

informed
prepared
agile

**coming back together
stronger and smarter**

The Walker School

2020-21 Plan

INFORMED

A flexible plan gives us the best chance for health and safety

“Challenges are what make life interesting. Overcoming them is what makes life meaningful.” – Joshua Marine

In the midst of a tremendous challenge, it is often difficult to keep a balanced perspective. Frustration, fear, anxiety grow in such a moment; but so do courage, resilience, and faith in each other. One of the best ways to avoid a “bunker mentality” and be truly INFORMED is to solicit and listen to diverse feedback. This has been our approach throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. I am certainly grateful for the leadership, expertise and diligent work of our teams and board of trustees; thankful for the input of experts, many of whom care deeply for The Walker School, and grateful for the feedback of our parents, faculty and staff. Knowing we are working through this challenge together makes the effort much easier to bear. As a result, we are better informed and our resolve grows, individually and collectively.

In these pages, we want to share our thoughts and plans as we PREPARE to return to campus August 13 for the 2020-21 school year. All of our plans are built upon the fundamental DNA of our school, Walker’s first two Core Values – the infinite worth and dignity of the individual and the reality that learning is the chief priority of this school. Health and safety plans create the context for how teaching and learning will progress in the midst of a health pandemic. We are taking advantage of the summer schedule to plan carefully the logistics of having students on campus in the fall and provide professional development for our faculty on mitigation strategies, technology, and student support. With thoughtful planning, we can deliver the best educational experience in the midst of this unique time.

Our plans must be flexible and adaptable in the face of the unpredictable nature of the public health crisis our communities are facing. Walker’s intimate size as an independent school allows us to be more AGILE than larger schools and to put in additional safeguards while not sacrificing the ability to be on campus. Like you, we are eager to be in community again and be on campus together. But, until we have a medical breakthrough in vaccination or treatment, our planning must allow for dexterity, should the circumstances call for an adjustment. We know that being well-prepared with a flexible plan gives us the best chance of having students on campus early and consistently while not compromising on the safeguards needed for health and safety. This agility will allow us to deliver the world-class educational program where meaningful relationships between students and teachers inspire transformative learning.

We are grateful for your partnership, your feedback, your questions, your counsel.

We are in this together.

JACK HALL, HEAD OF SCHOOL
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We are taking advantage of the summer schedule to plan carefully the logistics of having students on campus in the fall.

INFORMED

Thoughtful planning will help us navigate these unique times

Thoughtfully addressing COVID-19 in a K-12 environment is particularly challenging. **Each day, more than 1,100 students and employees from age 3 to nearing retirement-age fill our campus throughout nine buildings that encompass nearly 220,000 square feet.** We know, based on survey results from families and employees, that members of our community are considered high-risk for COVID-19 and many members of our community go home to loved ones who are high-risk. While our students do not belong to the age category that develops the most severe medical response, our employees and you, our parents, are at greater risk.

The Walker program is designed to be an on-campus experience, and while complete elimination of the risks to our community cannot be achieved while COVID-19 is still a threat, we will strive to mitigate health risks as much as possible to protect our students, parents, faculty and staff.

1

Walker has an advantage in our size and the consistent ways in which our faculty go above and beyond for our students. We are using the summer to:

- Carefully plan the logistics of having students on campus in the fall

2

Providing professional development for our faculty in the following areas:

- Mitigation strategies
- Technology
- Student support

3

With this thoughtful planning, we will deliver the best educational experience in the midst of this unique time. The Walker plan to return to campus is informed by:

- How COVID-19 spreads
- Guidance from federal, state and local public health officials and medical experts within the Walker Community
- Review of national and international school approaches for returning to campus

Resources

Walker is using a variety of sources to develop mitigation strategies and determine when we should move from one scenario to another within our plan. Those include, but are not limited to:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Capital Region BOCES
Minnesota Department of Public Health
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia PolicyLab
Covid Exit Strategy
Resolve to Save Lives
Georgia Department of Public Health
and Cobb-Douglas Department of Health

Public and Private Schools – nationally and internationally
Georgia High School Association
National Federation of State and High School Associations
National Association of Independent Schools
and Southern Association of Independent Schools
Several Walker parents who are in the science, medical
and public health profession

PREPARED

Flexible plan enables seamless transition

Our plan is to start the school year August 13 with all students on campus. The two primary assumptions that undergird the health and safety planning for the 2020-2021 school year are:

- COVID-19 will impact all schools until a vaccine or therapeutic drug becomes widely available.
- All schools must be prepared for future waves of infection.

