in each UCCS building.

Physical Distancing

14. What measures will you take to physically distance students while at school?

UCCS has worked with University of Chicago architects to assess and reassign classrooms to de-densify and allow for physical distancing. Under the advisement of UChicago epidemiological experts, in coordination with CPS' Safe Schools Program, and informed by a variety of recommendations made by national and state health and education organizations, UCCS has reconfigured rooms so that the following distances are used to establish physical distancing:

- Classrooms will allow for six-foot spacing between students.
- Rooms will be cleared of excess furniture to maximize space.
- Time outdoors will be maximized when weather permits.

Academic schedules and classroom use will be designed to keep students in smaller, consistent groups during the day and have fewer students on campus at one time.

Self Monitoring

15. How will you monitor the health of people on campus?

Anyone coming to campus is required to self-monitor for symptoms and stay home if they have potentially been exposed to COVID-19 or have had any symptoms including: cough, runny or stuffy nose, shortness of breath, fever, difficulty breathing, chills, body aches, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, and nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) [has identified the current list of symptoms of COVID-19](#).

- Employees: UCCS has a formal attestation and training process in place for all UCCS employees.
- Students: All UCCS parents will be required to complete a health attestation at the start of the year and parents will be required to complete a daily symptom screening form each day their student is on campus. Students will not be allowed in classrooms or to participate in on-campus activities if their parents have not completed the daily symptom screening form.

16. Will UCCS be taking students' temperature as they arrive each morning?

Yes. CPS requires this part of a multi-layered approach to health and safety.

17. Does my child have to stay home if they have a runny nose or cough but no fever? Must they remain home until it clears?

Yes. If your child is ill with symptoms associated with COVID-19, they must stay home until they have received a negative COVID test, their symptoms have cleared, and you have consulted with a UCCS School Nurse. Now more than ever, our community must abide by our policy that staff and students must stay home if they exhibit signs of any illness. Families will be asked to pick up their child promptly if they show symptoms of illness at school and need to go home.

COVID-19 Symptoms, Quarantine

18. What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) [has identified a variety of symptoms of COVID-19](#).

19. My child and/or another member of my household is in an at-risk group for COVID-19. Should I send my child to school?

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has defined [conditions in which certain people may be more at risk for severe illness through COVID-19](#). If your child or another member of your household is in an at-risk group, we encourage you to speak to your healthcare provider. Ultimately, you will need to decide whether you feel comfortable with your child attending school in-person.

20. Under what circumstances would my child have to be quarantined?

Your child would have to be quarantined if they have had close contact with someone who is COVID-19 positive; or upon return from a location that has been identified by [federal](#), state, or [local health officials](#).

21. What happens if my child is suspected of having COVID-19?

If you suspect your child has COVID-19: keep your child from entering any UCCS facility; inform the Campus Director and consult with your healthcare provider. Your child must not return to campus until the following criteria are met:

- If symptoms are no longer present, **and** your child has received a negative COVID test result, they may be permitted to return to on-campus activities after you present the negative test result to the Campus Director. (Note: A negative test result by itself is not sufficient for an individual to resume on-campus activities if they continue to exhibit COVID-19-related symptoms.)
- If the above criteria are not met, your child will be expected to stay away from campus or in-person UCCS-related activities until confirmed as non-infectious by the criteria below:
 - » At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared, **and**
 - » 24 hours have passed since recovery, defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in respiratory systems (e.g., cough, shortness of breath).

22. My child has COVID-19-like symptoms but tested negative for COVID-19. When can they return to school?

If your child has tested negative, they are permitted to return to on-campus activities when:

- symptoms are no longer present, **and**
- you have consulted with the Campus Director about plans for return.

(Note: A negative test result by itself is not sufficient for an individual to resume on-campus activities if they continue to exhibit COVID-19-related symptoms.)

23. What happens if my child tests positive for COVID-19?

If your student tests positive for COVID-19, you should promptly report the test to C19HealthReport@uchicago.edu and the Campus Director. They must not return to UCCS until the following criteria are met:

- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared, **and**
- 24 hours have passed since recovery, defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath).

24. What should I do if someone in my child's household tests positive for COVID-19?

If someone in your child's household tests positive for COVID-19, you should promptly report the test to C19HealthReport@uchicago.edu and the Campus Director. Your child must not return to UCCS facilities until the following criteria are met:

- They have quarantined for a period of 14 days per the recommendations of the [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov) and [CDPH](https://www.cdc.gov/cdpn) and did not develop any symptoms, **or**
- If during the time of quarantine, they develop COVID-related symptoms, the child cannot return to campus until confirmed as non-infectious by the following criteria:

- » At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared, and
- » 24 hours have passed since recovery, defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath).

25. If a student or employee becomes ill at school, do you have a place for them to rest away from other students until they can go home?

Yes. There are supervised quarantine spaces at all campuses for students and staff who are experiencing COVID-like symptoms and may be awaiting evaluation and/or pickup. Students will be supervised at all times while maintaining necessary precautions within the quarantine space.

