

# Walden Center & School Reopening Plan

2446 McKinley Avenue  
Berkeley, CA 94703

Walden does not have a head of school. It is run by a collective of teachers and staff: Susana Aragón, Claudine Swickard, Debra Wong, Gina Centanni, Cristin Costello, Emma Ammirati, Jeff Grether, Teresa Chen, Russell Wright, Lee Ann Parker, VickiLee Edge, and Elise Wilks

Reopening date: October 13, 2020, November 9, 2020  
Submission date: 10/8/2020, 11/6/2020  
School type: independent

COVID-19 Liaison:  
VickiLee Edge  
Admissions and Communications Coordinator  
[admissions@waldencenterschool.org](mailto:admissions@waldencenterschool.org)  
510-841-7248

Students returning to campus: 60 out of 69 students (normal capacity 96 students)  
Staff returning to campus: 16

Grade levels served by school: K-6  
Grade levels to be reopened: K-6

Plan published on [website](#)

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[City of Berkeley Reopening Order](#) October 2, 2020  
[City of Berkeley Reopening Order](#) November 5, 2020  
[City of Berkeley Reopening Order](#) January 25, 2021

[State of California Guidance](#)

[Guidance Related to Cohorts](#)

As the Walden community returns to in-person instruction and learning, we are reminded that caring for each other and being mindful of how our actions may affect other members of our community is of utmost importance. With that in mind, please familiarize yourselves with the requirements for being on campus together.

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## **CLEANING, DISINFECTION AND VENTILATION**

### **Cleaning:**

On a daily basis (twice per day, between 9:00 a.m. and 12 noon, and again between 1:00 pm and 3:15 p.m.) the following high-touch surfaces are cleaned with Purcell Professional Spray or CleanSmart daily surface cleaner by office staff (office and outdoor facing) and teaching staff (classrooms): table tops, counters, door knobs, bathrooms, sinks, light switches, copier, phones, chairs, books, handles on gates, master keys, handles on drawers, cabinet doors, etc. Additionally, tables (art room) are cleaned between groups.

Our office staff and teaching staff have been instructed about what to clean, how often, and with which products. We have daily check lists to document and remind people of what and when to clean.

Midweek, on Tuesdays or Wednesdays, after classes have been dismissed for the day, each classroom is more thoroughly cleaned by parent volunteers. In addition to the daily tasks, the cubbies are wiped down, each individual desk is cleaned, the floor is cleaned, and all the trash and recycling are removed and the bins sprayed down with Purell Professional Spray or Clean Smart.

Every Saturday, for 3 hours, there is an even more thorough cleaning of each classroom, office, and bathroom by parent volunteers.

### **Cleaning products:**

Walden uses CleanSmart surface cleaner in a spray bottle, EPA Reg. number: 89896-2 and Purell Surface Spray, EPA Reg. number: 84368-1-84150.

Toys are separated into bins for each stable group. Toys are cleaned with eON mist, EPA Reg. number: 92108-1-96201

### **Protections for cleaners:**

Walden provides disposable PPE for our staff and volunteers: masks, gloves, face shields, hand sanitizer, and gowns when needed. We also post the 6-foot physical distancing visual aids and have well ventilated spaces. No more than one parent volunteer cleans or occupies a space.

### **Disinfection:**

If areas of our school have been occupied by someone who was infectious with COVID-19, the areas will be disinfected with products from the EPA "N" list, specifically

CleanSmart Daily Surface Cleaner or a Lysol product from the EPA “N” list. The disinfection will be carried out by either our cleaning crews. or we will hire professionals to do the same. In the case of a COVID-19 outbreak at Walden, we would implement a three-hour cleaning by a team of 6 people, or hire a professional service for the master clean before returning to campus as well as temporarily closing the school if required by the health department.

**Ventilation:**

We have purchased 4 outside tents so we can keep stable groups small, and for outdoor learning. We have remodeled our art room so one whole wall is a glass garage door which we can open for outside art use and major air ventilation.

Each classroom opens up to an outdoor space; the doors and windows are kept open. Each room has a heavy duty Alen air purifier.

