Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Policy
OHIO Connections Academy

Effective Date: 6/25/2021
Scheduled for Review: 12/15/2021

Overview Section 2001(i)(1) of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires each local education agency (LEA) that receives funding under the ARP Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund to develop and make publicly available on the LEA's website a Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan, hereinafter referred to as a Continuity of Services Plan.

- *How will the LEA, to the greatest extent practicable, support prevention and mitigation policies in line with the most up-to-date guidance from the CDC for the reopening and operation of school facilities in order to continuously and safely open and operate schools for in-person learning?*

    Ohio Connections Academy is a fulltime virtual charter school, and as such, students attend school remotely.   Parents and guardians are required to screen their children for COVID-19 symptoms, including temperature checks, prior to sending them to any and all in-person school events. Students who have any symptoms associated with COVID-19 are not permitted to attend in-person events. OCA school personnel may take student's temperatures at in-person school events. Students with temperatures in excess of 100.2 degrees will be required to wear a mask and will be escorted to a separate designated area to await pickup by their parent or guardian. Parents and caretakers will be contacted and must promptly pick up any students with an elevated temperature.

    All faculty and staff will self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms daily before attending any buildings or attending any in-person school events. The school may require additional screening of employees at any time based on current state and federal guidelines. Employees exhibiting Covid-19 symptoms will be immediately sent home.

- *How will the LEA ensure continuity of services, including but not limited to services to address the students' academic needs, and students' and staff members' social, emotional, mental health, and other needs, which may include student health and food services?*

    ### Instruction/Academic Needs

    The school will prioritize social, emotional, and mental health needs, as well as academic recovery and acceleration. Strategies include high quality professional development for staff, increased use of assessment data to guide instruction, research-based core instruction, and tiered systems of support for interventions.

    ### School Meals

    As a virtual school, Ohio Connections Academy does not provide meals.

    ### Transportation

As a virtual school, Ohio Connections Academy does not provide transportation, in general. However, the school will work with families, following appropriate federal and state guidance to provide safe, economic, and efficient transportation in special situations where transportation may be create a hardship and be necessary (e.g., state testing, field trips, etc.).

Sanitation

The school will continue safety and sanitation protocols throughout the school/office building(s) for 2021-2022 and will follow appropriate federal and state guidance regarding school sanitation.

Support Staff

The school will continue to work with appropriate community agencies and organizations to improve services and support for families and students. Counselors, social workers, mental health professionals and other specialized staff will be available to support students. Evidence-based interventions will be implemented to ensure equitable access to high quality instruction, and social emotional services will be available for all students to help maximize recovery from COVID related isolation.

Technology

Families may request one laptop per enrolled student. Computer equipment supplied by the school must be returned upon withdrawal, graduation, or at the request of the school. Families who choose to use their own personal computers must ensure that the computer meets minimum system requirements for efficient operation of online applications. The school offers comprehensive technical support for computer systems and applications provided by Ohio Connections Academy. An internet subsidy may be requested by families to apply towards the cost of household internet services.

- *Use the table below to explain how the LEA will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff and the extent to which it has adopted policies, and a description of any such policy on each of the following safety recommendations established by the CDC.*

ARP ESSER Requirement	Strategies, Policies, and Procedures
a. Universal and correct wearing of masks;	The school will consider guidance provided by the county and state and will follow executive orders for use of masks at in-person events and/or office buildings.
b. Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding);	As a virtual school, students do not attend In-person classes. The majority of employees work from home. The school will consider social distance guidelines provided by the county and state and will follow executive orders, to include spacing and/or attendance caps for all who work in office settings and/or attend In-person school events.
c. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette;	Employees are required to observe proper hand hygiene and maintain and clean their workspace regularly. The school will ensure adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors, to include soap, tissues, hand

