

# Walden Center & School

## Fall 2021 Opening Plan

2446 McKinley Avenue  
Berkeley, CA 94703  
510-841-7248

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## **OVERVIEW-**

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, Russell Wright, and Winona Alexander

Reopening date: August 25, 2021

School type: Independent

### **COVID-19 Liaisons**

Kalyani McCullough

[kalyani.mccullough@gmail.com](mailto:kalyani.mccullough@gmail.com)

Claudine Swickard

[cloudswicks@gmail.com](mailto:cloudswicks@gmail.com)

510-841-7248

Students returning to campus: 75 students (normal capacity 96 students)

Staff returning to campus: 16

Grade levels served by school: K-6

Grade levels to be reopened: K-6

California Department of Public Health (CDPH) K-12 [Guidance](#) August 2, 2021

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As we start another school year during this pandemic 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.

## **HEALTH SCREENINGS FOR STAFF AND STUDENTS**

### **ADULTS**

Walden is using Google forms and spreadsheets for its ADULT screening process. Anyone who is not a Walden student entering campus will be required to screen for symptoms, elevated temperature, and exposure to COVID-19 before coming on to campus, using Walden's online screening form. If any person answers "yes" to any of

the screening questions, they must remain off campus, contact Claudine (COVID-19 liaison), and wait to hear back from her. Vendors and delivery people will phone Walden at 510-841-7248 to be admitted to campus after the screening process is complete.

[Screening link for adults](#)

## STUDENTS

Walden is no longer using Google forms and spreadsheets for its STUDENT screening process. Parents are expected to screen Walden students at home, including taking the student's temperature, before coming to school each day. Parents should use the Symptom and Exposure Checklist below. If symptoms are present, parents should contact Claudine Swickard immediately. Any symptomatic students are expected to stay home and get tested for Covid-19. Students only return to school when they can provide documentation of negative test results, symptoms have improved and they have been fever free for 24 hours. If a test result is positive, parents should contact Claudine Swickard immediately to begin contract tracing.

[Symptom Sheet](#)

If you are keeping your child home for any reason, please contact your child's teacher and report the absence on the School Absence Reporting Form.

[School Absence form](#)

If any student or staff member develops COVID-19 symptoms or a temperature  $\geq 100$  while on campus, they will be isolated in the small office until they can be picked up (or take themselves home, in the case of adults). These individuals will be tested for COVID-19, with both a rapid test and PCR test at Walden. Walden and families will be in communication regarding testing and quarantine plans.

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 Claudine. City of Berkeley and California Department of Public Health protocols for quarantine and isolation will be followed. See pp 15-21 of the CoB/ COVID Liaison Guide.

[Link to Guide](#)

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## **HEALTHY HYGIENE PRACTICES**

- Teachers and staff will teach handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Masks remain on for coughing and sneezing.
- Used tissues will 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
  - before and after using school supplies
  - before and after using any toys
- There are sinks in all the base teachers' classrooms. We have added two touchless sinks outside the North and South bathrooms.

## **IDENTIFICATION AND TRACING OF CONTACTS**

Daily attendance is tracked for students, staff, parents who perform work commitment on campus, and any cleared, essential visitors, including substitute teachers. Contact tracing for exposed individuals will be undertaken by the Walden COVID-19 liaisons. The local health department COVID-19 liaisons are Claudine Swickard and Kalyani McCullough.

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# **CLEANING, DISINFECTION AND VENTILATION**

## **Cleaning:**

On a daily basis high-touch surfaces are cleaned with Purcell Professional Spray or CleanSmart daily surface cleaner (or equivalent) by office staff and teaching staff. 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 emptied. 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, or equivalents.

## **Protections for cleaners:**

Walden provides disposable PPE for our staff and volunteers: masks, gloves, face shields, hand sanitizer, and gowns when needed.

## **Disinfection:**

If areas of our school have been occupied by someone exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 or a confirmed positive case, 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 teaching 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. Classrooms will have fans blowing out of windows or doors for improved air circulation.

Each room has a heavy duty Alen Hepa air purifier. The filters will be changed as needed.

If air quality as measured by [Purple Air](#) is at unsafe levels (150+ or Red on the AQI level), school will be closed and we will move to Distance Learning for the whole school.

