Roadmap to Reopening Playbook 2020-21



Last Updated August 5, 2020

Branson School Roadmap to Reopening Playbook

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Part 1: Guiding Principles

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, **Branson is resolved to do everything possible to reopen our campus because we know that doing so is what is best for our students.** We also recognize that it is imperative that we create a plan that allows a safe return with the health and well-being of our entire community – students, parents, faculty, and staff – top of mind.

As we plan to bring students, faculty, and staff back this fall, we know that the coming year will be unpredictable. Given how quickly things continue to change with the virus throughout the country, it has become clear that we will need to be more flexible and more nimble than we ever have been before. While we want to get back to normal operations as much as is possible, we also know that we might be asked to close school with very little warning. This means Branson must be prepared to toggle between different learning models designed to fit a variety of circumstances and drivers. Our plan has been constructed with these realities in mind, and with the knowledge that the 2020-21 school year will be unlike any we've previously experienced.

Guiding Principles

This Roadmap is guided by five principles:

- 1. Prioritize student, faculty, and staff health, safety, and well-being.
- 2. Lean in to our mission, core values, and strategic plan.
- 3. Opt for face-to-face learning over remote learning whenever it is safe to do so.
- 4. Ensure hygiene- and health- related policies are research-based, clearly communicated, effectively implemented, diligently enforced, and comply with State and County mandates
- 5. Promote practices and policies that will reduce risk of virus transmission.

No schools will be operating in a business-as-usual manner for the foreseeable future, but through this Roadmap, we hope to create positive, equitable learning experiences within this challenging new state of being. This Roadmap is a living, breathing document that will evolve and be updated throughout the year. All of the plans within it have been created through extensive research, months of scenario planning, consultation with experts in many related

fields, benchmarking with peer schools, the careful weighing of pros and cons, and surveys and input from our community. Balancing the diverse strengths and needs of our community, and offering supplementary support in areas where needed, our goal is to provide the best possible experience to all of our different constituencies.

We would like to thank our students for their resilience, adaptability, and spirit; our parents for their support, patience, and understanding; and our faculty and staff for their courage, professionalism, and dedication. The 2020-21 school year promises to be an especially challenging one for all of us, but we are confident that we can weather these seas together as one united community.

Mission-Aligned in a Time of Crisis

Values matter, especially during a crisis. They allow individuals and institutions to orient themselves and set priorities quickly. They permit us to navigate confusion, turmoil, and emotion. They compel us to reflect on our relationships with, and obligations to, others. Most importantly, they inform our decisions and actions.

Branson's mission states:

Branson develops students who make a positive impact in the world by leading lives of integrity, purpose, learning, and joy.

Never has our mission been more important than it is today, as we enter this new territory together.

Similarly, our core values of *Honor, Kindness, Courage, and Purpose* are the key to our ability to weather this storm together.

As we see ugliness and mistrust unfold in our country and in the world, we must be resolved to center ourselves, our school, and our decisions around Branson's mission and values. It is safe to say that this year will not be an easy one, and it is incumbent upon each of us to come together, united as one community. We will use our mission and values to orient our decision making and serve as a reminder that we are all connected and all have a responsibility to one another.



Part 2: Teaching and Learning

We do not believe that distance learning is a satisfactory long-term substitute for the regular Branson experience. Rather, distance learning is a necessary medium when health and safety conditions leave no other option. Accordingly, we have developed three different learning models to allow for the anticipated disruptions we will encounter this year. Whether we are face-to-face or hybrid, however, students may choose to stay at home and learn if their family is not comfortable having them at school.

Three Models for Teaching and Learning

1. Face to Face Learning Model

This is most similar to the school experience that our students have experienced in most of their schooling. Though physically distanced, students interact with peers and teachers in a supportive, in-person learning environment and build myriad lasting relationships with one another through their shared work, whether it be in the classroom, on the field, or on the stage. In this model, policies geared toward prevention (hand-washing, cleaning surfaces, physical

distancing, wearing a mask, cohorts, open windows) are implemented. If we are on campus, it means that the risk of exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19 is considered low enough that we can be together for teaching and learning. It is not, however, "just like it used to be."

2. Distance Learning Model

This model will be similar to what we experienced in the final months of the 2019-20 school year: our campus was closed and school remained open through remote 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 the regular school experience. In this model, safety conditions dictate that our campus be completely closed.

3. Hybrid Learning Model

This model combines face-to-face learning with coordinated online experiences. As we explain later in the document, we will move to this model as soon as we can, with some students on campus and some at home. Depending on the level of COVID-19 in the community, we may return with a phased approach in order to lower the density of people on campus. Our hope is to eventually have all students and faculty/staff on campus four days a week, but we anticipate that much of the 2020-21 school year will be spent in the hybrid learning model.

We will begin the year in the distance learning model in late August and will move to a hybrid model when allowed by the county and state. We hope that at some point this year we will return to a purely face-to-face model, but at this time, we are unsure if that will happen.



Safety Implications of Each Model

As we navigate the uncertainties associated with COVID-19, we will need to be agile in how we adjust and respond to external health conditions and risks. Although we worked to "flatten the curve" during the spring, epidemiologists predict infection rates will rebound within the next 12-18 months, which we have seen throughout the summer. Significant medical advancements—a vaccine, access to testing, and antibody detection—are needed before we will be able to safely return to our normal practices. Until these are developed, external conditions and risk will continue to fluctuate.

Currently, the State and Marin County hold the jurisdiction to determine when we can reopen campus. We – like all public, parochial, and independent schools in the State and in Marin – are obligated to follow the regulations that the State and Marin County Public Health put into place. We can not reopen for in-person learning until the State and Marin County Public Health say we can.

However, once these two entities have made the determination that in-person learning is possible, we will then look to internal and external assessments of risk to select the best learning model moving forward. This determination will continue to be guided by the State and Marin County Public Health (for instance, Public Health becomes intimately involved if we start to have cases of COVID-19 on campus, and Marin County Public Health has the jurisdiction to close Branson if we are not carefully following health orders.)

At this point, Branson will tether the selection of a learning model to the assessment of risk.