**STABLE GROUPS**

- Students will be placed in stable groups of 5 - 13 students for the purposes of reducing exposure, maintaining physical distancing, and contact tracing.
- Lower Group (2 groups), Lower Middle Group (1 group), Middle Group (2 groups), and Upper Group (2 groups).
- Current guidance allows for students to be part of a maximum of two groups. At Walden, this applies to students who enroll for Extended Day Care (EDC), during which their EDC cohort may be different from their school day group. EDC cohorts will follow small cohort guidance and will be limited to stable cohorts of no more than 16, inclusive of children and adults. Children can be part of an after-school class or an EDC cohort, but not both.
- LMG-UG students will have a dedicated classroom for their stable groups.
- Arts teachers will teach one grade level in-person for a period of 4 weeks. The goal is to reduce possible exposure of both students and staff and to facilitate contact tracing if necessary.
- Groups will remain stable, with the exception of new students entering the school
- Restrooms will be limited to single occupancy.

<b>Grade level groups</b> (7 groups)	<b>Indoor Instruction Space</b> (Classroom)	<b>Outdoor Instruction Space</b>	<b>Bathroom</b>
Lower Group	LG classroom	LG canopy area	LG Bathroom

Lower Group	LG classroom	LG canopy area	LG Bathroom
Lower Middle Group	LMG classroom	LMG canopy area	LMG Bathroom
Middle Group (Emma)	Emma's room	MG garden canopy	South Bathroom
Middle Group (Cristin)	Cristin's room	MG garden canopy	South Bathroom
Upper Group (Jeff)	Jeff's room	UG platform	North Bathroom and ADA bathroom
Upper Group (Teresa)	Teresa's room	UG garden area	North Bathroom and ADA bathroom

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### PHYSICAL DISTANCING:

**Overview:** Students are assigned to stable groupings during the school day as well as separate locations for outdoor learning and recess/play activities. Teachers crossing cohorts physically distance at least 6 feet from students at all times.

**Entry Gates:** Arrival and dismissal is staggered, and utilize the 2 gates on McKinley and the gate on Dwight Way. Each class was assigned a gate to use to promote physical distancing of cohorts. The sidewalk outside each gate is marked with 6-foot spacing to promote physical distancing outside of the campus. **Exception:** Students enrolled in Extended Day Care (EDC) will be dismissed through the McKinley gates only.

**Office:** Only one adult at a time may be inside Walden's office. Students are not allowed to enter the office. The office staff member supports students in a sheltered outdoor area adjacent to the office/Art room.

**Classrooms:** Classrooms have been arranged such that students can sit no less than 4 feet apart when 6 feet distancing is not possible. Teacher desks are positioned at least 6 feet from students. Non-essential furniture has been removed to allow for more spacing, and new desks have been acquired to meet this guideline. Plexiglass shields for each student are used to promote health and safety.

**Bathrooms:** Cohorts are assigned bathrooms (students enter one at a time) to promote physical distancing of shared spaces. An outdoor sink has been installed so that students need not enter the enclosed area of a bathroom for hand washing purposes.

**Outdoors:** We are utilizing outdoor space as much as possible. We have outdoor classroom areas for stable groups, allowing seating to be spaced 4-6 feet apart in an area covered by canopies. Recess and lunch periods will be staggered to promote physical distancing, including recess periods, allowing stable groups outdoor play areas exclusive to their use during their assigned time.

**Transitions:** Routines are set in place for students to be distanced when lining up, and to enter classrooms one at a time in order to maintain social distancing as much as possible during transitions.

**Belongings:** Instructional materials and personal items are not shared during the school day. Each student has their own materials and supplies. Students have also been assigned their own plexiglass shield to be used exclusively by them.

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## **Arrival and Departure, and Movement within the School**

### **Arrival: Lower - Lower Middle Group**

- Before exiting their vehicles, adults dropping off their child(ren) must put on masks. Masks should be worn over mouth and nose during the entire drop off procedure until you re-enter your vehicle.
- Parents walk children to the entrance on Dwight Way to be cleared by a staff member based on responses to the daily health screening. Parents keep at least six (6) feet distance between families in line. Six foot distances have been marked on the sidewalk in yellow.
- Non-staff parents are not allowed on campus except if extenuating circumstances or fulfilling work commitments.

### **Arrival: Middle Group - Upper Group**

- Students may be dropped off curbside so long as their daily health screen indicates that they are cleared to attend.
- Children walk to their designated entrance gate on McKinley Avenue (see below) to be cleared by a staff member based on your response to the daily health screen. Students keep at least six (6) feet distance between students in line. Six foot distances have been marked on the sidewalk in yellow.

