



Walker Beacon School Reopening Plan

Executive Summary

Walker Beacon is seeking a safe return to an in-person environment and appreciates that it will require a continued culture of health and safety every step of the way. Our plans, to date, have been made based on information obtained from the Department of Public health, guidelines from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, input from caregivers about the needs of their students, and thoughtful consideration of our ability to implement safety protocols. As we continue through these unprecedented times, we will continue to consider all the information available to us and make decisions accordingly. Last year we held a number of Zoom meetings with caregivers to assess student needs and gather input from families. We will continue to hold Zoom meetings with families when school resumes.

Walker Beacon is committed to continued vigilance towards health and safety measures to continue to contain COVID-19. Walker Beacon will ensure that necessary precautions are in place as well as appropriate PPE, and staff will monitor themselves for daily symptoms, and will self-certify at a single point of entry. Caregivers will inform Walker Beacon if a student meets any of the criteria from the provided self-certification checklist and both students and staff will stay home if they are feeling unwell. Both staff and students will continue to be required to wear masks that adequately cover their nose and mouths with exception to those students who have medical, behavioral, or other challenges who are unable to wear masks/face coverings. Opportunities for mask breaks will occur throughout the day and windows will be open when possible to maximize fresh air. Due to our small population of students and staff and available outdoor space, Walker Beacon will be able to ensure to the extent possible at least three to six feet of social distancing. Students will be seated at a distance of at least three feet apart, with a distance of six feet apart during mealtimes. Walker Beacon will continue to ensure consistent daily cleaning and disinfecting of all spaces, and will continue weekly fogging of all buildings.



Returning to Walker's Schools in Fall 2020: A Letter from the President & CEO

August 14, 2020

Dear Walker Community:

This Fall, we are entering a school year that has no historical precedent in our lifetime. We are still in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, even in Massachusetts where our COVID rates are fairly low statewide, but recently have begun trending upward in some communities. To ensure that we can continue to keep ourselves and each other safe and healthy at Walker, we are collectively committing to following public health guidelines designed to minimize the potential spread of COVID in our schools.

This means that we have put into place and will abide by practices that are different than how we would traditionally operate in our schools. These practices include, but are not limited to:

- consistent and proper use of personal protective equipment, including masks;
- creating and maintaining sufficient space between student desks and work spaces to ensure appropriate physical distancing measures; and
- proactive plans for delivering instructional and support services in an alternative manner should there be a need to change course and offer more of a hybrid learning model and/or quarantine should there be an outbreak.

We understand that these practices can be difficult to implement in the best of conditions and may be even more challenging for us as we strive to be responsive to students' sensory, spatial, and other needs. We aim to do our best, and welcome recommendations and strategies for how to be as equitable as possible in meeting students' needs while also maintaining the safety and health of the larger community.

In addition to addressing needs related to COVID, we find ourselves also needing to address potential issues related to inequity in our schools. Throughout the past few months, there has been increased dialogue and action, locally and nationally, about the impact of systems of oppression on student learning and feelings of belonging in school settings. We will continue to engage in our own dialogue and action at Walker to identify and determine where improvements can be made to ensure a safe and supportive learning environment for all members of our community.

In developing our reopening plans, we delved deeply into the topics discussed above, brainstorming and planning for the many ways in which we will assess and regularly monitor the physical and social-emotional wellbeing of students, families, and staff. We are a strong community, and we will weather this time together. I have always appreciated the resiliency of our community, and our ability to weather a storm has never been more evident than the past six or so months.



This school year, I am confident that Walker will create and facilitate positive, welcoming, and affirming learning environment in which are students are fully engaged academically and connected to their peers, teachers, clinicians, and other school staff. Thank you for your partnership in making this vision a reality.

Dr. Gene Takahashi, President & CEO
Walker Therapeutic & Educational Programs



In-Person Learning Model

All students and staff will be in school with the exception of students who will learn remotely due to health concerns.

Efforts to manage safety related to COVID-19:

1. Social Distancing

- a. Everyone (both student and staff) must maintain a social distance of six feet to the greatest extent possible.
- b. Desks must be placed at least three feet apart and facing the same direction.
- c. Students will assemble in multiple locations for non-structured time, such as arrival, lunches, and dismissal to minimize the number of students in one area. Transitioning between classes will be monitored for social distancing.

2. Hand Washing

- a. Staff and students must immediately wash hands upon arrival to school.
- b. Everyone also **MUST** wash hands or use sanitizer:
 - i. Before and after meals (including snacks)
 - ii. After bathroom use
 - iii. After coughing or sneezing
 - iv. Before putting on and after taking off masks
 - v. Before dismissal
 - vi. At designated times throughout the day
- c. Protocols for correct hand washing and sanitizer use, including training to students, will be provided.
- d. Hand sanitizer will be available in all areas of the school, but its use does not eliminate the need for frequent hand washing.

3. Masks

- a. Everyone will need to wear masks while in the school building that cover both their nose and mouth.
- b. We understand that there are some circumstances which make mask use difficult or impossible. In cases in which face coverings / masks are not possible, **STRICT SOCIAL DISTANCING of SIX FEET** is required.
- c. Parents should provide masks for their children; however, the school will have back up (disposable) masks available for students who need them.
- d. There will be the availability of mask breaks for students as needed.

4. Daily Screening

- a. We will be asking all guardians to self-screen their child before sending them to school, and requiring that if the student is sick, they must stay home.