- If risk is assessed as **HIGH**, and/or if the State and County mandate it, our campus will be closed and we will move to **Distance Learning**.
- If risk is assessed as MEDIUM, we recognize that we need more robust preventative hygiene measures coupled with the possible reduction of student density on campus, which means we would move to **Hybrid Learning**. Such scenarios might include:
 - A phased return of students to campus when we first reopen, allowing us to test protocols and train.
 - The need to reduce student density
 - Some cohorts learning from home while some are on campus
- Finally, if risk is assessed as **LOW**, Marin County and the state allow in-person learning to resume, and we are confident that conditions are appropriate to reopen school entirely, we will welcome all students back to campus for **Face to Face Learning** with realistic safety precautions in place.

LOW Risk

State and County directives: OK TO OPEN WITH SAFETY PROTOCOLS IN PLACE

External indicators support having Branson students and faculty/staff on campus together, with precautions.

MEDIUM Risk

State and County directives: OK TO OPEN, OR OK TO OPEN FOR SMALLER NUMBERS

External indicators indicate that Branson should lessen the density on campus OR we choose to lessen the density OR school is open but some cohorts have had positive tests and are home for quarantine.

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FACE TO FACE LEARNING

* Full density of 320 students and
80 employees
* Students operate in cohorts

* Full or reduced capacity on our buses and vans

* Active use of all campus spaces with appropriate modifications and physical distancing.

* Social distancing of 4-6 feet throughout campus
* Personal hygiene protocols (handwashing, masks, ventilation, etc)
* Cleaning protocols throughout the day by students and

employees.

* Some students at school,

HYBRID LEARNING

some learning from home

* On-campus students in cohorts
* Possible density reduction of
50-75 % of people on campus
* 50% student rider capacity on
bus and vans

* Enhanced personal hygiene protocols (handwashing, masks, etc.)

* Robust cleaning protocols throughout the day

* Interruption or cessation of most in-person extracurricular activities

HIGH Risk

State and County directives: MUST REMAIN CLOSED

External indicators require that Branson close our campus and teach and learn from home.

* Zero density on campus

(Rising infection rates probable, potential Infections within our community)

DISTANCE LEARNING

* All activities online.

We expect that some element of Hybrid Learning will exist throughout the school year, considering the following scenarios:

- Allowing activities outside of cohorts meet remotely (clubs, extracurriculars).
- Some families will elect not to have their children attend school in person and attend via distance learning only.
- One or more cohorts may be under 14-day quarantine awaiting test results.
- Some faculty members will be teaching remotely with staff members monitoring their classes in person.
- Students will be requested to quarantine after travel.
- Students or employees who are recovering from (any) illness may be learning remotely.

Cohorts

The model of small, stable cohorts forms the backbone of our plans for the 2020-21 school year. County Health requires us to use contact tracing if someone tests positive, and the cohort model allows us to do this because, when we have a positive test, we can go back and "trace" who that person came into contact with. The cohort model limits the number of "contacts" that any one student has in one day. The fewer the contacts, the less chance there is for spread throughout the community. Additionally, when someone tests positive in one of the cohorts, we only need to have the students in that cohort move to remote learning and quarantine, instead of having to close down the entire school.

(Note: Depending on the timing of a positive test and the cohort overlap with students, there may be times when multiple cohorts would need to quarantine; these decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis in collaboration with Marin County Public Health.)

Each cohort contains approximately 20-30 students. Cohorts will be assigned for classes and other activities (e.g., lunches), and students must remain in their assigned cohorts while they are on campus – and also, ideally, while off campus. Additionally, cohorts will be assigned specific spaces on campus where they will have classes, meals, use restrooms, etc. Students in a given cohort will take courses together for 3-week blocks, and will be together for all activities on campus throughout the day.

We grouped students into their cohorts by the courses they are taking; students with the same academic classes were placed in cohorts together and then adjustments were made to give as many students their original course selections as possible. Most classes will be 16 students or less. Cohorts will switch every three weeks when we cycle from ABC courses to DEF courses (see Course Schedules, below).

Faculty and staff are not tied to a specific cohort group or physical location. They will move between classrooms and cohorts, using appropriate physical distance and following hygiene and safety protocols.



Daily, Weekly, Yearly Schedules

We have designed a schedule that allows us to pivot through these three levels of risk assessment without changing the schedule. Regardless of how COVID-19 interrupts our lives, our daily/ weekly academic schedule will remain consistent.

The most significant change to the schedule is that students will have only three classes at a time instead of six. This approach allows us to be face to face while keeping cohorts small enough to allow for contact tracing and minimizing risk as much as possible. Students will take three of their classes at a time, in three week rotations, through the course of the year. Each class will meet for 90 minutes instead of 55 or 70 minutes.

With the elimination of the seventh block, we have significantly increased flex time to provide students time to meet with teachers or one another, to take Human Development (HD) classes, to meet with advisors and deans, to work on college admissions, and to experience clubs and affinity spaces.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:45 am - 9:00 am	Advisory (Online)		ONLINE DAY	Assembly	Advisory (Online)
9:00 am - 9:05 am	Break	Break	Seniors: College work time (mtgs & individual) /	Break	Break
9:05 am - 10:35 am	A / D	A / D	Asynchronous work time Juniors: HD classes / Asynch. work time	A / D	A / D
10:35 am - 10:45 am	Break	Break	Fresh. / Soph.: HD Classes and	Break	Break
10:45 am - 12:15 pm	B / E	B/E	curriculum / Asynch. work time (HD Class time 9:05 - 10:05 am / 10:15 - 11:15 am)	B/E	B / E
12:15 pm - 1:00 pm	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1:00 pm - 2:30 pm	C/F	C / F	1 - 1:30 pm Advisory 1:30 - 2:30 pm Flex	C / F	C / F
2:30 pm - 2:35 pm	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
2:35 pm - 3:10 pm	Flex (HD 2:35-3:35 pm)	Flex / Seniors College Meeting / HD 2:35-3:35 pm	Clubs	Clubs / Affinity	Affinity
3:15 pm - 3:45 pm	Flex	Flex	Flex	Flex	Flex
3:45 pm - 4:45 pm	PE/Sports	PE/Sports	PE/Sports	PE/Sports	PE/Sports

This schedule is effective face to face, or fully online, or in a hybrid model, so there will be NO change to the schedule regardless of which model is dictating our approach.