- All students and staff submit a daily health pre-screen no later than 8:00am every morning before coming to school.
- Exterior gates are propped open during drop off so families do not need to touch the keypad or the handles of the doors when they arrive at school.
- All children use hand sanitizer before entering a classroom.
- Student entry is split among the 3 gates (2 on McKinley Avenue and 1 on Dwight Way.) LG and LMG will use the Dwight Way gate, MG grade will use the south McKinley gate and UG will use the north McKinley gate.
- To avoid congestion, there is a staggered schedule for drop off and pick up. Please see below for each group's designated schedule.
- Important note: Outside of morning and afternoon drop-off and pick-up windows, any parent coming to campus must call the office to arrange for dropping off or picking up their child.

### **Departure - All Groups**

- Children are picked up at their designated gate at each group's dismissal time. Parents/caregivers are not permitted to enter campus. Staff open the gates so that families do not need to touch the keypad or the handles of the doors. Parents and staff wear a mask at all times.
- Parents limit interactions with other parents and maintain a safe distance (>6 ft) while talking. Parents avoid gathering with parents from separate stable groups, to reduce the chance of cross-group contamination.

### **Staggered Drop-off and Pick-up Schedules**

#### **Dwight Way gate**

LGA: 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

LGB: 9:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.

LMG: 9:15 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.

#### **McKinley Avenue south gate**

MGC: 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. (Cristin's homeroom)

MGE: 9:15 a.m. 3:15 p.m. (Emma's homeroom)

**McKinley Avenue north gate:**

UGJ: 8:45 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. (Jeff's Group)

UGT: 8:45 a.m. and 3:15 p.m. (Teresa's Group)

- At 8:30 a.m., classrooms open. Students may arrive at this time and should proceed directly to their classrooms.

**Movement on Campus**

- Students remain with their stable group when on campus, including when outside and at snack, recess, and lunch.
- Teachers and staff are assigned to specific stable groups and use the physical space assigned to those stable groups.
- For shared spaces such as the field, the big play structure and the basketball court, each stable group has a designated time to use the space, and their own set of equipment.

**Restrooms**

All students follow hygiene guidelines and use hand sanitizer before entering the restroom and wash their hands for 20 seconds after using the toilet. Only 1 student at a time is permitted into multi-stall restrooms; entry doors remain open. Lower Group and Lower Middle Group use only the bathrooms in their classrooms. Middle Group uses only the South bathroom and Upper Group uses only the North bathroom as well as the ADA bathroom. All staff use the office bathroom. Signs are posted to reinforce single occupancy of the North and South bathrooms. All other bathrooms are single occupancy by design.

**Recess**

Recess takes place outdoors for all stable groups, weather and air quality permitting. Students wash or sanitize hands before and after recess or using any equipment. Recess times are staggered and each stable group is assigned an area of the yard for play. Each stable group also has their own play equipment such as balls. Playground equipment is used by only one stable group at a time.

## **Lunch**

Students eat snack and lunch with their stable groups, outside whenever possible. Water fountain is closed. Students bring their own water bottles from home. Seating areas allow 6 ft. distancing during lunch since students do not have face coverings at this time. Lunch is staggered so as to reduce density and support physical distancing. On rainy days, students eat lunch in their classrooms.

## **Drama/Movement**

Drama and movement classes are held indoors and outdoors with modified activities to limit the amount of close personal interaction. When in the studio classroom, the large garage-style doors are opened whenever possible for additional ventilation. Markers are placed on surfaces so that students and instructors have the appropriate distancing. Dance classes are held outdoors. Students wash or sanitize hands before and after dance class. Shared equipment such as theatrical props, sports equipment, such as balls and jump ropes are sanitized between uses.

## **Music Class**

Music classes are held indoors and outdoors, with modified activities to eliminate close personal interaction. When in the studio classroom, the large garage-style doors are opened whenever possible for additional ventilation. Markers are placed on surfaces so that students and instructors have the appropriate distance. Markers are also placed on surfaces with the appropriate distances to designate where instruments such as drums, guitars/ukuleles, and xylophones are placed for student use. Movement activities are held outdoors. Students wash or sanitize hands before and after music class. Shared equipment, such as instruments, mallets, guitar picks, etc., are used by only one stable group for a 3-4 week period and then sanitized prior to the next stable group's use.

## **Field Trips and Overnights**

All overnight and field trips are on hold until health guidelines change.

## **Community Gatherings and Special Events**

At present, all school-sponsored in-person events are canceled or held in an online format, if possible. Once restrictions loosen, in-person events will be determined on a case-by-case basis with strict adherence to Alameda County Department of Public Health guidelines. There will be no events on campus with mixed stable groups, and all events will be virtual for larger groups.