5. Isolation and Dismissal for Students Who Become Ill During the School Day

- a. If a student becomes ill or starts to have symptoms associated with COVID-19, they will immediately be brought to the school's identified COVID-19 Medical Waiting Room that is separate from the nurses' office. There, nursing will check with the student and determine if the student needs to get picked up.
 - b. If a student needs to be dismissed due to COVID-19 associated symptoms, they must consult with their PCP prior to returning to campus. Remote learning will be available during any absences.
- 6. Smaller Self-Contained Groups**
- a. Students will be kept with the same peers and adults as much as possible each day, including lunch, arrival, and dismissal.
 - b. Classes will remain at or below Walker Beacon's practice of eight students and one adult per room.
 - c. Seating will be assigned to help minimize transmission and assist with contact tracing.
 - d. Each student will have their own supply of pens, pencils, paper, fidgets, and a Chromebook. They will not need to share supplies AT ALL.
- 7. Regular Cleaning, Sanitizing, Disinfecting, and Disposal Protocols**
- a. When students need to go to a single-user bathroom in the hallway, a classroom adult will ensure that no one is in the hallway or the bathroom before a student transitions to use the bathroom.
 - b. Each bathroom will be disinfected following use.
 - c. All surfaces will be disinfected prior to students entering the classroom and periodically during the school day.
 - d. Our maintenance and cleaning teams will clean all areas of student use after school hours.
 - e. Disinfectant fogging of the school building will occur weekly.
 - f. Classrooms will be required to complete a daily cleaning/disinfecting form before leaving for the day and upon arrival in the morning.
- 8. Classrooms**
- a. Desks are going to be arranged in a very specific manner and must remain where they are placed in order to assure social distancing. Each desk will be a minimum of three feet from any other desk.
 - b. Students will be assigned desks in each classroom to minimize contamination.
 - c. There will be NO sharing of items or supplies, everything will be provided individually to assure no cross contaminations.
 - d. Windows will be open when possible for greater ventilation.
- 9. Hallways**
- a. Hallways will have arrows pointing in the correct direction on each side of the hallway to designate a direction in which students and adults should move through the hallway.
 - b. Each main entry/exit will be designated as such; students and adults will be asked to enter and exit through specific doorways.



10. Lunches and Snacks

- a. We will provide individually packaged lunches for purchase (or free, if applicable) that will be delivered to the areas where students are eating.
- b. Lunches will be eaten in one of several indoor areas or outside to minimize proximity to others.
- c. Hands **MUST** be washed prior to and after eating.
- d. Water fountains will be disabled. Water bottles are encouraged and will be provided.

11. Remote Learning

- a. For families who opt to participate in virtual opportunities, remote learning students will join on-campus students in the classroom via Google Meet links. Self-directed classes and activities will not be offered. Related services specified in a student's IEP (clinical sessions, Speech/Language, and OT) also will be offered virtually.
- b. If at any point Federal, State, or Local guidelines dictate that we must reclose the school, remote learning will immediately begin.
- c. If a student's behavior or failure to abide by safety guidelines is putting others at risk, a decision may be made to have the student return to remote learning for the remainder of the term. This is a worst-case scenario, but we are committed to putting the health and safety of our students and staff as our #1 priority.

12. Hybrid Learning

For families who opt to participate in a combination of both in-person and remote instruction:

- a. Families will determine in advance (to the best of their ability) a pattern of in-person and remote instruction.
- b. If at any point in time, Federal, State, or Local guidelines dictate that we must change to a hybrid format, immediate notification to families and a combination of in-person and remote learning will begin.
- c. Students learning remotely due to health issues or quarantine will access classes via Google Meets and will maintain their same schedules
- d. Planning and preparation will continue as outlined above for both in-person and remote instruction.

Hybrid Model

Class schedules for the hybrid model will be the same as the in-person model. Cohorts will be determined to best meet the needs of students, transportation considerations, and to maximize distancing in classrooms. Cohorts will attend in person classes Monday and Tuesday or Wednesday and Friday. Students will attend their Thursday classes in person every other week. When students are learning remotely, they will participate in the classes via Google Hangouts with the students attending in person. Assignments will be available through Google Classroom. Classroom teachers, clinicians, and the educational coordinator will communicate with families to ensure students learning remotely are able to



access the classes and to offer opportunities for families to change their student's model of teaching between in-person and remote services. Attendance will be tracked as "present", "present-distance learning", or "absent". Chromebooks will be provided to all students.

Remote Learning

Remote learning will take place in the same manner that Walker Beacon managed remote learning for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. Walker Beacon will maintain the daily schedule and students will have the same classroom teacher and classroom cohort. Learning will be offered through Google Meets and assignments will be posted on Google Classroom. Opportunities for individual tutoring will be offered during study and homeroom periods to ensure that students are continuing to make academic growth based on the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks and their IEP goals and objectives. Clinicians and support staff will be available remotely to provide assistance and provide related services as mandated in the students' IEPs. Chromebooks will be made available to students who are remote learning and need access to technology. Attendance will continue to be tracked as "present-distance learning" and "absent" to represent distance learning and students who do not attend virtual classes. Documentation will be provided for students who are unable to access curriculum through remote learning. Curriculum sequences will be aligned to the state standards as well as a student's IEP goals and objectives. Students will receive report cards with letter grades and IEP progress notes will be written quarterly. Documentation will be recorded using Walker's electronic health record and a communication log. During remote learning in the 2019-2020 school year, we provided Chromebooks to a number of families and all of our students had wifi access. We will work with school districts to ensure all students have access, if needed in the future.

Helpful Links

[Reopening Guidelines from DESE](http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/return-to-school/)
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/return-to-school/>

[COVID-19 Information and Resources for Special Educators](http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/sped.html)
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/sped.html>

Information on the Outbreak of COVID-19
<https://www.mass.gov/resource/information-on-the-outbreak-of-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>