



Live, Learn, Lead

Dear parents and guardians,

I am very excited to announce that ALCS will be returning to full in-person learning with all students starting March 23, 2021. It will be one year exactly after spring break that the NM Public Education Department (PED) made all schools go to an on-line learning platform. This was quite a change from our mission and vision for Aldo, an outdoor experiential education charter school. Monday March 8, 2021 PED held a news conference saying the hybrid platform, a mixture of online and in person, would be replaced in all schools and all students could attend in-person immediately. The school will begin in-person learning with full re-entry after spring break on March 23rd.

Below are some excerpts from the PED.

“The expectation is for all schools to move into the third and final stage of the Public Education Department’s COVID-19 Safe Operating Categories. As outlined in the [PED guidance](#), this allows for full, in-person learning for all students. High-risk staff will maintain their accommodations until they reach full efficacy of the vaccine, and COVID-Safe Practices will remain in place, including mask-wearing, enhanced airflow and social distancing to the greatest extent possible.”

March 8, 2021 the Public Education Department (PED), alongside the New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH), announced plans to support an increased and expedited return for in-person learning across New Mexico’s schools. The plan includes three key updates:

School Staff Vaccination New Mexico is committed to prioritizing the vaccination of all educators and school staff over the next three weeks.

In-Person Learning The PED will work with and support schools and districts as they expand as quickly and safely as possible to a full return to in-person learning.

Sports, Music, and Activities NMAA sanctioned activities, music, choir and other extracurricular activities may resume at all schools, in accordance with COVID-safe practices and NMAA guidelines.

The announcement moves New Mexico public schools to the third and final stage of the Public Education Department’s COVID-19 Safe Operating Categories, available in the PED [reentry guidance here](#) (bit.ly/BackToSchoolNM). A full return to in-person learning allows all students to attend school each day of the week. COVID-Safe Practices (CSPs) will remain in place, including mask-wearing, enhanced airflow, and social distancing to the greatest extent possible.

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The expectation is for all students to return to in-person learning at ALCS, but will allow for those very few exceptions with valid reason that will continue to use the on-line format. Teachers will choose their own format of how to present the online content to these home-based students. For example, some teachers may choose asynchronous learning with office hours only; while other teachers may choose to stream their classes live. Either way, the best method for students to learn directly from the teacher is to be in-person.

Examples of reasons students may need to be online are

- If a student or class must be quarantined due to a positive COVID close-contact case, those student(s) will be using the online format until the end of quarantine period.
- If there are other valid, extenuating circumstances that do not allow your child to attend in person, please contact the school.

During the last nine weeks of school, classes will mainly be held outside, although the classrooms are ready for students if needed. Students will continue to be taught with academic rigor, along with fun academic activities that will allow the students to be active outside. The school day will begin at 9:00 to allow for the temperature to warm up, and the day ends at 2:30 before the winds start screaming. The complete school schedule can be found on the schools' website.

<https://www.aldocs.org/>

[We are excited for this return to in-person learning and recognize that it not only better meets students' academic needs, but it also serves to rebuild social and emotional connections and allows students to begin the road back to full health and functioning. We enter into this process responsibly and with careful planning to ensure that safety protocols are considered and enacted so that you can rest assured that your child's well-being is our first priority.](#)

Thank you for choosing Aldo Leopold Charter School,

Wayne Sherwood