**RED = CLOSURE**

If an AQI of 150 is reached as measured by Purple Air sensors nearest to school (and later, on campus), we will close campus (school and EDC) as soon as we are able:

If AQI reaches 150 by 7am- school will be closed for the day.

Families will be notified by email and phone or text.

If AQI reaches 150 by 10am- school is closed at noon.

Families will be notified by email and phone or text.

If AQI reaches 150 by 1pm- pick up at 3pm, EDC closed.

Families will be notified by email and phone or text.

If AQI reaches 150 after 3pm, EDC will be closed ASAP.

Families will be notified by phone or text.

**ORANGE = REDUCED ACTIVITY**

**SUSTAINED ORANGE = EDC CLOSURE**

If AQI reaches 130+, school/EDC are open with a reduced activity plan. Doors and windows will be kept open as described in our [Fall 2021 COVID-19 Opening Plan](#).

Families will be notified by email.

After 3 days of an AQI of 130+, EDC will be closed, school will remain open with a continued reduced activity plan.

Families will be notified by email.

Daily AQI Color	Levels of Concern	Values of Index	Description of Air Quality
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<b>Green</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>0 to 50</b>	<b>Air quality is satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk.</b>
<b>Yellow</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>51 to 100</b>	<b>Air quality is acceptable. However, there may be a risk for some people, particularly those who are unusually sensitive to air pollution.</b>
<b>Orange</b>	<b>Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups</b>	<b>101 to 150</b>	<b>Members of sensitive groups may experience health effects. The general public is less likely to be affected.</b>
<b>Red</b>	<b>Unhealthy</b>	<b>151 to 200</b>	<b>Some members of the general public may experience health effects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects.</b>
<b>Purple</b>	<b>Very Unhealthy</b>	<b>201 to 300</b>	<b>Health alert: The risk of health effects is increased for everyone.</b>
<b>Maroon</b>	<b>Hazardous</b>	<b>301 and higher</b>	<b>Health warning of emergency conditions: everyone is more likely to be affected.</b>

## **GROUPINGS**

- Current guidance does not require stable cohorts. However, for added precaution, each classroom space is dedicated solely to the students in that class plus one other group:
  - Lower Group and Lower Middle Group may share space,
  - Middle Group homerooms may share indoor space
  - Upper Group class shares indoor space.

- Since masking is required outdoors, students may mingle in outdoor spaces at recess and during EDC. Staff will remind students to physically distance during play.
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## **PHYSICAL DISTANCING**

**Office:** Up to 3 vaccinated, masked adults may be inside Walden's office at one time. Students are not allowed to enter the office. The office staff supports students in a sheltered outdoor area adjacent to the office/Art room.

**Classrooms:** Classrooms have been arranged such that students are distanced 3 feet apart to the best of our ability. Non-essential furniture has been removed to allow for more spacing,.

**Outdoors:** We are utilizing outdoor space. We have outdoor classroom areas, covered by canopies.

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## **Arrival and Departure, EDC and Movement on Campus:**

### **Arrival:**

- 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 younger children to the gates on McKinley Ave. Older students may be dropped off curbside. Parents keep at least six (6) feet distance between families in line.
- Non-staff parents are not allowed on campus except in extenuating circumstances or if fulfilling work commitments.



- All children use hand sanitizer before entering a classroom.

**Departure:**

- Children are picked up at their designated gate (see following schedule) at each group’s dismissal time. Parents/caregivers are not permitted to enter campus. Parents and staff wear a mask at all times. Parents limit interactions with other parents and maintain a safe distance (>6 ft).
- Teachers will dismiss students from the gate. Younger siblings will be released to older siblings at the later dismissal time. If a student has not been picked up ten minutes after class dismissal time, they will be released to EDC.

**EDC:**

EDC will operate almost exclusively outside. Students and staff will be masked at all times except while eating and drinking. When masked and indoors, people will maintain at least three feet of social distance with proper ventilation. While unmasked for eating, all will maintain at least 6 feet distance from one another. Students will sanitize or wash hands with soap and water before and after participating in a new activity or playing with a new toy. High touch surfaces will be sanitized regularly.

