ESCOLA AMERICANA DO RIO DE JANEIRO

EARJ LOWER SCHOOL RETURN TO CAMPUS PLAN

Home of the Panthers

Updated October 2020

FINDING OUR PATH

The Covid-19 pandemic has challenged society in every imaginable way. As we look to the future, we do so with its impact still being felt locally, regionally and globally. Yet we remain committed to finding ways to keep our school moving forward.

It is a situation that demands the best of us, at the worst of times.

At EARJ, we have the resources, expertise and inventiveness to forge a path ahead that both manages the risks we face, and maintains our mission and purpose. Last year we showed how our school is able to execute a rapid shift in how we provide our educational program. It is essential that we continue to apply those same dispositions - creativity, problem-solving, resilience, open mindedness, courage - to set a course that safeguards our children and their learning, as well as the health of those who work with them.

This updated plan outlines what we will do to maintain learning for our students in ways that are as safe as possible for everyone. We hope that it inspires confidence in our determination to ensure that learning will continue, and that every EARJ student will find our path together as a community.

Nigel J Winnard, EdD
Headmaster

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Our Return to Campus Plan is built upon five fundamental principles:

1. We prioritize health, safety, and well being

2. We continue student learning

3. We never lose sight of our mission, vision and purpose

4. We support the people of our community

5. We communicate frequently, clearly and transparently

OUR COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITIES

Although it remains a possibility that students, teachers, or staff members may be exposed to COVID-19 in the course of their work or studies, everyone is entitled to expect that all reasonable precautions are taken to prevent this from happening.

All members of our community should know, value and care for others. This means our interactions with others - friends and strangers, students and adults - should be self-aware, respectful, and courteous.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it means complying willingly with behaviors designed to keep our community safe and healthy. It means thinking of others, appreciating that their risk tolerance might be lower than ours, and adjusting our behavior with sensitivity and respect. And it means respecting policies and expectations, even when inconvenient to ourselves.

This is why all families in the EARJ community are asked to sign and support the **EARJ Community Commitment**. It is an important way in which our families show their mutual respect for each other, as well as our mutual responsibilities to keep each other safe through our own behaviors.

RISK ASSESSMENT & DECISION MAKING

Our Return to Campus Plan recognizes that we must be vigilant in assessing risk using all means at our disposal. We must match that assessment with appropriate measures to keep everyone safe and healthy whilst maintaining student learning.

The School Administration assesses the level of risk and makes a recommendation to the Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors makes the final decision on the school's risk status.

ASSESSING THE LEVEL OF RISK

LEVEL I
Full Campus Return

- Government guidance allows reopening
- CDC, WHO, trusted authorities indicate low risk
- Degree of medical certainty, including easy access to reliable testing
- Local infection rates declining and traceable
- EARJ confident in ability to mitigate risk when school is fully open
- Most schools opening campuses fully

LEVEL II
Hybrid School [relaxed]

- Government guidance allows reopening
- CDC, WHO, trusted authorities indicate moderate risk
- Degree of medical uncertainty exists
- Local infection rates confined / traceable
- EARJ confident in ability to mitigate risk with enhanced measures
- School benchmarking indicates schools are opening with precautions

LEVEL III
Hybrid School [strict]

LEVEL IV
Distance Learning

- State of Emergency or government request for schools to close
- CDC, WHO, authorities indicate high risk
- High degree of medical uncertainty
- Rising local infection rates and/ or remaining at concerning levels
- Known infections within EARJ
- EARJ not confident it can effectively mitigate risk and ensure safety
- Many schools closed campuses

LOWER SCHOOL RETURN TO CAMPUS MODELS OF LEARNING

Level I Low Risk - Full Campus School
This is a traditional school experience with all students attending school in person five days a week*.

Levels II & III Medium Risk - Hybrid School
A blend of face-to-face learning while leveraging digital experiences in ways that are integrated and planned as part of a coordinated whole. Our Hybrid School model allows us to relax or heighten on-campus health and safety procedures under a medium risk scenario*.

