

**NOVEMBER 2020 - REVISION 2.0**

Ridgefield Academy/Landmark Preschool

# ROADMAP TO REOPENING

THIS PLAN IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE BASED UPON FURTHER GUIDANCE, EVOLVING PUBLIC HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS AND/OR CHANGES IN CIRCUMSTANCES THAT MAY OCCUR PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE SCHOOL YEAR.

DETAILED PLAN CAN BE FOUND AT  
[www.ridgefieldacademy.org/reopening-plan](http://www.ridgefieldacademy.org/reopening-plan)





## Reopening Plan Introductory Information

Dear Ridgefield Academy and Landmark Preschool Families,

Each summer in mid-July, I send a letter to our school community announcing updates for the new school year. Our work this summer has been focused on the challenging work of compiling a reopening plan for our campuses. This has certainly not been a typical summer, and this update is anything but typical for our community.

I invite you to review the attached reopening plan for the 2020 - 2021 academic year. We are currently planning for a variety of potential scenarios, and decisions on which scenario to implement will change based on conditions within the community. What will not change is our educational programming. As always, Ridgefield Academy and Landmark Preschool will deliver high quality educational and developmental experiences that you have come to expect whether we are on campus or in a remote environment. It is both our hope and our plan to open on each campus on September 1. While our reopening plans focus on how to bring students, faculty, and staff back to campus safely, please know that we are actively planning for all contingencies including continuing to build a robust and engaging remote learning curriculum should we need to move in that direction.

This plan details the specifics for an onsite reopening, as well as additional scenarios, should they become necessary. At the time of this writing, Connecticut's management of the spread of COVID-19 seems quite encouraging and conditions would permit us to open onsite. However, in many other parts of the country that is not the case. Should local conditions change, I am confident that we will be prepared and flexible in the delivery of our program.

Several key principles guide our planning for the upcoming school year. First and foremost is the safety of our students, families, faculty, and staff. We want the members of our school community to come to campus knowing that the school has been diligent in creating the very safest environment possible. Second is fostering an educational program of the highest quality. This is a challenging time to be working in education or attending school as a student, and RA and Landmark have long been known for meeting the individual needs of each child. In all of the outlined scenarios we are dedicated to delivering an educational program that inspires our students to become joyful and accomplished learners, authentically self-assured individuals, and the very best versions of themselves. Our program is strong, comprehensive, and student-centered. That will remain the case, in any and all of these scenarios. Third, we want to protect our sense of community. RA and Landmark have such strong communities, and we want to make sure that we will be able to maintain the interconnectedness that defines us and serves our students so well.

Additionally, we want to make sure that our planning remains fluid and flexible. As conditions change, we need to be able to react to those changes. We need to comply with CDC recommendations, as well as the recommendations of state and local health agencies.

Finally, we are guided by a sense of commitment to the social/emotional well-being of our students. Coming back to school will be a big deal, and students may be anxious and worried. We want to make the return to campus comfortable, natural, and joyful, even if classrooms, activities, and expectations are quite different than in years past.

This plan is organized into 5 distinct components, beginning with a description of our educational program in each of the planned scenarios. We have limited the amount of information in the "summary" of the plan, as it could easily run to 50 pages and we think you can get a full sense of our planning from this surface read. If you want more details, click through on embedded link at the top of each page to obtain far more information.

A strong partnership between our families and the school has never been more important than now. Together, we can make our campuses as safe as they can reasonably be, and that is our goal. By attending Ridgefield Academy and Landmark Preschool, parents and guardians acknowledge an understanding of this plan and agree to do their part in complying with this reopening plan.

I cannot adequately thank the many individuals who spent a considerable part of two months contributing to this plan. I am appreciative and proud of their effort and am confident that the reopening plan will provide a solid framework for a successful 2020 - 2021 academic year!

Sincerely,

Tom Main, Head of School



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A GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND A LEARNING SCENARIO DECISION TREE CAN BE FOUND IN THE FULL ROADMAP TO REOPENING PLAN ON OUR WEBSITE. THE LINK CAN BE FOUND AT THE TOP OF EACH PAGE IN THIS DOCUMENT.





## EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

### INTRODUCTION

We are planning to open the Ridgefield Academy and Landmark Preschool campuses on September 1 for in-person classes, however, we are preparing four scenarios that, together, provide a continuity of learning regardless of modality: the opening of school on campus, periods of fully remote learning, hybrid learning, and parallel remote learning. Faculty have spent the summer developing lessons and activities that can be taught in any of our four scenarios without sacrificing the quality of the experience for students, even if we have to quickly pivot between an in-person class and a remote option. Each scenario ensures the highest quality educational experiences for students while prioritizing the community's health and safety. Students will be engaged in meaningful learning whether on campus, at home, or switching between the two. We recognize that any return to school this fall might be difficult for students, and both their social & emotional well-being and readiness to learn will be priorities. Our school counselor and learning specialists will be available to students and their families to lend social & emotional or academic support regardless of the scenario to ensure a successful start to the school year.

### OPENING OF SCHOOL ON CAMPUS

As detailed in Connecticut's plan to reopen schools and the guidance we have received from New York State, Ridgefield Academy and Landmark Preschool are preparing for on-campus learning in the 2020-2021 school year. An on-campus opening will have a daily schedule similar to what families have seen in the past with modifications made for health and safety purposes, most notably keeping students and teachers in cohorts designed to limit the possible spread of COVID-19 and other diseases. Cohorts will make it easier to perform contact tracing, should that need arise.

**Preschool:** Based on current guidance, students on the Ridgefield and Westport campuses will stay together in cohorts of 14 students per Connecticut's Office of Early Childhood guidelines; students at the Bedford campus will stay together in groups of 15 per the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. Head and assistant teachers will remain with their class cohort throughout the day. Specialist teachers will conduct class in either the cohort classrooms, in the specialist's classroom, outdoors, or via Google Meet as determined to be the safest, most practical approach.

**Lower School:** Students will stay in grade-level cohorts and remain with head teachers throughout the day, keeping to a daily schedule with regular class periods. Assistant teachers and specialist teachers will join classes according to a set schedule. One cohort of students will rotate through specialist classrooms per day, allowing for proper cleaning and disinfection before another cohort visits the same space; specialist teachers will also have the option of conducting classes from the primary classroom, outdoors, or via Google Meet. Students may be allowed to visit shared spaces such as the dining hall and gymnasium if health and safety guidance indicates this would be safe to do with appropriate social distancing.



## EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

(opening of school on campus continued)

**Middle and Upper School:** Students will stay in cohorts by floor of the Annex building: Grade 4 on the first floor, Grades 5 and 6 on the second floor, and Grades 7 and 8 on the third floor except for classes in a science lab dedicated for their use on the second floor. Students will remain in the classrooms assigned to their cohort, attending classes that follow the daily schedule with 40-minute classes. Students will participate in either technology and visual arts classes per half-trimester, rotating between these two courses each trimester. Plans for performing arts classes are still to be determined.

## PERIODS OF FULLY REMOTE LEARNING

If the school decides that local and state recommendations necessitate opening the school year remotely or that campuses must be closed during the school year, students will participate in a fully remote learning scenario with offerings varying in developmentally appropriate ways. Families will be asked to ensure access to a tablet or other computing device to interact with and submit work on an online platform. If a family does not have access, RA/LPS will work with the family to secure the necessary provisions.

**Preschool:** Prior to a day of remote learning, families of preschool students will receive the next day's asynchronous (not happening in real-time) activities by 8 pm. Students will participate in asynchronous activities using the Seesaw online platform. These asynchronous activities will be augmented by synchronous (real-time) one-on-one and small group remote meetings with their teachers via Google Meet during the school day.

**Lower School:** Prior to a day of remote learning, families of lower school students will receive the next day's asynchronous activities by 8 pm. Students will complete asynchronous activities on an online platform (K – Grade 2 using Seesaw and Grade 3 using Google Meet) and participate in synchronous whole-class, small group, and one-on-one meetings via video conferencing. Grade 3 students will be issued school-owned Google Chromebooks to facilitate online classes and assignments. If we do not begin the year in person, Grade 3 students will be invited to campus to pick up their Chromebooks and any other necessary information and materials.