Students will have two rotations in the fall semester, and three in the spring semester. The November-December window will have a slightly modified schedule that allows every class to meet. This is the year-long calendar for the three-week rotations:

	ABC Cohort	DEF Cohort	
1st rotation	Aug. 25 - Sept. 17	Sept. 18 - Oct. 9	
2nd rotation	Oct. 12 - Oct. 30	Nov. 2 - Nov. 20	
3rd rotation (winter) *	Nov. 30 - Dec. 8 (M/T only) + Dec. 14	Dec. 3 - Dec. 11 (Th/F only) + Dec. 15	
4th rotation	Jan. 4 - Jan. 25	Jan. 26 - Feb. 16	
5th rotation	March 1 - March 23	March 24 - April 14	
6th rotation	April 15 - May 5 May 6 - May 26		
7th rotation	May 27 - June 9 Immersive 8 days		
Year-end	June 10 - Day on the Green June 11 - Graduation		

"In this rotation, every class will meet in a modified schedule (ABC Monday and Tuesday, DEF Thursday and Friday) so every class can wrap up the fall semester. The Wednesday schedule will remain the same.

Homework, Assessments, and Grading

Students will be assigned homework to complete outside of class time, as usual.

The faculty has spent the summer working on designing assessments more suited to a hybrid model. Our goal remains to have our students learn to the limits of their ability and imaginations.

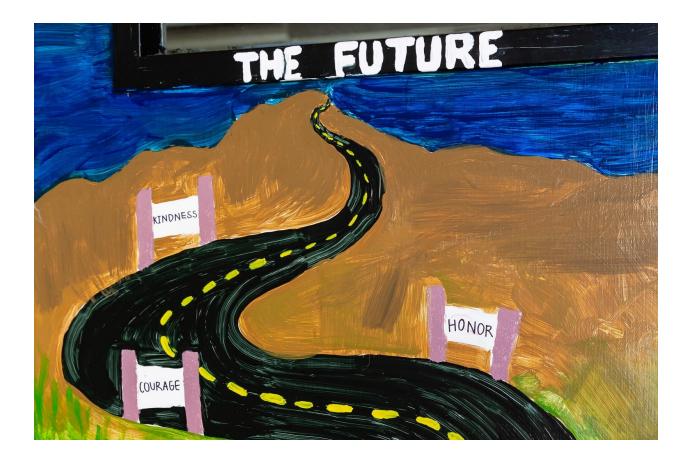
Our grading system will remain unchanged from the approach outlined in the student handbook.

Technology Access and Support

While we are eager to see all of our students on campus, our schedule allows for students to participate in their classes remotely at any time, should they or their family desire, as well as when Distance Learning is in effect. Additionally, some teachers will be teaching remotely for the duration of the school year, while non-teaching staff supervise their physical classroom. To prepare for an improved remote/ hybrid learning experience this fall, we have invested in significant technology upgrades, as well as professional development for faculty in learning how to expand and improve online learning.

We continue to use Zoom to deliver online learning, meetings and webinars, as we did with success this past spring. For the fall, we have invested in new Meeting Owl camera systems for our classrooms, which allow for a greater sense of presence and connection among the students whether they are in the classroom or learning remotely. See what it will look like in this short demo video.

Our technology department will continue to support all of our families to ensure that systems, equipment, and internet access will not be barriers to learning and participation in online activities. If you or your family have specific technology needs or concerns, please reach out to Justin Culley (justin_culley@branson.org) or Cécile Lelievre (cecile_lelievre@branson.org).



Part 3: Health & Safety

The challenge of planning for a return to campus started with a thought experiment: What would an average school day for our students look like in our new normal? We imagined boarding the bus in the morning or hopping into a carpool to come to campus, walking down the hill, dropping off a backpack in its usual spot in front of the Commons or gym, greeting teachers and peers as they headed to class and then sitting down for A Block.

It was there that we had to pause, because question after question came to the fore: What modifications would classrooms need? How would we keep everyone distanced at a Harkness table? Where would students eat lunch? What kind of masks should they wear? Would they need to wear masks in the classroom? What about faculty and staff? The list of questions was endless and we quickly realized that every policy, protocol, and practice would need to be reviewed and changed as needed.

We let our guiding principles, stated at the beginning of this document, direct us as we began to create our safety protocols, and focused on the following three as a starting point:

- **Guiding Principle #1**: Prioritize student, faculty, and staff health, safety, and well-being over other principles.
- **Guiding Principle #4:** Ensure hygiene and health-related policies are research-based, clearly communicated, effectively implemented, and diligently enforced.
- **Guiding Principle #5:** Promote practices and policies to reduce the risk of virus transmission and support our capacity to be responsive and agile when facing changing health circumstances.

Branson's Approach to Health, Safety, and Wellness During COVID-19

Our approach to this critical area has four pillars:

- 1. Physical Distancing and Reducing Density
- 2. Health Screening and Preventative Hygiene
- 3. Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting
- 4. Communications, Training, and Coordination.

Each of these pillars helps to ensure that our policies and protocols provide the necessary conditions on the ground to mitigate risk of exposure to COVID-19. We identified these pillars through ongoing study of the growing literature on COVID-19, such as how to reduce transmission risk of the virus, the role masks and effective hand-washing play in protection, and how to reduce and kill surface germs in a school setting. We also know that the best operational plan must be clear, flexible, and sustainable, and therefore our efforts only become operational when we can communicate, train, and coordinate these efforts effectively. Lastly, incorporating our pillars into the typical day of a student remains paramount, as the "new normal" needs to preserve elements of what's special about coming to school everyday.

COVID Coordinator

In order to operationalize our plans with appropriate medical expertise on-site, Branson has hired a COVID-19 Coordinator through Joffee Emergency Services. This individual, a trained medical professional, will provide Branson with in-house, on-site medical expertise during the 2020-21 school year and will coordinate Branson's protocols, training, daily monitoring, medical communications, and other needs specific to the pandemic. She will work closely with Branson's safety director, the COVID-19 Task Force, and Branson's administrative team, as well as being a liaison to Marin County Public Health, and other state and local resources. Further

responsibilities are outlined throughout this playbook. She may be reached at <u>covid@branson.org</u>

As referenced earlier, the plan has four key pillars, which are discussed below.