High Risk - Distance Learning
Our campuses are closed but school remains open through Distance Learning. Students attend school virtually.

*Please note that parents may elect for a Parallel Distance Learning [PDL] option when the school opens campus. Further information on PDL is published separately from the Lower School Offices.

RETURN TO CAMPUS - ACCESS

EARJ is very much a community school, with the presence of parents on campus as an important element of our character.

In these challenging times, that freedom has to be more limited as we match risk with appropriate safety measures to protect all members of our community, while returning to campus in ways that are as safe as possible.

We look forward to being able to welcome all parents back to campus once the Covid-19 situation has abated. Until then, we ask for your support in limiting the number of adults on campus.

	Low Risk Level I	Medium Risk Level II & III	High Risk Level IV
Students	• Access permitted if without symptoms • 48-hour fever-free without medication.	• Access permitted if without symptoms • 48-hour fever-free without medication. • Students required to answer a health questionnaire prior to reopening.	• No access to campus allowed
Staff	• Access permitted if without symptoms • 48-hour fever-free without medication.	• Access permitted if without symptoms • 48-hour fever-free without medication. • Staff required to answer a health questionnaire prior to reopening.	• No campus access without HM Office authorization.
Parents	• Access permitted by appointment • If without symptoms and 48-hour fever-free without medication.	• Parents remain in the car during Drop Off & Dismissal. • Parent meetings will happen virtually. • No campus access without HM Office authorization.	• No access to campus allowed

RETURN TO CAMPUS - STAYING SAFE

PLEASE DO NOT SEND YOUR
LOWER SCHOOL CHILD TO SCHOOL IF:

• He/She has any of the following symptoms:
- Body temperature of 37.5C or higher
- Extreme tiredness
- Loss of taste and smell
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Diarrhea

• Someone in your household has, or is suspected of having, Covid-19.

• You or your child has had close contact with someone with COVID-19.
- Close contact is being within 2m of an infected person for at least 15 minutes without a mask, or with an infected person coughing or sneezing even with a mask, or with whom you've had physical contact.

For any of the scenarios above, please immediately contact your child's Class Teacher or the Lower School Office.

BEFORE LEAVING HOME

Please make sure your child brings the following items to school:

• MASKS
(required for all students in Kindergarten and above):
- 3 masks to be used throughout the school day;
- 2 plastic bags to keep the clean and the dirty masks separate;
- Please avoid masks with any political or religious themes in keeping with the spirit of school dress code.

• WATER BOTTLE:
- No disposable cups will be available on campus.

• SNACKS:
- Snack shacks are closed. Make sure to send individually wrapped snacks for recess time.

• PENCIL CASE:
- Plastic pencil case to be kept at school.

• PRESCHOOL:
- In addition to the materials above, Preschool students should bring an extra change of clothes in their backpack.

RETURN TO CAMPUS - STAYING SAFE

We also encourage your child to bring the following item to school:

• HAND SANITIZER:
- Although we have hand sanitizers on campus, a personal hand sanitizer should always be kept in the backpack in case of need.

Please do not allow your child to bring the following items to school:

• Extra backpacks

• Stuffed animals

• Toys from home

ARRIVING ON CAMPUS

Here are the health measures to be taken before your child enters EARJ campus:

• MASKS:
- Masks are mandatory for all students from Kindergarten up, and must be worn from the moment of arrival on campus.

• TEMPERATURE CHECK:
- All students will have their temperature checked while still in the car. It is not allowed to enter on campus with body temperature at 37.5C or higher;
- Students who ride school buses/vans, will have their temperature checked before leaving home.

• SANITIZER CARPETS:
- Shoes are to be cleaned on the carpet upon entrance.

• SANITIZE HANDS:
- Hands must be thoroughly sanitized before entering school each day and before moving within campus.

• IDENTIFICATION:
- Use of EARJ Student ID cards/keychains is necessary. Fingerprint ID is not available.

RETURN TO CAMPUS - LOWER SCHOOL LEARNING

We are committed to making sure that all students are supported in their learning, no matter where they may be on their learning journey.