**Middle and Upper School:** Upper School students will participate in synchronous 30-minute remote classes; Middle School students will follow a similar but slightly modified class schedule. Synchronous class meetings will occur via Google Meet, and homework and other asynchronous activities will be assigned in Google Classroom and posted to the Patriot Portal. All students will be issued a school-owned Chromebook, and Upper School students will have the option of using a personally-owned computer.



## HYBRID LEARNING

If local, state, and federal recommendations limit the number of students on campus at a given time, Ridgefield Academy and Landmark Preschool may move to a hybrid learning model that would have some classes taught on campus while others are taught remotely. While we are preparing for the possibility of a period of hybrid learning, we also acknowledge that our small class sizes and the amount of available space both inside and outside of our classrooms make it unlikely that any mandated modifications to preschool or K-8 learning by Connecticut or New York State would trigger this scenario.

During a period of hybrid learning, portions of the student population will be on campus for in-person classes while the remainder of students will participate in remote classes according to a rotating schedule that will ensure a variety of learning experiences for each academic area. Schedules that keep siblings on the same on-campus/off-campus rotation will be developed prior to entering into this scenario.

## PARALLEL REMOTE LEARNING

When Ridgefield Academy and Landmark Preschool are open for on-campus learning, students may need to remain at home because of exposure to COVID-19 or if they are experiencing symptoms. Some families may simply be uncomfortable sending their children to school. Parallel remote learning allows for the greatest level of flexibility in these cases, offering classes with multiple pathways for participation.

Preschool campuses and Kindergarten – Grade 8 classrooms will be outfitted with technology that will allow remote students to participate in in-person classes. Preschool classrooms will share this technology on mobile carts, while K-8 classrooms will have permanent classroom installations. Students learning in-person and students learning remotely will engage together in learning experiences, group work, differentiated groups, and student support. Families of students who participate via the parallel remote learning option will be asked to ensure access to a tablet or other computing device. If a family does not have access, RA/LPS will work with the family to secure the necessary provisions.

**Preschool:** In-person students will participate in lessons and activities with their class cohort. Prior to a day of remote learning, families of preschool students will receive the next day's asynchronous (not happening in real-time) activities by 8 pm. Students will participate in asynchronous activities using the Seesaw online platform. These asynchronous activities will be augmented by synchronous (real-time) one-on-one and small group remote meetings with their teachers via Google Meet during the school day.

**Lower School:** Students will participate in synchronous class meetings alongside their on-campus classmates via Google Meet. They will also participate in asynchronous activities and complete homework via Seesaw (K-2) or Google Classroom (3). Grade 3 students will also be issued school-owned Chromebook computers.



## EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

(parallel remote learning continued)

**Middle and Upper School:** Students will participate in synchronous class meetings alongside their on-campus classmates via Google Meet. They will also participate in asynchronous activities and complete homework assigned in Google Classroom and also posted on the Patriot Portal using school-issued Chromebooks or personal devices.

## SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

We know that this prolonged period of social distancing and alternative ways of interacting socially can produce negative effects on the emotional and social development of children. The pandemic and the resulting changes such as wearing masks and keeping social distance from one another have accentuated the importance of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and our commitment to educate the whole child, build partnerships with parents, and create a strong, supportive community.

SEL is critical to re-engaging students, strengthening relationships, and ensuring that everyone under our roof feels a sense of belonging, feels safe and heard, and can heal and thrive.

The five essential components of the RA/LPS SEL program are:

- Self-awareness
- Self-management
- Social awareness
- Relationship skills
- Resilience

How children respond to the COVID pandemic largely depends on their age. Although other factors such as exposure, family circumstances, and personality play a role, reactions are usually age related. Faculty and staff have been participating in significant professional development focused on SEL and their support for students in this area will be ongoing and designed in age appropriate ways.

For a much more detailed and comprehensive look at social emotional support your children during COVID-19, please refer to the full **Roadmap to Reopening** on our website. The link can be found at the top of each page in this document.



## COMMUNICATIONS

You should expect to hear from us regularly this year; it is our goal to keep you informed of educational and operational updates, changes to policies or procedures, and updates on the health and wellness of members in our community to make certain that safety notifications, guidelines, and changes are known and understood.