Walker's four-phased plan is based on the White House plan "Opening Up America Again" and the subsequently released CDC "Activities and Initiatives Supporting the COVID-19 Response and the President's Plan for Opening America Up Again."

GREEN LOW RISK

Cases are rare and contact tracing can be used to control the virus

Large gatherings OK

YELLOW MODERATE RISK

Moderate number of cases, with most cases from a known source

Limit large gatherings & number of students in hallway

ORANGE MEDIUM RISK

Many cases including community spread, with undetected cases likely

In-person groups limited to 10

RED HIGH RISK

Widespread outbreak that is growing with many undetected cases

Restricted access to campus. No students on campus.

Distance Learning

All students on campus daily with class sizes limited by occupancy established for social distancing

Primary School & Lower School on campus with limited class sizes

Middle School & Upper School in Hybrid A/B Day model

Distance Learning available

Campus open with risk mitigation & social distancing strategies enacted

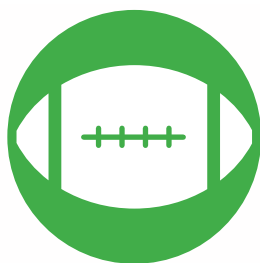
AGILE

On-Campus Learning (Scenarios Green and Yellow)

The Walker administration is planning to begin the 2020-2021 school year on campus August 13. The community will follow specific health precautions in accordance with our local, state and federal requirements. Specific decisions and plans regarding on-campus modifications will be finalized over the next few weeks; however, current considerations can be found on **page 7**.



We do not plan to make any changes to the academic calendar for the 2020-2021 school year (first day of school or school breaks).



Athletics offerings will be determined by GHSA recommendations and requirements.



It is our plan to offer the Extended Day Program for students in Early Learners through Eighth Grade.



Schedules are being created for all divisions to enable seamless transition for students from scenario to scenario. More about these schedules will be shared in upcoming division meetings with parents and students.

All divisions will be on campus

In the Green and Yellow Scenarios, students in all divisions will be on campus every day. Health and safety guidelines will be implemented as necessary to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread.

Distance Learning option

We realize there may be students who require Distance Learning after we have returned to campus. For those cases, we are working on technology and logistics for students to join classes remotely through live streaming or video sessions.

AGILE

Hybrid Learning (Orange Scenario)

We will be in the Hybrid Learning model if the spread of COVID-19 has not slowed enough to allow us to be on campus safely. The Orange Scenario requires Walker to either reduce the total number of students on campus or reduce class sizes. Primary and Lower School students will remain on campus in the Orange Scenario.

The Hybrid Learning scenario combines on-campus and distance learning for our Middle and Upper School students. Classes during distance learning will be offered synchronously, enabling students to maintain connections with their teachers and classmates each day.

Key components to Walker's Hybrid Learning Model



On-campus instruction – two consecutive days

Distance Learning – two consecutive days*

Synchronous Learning during off-campus days

School/Life balance

*We are exploring on-campus care for Middle School students on the days they are in Distance Learning

Distance Learning (Red Scenario)

Walker will only be in Distance Learning if there is a widespread outbreak, a shelter-in-place order or a case on campus that requires us to shut down part of the campus for a period of time.

We are making enhancements to our Distance Learning processes through professional development and based on feedback from parents this spring.

ON CAMPUS

We promise to keep learning about COVID-19 as long as it impacts our community

Walker's 2020-21 plan calls for risk mitigation strategies tailored to the corresponding color-coded scenario and virus situation. The established risk mitigation strategies are based on primary scientific sources and recommendations from the CDC, departments of health and other school systems. The Walker plan, as well as the risk mitigation strategies it calls for, has been reviewed by members of our community who are uniquely qualified to provide guidance and feedback specific to our school – our Walker parents who are also physicians, scientists and public health professionals.

For the protection of our community members, students and faculty will need to bring cloth face coverings to school each day. The use of cloth face coverings is part of an overall strategy to reduce risk. Cloth face coverings allow for additional scheduling flexibility and reduce the restrictions on students' interactions with faculty and other students. The degree to which they will be required and circumstances when they will be required will depend upon the scenario. Walker will continue to review the guidelines for cloth face coverings as additional guidance from medical professionals is provided.