At EARJ, Lower School teachers continually assess student learning throughout the school year. During Distance Learning, teachers used a variety of assessment strategies and tools to inform their online instruction and give consistent and appropriate feedback for continued growth. As we return to campus, teachers will use these same practices both on campus and with Parallel Distance Learning (PDL) to add to the data they currently have on student learning. Teachers will share information about learning progress and next steps at the upcoming Parent Teacher Conferences. We remain committed to supporting students to build community, connection and confidence as they return to campus or continue to connect with peers through PDL.

RETURN TO CAMPUS - LOWER SCHOOL ROUTINES

Family Groupings (Level II & III)
Lower School students with siblings will be grouped by family in the same morning or afternoon sessions. Additionally, students in the Lower School with Upper School siblings will automatically be placed in the morning session to align schedules.

Lower School Student Movement
In order to minimize contact with others, there will be limitations on student movement around campus. Lower School students will stay in their homeroom class for all lessons, with the exception of Physical Education. Students will also have a daily outdoor break for recess.

RETURN TO CAMPUS - LOWER SCHOOL ROUTINES

Lower School Arrival & Dismissal
Lower School students will walk directly to class upon arrival or to a predetermined location for teacher pick-up. Social distancing will be maintained under supervision by EARJ staff at all times. For dismissal, Lower School students will be socially distanced and escorted directly to the designated pick up location. Families will be provided with details of arrival and dismissal procedures before return to campus.

Lower School Classrooms & Learning Spaces
Lower School classrooms will be set up to create physical distancing appropriate to the risk level in operation. Students will use and keep material in an individual materials box. Any material that is sent home will remain at home. We will adjust the use of school books to meet health regulations. Home reading will be done through online resources or books that families have at home. All classes will be taught in student homerooms to minimize movement, including Art, Music and Portuguese. During PE classes students will have the opportunity to be active outside while physically distancing and wearing masks.

Recess in Lower School
Lower School students will be provided with opportunities for recess and play daily. Appropriate physical distancing measures will be put in place during recess to keep students in their assigned groupings.

HEALTH MEASURES ON CAMPUS

Please see the individual measures expected to be taken by your child while on campus:

• USAGE OF MASKS:
- They are mandatory during all times at school for all students as of Kindergarten up.

• HAND WASHING:
- Knee activated sinks placed at the common areas to facilitate hand washing.

• HAND SANITIZERS:
- There are hand sanitizer dispensers in every entrance, room, office, reception, cafeteria, hall, stairs and common areas.

• SIGNAGE ON CAMPUS:
- Directional signs are to be followed;
- Some benches have the signage “No sitting allowed” to guarantee social distance.

• SOCIAL DISTANCE:
- Maintain appropriate distance (2m if possible).

• TOUCHING SURFACES SHOULD BE AVOIDED.

• PERSONAL ITEMS MUST NOT BE SHARED. THIS INCLUDES NO SHARING OF FOOD.

HEALTH MEASURES ON CAMPUS

Please see the health measures taken by the school:

• CIRCULATION FLOW:
- There are signs to organize circulation on campus that must be respected.

• ROOM CAPACITY:
- Classrooms and offices have a 50% maximum capacity of people allowed inside at the same time to respect social distance of 2m.

• HYGIENE KITS:
- Offices and Classrooms will have hygiene kits containing hand sanitizer pumps, multiple 70% liquid alcohol, tissue paper, and paper towels which will be checked and replaced frequently by the cleaning staff.

• PROTECTION BARRIERS:
- Office Secretaries have protection barriers on their desks;
- Other protection barriers have been installed in appropriate locations.

• SEATING:
- Students should not exchange seats in the classroom.

• CLEANING & DISINFECTING MEASURES:
- Classrooms will be cleaned and disinfected twice a day;
- All common area touchpoints will be disinfected daily;
- Sanitization and disinfection against COVID 19 will be carried out through nano-nebulization in all school premises;
- A disinfection is scheduled for the eve before classes restart.