	sanitizer, face masks (as feasible), and a way to dry hands, as well as no-touch/foot-pedal trash cans.
d. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation;	A regular schedule for cleaning and sanitizing school offices will be followed. High touch surfaces and objects (e.g., door handles, sink handles, toilets, drinking fountains) will be cleaned at least daily or between use, as feasible. Ventilation will meet or exceed appropriate guidelines with the objective to increase circulation of outdoor air, increase delivery of clean air, and dilute potential contaminants, as well as to improve the level of filtration in the office space.
e. Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State and local health departments;	In general, OCA students are not required to report that they are positive or have been exposed to COVID-19 as they are enrolled in a contact-free virtual school. However, the following applies to students or staff members who attend In-person school events or who work in school offices: OCA will follow state and local guidance regarding contract tracing, isolation, and quarantine. Students who are ill, or who have close family members who are ill, should not attend any In-person school events. They should contact their assistant principal for further guidance. Students or staff who participate in an In-person school event are required to report to the school a positive COVID-19 test result OR exposure to a person with a positive COVID-19 test result if those positive test results are within 10 days of attending the In-person school event. School employees who work in an office space are required to report a positive COVID19 test to their supervisor. School employees who live with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, who have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, or have been near someone displaying COVID-19 symptoms should notify their supervisor and should work from home (assuming the employee is well). If an attendee at a school event or a staff person in the office tests positive for COVID-19, the school assistant principal or employee supervisor should be notified. The principal or supervisor will notify the contact tracer. The contract tracer who will obtain a list of close

	contacts and inform all staff, parents/guardians/caregivers of close contacts of possible exposure. The contract tracer will work with local health officials to assess spread and maintain follow up with students, staff, parents and guardians of those potentially impacted. Those close contacts will be advised regarding isolation and quarantine per current CDC guidelines. Staff, who are able, may work from home until cleared (per CDC guidelines) to return to work in the office.
f. Diagnostic and screening testing;	Referrals to diagnostic testing agencies will be provided to students, teachers, or staff members who exhibit COVID-19 symptoms. Students or employees who are ill or exhibit COVID-19 symptoms should stay home, see their healthcare provider, and consider getting a COVID-19 test. Any office worker or person who attends an In-person school event that receives a positive COVID-19 test result, should notify their supervisor who will notify the contact tracer who will obtain a list of close contacts, and will inform the contacts (staff,parents/guardians/caregivers) of possible exposure. The contract tracer will work with local health officials to assess spread and maintain follow up with students, staff, parents and guardians of those potentially impacted.
g. Efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities;	The school will work with local health departments to support messaging and outreach regarding vaccinations for members of the school community. Outreach will be made available in a language that all family members can understand and in alternate formats, as needed, to facilitate effective communication for individuals with disabilities.
h. Appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies;	The school will work closely with related service providers to consider prioritizing In-person services for students with disabilities.
i. Coordination with state and local health officials.	When feasible, the school will coordinate with state and local health officials to ensure staff, student, and family have access to testing, vaccines, and other resources to prevent and mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

ARP ESSER Local Use of Funds Plan
OHIO Connections Academy

Effective Date: 8/20/2021

As an online school, OCA has been open and operational throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, the pandemic has had a large impact on students, families, and school staff.

Twenty percent of ARP ESSER funds will be used to address student learning loss due to COVID-19. Ohio Connections Academy will spend these funds on evidence-based interventions such as summer learning and summer enrichment programs, extended day/year programs, and intervention–based instructional supports and support staff, as well as additional items/personnel/activities to address social, and emotional needs with focus and emphasis on the needs of student subgroups (racial/ethnic, low-income, disabilities, English language learners, gender, migrant, homeless, and foster care).

The remaining ARP ESSER funds will be used predominantly to maintain the operations and continuity of school services and to continue to retain and employ existing staff. COVID-19 created a very large enrollment surge that required the hiring and training of new teachers and support staff. Teacher, counselor, social worker and administrative positions were created in 2020 to support the heavy inflow of students, and new positions are still a need for the school.   In addition, new technology had to be deployed to handle communication with larger numbers of students. Sanitation supplies and cleaning became a greater expense and priority. OCA is currently facing a shortage of qualified applicants which places a heavier and more rigorous load on existing staff. Staffing, salary levels and retention of existing employees will be addressed through ARP ESSER funds, by means of new hires, stipends, and performance bonuses to recognize and retain employees.