Park’s community is central to everything we do.

We are eager to be together on campus in the fall and to welcome new faces – both students and faculty – to 171 Goddard Avenue. While uncertainties surrounding COVID-19 may affect our plans, we are excited for the 2020-21 school year to begin on campus.

This fall, as always, a Park education will be student-centered and focused on the whole child — the intellectual, academic, creative, social-emotional, and physical development of each student. Based on current and anticipated conditions related to COVID-19 and the need for a variety of safety protocols, the fall of 2020 will be familiar yet different than a typical semester.

Our plans for opening in the fall, outlined below, are guided by the following principles:
Safeguarding the health and well-being of our community

Park’s highest priority is keeping our community healthy and safe. Every decision and policy we implement is aligned with guidance from infectious disease experts in the Park community, state and local officials, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH), and the Center for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC). This fall, every student and employee will participate in a daily health screening online, and will be asked to stay home if they are feeling ill to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. And, to further protect the health and safety of our community of students and teachers, no parents or visitors will be allowed in the building in order to limit the number of people on campus.

Advancing our mission of academic excellence

Whether learning on campus or at a distance, Park is committed to pursuing academic excellence. While health circumstances may necessitate certain changes or restrictions to daily routines, our goal is to support our students’ learning and development as seamlessly as possible. During the 2020-21 academic year, student-centered learning will take place in every classroom, as well as through synchronous and asynchronous curriculum and instruction should we need to pivot to distance learning.
Fostering and building our community of students, educators, and families

Park has a unique partnership between students, teachers, and families, with dozens of opportunities to connect throughout the year. This spring, when we were unable to gather in person, the School created virtual gatherings – wellness forums, DEI forums, coffees with administrators – for our community to gather for discussion, engagement, and reflection. Despite being physically distant, the Parents’ Association also provided innovative ways to build community: families took part in scavenger hunts and Instagram challenges and students wrote Letters of Love to first responders. Whether on-campus or in a distance format, these ways of connecting and building community, especially for our parents and guardians, will continue to be a way we build connection and sustain community.

Nurturing the Whole Child by emphasizing social-emotional learning

At Park, children develop their whole selves – intellectually, socially, physically, emotionally, and creatively. Recognizing that strong social-emotional skills are crucial to a child’s academic success, we weave social-emotional learning (SEL) throughout every day. While we were away from campus this spring, we compiled social emotional resources for children and families on the PARK+ website. Whether on-campus or in a distance format, social-emotional education is central to our mission and our values, and we will continue to make SEL work a pillar of our students’ experience throughout next year.
Our plan for the fall is designed to maximize social distancing by using clusters as a way to keep subsections of the community isolated from one another to protect the health of the group. Clustering will impact all aspects of the school day from the moment students are dropped off until the moment they are picked up at the end of the day. Academic time will be spent in small clusters determined by homerooms or advisories, and students will share certain aspects of the facilities with their whole grade level, including hallways, bathrooms, and outdoor spaces. Students who attend ASP will be grouped together with classmates from the same grade level. In anticipation of increased faculty absences, we have hired additional permanent substitute teachers to support teaching and learning on-campus.

**Daily Health Management**
- Increased nursing support: 8 a.m.–6 p.m. daily
- Touchless water bottle filling stations

**Classrooms**
- 16 students or fewer per classroom cluster
- Desk placement to maximize social distancing
- Mask-free within classroom cluster

**Bathrooms**
- Designated by cluster
- Limited occupancy at all times
- Increased cleaning

**SCENARIO 1 – On Campus**
In 2020-21, PreK will take place in the ASP Building, located at 255 Goddard Avenue. With its multiple classrooms and designated playground, our youngest children will be able to easily maintain social distancing and avoid contact with older students.

Dining
- Snacks and lunches will be safely packaged and delivered to clusters
- Variety of options to support vegetarian diets and food allergies
- Lunches will use biodegradable packaging

Recess
- Enhanced safety and sanitation practices for playgrounds

Carpool
- School-wide consistent start and end time
- Multiple pick-up and drop-off locations on campus, based on grade level

After-School Program
- ASP will take place in the Main Building to keep grade-based clusters intact
- Enrollment will be capped by grade
- If ASP cannot take place, deposits will be fully refunded
SCENARIO 2 – Distance Learning

In the event that the Park community experiences a spike in COVID-19 cases or local authorities close schools, Park will pivot to remote learning with minimal impact to our academic program. Our approach to distance learning will be a blended approach balancing synchronous and asynchronous techniques informed by our experience last spring, student, parent, and teacher feedback, summer faculty professional development, and research of best practices in distance learning. We are actively considering the needs of dual working families and building out our schedule and framework for the next iteration of distance learning. As in the spring, should we move to distance learning, students will be provided with the technology they need to fully participate in our program.
The uncertainties surrounding public health guidelines for the upcoming year will require that our community be prepared for a variety of possibilities. It is quite likely that we will have to toggle between both the on-campus and distance learning scenarios, and perhaps a hybrid of the two models. We believe that we will be best prepared for the new challenges by remaining flexible and adaptable as the situation dictates. This approach will also allow us to cope with any unexpected infections within the Park community.