1. Physical Distancing and Reducing Density

Infectious disease experts have promoted social distancing as an essential strategy in the containment of COVID-19. As the pandemic has evolved, it has become clear that this is one of the most important ways to avoid transmission. By nature, schools are high-density, offering conditions where illness can spread quickly even in the best of times. For example, schools routinely experience outbreaks of the seasonal flu, conjunctivitis, and head lice. The world has learned that the virus that causes COVID-19 is menacing and highly contagious. It poses a risk not only to students, but also to the adults in their lives, including parents, grandparents, teachers, advisors, and coaches.

If physical distancing is one of the solutions recommended by County Public Health, the answer lies in creating more spaces with fewer students occupying those spaces. We recognized that to effectively reduce risk of infection, we must implement effective physical distancing policies. (Note: We prefer the term *"physical distancing"* to *"social distancing"* – we actually don't want our students to be socially distanced. We simply want them to be far enough away from one another to avoid spread of the virus).

Our small size and large campus are incredible assets during COVID-19. After thorough analysis of all of our spaces on campus, it was clear that, with the repurposing of several areas and the use of our vast outdoor space, it could be possible to have all of our students and employees on campus together, while following the evolving physical distancing (currently 4 - 6 ft. apart indoors) and cohort guidelines from Marin County Public Health. By making spaces like Crossways Living Room, the Old Dining Hall, the Dance Studio, and the Library – among others – into classrooms and also making single use classrooms (like those in New House) into multi-use classrooms, we've found that we can adequately create the spaces we needed to provide for the physical distancing required to operate our classes, once we are allowed to do so by the state.

Being outdoors has been determined to be much safer due to easier physical distancing and better air circulation. Due to the climate of southern Marin, we are also able to leverage our large campus to provide numerous outdoor meeting spaces augmented by tents and outdoor chairs. These will be used for class meetings as well as breaks and lunch.

While neither is a 100% guarantee of students' or employees' safety on campus, the ability to physically distance and reduce density does put Branson at a distinct advantage in our planning.

PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)

In order to safely open, it is imperative that all faculty, staff and students have access to and utilize proper PPE. To that end, Branson has sourced the following:

- Several thousand disposable masks to supplement peoples' personal masks, should they forget them or should their masks get dirty.
- Face shields for the teaching faculty who wish to use them in order to facilitate clearer communication with students while maintaining safety.
- Several thousand disposable gloves of all sizes, (small, medium, large), to protect members of our community when they clean and disinfect, and also to provide protection when caring for anyone on campus who is in quarantine.
- 100 plexiglass shields for any person who feels the need to use one during the course of the day as an additional protective barrier. These will also be deployed to all static service offices on campus such as Admissions, the Attendance Manager, Registrar, etc.

Campus Modifications

The following campus modifications have been completed, or are in process, to facilitate a safer and cleaner environment:

- Addition of 6 touchless drinking fountains with water-bottle-filling spouts.
- Removal of Harkness tables from New Oaks and Study Hall buildings in favor of tables and desks that allow for better physical distancing with students facing the same direction (recommended by CDC).
- Installation of touchless faucets, soap dispensers, and paper towel dispensers in all existing bathrooms on campus.
- Installation of 10 15 portable toilet facilities on campus in order to address the requirement that fewer individuals be allowed in any facility at one time.
- Deployment of 20 portable hand washing stations and approximately 50 portable, battery-operated hand sanitizer dispensers around campus
- Designation of 25 outdoor areas on campus for cohorts, each outfitted with two or three 10 ft. x 10 ft. tent canopies and camping chairs.

2. Health Screening and Preventative Hygiene

Daily Health Screening

Daily health screening will be required for all members of the Branson community to help ensure nobody with symptoms or who is feeling unwell is allowed on campus. While this process cannot identify asymptomatic carriers of COVID-19, it provides a very useful moment for screeners to interact visibly and verbally with each person arriving on campus.

The health screening will consist of a temperature check using a touchless infrared thermometer and several questions asking each person how they feel, if they have any symptoms, and whether they have come into contact with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19. Health screening will be required for:

- Faculty and staff
- Students
- Van and bus drivers
- Visitors to campus

If positive for any symptoms, the person will go to an isolation room (with the COVID-19 Coordinator) until they can get picked up from school. Next steps are described in the "Illness, Quarantine, and Testing" section, below.



Preventative Hygiene

The CDC recommends regular hand washing throughout the day in order to prevent transmission of virus through touch. In order to facilitate this, the daily schedule will have regular hand washing breaks built in. As mentioned earlier, we are deploying 20 portable hand washing stations around campus that will be serviced several times daily. Each hand washing station will have soap and paper towels.

In addition to the hand washing stations, we will also deploy approximately 50 portable, battery-operated hand sanitizer dispensers around campus in classrooms, offices, etc. While hand washing with soap and water is preferred, sanitizing with an alcohol-based sanitizer is still very effective.



3. Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting

These terms should be defined in order to understand how we will be addressing them on campus. The following are paraphrased from the <u>CDC website</u>:

- **Cleaning** refers to the physical removal of dirt and germs on surfaces using soap and water. While this process doesn't necessarily kill the germs, it reduces their number and is very effective in helping to prevent the spread, as with hand washing.
- **Disinfecting** refers to a process where germs are actually deactivated or killed through the use of chemicals. This is another way to reduce the number of germs on surfaces.
- **Sanitizing** simply refers to the reduction in the number of germs on surfaces through either of the above two processes or a combination of both.

During the day, between classes, teaching faculty and students will work together to clean and disinfect surfaces prior to use by another class group. To facilitate this, each classroom and program area will have cleaning buckets containing the following:

- Detergent in water and spray bottle for application
- Disinfectant solution and spray bottle for application
- Gloves
- Paper towels

Each day, we will also have a dedicated cleaning crew team going back and forth around campus to clean and disinfect the restrooms and portable toilet facilities and to refill, drain, clean, and disinfect the portable hand washing stations.