HEALTH MEASURES ON CAMPUS

• AIR CIRCULATION:
- Doors and windows will be kept opened, whenever possible;
- AC units are only allowed on ventilation mode with doors and windows open;
- Central Air Conditioner units can be used and are prepared to renew the air in the classroom;
- Air and water quality control have been enhanced according to current legislation.

• WATER FOUNTAINS:
- Water fountains have been replaced with more hygiene friendly units.

• CAMPUS VISITS:
- Gávea and Barra campuses are closed to non-essential visitors;
- Absolutely no visitors are allowed on campuses without the approval of the Headmaster's Office.

FOOD SERVICE:

• There will be no Cafeteria Services for Lower School students;

• Snack shacks are closed; Snacks must be provided from home;

• External food deliveries are not permitted.

LEAVING CAMPUS

When your child leaves school, make sure he/she will:

- Keep the mask on;
- Wash his/her hands or use hand sanitizer;
- Avoid gathering;
- Keep social distance - 2m;
- Not share personal items.

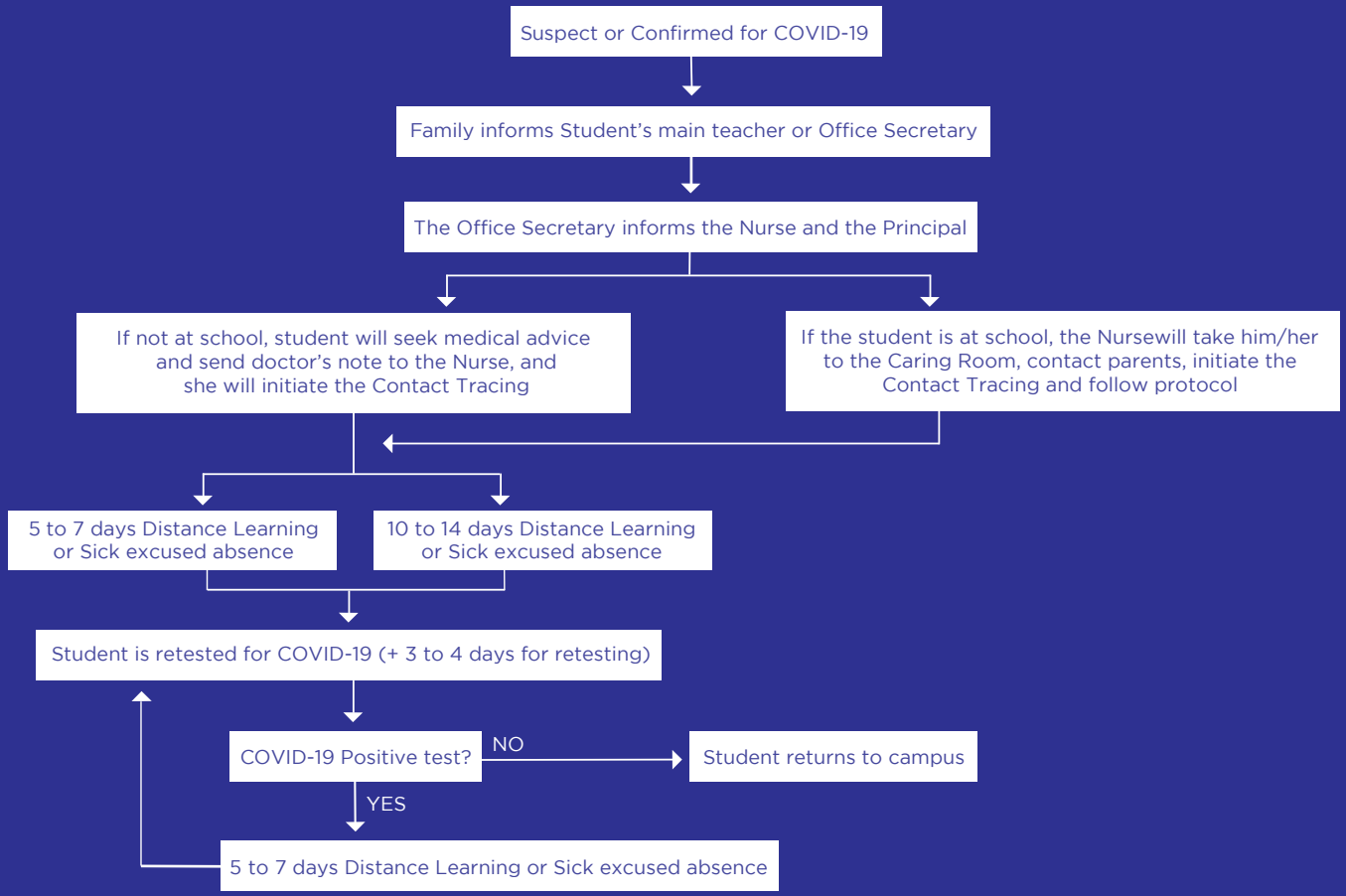
ARRIVING AT HOME

In order to be safe at home:

- Shoes should be removed before entering home;
- Hands should be washed with lots of soap and water;
- Shower as soon as possible;
- Personal belongings are to be cleaned with 70% liquid alcohol (backpack, cell phone, wallet, bag, etc).

IN CASE A STUDENT IS TESTED COVID POSITIVE OR IS A SUSPECT CASE:

EARJ will monitor students' health situation. The general process below outlines the steps through which COVID-19 confirmed or suspected cases are conducted. The EARJ health department in conjunction with an externally-hired medical professional consultancy are available to support and guide families in these circumstances.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS ABOUT LIFE IN LOWER SCHOOL:

Scheduling & Attendance

Can I choose which session my child attends?
Unfortunately this is not possible. The LS administration and teachers will make every effort to achieve AM/PM rosters that are balanced, and based upon learning and grouping needs.

When will school communicate the LS AM/PM class rosters and schedules?
We will communicate LS AM/PM schedules by September 28th at the latest. This is dependent upon all parents submitting the Community Commitment document by September 25th.

Will the school take in consideration for siblings in the Upper School when making the AM/PM class rosters?