Walker is first and foremost a community of learners. Walker's faculty and staff share the same love of learning and problem-solving that they work each day to cultivate in their students. We promise to keep learning about COVID-19 as long as it impacts the health and safety of our community and to revisit our mitigation strategies and safety enhancements as the medical community provides updated research and guidance.

We are informed, prepared and agile!

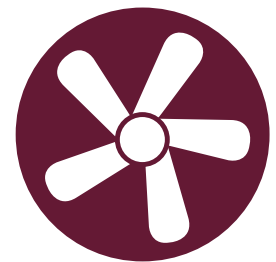
Strategies include, but are not limited to:



Reducing number of students in classes and common areas and altering traffic patterns to maintain proper social.



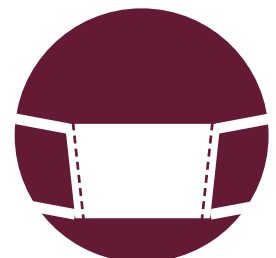
On-campus screening of faculty, staff and students each morning for temperature above 100.4F.



Ventilation systems have been reviewed, filters replaced and outdoor air will be circulated as much as possible.



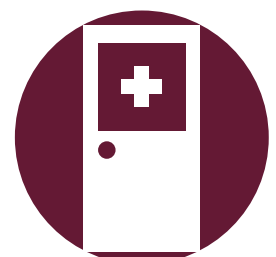
Campus access will be reviewed for parents and visitors.



Cloth face coverings may be required in some scenarios.



Educating students, faculty and staff on proper hygiene.



Rooms designated throughout campus to isolate sick students and employees.

ADMINISTRATION

We are here for you: Contact us if you have questions or concerns



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TASKFORCES

Walker has organized a variety of taskforces to prepare for a successful return to campus

Mission Control

Guided by the mission of the school, this team, chaired by **Jack Hall**, Head of School, is responsible for overseeing the planning process and keeping communication between teams and with the community timely, coordinated, and effective.

Health & Safety

Inspired by Walker's first Core Value – the infinite worth and dignity of the individual – this taskforce, chaired by **Christie Holman**, Chief Financial Officer, is responsible for creating the best plan to keep students, faculty and staff and the families that they go home to safe. They are working to do this by identifying risks and establishing strategies to mitigate those risks. This group, which has led our community so well from its inception in February, is currently working on a plan that will serve as our guide throughout the coming school year. In addition to relying on guidance and data from federal, state and local health agencies, this team is consulting with four medical experts connected to The Walker School.

Teaching & Learning

Focused on Walker's second Core Value – Learning is the chief priority of the school – this taskforce, chaired by **Michael Arjona**, Upper School Head, led our school's remarkable pivot to online learning in early March and is working to develop educational plans for each of the Three Phases established by the Health & Safety Task Force. The plan is to divide this taskforce into two groups, with additional faculty, one for the Primary & Lower divisions and one for the Middle & Upper divisions.

Student Support

In the midst of unprecedented times, nothing could be more important than supporting the emotional health of each and every student. This team, chaired by **Ira Dawson**, Middle School Head, will focus on overall student wellness and serve as a safety net for students who may be struggling academically, socially or emotionally.

Finance

The Walker School always operates with a balanced budget. This team, led by **Christie Holman** and **Scott Gregory**, the Board Finance Committee chair, is working diligently to create financial flexibility for Walker families while maintaining a balanced budget.

Community Engagement

Given that our community is empowered by meaningful relationships, this team, chaired by **Katherine Harrison**, Director of Admission, is focused on helping everyone in the community stay connected through proactive planning and communication with current families, families new to our community, prospective families, donors, former faculty and staff and alumni.

Employee Engagement

One of the key strengths of The Walker School is the faculty and staff. This team, chaired by **Derrick Williams**, Director of Human Resources, is dedicated to making sure all employees are receiving the appropriate support and engagement, ensuring full compliance with evolving health and safety requirements, and keeping personnel policies updated as appropriate to meet the changing situation.

Auxiliary Programs

Led by **Dave Harding**, Director of Summer Programs, and **Trish Dougherty**, Lower School Head, this team has been working diligently this spring to create summer program options that are responsive to the needs presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. Summer programs will be virtual in June. On-campus summer programs will begin in July.