Each evening, after school has ended, our regular team from Peak Cleaning will go through campus and perform the following duties:

- Disinfect high-touch surfaces such as light switches, doorknobs, desks, chairs, etc.
- Empty trash

On Wednesdays, or whichever weekday is identified for deep cleaning when students are not on campus, our Peak Cleaning team will do the following:

- Disinfect high-touch surfaces, as mentioned above
- Refill cleaning/disinfecting buckets in classrooms and other facilities
- Vacuum classrooms and high-traffic areas
- Clean and disinfect all restrooms and portable toilets.

4. Communications, Training, and Coordination

Branson's plan will only be successful if it has clear expectations set out for its community, a structure that is sustainable, and the flexibility to adapt to changing realities. The first step is targeting communication to the community on how to protect ourselves and others by informing them about what guidelines must be followed.

In addition to existing communications channels, we will implement environmental messaging (signage, wayfinding, arrows, etc), particularly in regard to key areas such as the main access points to campus, buses, bathrooms, and common areas on campus. Our parent and faculty/staff portals on Blackbaud have a designated COVID-19 page that aggregates all related messages and includes resource links, documents, and forms. This information is also now available at branson.org.

Once communication mechanisms are in place, more detailed instruction and training will be implemented throughout the community, prior to and at the start of our campus reopening. We will train our cleaning staff on new measures of reducing and eliminating germs, our van drivers on protective measures specific to their roles, our teachers and staff on sanitizing classroom space and shared objects, our students on maintaining distance and upholding personal health hygiene, our parents on screening, and more. Everyone will have a role to play, and training will be an integral part of our reopening.

We need all members of our community to accept new responsibilities within this changed culture we will experience over the next year. Acting with self-awareness, sensitivity to others, and agency will be key. When students express frustration with rules that limit their social interactions, adults should express your understanding, but discourage their cynicism and remind them why the measures are in place. When your student comes down with a cough or fever and complains of not feeling well, please keep them home until they are asymptomatic. If your workplace has a particularly innovative way to address occupational safety, please pass it along. A collective and unified community effort has never been so important.

Training will be provided to all faculty, staff and students prior to the beginning of the return to site-based instruction. Training will be conducted by the campus safety director and the COVID-19 coordinator. This training will include the following:

- Cleaning and disinfecting protocols, including keeping desks and classrooms uncluttered to facilitate daily disinfection
- Personal hygiene protocols referencing hand washing and hand sanitizing
- Requirements for PPE when on campus and situations when it's permissible to remove masks

- Water bottle requirements
- Daily campus arrival and screening procedures
- Restroom procedures
- Requirements for physical distancing when in the classroom in offices, and on campus in general with emphasis on maintaining at least 6 feet of distance between adults and other adults and students.
- Lunch procedures outdoors in cohort areas
- Encouragement to utilize outdoor spaces for meetings whenever practicable
- Moratorium on unscheduled visitors.
- How to schedule necessary visitors and the procedures they must follow when on campus

Depending on the topic, some training may be conducted asynchronously and some training may be conducted in-person.

The coordination of all efforts to provide a safe campus will be the responsibility of the campus safety director working in concert with the COVID-19 Task Force and the COVID-19 clinical coordinator. These individuals will meet weekly to evaluate the efficacy of current procedures, policies and equipment and will make adjustments where needed. Additionally, this team will coordinate with Public Health regarding the following:

- Contact tracing, should there be a positive COVID-19 case identified
- Evaluating whether it is safe to keep school open based on county trends and the governor's orders

Specific Areas of Enhanced Protection

Transportation

We will use a combination of our usual modes of transportation to get our students to and from school. We are in the process of creating our COVID-19 Transportation Plan, which will include carpools, buses, vans, drop-offs, and bicycles. We will need to use more vehicles with fewer students on them this year (e.g. one student per bus seat) to account for the physical distancing we must maintain. We are also exploring greener transportation alternatives to help offset the possible increase in motor vehicle traffic. We will update you with information when we finish the plan.

Branson will not be organizing any carpools this year and the coordination of any carpools is up to individual families.

Visitors to Campus

The Branson campus will maintain a policy of being closed to visitors unless deemed necessary. Such necessary visitors will include the following:

- Vendors for essential equipment
- Contractors to perform essential construction and repair duties on campus
- Delivery personnel

The following visitors will generally be prohibited from being on campus:

- Alumni
- Parents
- College admissions officers
- Neighbors
- Admissions visitors
- Guest speakers

These lists may be modified as needed by the campus administration and the COVID-19 Task Force.

Classrooms, Tents, and Ventilation

For safety purposes, classrooms on campus will be configured to ensure a maximum number of students while facilitating alignment with 4 - 6 ft. physical distancing requirements as mandated by Marin County Public Health. Harkness tables will be removed. Additionally, desks and tables will be oriented so that all students face in the same direction. All classrooms will be provided with a cleaning/disinfecting bucket and a hand sanitizing station. Classrooms will have signage that provide guidance on the following:

- Cleaning/disinfecting
- Keeping classrooms free of clutter
- Reminders for hand washing and sanitizing
- Reminders for physical distancing and wearing PPE
- Reminders to keep windows and doors open

Approximately 25 outdoor areas have been identified on campus for outdoor program spaces and lunch. Each areas will have the following:

- Two or three 10 ft. x 10 ft. pop-up tent canopies
- Outdoor camping seats for around 20

These spaces will be maintained daily by the cohort groups that use them. Each cohort group will wipe down the chairs and store them inside storage bins that will themselves be stored

inside the nearest classroom or indoor facility for security. The 10x10 pop-up tents will remain up as long as is practicable and will be checked several times each week by the campus facilities crew to ensure stability and operability. When deemed necessary – for instance, if high winds or heavy rains are predicted – these tents will be taken down and stored inside. Where possible, each cohort group will work with the facilities crew to help maintain, take down, and set up these tents.

Ventilation inside the classrooms will consist of keeping the windows and doors open during classes to facilitate air exchange. Additionally, each classroom will be equipped with a large ventilation fan that will be placed facing out through a window or door to exchange a larger volume of air.



Meals on Campus

Food service presents some unique challenges given the need to remove face coverings to eat. For that reason, lunch will be eaten in outdoor spaces assigned by cohort. These spaces will be equipped with pop-up tents and outdoor camping chairs and will either be located near a restroom or will be assigned a hand washing station and a portable toilet facility. In case of rain, cohorts will eat together in their assigned classrooms. During lunch, cohort members will be permitted to remove face coverings and eat while observing physical distancing.

