

Sky Academy navigates a new school year

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ENGLEWOOD — The 2020-2021 school year is underway. The Sarasota County charter YMCA Sky Academy, like other schools throughout Sarasota and Charlotte counties, welcomed its students Monday. In the wake of the COVID-19 virus pandemic, the welcome was much different than previous years.

Sky Academy posted YouTube videos demonstrating what parents and students can expect this school year.

“The year may look different, but our academic expectations and the achievement levels — which we know our students can achieve — will stay the same,” Sky principal John Bailey said in the orientation video he narrates. The academy dedicated a YouTube channel with other videos.

The orientation video illustrates how teachers will greet the students and take their temperatures first before they are allowed to enter the building. The students are also expected to clean their hands with sanitizer before entering the building.

Of the 272 students that make up this year’s academy’s student body, 20 percent are attending classes remotely, Bailey said. The academy is a



PROVIDED BY ENGLEWOOD SKY ACADEMY

A plastic shield didn’t hinder Englewood Sky Academy teacher Isele Sisson from teaching her eighth grade students civics Monday. Like schools throughout Sarasota and Charlotte counties, Sky Academy adopted protocols this year to deter the COVID-19 virus and keep their teachers and students healthy.

middle school, teaching sixth-, seventh- and eighth-graders.

To accommodate the remote students, Sky Academy

teachers will devote a teaching period entirely focused on the remote students, rather than trying to divide the teachers’

attention between the students attending classes and those attending remotely, Bailey said. All students are provided

Chrome computer tablets.

The video introduces teachers and shows how the teachers wear masks and how desks in classrooms are arranged to maintain socially accepted distances. The students, teachers and Sky staff are maintaining various other protocols to stem the potential spread of the virus and keep their students and staff healthy.

Because the academy’s student body is small, Bailey said, hallways won’t see herds of students emerging from classrooms crowding each other as they make their way to their next classes. The school spread out cafeteria seating and added covered seating outdoors.

Due to COVID-19, the Sky Academy adjusted but maintains all of its sports programs. This year, the academy will start the school year with golf, tennis and golf, while postponing its flag football and volleyball seasons, which usually kicks off the school year.

To learn more about the Englewood Sky Academy, visit its website at www.skyatthey.com/englewood, its Facebook page and other social media platforms or view its YouTube videos. Call 941-999-4775.

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