



FRIENDS' CENTRAL SCHOOL

Safety Update as We Approach Fall on Campus

Dear Friends' Central Families and Staff,

As you know, administrators and faculty members have been working through the spring and summer to ready Friends' Central for a fall that might be Modified Face-to-Face, Virtual FCS, or both at once. At every step, we have asked ourselves if we can return to campus in a way that is safe enough to give our community the in-person benefits we all want without sacrificing the physical wellbeing of the community. Though our plan, as envisioned, still feels possible, I write this knowing that numbers of COVID-19 infections in Pennsylvania and throughout the country are increasing. Our hearts go out to neighbors near and far who have fallen ill, who have lost family members, and who are struggling in other ways through this pandemic. We will monitor the situation carefully, and if we do not believe we can return to campus safely, we will open the 2020-2021 school year virtually.

This document builds on the Path to Reopening which you received about 10 days ago. As promised, we are providing more information about safety measures, new practices, and schedules currently planned for fall. I remind you that our on campus measures will only be as effective as our community's adherence to wellness policies while off and on campus.

Further details about daily life will come, or have already come, directly from division principals.

My best to you and your families,



Craig N. Sellers
Head of School

Our planning is guided by the following principles:

- Our mission, vision, and guiding testimonies
- The importance of safety for all – students, employees, and families
- The recognition that, if possible, face-to-face instruction should be prioritized
- A commitment to making decisions based on science and research
- A determination to be agile based on emerging information

Our pillars for Health and Safety are:

- A shared commitment to our Community Compact
- Physical distancing, reduced density, mask wearing, and excellent ventilation
- Health screening and preventive hygiene
- Increased cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting of the physical plant
- Communication, coordination of efforts, and training to our “new normal”
- Quick and adept response to new public and community information as it emerges

A Shared Commitment to Our Community Compact

If we did not have faith in our community, we would not plan to open our campuses. Every member of our community shares responsibility for the safety of the community as whole. We will keep ourselves and one another safest when we commit to this compact. This will not come easily to everyone. The news is filled with young people who have struggled to maintain social distancing and have either become ill themselves or have infected others. Let us imagine a moment when we can come together to honor and celebrate the care our young people, our staff, and our families took to keep each other well and safe. Any family who does not wish to adhere to the compact may choose to receive their FCS education 100% virtually and return to campus when the danger of COVID-19 has passed.

A Commitment to Making Decisions Based on Science and Research

Physical safety is our first priority. I write that because increasing numbers of physicians and scientists project potentially catastrophic mental health implications of not returning F2F. I acknowledge this and maintain that physical safety will remain the first, though not the only, priority.

Physical Distancing, Reduced Density, Mask Wearing, Excellent Ventilation

All students, faculty, and staff will follow social/physical distancing policies, come to campus wearing a face mask and other protective gear throughout the day as necessary, and will wash or sanitize hands frequently.

► Social/Physical Distancing:

Based on emerging research, it is clear that people are safest when outdoors and wearing masks. Physical distance of 6 ft. in these situations adds an additional level of safety. Indoor areas are safest when they have excellent ventilation, students' density is reduced, and they are wearing masks physically distanced.

- ◆ Understanding the need to maximize outdoor possibilities, Friends' Central is committed to leveraging our expansive campuses and will move as many activities as possible outdoors.
 - To accomplish this, the School has acquired 3 large tents for the City Ave. campus. Classes may use additional outdoor spaces, as well. Lower School is installing an outdoor pavilion and an additional playground, physically distant areas and where, under supervision, they may remove their masks and stay 6 ft apart. City Ave. students who are outdoors, walking from building to building, wearing masks, will maintain their physical distance.
- ◆ When students and teachers are indoors, the following rules will be in place.
 - Students will be at least 6 ft apart, facing forward, and wearing masks.
 - Large indoor spaces, such as gyms and dining halls, have been converted to teaching spaces.

- When students in grades 1-12 are closer than 6 ft. (no closer than 5 ft.), they will be separated by plexiglass or acrylic barriers, facing forward, and wearing masks.
 - Students will have assigned seating.
 - Teachers will have a 6 ft. space between themselves and students.
 - For staff providing services, such as counseling, ventilation standards will be in place along with a 6 ft. plexiglass barrier between the student and the staff member.
 - Windows will be open and air conditioning will run simultaneously.
 - Interior doors will remain open whenever possible. Exterior doors will remain open when appropriate.
- ◆ Traditional gatherings such as assemblies, Meeting for Worship, grade-level meetings, etc. will not take place in person. These events will be experienced in virtual ways or in small groups.

► **Cohorts/Pods**

- ◆ All students will be divided into cohorts or pods.
- Lower School students will come to campus every day. Students in grades K-5 will be in groups of 10 or less with one teacher at a time through the day, with teachers rotating. Specialists will visit classrooms to provide instruction. Children will remain in their pod for Extended Day.
 - Middle School students will come to campus every day. Students will be assigned to a cohort and have all of their classes together in that cohort. Teachers will travel to classrooms, rather than students traveling to classrooms.
 - Approximately half of all Upper School students will be on campus per day. They will follow a class schedule, using spaces large enough to ensure physical distancing. Extra time for safe movement from class to class and handwashing is built into the schedule.

► **Masks! All community members will wear face masks at all times.**

- ◆ Ideally masks must be three layers of densely woven cotton or include a filter between two layers. Two layers of dense fabric is also acceptable.
- Exceptions:
 - Eating lunch or snacks which will take place with adequate physical distancing and ventilation to maintain safety.
 - Lower School will provide safe mask breaks at recess.
- ◆ Additional protective gear, such as face shields or goggles, may be worn as an added layer of protection.