## **Visitors**

Outside visitors and groups are limited to essential visits only. All outside vendors and delivery personnel must wear face coverings while on campus and abide by physical distancing. Delivery personnel are not permitted to enter any buildings. Vendors on campus longer than 15 minutes are required to be screened. Any visitor on campus is required to sign in and provide a phone number, for safety and tracking purposes. For the time being, we limit any visitors on campus to only emergency situations. All admissions events are held virtually.

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## **FACE COVERINGS AND OTHER ESSENTIAL PROTECTIVE GEAR**

Walden requires anyone coming on to campus to wear a mask. All masks must be washed or changed at least daily. Masks must have at least two protective layers. Masks with exhalation valves which release unfiltered droplets are not permissible on campus. If people don't have a mask, or the mask needs to be replaced, we stock adult size and child size disposable masks in the office. We also have 50 face shields for our staff to wear if they want more PPE.

We have non-latex gloves in S, M, and L stocked near the office at all times. We have a dispenser for the gloves, which allows people to get their own without touching anything else. We have hand sanitizer throughout the school, and keep this item well stocked. We have touchless thermometers. Students are not allowed in the office, which is too small for social distancing. We have a designated outside area for students right outside the office, if a student needs anything from the office (band aids, ice packs). Office staff will use gloves and tongs and trays to get children what they need. Tongs and trays and ice packs will be sanitized between uses.

Student work stations have 3-sided sneeze guards.

Walden has laminated posters, with pictures and words, re: social distancing, mask wearing, symptoms, and hand washing posted all around campus, in addition to all entrances and exits.

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## HEALTH SCREENINGS FOR STUDENTS AND STAFF

Anyone entering campus will be required to screen for symptoms, elevated temperature, and exposure to COVID-19 daily, using one of Walden's online screening forms. This includes students, staff, and parents fulfilling work commitment. Also included are any vendors providing services at Walden (anyone at Walden to service equipment, utilities, conduct inspections, assessments, etc.). All others are asked to remain off campus. If any person answers "yes" to any of the screening questions, they must remain off campus and contact Vicki (COVID-19 liaison), and expect contact from her. Walden is using Google forms and spreadsheets for its screening process. Vendors and delivery people will phone Walden at 510-841-7248 to be admitted to campus.

These are the links for screening:

[Screening link for adults](#)

[Screening link for students](#)

If any student or staff member develops COVID-19 symptoms or a temperature  $\geq 100$  while on campus, they will be isolated at an outdoor station with privacy screens, near the office until they can be picked up (or take themselves home, in the case of adults). These individuals will be tested for COVID-19.

Those who are already at home when becoming symptomatic or exposed will not come to campus for testing, but will arrange for their own testing and will forward testing results to the COVID Liaison. City of Berkeley and State of California protocols for symptoms and positive cases will be followed.

Summary of Guidelines and Actions for COVID-19 Symptoms, Exposure, and Positive Cases (Medical privacy in compliance with HIPAA and FERPA will be maintained.)

	Student or Faculty/Staff with:	Action	Communication
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1	<p>COVID-19 symptoms or “yes” response to health screening</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Stay home</b> if answering “yes” to any of the screening questions</li> <li>● Go/send individual home (isolated and cared for at the office outdoor station until pick up)</li> <li>● Contacting healthcare provider and getting COVID-19 testing is recommended, will be provided onsite if symptoms develop onsite</li> <li>● <a href="#">Community testing resources</a></li> <li>● Share test results with COVID Liaison ASAP</li> <li>● If test is positive, see #3; if negative, see #4)</li> <li>● Follow <a href="#">isolation instructions</a> unless COVID-19 is ruled out</li> <li>● School/cohort remains open</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● None recommended</li> </ul>
2	<p>Close contact with a confirmed (test positive) COVID-19 case</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Stay home or send home if at school</b></li> <li>● Follow <a href="#">quarantine instructions</a> for 14 days from last exposure (Walden is continuing to require 14 days)</li> <li>● Testing recommended 5-7 days after exposure if asymptomatic and sooner if symptomatic (result will not shorten 14-day quarantine)</li> <li>● School/cohort remains open</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Consider school community notification of a known exposure if exposure occurred at school</li> </ul>

