



Wednesday, August 19, 2020

## Dear Families,

As the new school year approaches, we are excited to begin and welcome our community for a new year of learning and growth. But for this, our 175th year, that statement alone is not the full story, and I want to make sure everyone understands our determination to partner with you as we live a set of safety measures together. For Friends' Central's virus mitigation and safety measures to work, our community will have to live up to high expectations for behavior -- collectively.

Moving forward, our community needs to be prepared for quick decisions that could present challenges or have inconvenient consequences. We will make every effort to ease this burden by communicating quickly and proactively.

### **Our Headline: Community Behavior is Central to Our Safety.**

**Our Story:** Those who return to campus must keep the wellbeing of the Friends' Central community at the heart of their decision making. What does that mean, exactly, for students, employees, and families?

- As mask-mandatory campuses, we will require masks at all times, with few, structured and supervised exceptions.
- Students and employees who are sick, even a little sick, must stay home.
- Everyone will practice physical distancing and wash or sanitize hands frequently.
- Everyone will reconsider playdates, lessons, gatherings, and travel and assess them through the lens of community safety.
- Everyone will have read and signed our Community Compact, signaling an agreement to act with the Community's wellbeing at the center of individual and family decision-making.

If we become aware that families have signed the Community Compact and are not following it, *we will send students home, and more importantly, our community members' health will be at risk.*

We cannot keep our campuses open unless everyone takes community safety seriously.

### **Some Essential Elements of Our Safe Opening**

**Testing & Schedule:**

We have engaged RR Testing, Inc. to provide testing at sites on our campuses. This testing will be provided at no cost to our students or employees. We ask that everyone present insurance information when they come for testing. Insurance will be billed, and Friends' Central will cover any remaining cost. If you do not have health insurance, Friends' Central will cover the complete cost. Testing will be required before students and employees return to campus for in-person, indoor activities. Going forward, we expect to require testing approximately every two weeks for all employees and students participating in on-campus and indoor activities.

**Testing Schedule:**

- **Tuesday, August 25:** Nursery/Pre-K and all Employees
- **Tuesday, September 1:** Students in grades K-8
- **Saturday, September 12:** Repeat testing for all Employees and Students in Nursery/Pre-K-grade 8
- **First-time testing for students in grades 9-12: TBD**

Information about signing up for testing is coming soon. If, for some reason, you cannot attend one of these dates, you need to schedule testing for your child within 24 hours of the FCS test date and provide school nurses with proof of a negative test result before returning to school. If you have questions about the logistics or insurance aspect of testing, please contact the Business Office. If you have questions about the medical aspect of testing, please contact our [school nurses](#).

**When a Test is Positive**

Parents of students in pods and cohorts have asked for clarification about who will be sent home should a student or teacher test positive for COVID-19. Our plan is to use Montgomery County Health Department guidelines to decide when to send a student home. Those guidelines may be found [here](#).

The only caveat is that Friends' Central School will send home the entire pod or cohort if there is a positive test result within the pod/cohort. We will use the Pennsylvania Department of Education to decide when/if to close [school](#).

**Health Screening**

Daily health screening will be required for all students. This screening will be administered via an app called RUVNA, which Friends' Central already uses. Parents and guardians: you will receive a text message with a link each day. This electronic form must be completed, in full, before your student can come to campus. You will receive more information about this app next week.

**Lunch**

After carefully considering your survey responses, which suggested only modest interest in box lunches, logistics, and safety recommendations, we have decided to suspend our lunch

program entirely for the first half of the school year. We will revisit this decision later in the fall, taking each of these factors into account.

**Reminder: Please Review These to Important Documents:**

- Friends' Central's [Community Compact](#)
- [FCS Path to Reopening](#)
- [Safety Update](#)

I will close with a final plea - many schools and districts are closing in anticipation of Labor Day weekend and poor choices that they believe will lead to surges in infections. Our faith in all of you is such that we are bringing Lower and Middle Schools back on time, with the expectation of having our Upper School to follow. When you consider travel, attending a fireworks display, or a neighborhood holiday gathering, it is imperative that you remember the most vulnerable among us and make choices that are safe for all.

Once again, thank you to all families and employees for partnering with us to keep our teachers, students, and one another safe.

Craig N. Sellers  
Head of School



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