

# PSA FAQs:

## **What is a micro-school?**

Think: one-room schoolhouse with a small class (12 kids or less in most) and multiple age groups learning together. As a micro-school we keep our enrollment low and team-members are part of a mixed-level group (ages 6-11). Micro-schools are a blend of homeschool and private school and are not required to be accredited (though our curriculum aligns with TEKS).

## **Why micro-schooling?**

Micro-schooling establishes a core set of learning experiences that guardians/parents can then expand on and individualize for their children. Due to the smaller class sizes micro-schooling can provide students with more hands-on and activity-based learning than traditional schooling, and allow natural exposure and growth in leadership, time management, prioritization due to flexible learning styles and mixed-age classroom composition. Micro-schools can also provide more flexibility in learning approach and adjustment for style.

Project and/or experiment activities are typically designed to encourage the learner to develop their own personal understanding as guides (aka teachers) will typically avoid making definitive statements of understanding to support the learners to work towards their own understanding. Micro-schools will often pair extracurricular activities, field trips, programs, books, and other multimedia with their lessons so that learners gain broader exposure to content than what is available in a typical classroom.

PSA seeks to utilize engaging content and curriculum that helps create a passion for learning in our team, focusing on real-world knowledge and skills that enriches the team's educational journey.

## **What are your COVID-19 safety measures?**

We are committed to keeping every participating family safe and healthy, and as such have implemented the following policies to which all families enrolled must agree.

By joining our school pod, PSA families understand that we follow local and state level mandates pertaining to Covid-19 safety measures. Under current law, children 10 and under are not required to wear a mask; therefore, masking is voluntary and completely up to individual families.

Our families operate between a 2-3 Covid-19 Risk level as follows:

Risk Level 2 – Fairly Strict: leaves only for work/groceries; socializes with others at six feet; exercises outdoors in low density areas; no intimacy/touch outside of container; shops once a week or less.

Risk Level 3 – Somewhat Open: socializes with <10 others at six feet; will socialize with others at less than six feet at the same level or less; goes outside of container with mask on; intimacy or touch if at same level or less.

As we are a micro-school, we follow local social distancing measures due to our small group size. To keep our students and families safe, we all agree to follow the 2-3 Risk level and quarantine if exposed or have traveled. Our online curriculum makes it easy to continue lessons at home for a period of time if necessary.

Until further notice, no one but staff and students are allowed inside the building. We practice frequent hand washing, sanitizing of all surfaces and supplies after each use, and temperature checks and health screenings at drop off. Our facility is over 1000 square feet with plenty of open space to stay socially distanced. Each child is assigned their own independent work space. We have constant air flow utilizing our many windows and have level grade 10 air filters that kill airborne viruses, changed every 30 days.

Until further notice, the following activities are suspended:

- Field Trips
- Potlucks
- Show and Tell
- Onsite guest guides
- Offsite volunteer activities

### **What about sick days?**

Team-members may not participate in the daily workflow if they have a fever, are nauseous, are experiencing stomach upset (example: diarrhea), and/or have been exposed to COVID-19 or any other communicable disease (examples include but are not limited to pink eye, flu, chicken pox, etc.).

Team-mates may return to PSA 2 calendar days after their fever has broken, the last bout of nausea and/or stomach upset has occurred. A doctor's note may be required.

In the case of a confirmed COVID-19 exposure or diagnosis at least 14 calendar days must expire before physical return to PSA.

As PSA includes the use of online learning platforms team-members who wish to continue their daily workflow activities involving online learning platforms have the opportunities to do so; however as we are a learner-led environment this is not required. PSA believes in ensuring that an individual allows their body time to heal fully before returning to work as this supports a healthy work-life balance and overall health and wellbeing, which are needed to do our best work.

### **Does PSA give grades?**

It is uncommon to see letter grading in micro-schools; however, to support families wishing to join the public school system at a later time we do conduct regular assessment and will issue a comprehensive letter grade in the core subjects (Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science) in March, June, September, and December.

PSA, in compliance with TEA guidelines as they pertain to non-public school elementary level education, provides lessons for Language Arts, Mathematics, and Good Citizenship. In addition to these basic criteria, PSA workflow includes daily exposure and hands-on use of current technology, as well as regular content in science, arts, physical education, and world studies.

### **What does PSA provide and what do we need to provide?**

PSA provides the working space (temperature controlled private indoor space, and outdoor space), daily guide, curriculum materials, project and experiment materials, general supplies (pens, paper, etc.) and transportation to and from PSA activities scheduled during daily workflow hours.

Families must provide a functional laptop or tablet with compatible power cord/adaptor that is able to connect to the PSA designated curriculum platforms via Wi-Fi, a compatible headset, and a refillable water bottle with a closing lid, and lunch and snacks (no candy, milk, and juice) to get the team-member through their day. We suggest snacks and lunches including protein, vegetable, and fruit that can be eaten without the use of utensils.

\*include a morning snack and/or afternoon snack

\*lunch available for \$3.50/meal if forgotten

Please note team-members may be exposed to peanuts, strawberries, fresh-cut grass, pets (cats, dogs, lizards, etc.), petting zoos, etc. and other potential allergens while at PSA.

PSA does not have a full-time health-care professional on staff and therefore cannot accommodate individuals with potentially life-threatening allergies or individuals in need of assistance with ADLs (example: intravenous feeding, physical assistance with mobility, etc.).

### **If we decide to enroll into public school after attending PSA, what do we need to do?**

You need to notify us in writing at least 60 days prior to the last day of attendance; this is to ensure that we can provide a final report card for the team-member leaving PSA, make final payment arrangements, and review prospective team-members that have been waitlisted for possible enrollment into the program without negatively impacting daily workflow (including current projects and/or experiments in progress).

Enrollment requirements into a public school will depend on the public school itself. Typically, Texas elementary public schools in the Austin area enroll children based on their age/birthday. Documentation requirements, if any, will depend on the public school's processes and procedures.

### **Is micro-schooling for everyone?**

Micro-schooling may not be the best option for children that require extensive structure in their daily lives, or those that need consistent one-on-one assistance to utilize technology or stay on-task.