<p>3 .</p>	<p>Confirmed COVID-19 case</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● COVID Liaison will contact City of Berkeley Public Health Department</li> <li>● Go/send individual home if at school (isolated and cared for at an outdoor station until pick up)</li> <li>● <b>Stay home</b> and <a href="#">isolate</a> for at least 10 days from symptom onset or test date if asymptomatic and 24 hours after symptoms resolve or improve</li> <li>● Stable group members and any close and traced contacts follow <a href="#">quarantine instructions</a> for 14 days after the last date the COVID-positive person was present at school) and contact health provider and consider testing 5-7 days after exposure if asymptomatic and sooner if symptomatic</li> <li>● <a href="#">Community testing resources</a></li> <li>● Classroom and primary spaces where COVID-positive person spent significant time (<math>\geq 15</math> minutes) will be cleaned and disinfected</li> <li>● School remains open</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Exposure letter to stable group*</li> <li>● School community notification of a known case*</li> <li>● Notification of all relevant staff in accordance with AB685</li> </ul>
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4	Symptomatic person tests negative or a healthcare provider has provided documentation that the symptoms are typical of their underlying chronic condition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● May return to school when:</li> <li>● Feeling better</li> <li>● At least 24 hours have elapsed with no fever in absence of fever-reducing medication</li> <li>● School/classroom remains open</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● None recommended unless community aware of testing</li> </ul>
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\*In the event of COVID cases and exposures at Walden, cohort members (staff and parents of students) will be notified by e-mail that cohort members have been exposed to COVID-19 without naming any individuals. They will be advised to consult with their medical providers, be tested for COVID-19, and quarantine for 14 days. The results of daily screening responses and any COVID-19 test results are held confidentially by the COVID-19 liaison.

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## HEALTHY HYGIENE PRACTICES

- Teachers and staff will teach handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. We will increase monitoring of handwashing.
- Staff and students will be encouraged to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue.
- Used tissues should be thrown in the trash.
- Hands should be washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after coughing or sneezing.
- We will provide facial tissues, no-touch trash cans, hand soap, 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer, and disposable hand towels.
- We will provide hand sanitizer in all indoor spaces used by students or staff and at building entrances/exits.
- If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol will be used.
- Students will wash their hands or use hand sanitizer:
  - before entering and exiting the classroom
  - after using the restroom
  - after playing outside and returning to the classroom
  - before and after eating
  - after coughing or sneezing

- There are sinks in all the base teachers' classrooms. We have added two touchless sinks outside the North and South bathrooms.
- Personal Supplies Kit- 1 or 2 extra masks, hand sanitizer, facial tissues.

## **IDENTIFICATION AND TRACING OF CONTACTS**

Daily attendance is tracked for students, staff, parents who perform work commitment on campus, and any cleared, essential visitors (who are required to fill out a screening form before entering campus). Staff follow a fixed weekly schedule. Students remain in assigned stable groups. Any substitutes needed by a cohort would be calendared and listed in contact tracing efforts for exposed students and staff. The local health department COVID-19 liaison is Vicki Edge.

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## **COVID-19 STAFF TRAINING AND FAMILY EDUCATION**

### **Staff Education**

The staff spent the summer learning about and monitoring the updates from the county regarding all aspects of school reopening guidance and safety practices from the county - including facial covering requirements, healthy hygiene, physical distancing, drop-off and pick-up procedures, cohort size and daily screening protocols. We met once a week and we received regular updates from Vicki Edge, our liaison to the county health department and set policy compliant to that guidance as well as the state guidance, and the new City of Berkeley Department of Public Health reopening order. We have since updated our practices to align with the City of Berkeley COVID Liaison guidance and the State of California guidance for schools. The staff receives weekly updates from the COVID Liaison's attendance at mostly weekly ACOE/ACPHD Schools meetings and biweekly City of Berkeley COVID Liaison meetings. Issues related to COVID-19 are discussed at weekly Collective meetings attended by all staff working on campus.

### **Parent Education and Communication**

We are communicating with our parents through these means:

- Community meetings
- Surveys
- Grade-level meetings
- Individual phone calls and e-mails from teachers and staff to parents
- Regular written communications including weekly updates in the *Walden Weekly Note*, and periodic school-wide e-mailings

- Training/information meetings given by Walden's administrative coordinator with office parents and cleaning crews
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## **COVID TESTING**

Walden is contracted with Curative Labs Inc. All Walden staff and volunteers who work on campus are testing for SARS-CoV-2 once a month to provide broad surveillance.

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## **TRIGGERS FOR SWITCHING TO DISTANCE LEARNING**

Decisions about if and when to close the school due to COVID-19 will be taken in collaboration with the City of Berkeley Department of Public Health. Expect closure of the school if 5 percent of the staff and students are positive for COVID-19. We will plan on distance learning for those days on which the air quality is red or worse due to competing needs for ventilation for COVID-19 and being in an enclosed space for poor air quality. Inclement weather that precludes keeping doors and windows open will also result in temporary distance learning.