



2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR UPDATE

PREPARATION PLANS FOR RE-OPENING
ACADEMIC PLANNING UPDATE: 05.27.2020



- **Our planning framework**
 - What we can do will be framed by the State of Maryland, and the best recommendations of the CDC, WHO, and numerous educational associations that we have mentioned in several communications this spring.
- **State of Maryland Steps:** (MD Steps vs. federal Phases)
 - Step 1: Schools still closed
 - Step 2: Schools open with strict social distancing
 - Step 3: Resume most normal school operations, with additional precautions
- Our best sense at this time is that we will be able to open school on campus in September, (What MD describes as “Step 2I”) but with significant social distancing restrictions in place.
 - In addition to schedule and calendar adjustments, there will need to be hygiene and decontamination procedures, and changes to operations and support programs.

Will School Start On Campus? Operating Parameters and General Plan for the School Year/Calendar:

- **As of now, we expect to start school September 1, unless circumstances dictate something different.** We hope to stick to the academic calendar as currently designed, but we recognize there may emerge a need to adjust the school calendar between now and September, or even during the school year. We will all need to be flexible, and to respond to the changing situation before us during the year.

- **We are seeking to develop ways to have students on campus as many days as possible, within the operating restrictions we are provided.** We can offer the best educational experience for all students when they are on campus with their teachers.
 - We feel this is a **particular priority for the younger students (Preschool-Grade 6).**
 - **Upper grades** may need to utilize some form of **alternating on-campus days and virtual learning days**, depending on what size groups are allowed to congregate.

- Currently we plan to use the academic calendar as currently designed, starting school on September 1st with the currently scheduled breaks. However, this is still subject to change.
 - For example, if the State of Maryland says we can open on campus after September 3rd, we might adjust the start of school by a few days to begin on campus.

Typical School Day with Social Distancing

In general terms, our current understanding is that social distancing under Phase 2 will mean:

- Groups of no more than 10
- All students and staff maintaining 6' physical separation at all times
- Face masks required of students and staff/faculty
- Staggered arrival/dismissal times and/or locations to avoid congregating
- Requirements for handwashing/sanitizing
- No large group gatherings in person (MFW, dining hall, athletics, assemblies, etc.)

A mandate on the limitation on the size of groups is a significant factor in our planning. It dramatically affects scheduling and staffing, and so **we are preparing for different scenarios depending on what public health officials are recommending and allowing.** Right now, this, along with when we can occupy campus, are the most significant variables that affect our ability to be more specific with parents about what school will look like in the fall. When we are provided greater clarity, we will be able to provide families more clarity.

Preserving SSFS's Sense of Community is a priority for us. This is what Tom Gibian refers to as the “magic sauce” of Sandy Spring Friends. As we plan for the fall, we are looking for ways to support this sense of community, within the limitations we are presented, including:

- The importance of seeing people face-to-face
- Virtual MFW, advisory, divisions gatherings, etc.
- Ways to incorporate recess and physical activity into the day, even if we can't have athletics or traditional PE classes.

Student Academic, Emotional, and Social Supports

We expect to have some students who are not able to attend school at the start, or for significant periods of time during the year. And, we may need to move the entire school to virtual learning mode on short notice, depending on the patterns of the pandemic in the coming months. Because of this, **we expect to offer simultaneous virtual and on-campus educational programs, at least in some areas.**

For example:

- Some students may have travel difficulties
- There may be students who are symptomatic/diagnosed with COVID-19 who need to be home to get well.
- Students who need to self-quarantine or whose families need to self-quarantine because of exposure
- We may have Immunocompromised students or those with vulnerable family/household members

If we need a schedule where students are here on different days:

- We expect we may need to accommodate some small number of students in grades 7-12 who cannot be home on alternate days - to provide some form of supervised study for their virtual work. We will do our best to make this a positive, bearable experience.