The shift scheduling will be defined to support family groupings and balanced student populations in two equal population groups. Students with Upper School siblings will be placed in the morning session to facilitate pick up and drop off once the Upper School returns to campus.

Will students have the same teachers for on-campus and parallel distance learning?
Yes, students will have the same teachers for both modes of instruction. It is important that your child has a consistent teacher and we have built this into our plan as a core element.

Counseling & Transitions

How will the adaptation process for newcomers to Preschool be handled if parents cannot be on campus?
Preschool students who are in adaptation to EARJ will follow our phasing in schedule. Parents will be able to accompany students to the school entrance and our teams are working on ways to support the separation. Parents of Preschool children will be allowed to wait in a socially distanced designated waiting area and follow all health and safety procedures during the adaptation week.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How will the transition process for newcomers to school be handled to support their entrance to EARJ?
New students to EARJ will be supported by their teachers and peers. As with any new student, they will be assigned a class buddy to help them with routines and campus layout.

Curriculum & Learning

Will the PYP program be implemented as scheduled? Or it will take longer to do so?
We are absolutely committed to the PYP journey! EARJ is in the PYP Candidate Phase on schedule and we are committed to implementation during the two year proposed schedule.

Will there be any evaluation before the Lower School kids return to campus or parallel distance learning?
During distance learning, teachers have collected student learning evidence from both synchronous lessons and asynchronous assignments. In preparation for parent-teacher conferences, teachers have assessed students in key areas of literacy and mathematics in order to share present levels of learning at this time. During the conference conversation teachers will share areas of strength during distance learning, areas needing support and recommended actions going forward to support each child's transitions to a return to campus or a parallel distance learning environment.

Sometimes it is difficult to understand what people say when wearing a mask - how will you deal with this especially for PS, K and second language learners?
Masks with a transparent view of the mouth have been ordered. These masks will be given to Preschool teachers and Student Support teachers.

