



2020/21

SCHOOL PLAN

08/04/20 PRELIMINARY DRAFT



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Stay Informed

These policies and protocols are subject to change; you can find the latest updates at [sidwell.edu/Fall2020](https://www.sidwell.edu/Fall2020).

Philosophy Statement

Sidwell Friends School is a dynamic educational community grounded in the Quaker belief that there is “that of God in everyone.” Individually and collectively, we challenge ourselves to pursue excellence in academic, athletic, and artistic realms. We are committed to the joys of exploration and discovery. Differences among us enhance intellectual inquiry, expand understanding, and deepen empathy. The Quaker pillars of the School inspire active engagement in environmental stewardship, global citizenship, and service. We find strength in reflection and shared silence. At the heart of each endeavor, we strive to discern deeper truths about ourselves and our common humanity, preparing students and adults to “let their lives speak.”

Diversity Statement

Sidwell Friends School affirms the centrality of diversity and inclusion in all aspects of academic and campus life. Honoring a multiplicity of voices, we celebrate shared joys and address tensions productively. Together, we are guided by Quaker testimonies and seek to answer the question, “How do we nurture a sense of belonging in our community and demonstrate our commitment to a just world?”

Board of Trustees

Approved September 10, 2015

Guiding Principles and Introduction

Last March, Sidwell Friends closed its campuses and transitioned to distance learning to protect all members of the community. As we plan now for the 2020/21 academic year, we do so with the key priorities of the safety and well-being of our community in mind, while offering the best educational experience possible and lifting up our School's mission, which is grounded in Quaker values. Despite the many challenges that lie ahead, Sidwell Friends remains deeply committed to nurturing each student in our care, illuminating the Light within, and discovering "that of God" in each child. Our steadfast commitment to equity, justice, and inclusion will drive all of our plans and programs.

Our planning has been informed by guidance issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the state of Maryland, Montgomery County, and the District of Columbia, as well as guidance issued by Harvard's T.H. Chan School of Public Health and other resources. In addition, the School's Emergency Response Task Force extensively researched school reopening plans issued by independent schools in Asia and Europe that reopened campuses in the spring, as well as guidance issued by the National Association of Independent Schools, the Friends Council on Education, and the Association of Independent Schools of Greater Washington. The Task Force has also conferred with the School's Medical Advisory Team, comprising physicians, epidemiologists, infectious-disease specialists, and public health officials.

In response to the adverse impact the global pandemic has had on education for children, the American Academy of Pediatrics issued a statement "strongly advocat[ing] that all policy considerations for the coming school year start with a goal of having students physically present in school." We share this priority and believe that in-person learning for our students is best, not only for academic and intellectual development but for social-emotional learning, mental health, and building community. Our plans aim to keep our students, faculty, and staff safe while creating as many opportunities for in-person engagement as feasible.

To develop plans for the 2020/21 academic year, Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs Min Kim and Director of Health Services Jasmin Whitfield worked closely with each division and athletics to develop plans. Knowing the unpredictable nature of the transmission and spread of COVID-19, divisional committees were instructed to develop plans for in-person learning, an improved approach to distance

PLANNING IN A PANDEMIC

As current news stories indicate, the spread of COVID-19 continues to fluctuate throughout the nation. Conclusive scientific findings and effective public health measures are still emerging and, in their absence, schools are forced to rely on the most updated thinking available.

Given the many factors involved, a community's ability to manage through the situation is highly dependent on a unified and disciplined approach to adhering to stringent protocols. Everyone must do their part, consistently and mindfully.

It is important to note that as the local response to the pandemic changes due to unforeseen circumstances (e.g., research and major public health findings, local policy changes, a surge in the number of local cases), the School has prepared this plan in order to allow the community to adapt and shift between learning modes swiftly and efficiently.

The School may need to evaluate metrics on a divisional level based on age-appropriate learning, and may need to prioritize bringing our youngest students back to campus for as much in-person learning as possible with health and safety protocols in place.

We value and appreciate the continued patience, flexibility, and cooperation of every community member.

learning, and a hybrid approach of in-person learning combined with distance learning.

The key guiding principles that informed planning:

- Protecting the health and well-being of our community
- Offering an enriching educational experience for the intellectual and emotional growth of our students regardless of mode of delivery
- Creating opportunities for students to form strong relationships with our talented faculty and with one another
- Ensuring that our commitment to equity, justice, and inclusion shapes and informs our programs
- Fostering a strong sense of community grounded in Quaker values

Sidwell Friends Community Expectations and Responsibilities

The health and well-being of our students, faculty, and staff are of utmost importance and have been prioritized in all of the School's plans. In order to keep everyone in our community safe, it is vital that each community member monitor their own health and remain home if they are not feeling well. A new daily self-health screening will serve as a constant reminder for each of us to pay close attention to our own health in order to protect ourselves and other community members. Adhering to the health and safety protocols is an expression of respect toward others and a way for us to uphold the well-being of our community. Students will have access to online learning on days they are absent due to self-isolation. Prior to returning to in-person learning, families who will be sending their children to campus will be required to review and sign our Friends Take Care of Friends Return-to-Campus Waiver, acknowledging that they understand and will adhere to the safety protocols and policies. The School reserves the right to require 100 percent distance learning for noncompliant students.