Health Screening and Preventative Hygiene

► **If testing is readily available for asymptomatic people, a negative test result within 72 hours of returning to campus for the new school year will be required.**

- ◆ Prior to a return to campus, assuming an availability of tests and timely test results in our area, we are requiring a negative COVID 19 test for all students and employees taken 72 hours before a return to campus (understanding that different students will return at different times).
 - Families are welcome to seek these tests at their own doctor's offices or may come to campus where Lankenau staff will be testing FCS community members.

► **All students, faculty, and staff will complete a wellness check every morning before school hours.**

- ◆ Friends' Central has contracted with Ruvna to provide a health screening and assessment tool to be completed for each child and staff person each morning before coming to school. This tool will require a smartphone and will ask about possible symptoms and a daily temperature reading. Students may not come to campus without a daily online assessment.
 - Ruvna is a school safety platform FCS already uses for student and employee tracking during fire/lockdown drills. In our use for these purposes, we have found the app to be user-friendly and trouble-free.

► **Hand Washing and sanitizing**

- ◆ All classrooms have hand sanitizing stations mounted to the wall outside the classrooms, and students will sanitize their hands on the way into class.
- ◆ All teachers on both campuses will have hand sanitizer readily and safely available as appropriate in classrooms.
- ◆ Hand washing will be required at regular intervals on the City Ave. campus.
- ◆ Lower School students will be required to wash their hands each hour.
- ◆ In grades Pre-K and K, where students move around classrooms more freely, students will not share learning materials. Toys for free play will be sanitized between uses.

► **If a member of a Friends' Central household is exposed to COVID-19, it is our expectation that the exposed household member will self-quarantine for 14 days, or as required by current public guidelines, and will notify FCS school nurses immediately. Students who must self-isolate will be educated remotely, and accommodations will be made for faculty to teach remotely.**

- ◆ Webcams have been installed in FCS classrooms to facilitate home learning and remote teaching in real time.

- ◆ FCS has purchased Canvas, a learning management platform that will be in use for grades 6-12. Canvas will allow for seamless toggling between in-person and online learning, including learning or teaching from home when others are on-site.
- ◆ FCS School nurses are prepared to work with county health departments to facilitate any contact tracing required.

► If any student, faculty, or staff member contracts COVID-19, the School will work with county health officials to determine the areas that need to be cleaned and sanitized, and which members of the community need to remain home for a period of time. In this case, virtual learning will proceed for affected students.

- ◆ If a student or staff member becomes ill during the school day, the classroom teacher or staff member will call the school nurse on duty. The nurse will come to pick up the student or staff member.
 - Anyone present will evacuate the classroom so that it can be sanitized, and the nurse on duty will evaluate whether or not the group needs to go home as well. Contact tracing will ensue as recommended by the county health department.
 - Each campus will have two nursing spaces, one for suspected COVID-19 cases and one for the routine bumps and bruises of school life. Students who are suspected of having COVID-19 will stay isolated until a parent/guardian picks them up.

► All students, faculty, and staff will receive training so that each can adhere to newly established community norms and contribute to a healthy environment when interacting with one another, inside and outside of classrooms.

- ◆ It is vitally important that hygiene education begin at home right now.
 - Teach your children to wash their hands thoroughly.
 - Practice wearing masks properly and for extended periods of time.
 - Remember to wash/sanitize hands before you put a mask on and before you remove it.

► Visitors to campus will be limited, and a stringent visitor policy will be enforced. All visitors will be required to follow the School's safety protocols, which will be shared with them ahead of their visit.

- ◆ During this time, parents and guardians will not be allowed into buildings. Students may be assigned specific drop off locations to facilitate physical distancing.
- ◆ There will be no in-person visiting scholars or experts in classes.
- ◆ Essential repair and delivery people will be allowed on campus. In these cases, they will follow FCS policies and, absent an urgent reason, will not enter areas where school activities or classes are taking place.

Increased Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting of the Physical Plant

► **Friends' Central has invested in the most effective disinfection processes and equipment modification available and has increased cleaning staff to ensure the safety of spaces for all community members.**

- ◆ Air handlers in Shimada, LS Main Building, Shallcross, and the FCC are installing bi-polar ionization to enhance safety.
- ◆ Each evening, all spaces will be sprayed with vital oxide.
- ◆ Throughout the day, cleaning staff will disinfect frequent touchpoints.
- ◆ Touchless faucets have been installed in all bathrooms and Lower School classrooms.
- ◆ Covers have been installed on toilets, and students will be instructed to close toilets before flushing and to wash their hands immediately.
- ◆ Water fountains will be available for touchless bottle filling, but otherwise disabled.
- ◆ Door knobs have been retrofitted for opening with an elbow.

Communication, Coordination of Efforts, and Training to Our “New Normal”

The new normal: Our collective success depends on our community adhering to a stringent, even rigid set of rules designed to keep everyone safe. For example:

- ◆ To reduce the density of people in our hallways, each student and staff member will be assigned to an entry door and a path to their classroom.
- ◆ Hallways will be marked with directional arrows.
- ◆ Student trips to bathrooms will be staggered.
- ◆ Students may be assigned drop-off and pick-up spots.
- ◆ Parents and guardians will not be allowed in buildings.
- ◆ Township buses are likely to assign seating.
- ◆ Students will bring their own, clearly identified water bottles from home.
- ◆ No food will be served in the cafeteria. Box lunches may be available.

► **To support everyone's understanding of our our new normal:**

- ◆ Orientation for all students, parents/guardians, and staff will reinforce safety information.

- ◆ The Family Handbooks for each division will be updated to reflect our current situation.
- ◆ Families will be provided a checklist to help them track added COVID-19-related responsibilities.
- ◆ Signage will be plentiful across both campuses.
- ◆ The community will receive reminders in addition to training.
- ◆ Communication will be frequent and transparent.