We have been working with Epicurean and they have developed an enticing array of lunch menus that reflect the high quality we have come to expect from their service. Delivery of lunches will happen prior to the start of the lunch period each day. Members of the staff and facilities crew will use the campus golf carts to pick up insulated bags containing the pre-packaged box lunches and beverages for the various cohort areas. These bags will be dropped off at the cohort locations. Following lunch, the cohort groups will work together to clean up and re-package the boxes inside the insulated bags and will return them to the Commons. The insulated bags we have purchased are reusable and will be cleaned daily to limit waste.

Snack boxes will be provided in classrooms and replenished weekly. Protocols to distribute them safely are still being determined.

If students bring their own food/snacks to campus, it is important that they not share this food with others. Additionally, food will only be permitted during lunch and assigned break periods in cohort groups.

Please note that the Snack Shack will be closed for the 2020-21 school year.

Movement on Campus

Students' movement on campus will be much more restricted than it was in the past. Students will move from place to place with their cohorts during the school day, and physical distancing and wearing masks will be required. Students will not be allowed to congregate informally, inside or outside. Likewise, the only opportunities for socializing outside of their cohort while on campus will be online activities. We recognize that this will be a difficult adjustment for many students, but it is necessary to ensure that we limit exposure and can remain on campus together, as soon as and for as long as possible.



Illness, Quarantine, and Testing

Illness and Quarantine on Campus

In the event a student or employee develops symptoms while on campus or demonstrates symptoms while being screened into campus, that individual will be placed into a quarantine facility (formerly the Snack Shack) while parents/guardians are called to pick up the student (or, if an employee or visitor, will be sent home). This facility will be supervised by the COVID-19 clinical coordinator or a member of the COVID-19 emergency team. Anyone supervising students in quarantine will wear extra PPE including a face shield and gloves.

COVID-19 Scenarios and Protocols

We follow the protocols set forth by Marin County and California Public Health for classroom settings. Please note that these protocols do continue to evolve, and we will update this as needed.

	IF A STUDENT OR EMPLOYEE	THEN THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN	COMMUNI- CATION
1	Exhibits COVID-19 symptoms, answers yes to a health screening question, or has a temperature of 100.4 or above.	 Individual is sent home. Return to campus will require a negative COVID-19 test result. Recommend testing (If positive, see #3. If negative, see #4). Cohort remains open. School remains open. 	None.
2	Comes in close contact* with a confirmed COVID-19 case	 Information must be reported to COVID-19 coordinator. Individual is sent home. Quarantine for 14 days from last exposure. Recommend testing (but this will not shorten 14-day quarantine). If positive, see #3. If negative, remain quarantined 14 days from last exposure. Cohort remains open. School remains open. 	School community may be notified of a known contact.
3	Tests positive for COVID-19	 Information must be reported to COVID-19 Coordinator. Notify local public health (Marin County & student's county of residence) Individual is isolated and sent home to quarantine for 10 days from symptom onset or test date Identify contacts, quarantine, and exclude exposed contacts (likely including entire cohort) for 14 days after last date present at school while infectious. Recommend testing cohort and contacts (though will not shorter 14-day quarantine) Disinfect and clean spaces where case spent significant time. Cohort** closed for 14 days from last exposure. School remains open. 	School community will be notified of a known case.
4	Tests negative for COVID-19 after any of the reasons in scenarios 1,2, or 3.	 May return to cohort 3 days after symptoms resolve. Must continue to quarantine if in contact with a family member with COVID-19. Cohort open. School remains open. 	Possible school community notification if there was prior awareness of testing or announcement of a case.

* For COVID-19, the CDC defines "close contact" as "any individual who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to positive specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated."

** Depending on the timing of a positive test and the cohort overlap with students, there may be times when multiple cohorts would need to quarantine; these decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis in collaboration with Marin County Public Health."

Ongoing COVID-19 Testing

Many have asked whether Branson will offer testing. We are still working on developing the partnerships with vendors who can perform on-campus tests and determining if, when, and how to provide testing to our Branson community. The guidelines and recommendations are changing constantly in this area, including the California rules for insurers.

We will continue to keep the Branson community posted on options and requirements moving forward.





Part 4: Co-Curricular and Extracurricular Programs

All of our co-curricular and extra-curricular activities are a key part of the Branson experience. These opportunities provide our students with a chance to explore and develop their passions and interests beyond the classroom. They help students develop leadership, sportsmanship, perseverance, teamwork, and many other important life skills.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 has forced Branson to make these programs virtual as we begin the school year. We are doing our best to re-think how we might restart these programs knowing that they must be aligned with the risk levels and learning models outlined in Part 2 of this document for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Aligning Extracurriculars to Learning Models and Risk Assessments

As explained in Part 2 of this Roadmap, we will anchor our learning model to one of three risk levels - HIGH, MEDIUM, or LOW. These risk levels have a major bearing on our ability to practice, rehearse, or meet, although we intend to explore alternative modes relevant to each activity or sport so that we have other options to practice and meet. Some of the considerations for our co-curricular programs at each risk level or learning model are discussed in the tables below. We anticipate being in High and Medium Risk for a good part of the 2020-21 school year.

	LOW Risk	MEDIUM Risk	HIGH Risk
	FACE TO FACE LEARNING	HYBRID LEARNING	DISTANCE LEARNING
G E N E R A L	 * Outdoor activities will be conducted in groups of any size. * No daily participation limits. * International travel will be postponed. 	 * Facilities on campus utilized with realistic physical distancing and proper ventilation. * Offer activities that can be done with physical distancing and no shared equipment. * Daily participation limits may be introduced to ensure realistic physical distancing. * Small groups and outdoor spaces used when possible. 	*Distance activities only. * No in-person activities, arts or athletics will be offered. * Digital webinars and other opportunities designed to improve, service learning, sportsmanship, and leadership will be offered.