The School expects all community members to:

- Record and submit a daily health-screening questionnaire using an app.
- Refrain from coming to the School if exhibiting any of the COVID-19 symptoms (fever of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, new or worsening cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, new loss of smell or taste, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, unusual fatigue or body aches).
- Follow all safety protocols and policies, including wearing face coverings and maintaining a distance of six feet from others.
- Adhere to a 14-day isolation period if tested positive for COVID-19 or quarantine for 14 days if known to have been in direct, close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Comply with the local laws and health orders of DC and Montgomery County.

Testing for COVID-19

The School is currently evaluating the feasibility of diagnostic testing based on the latest data, timing, availability, and reliability of tests. Periodic and ongoing testing for certain groups (e.g., teachers, cleaning staff, kitchen staff, student athletes, coaches, those who have been exposed to a confirmed COVID-19 case) may be conducted throughout the year.

Virtual Parent/Guardian Programs

Parents and guardians are an integral part of the Sidwell Friends community, and the ongoing partnership with our families will be vital to maintaining a strong sense of community, especially amid a pandemic that requires physical distancing. As we learned this past spring, engaging parents and guardians through regular communication and virtual events is key to providing students with the support network they need and are vital as we work together to address ongoing challenges. The School will continue to provide regular communication with our families and will hold virtual parent programs in lieu of in-person events for the 2020/21 academic year.

In order to mitigate viral transmission, only students, faculty, and staff will be permitted to enter the campus and School buildings. All parent/guardian programs, including parent/guardian meetings with principals, counselors, and teachers, will move to a virtual format. Back-to-School Night and parent-teacher conferences will also be held virtually, as well as all Parents Association events. No visitors will be allowed on campus, including parents. The School will work closely with the leadership of the Parents Association to ensure that ongoing communication and programs for families continue seamlessly.

Updated health and safety protocols that the School will implement can be found on page 12.

Learning Modes

Until an effective vaccine is developed, the School will need to rely on plans that allow us to be agile and flexible, moving between in-person and distance learning with minimal disruption. Sidwell Friends recognizes the importance of in-person learning for students and will provide as much in-person learning as possible within the safety parameters that require physical distancing of students and reduced capacity within the campus buildings.

THREE MODES OF LEARNING

LEARNING MODE	DESCRIPTION	SELECT SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS & CRITERIA
100% In-Person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional in-person school mode • Five days a week • No physical distancing restrictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CDC, local health officials, Sidwell Friends Medical Advisory Team encourage reopening campuses without safety measures and spacing requirements • Local infection rates are low and an effective vaccine is widely available • Area benchmarking schools reopen campuses fully • All students allowed to attend school in person daily with as many as 16 to 24 students in each classroom
Hybrid Mode Possible Options	<p>Students engage in in-person and distance learning on designated days</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option 1: In-person Learning 1 day/week • Option 2: In-person Learning 2 days/week • Option 3: In-person Learning 4 days/wk for PK-4 2 days/week for 5-12 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CDC, local health officials, Sidwell Friends Medical Advisory Team encourage reopening school campuses with strict safety measures • Local infection rates are low to medium • Established metrics indicate campus is ready to be reopened • No more than 10 to 12 students per cohort
100% Distance Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students engage in learning remotely using digital and online platforms and resources • Regular daily schedule with synchronous sessions and asynchronous learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CDC, local health officials, the Sidwell Friends Medical Advisory Team recommend the closing of School campuses • Established metrics indicate campus closure • Rising rates of infection in the local area • Multiple known cases of infection in the Sidwell Friends community • Area benchmarking schools close campuses

100 Percent In-Person Learning Mode

This mode for learning allows students to engage in in-person learning on the School campus five days a week, following a traditional academic day and calendar. The 100 percent in-person learning mode will be employed when public health officials determine that there is a low risk of transmission of COVID-19, and schools are able to reopen campuses without physical distancing measures.

Hybrid Learning Mode

This mode allows students to engage in both in-person learning and distance learning on designated days. There are several options for a hybrid approach with varying lengths of time for in-person learning and distance learning, but each option allows for deep cleaning of the campus during a designated distance learning day. In a hybrid learning mode, students will be kept in intact cohorts of 10 to 12 students and one teacher. The School will make decisions regarding which hybrid option to use based on established metrics for campus reopening. The School may develop additional options for a hybrid approach if new evidence and data reveal that alternative approaches will create or maintain a safer environment that is more optimal for the student learning experience.