You should expect that clear, consistent, and timely communications from key members of our school will be delivered via numerous vehicles including text, email, virtual town hall events, and digital newsletters. A dedicated web page, accessible directly or through the Patriot Portal, will archive all communications and informational resources from the school for easy reference.

In addition to providing updates through the existing communications channels, signage will be placed in key areas and campus access points such as building lobbies, dining halls, bathrooms, common areas, and parking lots to remind students, faculty, and staff of relevant safety protocols such as handwashing and social distancing.

To help you know what to expect, the chart below details the key types of COVID-19 related communications that may occur for the upcoming year:

Situation	Who is informed?	By whom?	Vehicle
Student/Faculty/Staff/ Household Member Tests Positive or is Presumed to Have COVID-19	All parents on Affected Campus or Division/Building to be Referenced	School Nurse/Preschool Director	Text or Email to all
Positive COVID-19 Situation at School	All parents on Affected Campus; Division/Building to be Referenced	School Nurse/Preschool Director	Text or Email to all
Institutional News	All Parents	Head of School	Email & Newsletter
Divisional or Campus News	Parents of the Division or Campus Impacted	Division Head or Preschool Director	Email & Newsletter
Grade Level News	Parents of the Grade Impacted	Division Head	Email
Class or Preschool Cohort News	Parents of the Class or Preschool Cohort Impacted	Division Head or Preschool Director	Email





## REPOPULATING CAMPUSES

### ORIENTATION

Ridgefield Academy and Landmark Preschool will provide clear communication which will support the successful implementation of all COVID-19-related protocols and procedures. This communication will include letters, web pages, student orientations, town hall meetings, divisional meetings, faculty meetings, as well as this plan in its entirety. Much of this communication will be in advance of the opening of school, and will continue as students return and their teachers work through protocols with them.

### PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT - MASKS

Consistent with Connecticut, Office of Early Childhood (OEC), and New York State guidelines, all students will wear masks indoors, removing them at specific times (mask 'breaks' or lunch/snack, for instance). This includes Preschool students ages three and older in alignment with the 9/29/20 Connecticut OEC *Coronavirus Memo #29*. Two-year-olds will not be asked to wear masks. Two-year-olds will not be asked to wear masks. Faculty, staff, and students will all wear masks in accordance with public health guidelines. Specific staff (health care workers, kitchen, or custodial staff) will follow any special mandated PPE requirements for their jobs. Due to the frequency in which they slip off, bandanas are not an acceptable substitute for a mask.

For more specific information on masks, please refer to the full **Roadmap to Reopening** on our website. The link can be found at the top of each page in this document.

### CLASSROOMS

Classrooms have been measured and arranged to allow for appropriate social distancing, complying with local and national standards. RA/LPS is fortunate to have small class sizes and fairly large classroom spaces, and is able to accomplish social distancing through careful planning of the layout of the classroom spaces, rather than reducing students' time on campus. For example, unnecessary furniture, some rugs, and other items that are either bulky or hard to sanitize have been removed, making cleaning easier and creating more space to socially distance desks. In addition, when possible, faculty will conduct classes outside in designated out-of-doors classroom spaces.



## REPOPULATING CAMPUSES

(continued)

### COMMON SPACES

Extensive thought and planning have been given to our common spaces: cafeterias, playgrounds, hallways, libraries, and places where students may congregate or gather. In each case, we will assure that social distancing guidelines are adhered to, and that space will be occupied by one cohort, and thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before being occupied by another cohort.

### LUNCH

Lunch is an important time in the lives of our students. It is a time to socialize and for us to promote healthy eating and nutrition habits.

- The Bedford campus does not serve lunch due to the hours of the program.
- Westport students will continue to bring their own lunches and eat in their cohorted classrooms.
- Ridgefield campus preschool students will continue to bring their own lunches or their parents will order through an online platform and students will eat in their cohorted classrooms.
- Students in K-8 will eat by cohort in the Dining Hall, Commons, classroom or outside. Students eating in the Dining Hall or Commons will be separated by plexiglass dividers.
- K-8 students will order from an online menu platform each morning and receive their chosen individually packaged meal at their designated time and location.

### CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

Disinfection measures include (but are not limited to):

- Hand sanitizers will be available in multiple spaces in all buildings, classrooms, and additional locations.
- Disposable wipes will be available in all bathrooms, classrooms, and other shared facilities for wiping down surfaces.
- Teachers will have sanitizing kits in each classroom to enable them to disinfect surfaces and materials as needed during the day.
- Students, faculty, and staff are reminded to wash hands frequently. Protocols are in place for hand washing/sanitizing steadily over the course of each day.
- Public spaces, corridors, office spaces, and bathrooms are cleaned regularly.



## REPOPULATING CAMPUSES

(cleaning and disinfection continued)

In accordance with the State of Connecticut's Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection of Schools during the COVID-19 Pandemic, surfaces will be cleaned throughout the day and a COVID-19-trained cleaning crew will do a thorough cleaning of each facility each evening.

To see the State of Connecticut's Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection of Schools during the COVID-19 Pandemic, please refer to the full Roadmap to Reopening on our website. The link can be found at the top of each page in this document

### HVAC

To the extent possible, the school will work to increase ventilation rates or the percentage of outdoor air circulating in ventilation systems, improve air filtration, reduce recirculation, and disable demand-controlled ventilation.

### OUTDOOR SPACES

With a 42 acre campus in Ridgefield, a beautiful slice of open land with play equipment in Bedford and two outdoor play areas in Westport, another significant component to our reopening plan is the use of outdoor spaces for both play and learning.

When weather and schedules permit, cohorts or classes will take advantage of fresh air by using outdoor spaces which have been shown to pose a lower risk of transmission and reduce the burden on indoor classrooms.

For details on how the Ridgefield campus will use its outdoor spaces, please refer to the full **Roadmap to Reopening** on our website. The link can be found at the top of each page in this document.

### TRAVEL

All students, faculty, and staff are advised to avoid non-essential travel domestically and internationally, and should essential travel be required, to inform the school of the details. Students, as well as family members, and employees who travel to a CDC or CT/NY Travel Advisory State or Country will be asked to remain off campus for 14 days upon return in accordance with government-issued quarantining requirements OR shall comply with their state issued negative test result requirements.



## REPOPULATING CAMPUSES

( continued )

### VISITOR ACCESS

In an effort to limit the possible spread of COVID-19, we have changed our visiting policy, based on the recommendations of health and government officials. We recognize that families will miss the welcoming invites to classroom activities and performances, but it is important that we reduce the number of visitors for prevention reasons.

For specific protocols for visitors on campus, please refer to the full **Roadmap to Reopening** on our website. The link can be found at the top of each page in this document.

### TRANSPORTATION

Ridgefield Academy and Landmark Preschools will abide by the following protocols for arrival and dismissal across all three campuses. RA is working closely with designated busing providers to ensure appropriate safety and wellness policies for riders.

For specific details concerning drop-off and arrival and busing procedures, please refer to the full **Roadmap to Reopening** on our website. The link can be found at the top of each page in this document.



## HEALTH, SAFETY & CONTAINMENT

Every member of our school community plays an important role in keeping our students and families, faculty, and staff safe. Even with the best safety measures in place, it is important for every member of our community to act responsibly and follow the latest health guidelines as they relate to mitigating the spread of COVID-19. As a community, if we are all highly attentive to these safety measures, collectively, we will be a safer place and more likely to be able to keep our campuses open for in-person learning. At this time, there is no known way to completely eliminate risk; safety measures focus instead on actions that keep risks to a minimum.



## HEALTH, SAFETY & CONTAINMENT

(continued)

To that end, prominent signage at the entrance to each campus will ask you to confirm your own health status before coming on campus. This is what the sign will say:

- **Welcome! By arriving on campus, you are confirming that:**
  - **You do not have a temperature**
  - **You feel well and do not have any signs of illness**
  - **You have not traveled to any restricted areas**
  - **You have not been in close contact with anyone diagnosed with COVID-19**

**Monitoring:** The CDC recommends that students, faculty, and staff will:

- Avoid contact with those known to be ill from COVID-19 or any other communicable illness.
- Stay home when, and observe for possible symptoms of COVID-19.
- Practice social distancing and mask wearing and hand hygiene.

