

Dear Lower School Families,

There are still many unknowns about the coming fall and the ever evolving COVID-19 situation. What we do know is that our students do best when learning in community and with that in mind, our planning is focused on returning to campus this fall. In keeping a close eye on current research, medical professionals are recommending that schools prioritize returning to school, provide as much consistency as possible, and allow students to safely socialize, play, and learn with and from one another.

Below are the steps and careful planning developed alongside our *FCS Path to Reopening* to ensure our Lower Schoolers are safe and that we are taking age appropriate precautions with the entire community's health in mind. There are aspects of school life that are still being considered, such as transportation and orientation dates. We also know that plans may change as new developments emerge, and we will keep you informed as the school year grows near. *Please review this document before completing the survey sent to you on Friday and be in touch should you have more questions.*

Warmly,
Melody

Modified Face-to-Face Learning (meaning risk level is low or fluctuating):

1. **Masks:** In alignment with the most recent order from the PA Department of Health, we plan to implement universal mask wearing on both campuses, including our youngest students. Our goal is to mitigate transmission and ensure everyone on campus is kept safe, enabling students to remain on campus and engaged in on-campus learning. We encourage all Lower School families to practice mask wearing this summer to prepare for their use in the fall. It will be important that your child knows how to remove their mask safely and has a preferred mask for comfort. [Here is a good resource](#) for preparing your child for mask wearing. It is also helpful to coach your child to master proper handwashing techniques - 20 seconds, backs and fronts of hands, vigorously with soap and water.
2. **Schedule:** While safety is key, a consistent schedule is also a priority for our students. We are committed to having all Lower School students on campus at the same time Monday-Friday, rather than employing a staggered learning schedule. This is made possible by the space we have both in our buildings and with our outdoor spaces. Due to the need for social distancing and proper supervision, we will not be able to offer Before Care. This will mean students can arrive between 8:00-8:30 and will report directly to their classrooms using designated entryways. We are hoping to avoid a staggered morning start, but we will likely need to stagger dismissal times and we ask that you stay tuned. At this point in planning, we will suspend indoor parent pick up, meaning all families will need to come through the carloop. We also will be asking parents and guardians to open car doors and buckle car seats, a major change in our current policy. Because of this

change, the speed of the carloop and how many cars can enter the loop will be closely monitored. We will also need all adults who exit their cars to wear masks.

3. **Pods:** Keeping our learning communities small helps to mitigate germ sharing and allows for social distancing, when appropriate. In this model, students will be split into half class groups called “pods”. These pods will comprise 8-10 students in grades K-5 and 14-15 in PreK. Pods will be assigned to specific rooms where they will remain throughout the day. Within these pods, students will have small group instruction, specials, and lunch. Teachers will rotate into classrooms to allow students to have specials and to interact with their teaching teams. There will also be times for pods to connect virtually either at lunch, for assemblies, or during book buddy time so the whole Lower School division can remain connected.
4. **Social Distancing:** We know that remaining distant while learning may be very difficult for our Lower School students, particularly our youngest learners. To allow school to remain a place of community and connection, students will be asked to spread out while in lines, at learning spaces like desks and tables, and during instruction. When our youngest students are playing, we will be careful in planning their play to be more structured, but we know they will come into contact. This is where meticulous hand cleaning routines will be essential, as well as separate bathroom spaces for each pod, and an emphasis on students having their own learning materials.
5. **Playgrounds:** Alongside social distancing, being outside is a key recommendation from leading research. In preparation for this element of our return, we are in the process of building a third playspace on campus, as well as a large pavilion for outdoor learning and shared time. These spaces, along with our two other playspaces, will have a schedule to organize pod usage and their exposure to one another. We will likely allow students to have “mask breaks” while outside and there will be an interval schedule for playground disinfecting.
6. **Extended Day:** We are happy to announce that we will be able to continue to offer our Extended Day program for the 20-21 school year. In order to mirror the social distancing protocols in place, student pods will carry over into the Extended Day Program. There will be one Extended Day teacher assigned to each afterschool pod and that pod will remain in the same classroom from the school day schedule. With these safety procedures in place, we will need to double our Extended Day staff and end Extended Day at 5:00 to allow for proper cleaning and sanitizing each evening. The cost for Extended Day this year will be \$3,700 and a 5 day contract will be required to enroll. These changes are to support the modifications needed to keep Extended Day safe and possible for our families. Registration for Extended Day will open today and can be accessed through Veracross. If you would like to add your Extended Day fee to your FACTS account, please contact [Rudy Fabry](#). If you are a family that planned to use the Center City HUB for after school care, please email me directly for more information.

Virtual Learning (meaning risk level is high or fluctuating):

We are also preparing for the possibility of a return to virtual learning at some point in the school year. To that end, the information below outlines our philosophy on virtual learning, as well as modifications we will make to our virtual offerings. Like planning for on-campus learning, much is still being planned and we ask that you stay tuned for more details in the coming weeks. One major enhancement to next year's offerings is that we have purchased new iPads for all students PK-2nd and Chromebooks for grades 3rd-5th. Students having their own devices, as well as Google apps to help them manage their own schedules and meetings (in age appropriate ways) was a priority for our planning.

Lower School's Philosophy on Virtual Learning:

Within the Lower School at FCS our practices are steeped in Quakerism, honoring the whole person and caring deeply about equity in learning. We value thematic learning, allowing interdisciplinary teaching to bring joy and excitement into every classroom. Most importantly, we believe it is essential for us to know our students to their core to best serve them. To that end, when we consider alternatives to our regularly scheduled school year, we prioritize small group, synchronous work to honor the relationships between teacher and student, as well as asynchronous work for students to work through at their own pace. The Lower School encompasses students ranging in ages from 3-11 and is committed to meeting students where they are developmentally. The following plans are guided by this philosophy and with students at the center of our decision making.

Initial Modifications to Virtual Learning:

- a. All students will check in with their classroom teachers at 9:00 for a Morning Meeting, to take attendance, and to review the plan for each day.
- b. Following that Morning Meeting time, students K-5 will engage in small group learning for core subject areas, along with asynchronous work on days they are not meeting with their teacher for a specific subject area. Teachers will be available for office hours each week for individual check ins. *PreK families will be receiving more information specific to their grade level tomorrow.*
- c. Specialist classes will be "live" for all grades with a consistent schedule.
- d. Our Community Friday is in the process of being revamped, but will continue to focus on students connecting with one another, whether in assembly times, with Book Buddies, or lunch bunches.

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Mission: We cultivate the intellectual, spiritual, and ethical promise of our students.

Vision: To awaken courage and intellect – and peacefully transform the world.