26. What happens if a teacher or another student in my child's class tests positive for COVID-19?

The Campus Director will consult with the University of Chicago's Contact Tracing Team. The Contact Tracer will determine transmission timelines and pathways and provide recommendations to further limit spread of the virus. Should the Contact Tracer determine that your child had "close contact" with a COVID-positive person, you will be notified by the Campus Director and your child must not return to school until the following criteria are met:

- They have quarantined for a period of 14 days per the recommendations of the [CDC](#) and [CDPH](#) and did not develop any symptoms, **or**
- If during the time of quarantine, they develop COVID-related symptoms, the child cannot return to campus until confirmed as non-infectious by the following criteria:
 - » At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared, and
 - » 24 hours have passed since recovery, defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath).

27. Will they receive remote learning while quarantined?

UCCS will support individual students as needed during their time away from school. If an entire cohort is quarantining, their teachers will run a fully remote class for that time period.

28. How will UCCS be supported with COVID-19 contact tracing?

UCCS will utilize the University of Chicago Infection Control Team for the tracing of all positive tests.

29. If a special area teacher contracts COVID-19, who will have to quarantine at home given they rotate into classes?

During instruction, special area teachers will maintain six feet of physical distance between themselves and their students, wear a mask, and practice excellent hand hygiene. UCCS will follow the guidance of the University Infection Control Team. Assuming the special area teacher follows all of these precautions, students may be allowed to remain in school.

30. What mental health supports will you be providing to support students?

Teachers will continue to provide social and emotional support to students individually and in small groups. Counselors and social workers will also partner with teachers in supporting the social and emotional needs of students in the classroom.

31. Are there resources I can use at home to support my child?

Please contact the Campus Director for additional resources to help you with talking to your child about the coronavirus and news reports.

Travel

32. If my family travels out of state, do we need to quarantine before returning to UCCS?

In keeping with the rest of the University of Chicago, we will require our UCCS community to abide by travel restrictions, including self-quarantining for 10 days upon return from a location that has been identified by [federal](#), state, or [local health officials](#). Please understand these regulations and adjust your travel as needed to prevent your child from missing school.

Arrivals and Dismissals

33. What are the arrival and dismissal times and procedures for Phase II?

Times may shift or vary a little to appropriately stagger arrival and dismissal and follow all safety guidelines. Your Campus Director will provide you with arrival and dismissal times and procedures for your specific campus and grade.

34. Will families (e.g., parents, caregivers, and children) be required to be masked in their car when they arrive for drop-off and pick-up in carline?

Yes. Everyone in the vehicle will be required to wear a face covering during carline drop off and pick up.

35. Who will help my children out of their car seats and opening and closing car doors in carline?

Parents (not UCCS employees) must assist their children with car seats and doors as they exit and enter their vehicle. Staff will be on hand to guide students into the building to wash their hands and arrive at their classrooms.

36. What if I am running late at pick up time?

We will have a designated space where a child can sit and wait for a late parent in the case of an emergency.

Lunch and Snacks

37. How will meals be provided?

Your Campus Director will inform each Campus about the specifics of meals during the school day.

38. How will students eat at school?

Students will be distanced during all snack and lunch periods and meal times will be quiet times. Students may eat outside when weather allows. Snack and lunch items will not be shared among students.

39. May I send cupcakes or other treats to share with the class to celebrate my child's birthday?

No, there will be no shared food in the classroom. Classroom teachers will work to make birthdays at school special in new ways.

In Person School Guidelines

40. Will parents or visitors be allowed on campus?

No. Whenever possible, we encourage parents, alumni, colleagues, and prospective families to consider a virtual meeting or a phone call.

41. What can my child bring to school with them each day?

Students should bring their backpack and school supplies with them. Toys from home and unnecessary items must remain at home. A list of any necessary school supplies will be provided by your child's teacher. Students must come prepared with their items each day as UCCS staff will not deliver items dropped off at a later time.

42. How will my child's belongings be stored at school?

Students will keep their items at their desk. It is recommended that materials brought to and from school be disinfected each evening.

43. How will students maintain social distance when they are outside or playing together?

During some outside periods, students will be allowed to play together while wearing face coverings. Part of the school pedagogy will be teaching children about social distancing, and teachers will supervise children while they are outside.

44. How will emergency drills be conducted during the school year?

In the event of an *actual* emergency, life safety will be the priority. This means prioritizing actions that save time (exiting a building as quickly as possible) and are medically prudent (CPR) over attempting to maintain social distancing.

There are three types of drills which we practice throughout the year: fire evacuation drills, lockdown drills, and inclement weather drills. Because the lockdown and inclement weather drills require that students and staff move from their regular classroom area to an area that, by necessity, involves congregating in a space that would not allow for five-foot separation from another person, these drills will NOT be practiced. However, the staff will discuss with their students the proper procedure for such emergencies and explain the importance of the practice.

Fire drills require evacuating the buildings in an orderly manner and then assembling in an outdoor area to account for all students and staff. All exit routes will remain the same and are posted in each room and office for the faculty and staff to follow. When exiting the building, it may not be possible to maintain the six-foot separation from other cohorts, but such contact with another group will be brief. Once outside the building, the cohorts will assemble in spaces so that each cohort will be grouped together and separated from another by an appropriate distance, managed by staff.