**Testing:** Currently, the school nurse or preschool director will request a student, faculty, or staff member suspected of having COVID-19 or having had close contact with someone positively diagnosed to either consult with their physician or self-initiate a COVID-19 test. As information on testing (or repeat testing, if applicable) of students, faculty, and staff evolves, RA/LPS's requirements will always be in accordance with recommendations from local and state health authorities, as well as CDC guidelines.

## CONTAINMENT SPACES AND PROTOCOLS

**Ridgefield:** Students with symptoms will be brought to the designated containment room near the gym entrance in the Summit Building to be monitored by the nurse until a parent or guardian arrives. An air purifier will be utilized in the nurse's office and containment area.

**Bedford:** Individuals with symptoms will be brought to a designated, unused classroom enclosed by a plastic curtain and identified as a containment space. The student will be monitored by a designated staff member in PPE until a parent or guardian arrives. An air purifier will be utilized in this containment area.

**Westport:** Individuals with symptoms will be brought to a designated containment space with an adjacent bathroom that has been designated as a containment room. The student will be monitored by a designated staff member in PPE until a parent or guardian arrives. An air purifier will be utilized in this containment area.





## HEALTH, SAFETY & CONTAINMENT

(continued)

Students who experience COVID-19 symptoms must obtain a note from their healthcare provider with an alternate diagnosis in order to return to school without having quarantined.

## CONTACT TRACING & REPORTING

**Contact Tracing:** Contact tracing for exposure will be conducted and coordinated through each campus' local, respective health department: Ridgefield, Westport, and Westchester County.

**Collecting Information About COVID-19 Cases:** If a student or employee is experiencing symptoms, has had a possible exposure to COVID-19, or tests positive for the virus, the parent/guardian or employee must inform the nurse (Ridgefield campus) or preschool director (Bedford and Westport campuses) by phone call or email.

If a student/faculty/staff/parent tests positive or is presumed to have COVID-19, the nurse or preschool director will notify the head of school, school administrators, director of facilities, and the local health department.

The school will maintain a reporting and tracking form on each campus to record these cases and associated absences.

A more detailed explanation of Health, Safety and Containment procedures can be found in the full Roadmap to Reopening on our website. The link can be found at the top of each page in this document.



## CAMPUS SHUTDOWN

While a primary focus of the Reopening Plan and Task Force work has been to prepare to welcome students back to campus in the fall to a full five-day schedule of on-campus instruction, the pandemic has necessitated a flexible, multi-faceted approach that also allows for the possibility of a move to hybrid learning or a return to fully remote learning at any time during the year due to exposure within a cohort, building, or closed campus. Decisions regarding closure will be made collaboratively with school leadership or at the requirement of local health officials or Governor orders, if it is determined that a statewide shutdown is to occur.



## CAMPUS SHUTDOWN

(continued)

As noted, in any of the previous situations, if a part (cohort, building, or campus) of the school needs to shut down for any period of time during the school year, Ridgefield Academy and Landmark Preschool is fully prepared to provide continuous instruction for all of its preschool through 8th grade students. The specifics of each scenario are detailed in the Educational Program section of this document.

If a serious outbreak occurs and orders of closure are from the local authorities, they will contact the head of school directly. The head of school will initiate established protocols of communication to alert the school community. Communication to a local health department will be handled by the nurse (Ridgefield), preschool director (town of Westport or Westchester County Dept. of Health), or head of school.

## RESOURCES

including but not limited to

- Center for Disease Control (CDC)
- Connecticut
  - Department of Education Reopening Schools Plan
  - Association of Independent Schools (CAIS)
  - Office of Early Childhood: Guidance for Child Care COVID-19 Response
  - Reopen Connecticut
  - Trumbull, CT COVID policy draft , Lynn Steinbrick RN MSN, et al,
- New York
  - Child Care and Day Camps:
    - Childcare\_and\_Summer\_Camps\_Summary.pdf
    - Child\_Care\_Daycamps\_Detailed\_Guidelines.pdf
    - NYS\_BusinessReopeningSafetyPlanTemplate.pdf
- Pennsylvania Dept. of Education, Resources for School Communities During COVID-19

The full **Roadmap to Reopening** for Ridgefield Academy and Landmark Preschool can be found at: [www.ridgefieldacademy.org/reopening-plan](http://www.ridgefieldacademy.org/reopening-plan)

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