**Drop-off and Pick-up Schedule:**

**All students enter campus through the McKinley Avenue gate.**

**Students are picked up at the designated gate and time below, unless going to EDC.**

	<b>Drop-off</b>	<b>Pick-up</b>
<b>EDC</b>	7:45am-8:45am McKinley Ave (North Gate ONLY)	After-school till 6pm McKinley Ave (North Gate ONLY)

	<b>Drop-off (8:45am)</b>	<b>Pick-up</b>
<b>LG</b>	McKinley Ave	2:30pm McKinley Ave

<b>LMG</b>	McKinley Ave	3:00pm <b>Dwight Way</b>
<b>MG</b>	McKinley Ave	3:00pm McKinley Ave
<b>UG</b>	McKinley Ave	3:00pm McKinley Ave

**Movement on Campus:**

Students remain with their classes when inside classrooms and during eating times. Students will be allowed to mix with other classes during outside instruction and recess periods.

**Restrooms**

All students follow hygiene guidelines and wash their hands for 20 seconds after using the toilet. Only 2 students at a time are permitted into multi-stall restrooms; entry doors remain open. All other bathrooms are single occupancy by design. All staff use the office bathroom. Signs will be posted to reinforce occupancy of the bathrooms.

**Recess/Lunch**

Recess takes place outdoors for all classes, weather and air quality permitting. Students wash or sanitize hands before and after recess or using any equipment. Students eat snack and lunch with their classes, outside whenever possible. Students bring their own water bottles from home. Seating will enforce 6 ft. distancing during lunch since students do not have masks at this time.

On rainy days, we will move to a staggered lunch schedule with a portion of kids eating outside under canopies and a minimum of students eating lunch in their classrooms with windows and doors open.

**Drama/Movement and Music Class**

Drama and movement classes are held indoors and outdoors with modified activities to limit the amount of close personal interaction. Students wear masks whether in or out of doors. 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. 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. Dance classes are held mostly outdoors whenever the use of the studio dance mirrors aren't helpful. In addition when the children sing they will follow the Guidance as per Alameda County Schools Guide:

- Safely singing outdoors by having all participants participate in social distancing and wearing masks.
- Limitations on time for safely rehearsing both indoors and outdoors – 30 minutes.

Students wash or sanitize hands before and after class. Shared equipment such as theatrical props, sports equipment, such as balls and jump ropes are sanitized between uses.

### **Field Trips and Overnights**

All overnights 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.

### **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. 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. Anyone on campus, or for pick up and drop off will be required to wear masks both indoors and outdoors. For emergency purposes, we stock adult size and child size disposable masks in the office. We also have face shields for our staff to wear if they want more PPE. Students should bring back-up masks in their backpack daily.

Mask Requirements:

- 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.

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).

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

## **Staff Education**

The staff continue to monitor the updates from the county, the city and the state regarding all aspects of school reopening guidance and safety practices and set policy compliant to that guidance. We have 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.

## **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 updates in the Walden News and periodic school-wide e-mailings
  - Training/information meetings given by the COVID Liaison with office parents and cleaning crews
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## **COVID TESTING**

Walden is partnering with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) rapid antigen [school testing program](#) to perform onsite testing of students and staff using Abbot BinaxNow antigen test cards. Walden staff and parent volunteers with medical experience will complete the required CDPH training to perform in-school testing. We plan to perform the following types of testing:

- Pre-entry testing using home test kits. Ideally 2 tests, 36 hours apart prior to returning to school after a break.
- Surveillance testing:  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the school population will be tested weekly, such that each student will generally be tested once monthly.
- Response testing: rapid antigen testing and PCR testing for individuals who develop symptoms during the school day or for close, in-school contacts of a positive case.

Consent forms, test results and additional information will be available to the school community through the online platform Primary.Health.

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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 school closure and moving to Distance Learning if:

3 or more students or staff members test positive for COVID-19:

- within a 2 week period; AND
- they are not members of the same household

School will work with CoB to determine if this is an outbreak and whether partial or full closure of the school is required.

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. (See Ventilation section.) Inclement weather that precludes keeping doors and windows open will also result in temporary distance learning.