	LOW Risk	MEDIUM Risk	HIGH Risk
	FACE TO FACE LEARNING	HYBRID LEARNING	DISTANCE LEARNING
ATHLETICS	 * Sports will be offered as indicated by NCS. * Traditional sports teams will be formed with tryouts and regular practice schedules. * Outdoor sports and activities will be conducted in groups of any size. For larger groups, initial training may be done in smaller groups. * Locker room and weight room status TBD * Interscholastic competitions/ events will resume as scheduled but will undergo risk assessments. * Branson will host and travel to local schools for competition and tournaments. * No spectators will be allowed at the outset. 	 * Offer a PE and/or intramural sports program if interscholastic sports are paused or cancelled. * Weight room is closed to all. * Locker room usage staggered to help ensure physical distancing. * Physical contact is restricted within the rules of the sport during time of active play. * Efforts should be made to avoid prolonged contact. * Team huddles and celebrations including personal contact avoided. * Some sharing of equipment will be permitted. * Interscholastic competitions and other local events will be extremely limited, if at all, and must undergo individual risk assessments. * Spectators will not be allowed. 	 * Individual strength and sport/activity-specific training are encouraged if no equipment is required. * No in-person interscholastic competitions * Athletic facilities on campus remain closed.
A R T S	 * Performing arts activities will occur with regular auditions and regular rehearsals. * Arts performances will be performed online or via livestream. * No live audiences will be allowed. 	* Arts performances such as concerts, plays, and musicals will be performed without audiences or online. * Branson to provide increased live-stream service for the community.	 * Arts facilities on campus remain closed. * No live performances or rehearsals. These activities will shift online wherever possible.

Athletics

Branson recognizes that, while we always prioritize the health, safety, and well-being of students, teachers, and staff, this duty is now heightened. Accordingly, our Athletic Department has developed new health-related policies and procedures that are research-based, following models of best practice from other schools around the world that are also aligned with public health and North Coast Section (NCS) requirements.

Whether our students are learning from home or on campus, Branson will continue to promote physical activity and healthy choices as essential elements in their growth and well-being. Our athletic requirement of one semester or season of physical activity will still hold true this year. To help our students fulfill this requirement and, more importantly, maintain a healthy lifestyle, we will offer a "Fundamentals of Exercise and Wellness" course designed by our Strength and Conditioning Coach Bruce Pruiett. The course will have online and in-person components, so students will be able participate whether they are on campus or at home. When we transition from distance learning, students will have the opportunity to choose from a variety of on-campus activities, or continue with their online regimens.

If our situation improves and Marin County is able to work its way off California's watch list, we will operate our athletic program in accordance with guidelines released on Monday, July 20, 2020 by the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) and the North Coast Section (NCS). The <u>CIF press release</u> explains that the usual three seasons of sport will be modified and condensed into two seasons for the 2020-21 school year. While the CIF established a schedule for state playoffs for the two seasons, it was up to each section office to set start dates for each regular season and their plans for section playoffs. <u>The NCS press release</u> lays out the sports seasons as follows:

"FALL" SEASON	SPRING SEASON
Dec. 14, 2020 - March/ April 2021 (State playoffs)	March 2021 - June 2021 (State Playoffs)
Includes Cross Country, Football, Volleyball	Includes Soccer, Swimming & Diving, Tennis (Boys & Girls), Basketball, Golf (Boys & Girls), Baseball, Track & Field, and Lacrosse

There is no guarantee that the schedules set by the CIF and NCS will unfold as planned. In the coming weeks and months, we will coordinate with our colleagues in MCAL schools to revise league schedules and search for solutions to the many issues created by the change in athletic seasons, and by the pandemic.

Arts

While regular classes in the arts will continue with modifications, other arts programs will be postponed until we have more information and guidance from the county, or else they will be re-envisioned and performed in an online format. Currently, all singing and playing of wind instruments in person is not recommended. If and when that changes, we will make adjustments to our plans.

Student Life

Through targeted professional development that focuses specifically on topics of social emotional development, adolescent mental health, and community cohesion, the Student Life team is working hard to preserve and enhance the co-curricular experience for all students in this coming school year.

Since last spring, the Student Life team has been auditing and examining diverse ways to build a more cohesive community in this new context. Branson students maintain notoriously busy schedules and their capacity to involve themselves in multiple clubs or affinity spaces has long been challenged by small windows of time allotted for these activities in our daily schedule. In designing our new schedule, we saw an opportunity to address this long-standing issue and dramatically increased the time in our schedule available for Clubs, Affinity Space, and Advisory. Additionally, we've added more "Flex blocks" to our new schedule, which offers students the chance to connect, either with each other or with teachers.

Ultimately, though, any successful planning of the student experience must involve the most essential ingredient of any school: the students. This summer, a COVID-19 Student Task Force, was created to examine different aspects of school life and to make recommendations to the administration about the best ways to enhance the student experience for the 2020 - 21 academic year. The Student Task Force meets weekly and includes over 30 students, representing all grade levels and a broad range of backgrounds. The students have formed comparable committees to those in the adult space and will be consulted on a broad range of issues.

Examples of topics the Student Task Force is currently working on are:

- Food Service
- Orientations
- School Spirit
- Athletics and PE
- Advisory

- Transportation
- Cleaning/Behavior Protocol and Student Buy-In
- Classroom Experience

Community Engagement (CE)

Centering our "Character and Leadership" and "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)" pillars of the strategic plan, the Director of Community Engagement will continue working with the student CE leaders and a subset of the COVID-19 Student Task Force to design and reimagine community engagement at the school. Longstanding programs, such as KEEN, the Best Buddies program, KIP, Cyberseniors and Story Stars will continue in an online format. Please reach out directly to Janeal Fordham, our Director of Community Engagement, for additional questions.

Counseling Services and Student Support

Monitoring the student experience, paying particularly close attention to the psychosocial well-being of every student, is our top priority. This is particularly important this year, as the experience of being a Branson student will feel very different than in the past.

The Student Life team – led by the Dean of Student Life and including each Class Dean, the School Counselor, and the Attendance Officer – meets weekly to discuss a broad range of student issues. Additionally, a broader Student Support Team meeting also takes place every two weeks. This group includes the Dean of Student Life; Director of Studies; Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Director of College Counseling; Director of Community Engagement; Director of School Counseling; Director of the Rand Learning Center, and the Class Deans.