How will the intervention block be addressed during Level 2 Return to Campus and PDL?
Students who receive additional support during the intervention block will continue to receive support during their (AS) asynchronous learning block at home. The Learning Support or EALS teacher will contact students to schedule time online for small group instruction. It will be very important that students receiving intervention support attend these scheduled sessions during their asynchronous period at home.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Learning Spaces & Materials

How do you plan the layout of the classrooms to ensure distance between students? Will playgrounds reopen on any risk Level?
In each classroom, student desks have been arranged to be 2 meters apart to ensure social distancing between students. When it is safe to return to campus, starting at Level III, playgrounds will be open with appropriate health and safety protocols per Level.

Can kids bring their own laptop?
EARJ has an inventory of Chromebooks and Ipads to support student learning in class. Each device will be cleaned and disinfected after each student uses it. Students in grades 4 and 5 are invited to bring their own device to their AM or PM session if they do not want to use devices from school. For G4 and G5 students who do not want to bring their own device to school, that is not a problem. The school will provide one. It is important to note that if a student brings his/her device to school, EARJ is not responsible for any damage to the device.

Health & Wellbeing

What updated measures is the school taking for hygiene and cleaning protocols? Are there cleaning procedures for between the morning and afternoon sessions on campus?
The school has a rigorous cleaning protocol, including increased staffing for support, in place in alignment with CDC, WHO, and local authority guidelines. Besides regular cleaning, there will be classrooms and public space disinfection that takes place between the morning and afternoon hybrid sessions to ensure that classes have been adequately cleaned and disinfected in preparation for the next group.

What documents will be necessary for students to return to campus?
Please see the EARJ Community Commitment for details. Please remember that it must be turned in by September 25.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Will temperature checks be made at arrival in all students? How many times?
Yes. Temperature checks will be done daily upon arrival and if a student is sent to the nurse. Please also check your child before leaving home if you suspect they may have a fever.

Will masks be mandatory? What factors are taken into account to decide the use of masks in LS?
All students in K - 5 and all staff will be required to use masks according to the health authorities instructions.

Will IgM and IgG tests be required prior to returning for students?
The Board has made the decision that the school will not require these tests for Lower School students.

Will EARJ staff be tested for Covid-19 before classes on campus start? And with what frequency will they be tested throughout the semester?
All faculty and staff will be tested in the week before students return to school. We will then test faculty and staff on a randomized rotation, or as needed in the case of health concerns.

What is the plan if a student or teacher tests positive? How does the Level change?
According to the school's Covid-19 Response Protocol, we move to Level III and take the necessary measures to isolate the affected student, the people who had had direct contact with him/her and deep clean the area. In case we have a growing number of cases at school, the Board may decide to authorize a move to Level IV.

Will all parents be informed about new Covid-19 cases within the school community? And in which classes those cases are?
In the event of an on-campus infection, we will make sure that everyone who needs to know is appropriately informed - with due regard to confidentiality of course.

What are going to be the school options for students that are in high risk?
Students who are not able to attend in-person school due to clinical conditions should opt for Parallel Distance Learning on the EARJ Community Commitment form.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are going to be the school options for teachers that are in high risk?
Not all teachers will be able to work from campus. Some will be working from home as, like several of our families, they are in a designated at-risk category. This has been built into our plans. Further details will be communicated to those families whose children are involved.

Is quarantine required for students who travel?
We suggest that you and your family avoid non-essential travel during the pandemic. We are in a stage of community transmission, where quarantine is not officially mandated. If you participated in higher risk activities or think that you may have been exposed before or during your trip, consult with your doctor for further instructions before returning to school or work. Regardless of where you traveled or what you did during your trip, make sure you take all necessary preventive actions to protect others from getting sick. In case you or anyone in your house who have COVID-19 related symptoms, please do not send your child to school and contact the school nurse for further instructions about EARJ protocols for suspected cases.

Your health also depends on you.

If you have any questions, please contact the school nurses:
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A special thank you for the PTA and the U.S. Consulate
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