

# AOSR Plans for Learning in September



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## Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic presents the most serious public health crisis the world has experienced in generations. Looking forward to the 2020-21 school year and beyond, AOSR is resolved to do everything it can to reopen our campus because we believe doing so is in the best interest of our students. And yet, we recognize that AOSR needs to find a pathway for reopening its campus safely with the health and wellbeing of our entire community in mind and in strict adherence to guidelines from the Italian authorities.

AOSR Plans for Learning in September is guided by the assumption that a vaccine will not be available for 12-18 months, which means AOSR needs to be able to respond quickly to circumstances in its own school community as well as to conditions in Italy. Even as we plan to reopen our campus in September, we know we may need to close it again with very little advance warning. This means AOSR must be prepared to switch between different learning models designed to fit a variety of circumstances and influences.

### **This Plan is guided by five principles:**

1. Act with fidelity to AOSR's Mission, Beliefs and Community Principles
2. Prefer face-to-face learning to remote learning whenever it is safe to do so.
3. Prioritize student, faculty, and staff health, safety, and wellbeing over other principles.
4. Ensure hygiene- and health-related policies and practices are research-based, clearly communicated, effectively implemented, and diligently enforced.
5. Promote practices and policies to reduce risk of virus transmission and support our capacity to be responsive and agile when facing changing health circumstances.



## Rights and Responsibilities within the AOSR Community

**Rights** — Every student, teacher, or staff member should be known, valued, and cared for. This fundamental right accompanies membership in AOSR’s school community. It implies we all have a right to expect both emotional and physical safety. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this means members of our community can reasonably expect a heightened level of concern for their health and wellbeing. While it is possible that students, teachers, or staff members will be exposed to COVID-19 in the course of their work or studies, everyone is entitled to expect that every effort and reasonable precaution will be taken to prevent this from happening.

**Responsibilities** — Our Commitment also implies that members of our community should know, value, and care for others. This means our interactions with others—friends and strangers, students and adults—should be self-aware, respectful, and courteous. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this means complying willingly with rules and policies designed to keep our community safe and healthy. This means thinking of others, appreciating that their risk tolerance might be lower than ours, and adjusting our behavior with sensitivity and respect. This means respecting policies and expectations, even when inconvenient to ourselves.

As a caring and supportive community, committed to our shared Beliefs and Community Principles, AOSR expects our respect for and sense of duty to others to be visible in a variety of ways, including the following:

- How all members of our community and visitors to our campus wear masks, wash and disinfect their hands frequently, and follow physical distancing norms;
- How all members of our community and visitors to our campus interact with each other in and out of the classroom, and take responsibility for maintaining a healthy environment;
- How all members of our community and visitors to our campus treat others—bus drivers, guards, nurses, cleaners, teachers, cafeteria workers, office administrators, etc.—as people worthy of their respect and deserving of safety themselves;
- How parents and bus riders comply with bus monitors’ requests to follow rules on our buses;
- How all members of our community and visitors to our campus follow self-screening guidelines for symptoms of illness and refrain from coming to campus when symptomatic;
- How all members of our community and visitors to our campus comply with self-quarantine rules regarding exposure to COVID-19 and recent overseas travel.

The challenges of establishing a “new normal” next year will be compounded if we are unwilling to change and adapt our behaviors. COVID-19 has disrupted life as we knew it. To navigate this unprecedented public health challenge, mutual respect, trust, and a deep sense of our reciprocal obligations to one another will be essential.

## Learning Models

While we do value online learning as a valuable component of 21st century learning, AOSR does not believe an exclusively online learning platform is a satisfactory long-term substitute for regular school. Rather switching to an exclusively online learning is a necessary expedient when health and safety conditions leave no other option. Accordingly, AOSR has developed three different learning models to increase the likelihood that it will be positioned to reopen its campus in September 2020.

### Three Potential Models for Learning

In anticipation of ongoing and evolving challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, AOSR has developed three models for learning. These models take into account Principle 2, which states, “Prefer face-to-face learning over remote learning whenever it is safe to do so.” The first model, which we call our Face-to-Face Learning Model, describes a traditional school experience where students attend school five days a week. If conditions demand that we close our campuses, AOSR will continue to refer to our Online Learning Model. Finally, we have identified an alternative to this open-or-closed dichotomy, which we call our Hybrid Learning Model. This model acknowledges the critical role face-to-face interactions play in a child’s learning while implementing physical distancing norms that reduce student density. More detail about each of these models follows below:

**Face-to-Face Learning Model:** This is a traditional school experience with students attending school in person five days a week. Students interact with peers and teachers face to face. The learning that happens off campus is mostly in the form of homework or projects. Preventative hygiene policies are implemented in combination with realistic physical distancing guidelines. The risk of exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19 is considered low enough that greater student density on buses, in classrooms, and in other shared facilities is appropriate.

**Online Learning Model:** This is the same model our community experienced in the final months of the 2019-20 school year: our campus is closed and school remains open through online learning experiences. Students attend school virtually through synchronous and asynchronous lessons, activities, and projects. Students collaborate online, but not with the same frequency as in regular school experience. Safety conditions dictated by the Italian authorities establish that AOSR’s campuses must be closed.

**Hybrid Learning Model:** This model combines face-to-face learning with coordinated online experiences. This model recognizes that Distance Learning does not provide the social interaction most students desire; therefore, a hybrid model provides face-to-face learning 40-50% of the time while leveraging digital experiences the remaining 50-60%. This model introduces physical distancing and density reduction as key strategies to further reduce exposure within our community, while at the same time providing face-to-face interaction between students and teachers about half of the time.

**Our Approach:** In line with principle #2 listed above, AOSR is planning to do whatever it can to make face-to-face, 5 days a week, on campus learning happen in September. We are aggressively pursuing plans to expand our learning spaces and tailor class sizes to learning spaces so we adhere to health and safety guidelines. Although this will involve a great deal of additional cost, we believe this is the best and first option to pursue.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Will there be special cleaning services?**

Yes. All areas will be regularly disinfected throughout the school day and extra cleaning shifts will be added. We will have touch less hand sanitizing stations throughout the school and students will be guided to regularly wash their hands, wear their masks (ages 6 and above) and maintain social distancing. Safety is our priority.

### **How will food services be affected?**

We are currently working with our cafeteria provider so that packed lunches can be delivered. Students will eat in areas in which social distancing protocols can be respected.

### **Will there be after school activities?**

We are awaiting more detailed guidelines from the Italian authorities on after school activities and sports. Our plan is to determine which activities are compliant and therefore possible. If at all possible, we would like to run our after school activities program.

### **How will sports events, plays and musical events be affected?**

AOSR will continue to provide it's extra curricular programs. Participation will follow the guidelines provided by the Italian authorities to ensure the safety of all participants. Appropriate spaces and facilities will be in line with the guidelines provided by the Italian authorities.

### **Will there be bus services?**

We are working closely with our bus companies to ensure that we will be able to meet the guidelines. Routings will likely change and drop off and pick up points identified and utilized to limit the amount of time students are on the bus. Temperature checks may be done before students enter the bus.

### **Will any academic programs change?**

Reading the most recent guidelines, the two subjects areas that will be most affected will be physical education and music. Physical education guidelines dictate a two meter social distance and discourage team sports. Our PE teachers will have to adjust their curriculum. For music, guidelines will likely prohibit singing and playing woodwind and brass instruments, therefore, our music teachers too will have to modify their curriculum.