Class Deans will continue to meet regularly with their grade level advisors. All Branson employees are trained to raise concerns about students through the Student of Concern Form or by reaching out directly to the Dean of Student Life or School Counselor. As she did during last spring's distance learning, our Director of School Counseling, Kim Fahlen, will continue to offer telecounseling sessions to students as needed. Soliciting feedback from students directly about how they are feeling, either individually or collectively, remains an essential part of supporting students and meeting their needs. We will collect student input through a variety of means, such as:

- Grade level class meetings
- Dean "office hours"
- Advisor/Advisee 1-1 check-in meetings
- 1-1 meetings with deans

- Student Life Advisory Board
- Student Senate
- COVID-19 Student Task Force
- Affinity and club spaces
- Student Experience survey

The Rand Learning Center

We understand that distance and hybrid learning can create unique challenges for some of our students. Students with diagnosed learning differences will continue to receive robust support from the Rand Learning Center. At the start of each academic year, Rand Center personnel will host learning support meetings with families and students. Additionally, 1-1 support is provided throughout the year, as are open office hours and class and teacher consultation. For questions about our learning support services, please reach out directly to Annie Morris, our Rand Center Coordinator.

Affinity Groups

Affinity spaces are designed to help people who have similarities to identify and build community in the diverse world we live in. Racial affinity spaces are designed to help those who identify with others from the social-construct of race. The purpose is not only to identify and build community, but also create a space of love and safety so that they can navigate their environment. It is through this work that an individual can identify their uniqueness while still belonging to a collective community. The benefits include a deeper understanding of one's self in a group dynamics that can lead to higher self-esteem. In addition, a more profound engagement among the entire community results in more innovation.

During COVID-19, affinity groups will meet online. Instructions will be shared with students when school begins. For questions about our affinity spaces, please <u>reach out directly to Dr.</u> <u>JuanCarlos Arauz</u>, our Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Part 5: Joining Together to Keep Our Community Safe

Keeping our students, faculty, staff, parents, and families safe will require all of us to work together, help each other, and do our part. Marin County will only reduce our case numbers – and Branson's campus will only be allowed to reopen and stay open – if every person in our community commits to:

- 1. Wearing a mask in public at all times
- 2. Keeping a 6-foot distance between people outside your family, school cohort, and "bubble"
- 3. Washing hands regularly
- 4. Avoiding large group gatherings.

More than ever before, the decisions that Branson families make outside of school will have a direct impact on our whole community. We can not mandate what happens outside of school, but we urge students and parents, faculty and staff to consider this "ripple effect" when making plans outside of school hours.

Cohorts and Social Bubbles

We strongly request that families maintain the integrity of the Branson cohorts. We realize that this will be difficult given students' desire to socialize and engage in activities with friends who may be outside of their Branson cohort. The more we all endeavor to limit our in-person contacts with those outside of our Branson cohorts, the more likely we will be able to limit positive cases and keep all students learning on our campus.

Travel

Branson would prefer that students and their families not travel during vacations, and limit travel only to essential trips. If you do travel outside of the Bay Area, students will likely be asked to quarantine at home for a period of 10 - 14 days after your return, depending on the guidance at the time.

We ask all parents who travel with their children to:

- 1) Contact the Dean of Students and Branson's COVID-19 Coordinator
- 2) Fill out and submit our Travel Form in advance of your trip.

Given that the guidance is changing weekly about the need for quarantine and which counties, states, and countries may be on the watch list, we will need to evaluate every case individually.

Conclusion

The 2020-21 school year will be a true test for Branson, but we are confident that our community will rise to the challenge, just as we all did last spring. It is vital that we all work together as a community to limit the spread, and opportunities for spread, of this virus.

Branson's Honor Code states:

In choosing The Branson School as a place to learn and a place to work, each member of the community – student, faculty, staff and parent – agrees to sustain an environment of honesty and integrity. We will, individually and collectively, do our part to create and maintain trust, respect and care throughout school life by accepting responsibility for our own actions and those of others. We make this commitment to ensure that each of us may grow both in knowledge and in wisdom and that we may leave this school having enriched it by our presence.

In the spirit of our Honor Code, we ask that all of our students, parents, faculty, and staff commit to following Public Health guidelines and the practices outlined in this playbook. With everyone's commitment to preserving and protecting our "Beloved Community," we look forward to this extraordinary year of living Branson's core values – Courage, Kindness, Honor, Purpose – together



Part 6: Sources and Resources

This is not a comprehensive list, but rather a compilation of the best articles and research that we have consulted in building this plan. We will continue to update this list regularly.

Resources: Health and Safety

American Academy of Pediatrics. (2020). <u>COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for</u> <u>School Re-entry</u>.

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NAIS. "Reopening 101: Tactical Considerations for Independent Schools."

National Education Association. <u>Cleaning, sanitizing, and targeted disinfecting on the school</u> <u>bus.</u>

New England Journal of Medicine. (2020). <u>Aerosol and surface stability of SARS-CoV-2 as</u> compared with SARS-CoV-1.

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Unesco. Reopening Schools: How to get education back on track after COVID-19.

United Nations. (2020). Policy Brief: The impact of COVID-19 on children [Ebook].

UNICEF, WHO, & IFRC. (2020). <u>Interim guidance for COVID-19 prevention and control in</u> <u>schools</u>. Unicef.org.

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. (2020). <u>Cleaning and disinfecting your facility:</u> <u>Everyday steps, steps when someone is sick, and considerations for employers</u>. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. (2020). <u>Schools and child care programs: Plan</u>, <u>prepare, and respond</u>. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

World Bank. Education and COVID-19. World Bank. (2020).

World Health Organization. (2020). Coronavirus (COVID-19) advice for the public.

Resources: Activities and Athletics

<u>Core principles of resocialization of collegiate sport: Frequently asked questions.</u> NCAA.org - The official site of the NCAA. (2020).

NATA Intercollegiate Council for Sports Medicine. (2020).

NSCA COVID-19 taskforce return to training resources. nsca.com. (2020).

Solomon, J. (2020). How will youth sports return to play? USOPC offers first glimpse [Blog].

Toresdahl, B. G., & Asif, I. M. (2020). <u>Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19): Considerations for</u> the Competitive Athlete. Sports Health, 12(3), 221–224.

US Youth Soccer. (2020). <u>US Youth Soccer return to activity notice</u>. US Youth Soccer national Office.