POSSIBLE HYBRID MODE OPTIONS*

OPTION 1	Grades PK-12 on campus for in-person learning one day/week and distance learning four days/week
OPTION 2	Grades PK-12 on campus for in-person learning two days/week and distance learning three days/week
OPTION 3	Grades PK-4 on campus for in-person learning four days/week and distance learning one day/week
	Grades 5-12 on campus for in-person learning two days/week and distance learning three days/week

**The School may develop additional options for a hybrid approach if new evidence and data reveal that alternative approaches will create a safer environment that is more optimal for the student learning experience.*

100 Percent Distance-Learning Mode

This mode allows students to engage in learning remotely from their homes using digital and online platforms and resources. Students will follow a regular daily schedule with a set number of synchronous class sessions with teachers and classmates, as well as the ability to access course materials for asynchronous learning. The School learned important lessons after transitioning into 100 percent distance learning in the spring, and we updated the distance-learning

mode to include greater consistency and frequency of synchronous class sessions, improved course structure, and improved communication between teachers and students. Additionally, the School will deploy new technology to facilitate a more cohesive experience (see Technology Updates below). Some students may opt for the 100 percent distance-learning mode (e.g., families uncomfortable sending their children to School, students with underlying health conditions, and/or those who live in a household with someone in a high-risk category) while continuing to participate in the School year.

The School will move all students to the 100 percent distance-learning mode if public health officials determine there is a high risk of transmission of COVID-19 in a school setting, even with physical distancing and other safety protocols in place.

Technological Tools and Infrastructure

Sidwell Friends has invested in its technology infrastructure to provide students and teachers with the technological tools needed for optimal in-person and distance learning. We have moved to a single School-wide learning management system to allow students easy access to all educational materials. All students, PK through 12, will be issued School-owned and School-supported devices (iPads or laptops) to ensure equitable access to tools and materials. Synchronous online class sessions will use the same School-wide platform for consistency and ease of use, and expanded outdoor Wi-Fi will allow classes to be held in outdoor spaces around campus. Families who require School support for home Wi-Fi should contact Director of Admissions and Financial Aid Frankie Brown.

Technology Updates:

- Use of a single high-functioning and flexible learning management system (Canvas) for ease of access to educational materials
- A School-wide 1:1 device program to ensure equity of access and experience (new program in US; existing 1:1 program in LS and MS)
- Use of Zoom for Education as a School-wide platform for synchronous online classes
- Expanded Wi-Fi in outdoor areas for outdoor classes

Metrics for Opening the Campuses for In-Person Learning

We will make the decision to reopen the School campuses by examining several different metrics—including local guidelines issued by the DC and Maryland Departments of Health—analyzing positivity rates from the diagnostic testing conducted on students and employees if available, as well as faculty/staff availability. We will also examine additional metrics, including syndromic surveillance (i.e., student absenteeism and reports of influenza-like illnesses) as well as community compliance with safety protocols.

Below is a draft of the metrics the School is considering employing to make these decisions.

METRICS FOR OPENING THE CAMPUSES FOR IN-PERSON LEARNING*

CATEGORY	KEY QUESTION	INDICATOR	TRIGGERS/THRESHOLDS
Local Guidelines	How controlled is the pandemic in the DC area?	DC, MD, and VA Reopening phases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay at home, Phase I (campuses closed) Phases II, III (campuses may open)
Faculty/Staff Availability	Do we have the necessary number of faculty/staff to cover all classes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hiring of additional faculty/staff has been completed Substitutes available 	100% faculty/staff and/or substitutes available to cover classes
Resource Availability, Equipment & Facilities	<p>Do we have all necessary equipment and PPE available to protect employees and students?</p> <p>Is the campus ready to receive students and teachers?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Availability of PPE (e.g., face coverings, gloves, gowns) and hand sanitizer Plexiglass dividers for desks in place Air purifiers in each classroom HVAC balancing and repair completed 	100% of equipment in place and inventory well stocked in order to open campuses
Area Schools	Are AISGW schools reopening for in-person learning?	AISGW schools open for in-person learning	
Student/Parent Response	How many families are opting for 100% distance learning?	Increasing number of families request 100% distance learning for their child(ren)	If more than 75% of families opt for distance learning, School may shift to 100% distance learning

**Adapted from the OpenSmart guidelines*

METRICS FOR CLOSING CAMPUSES FOR IN-PERSON LEARNING*

CATEGORY	KEY QUESTION	INDICATOR	TRIGGERS/THRESHOLDS
Local Guidelines	How controlled is the pandemic in the DC area?	DC, MD, and VA Reopening phases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay at home, Phase I (campuses closed) Phases II, III (campuses may open)
Syndromic Surveillance	Are there early signs of disease resurgence?	Absenteeism, influenza-like illnesses reported to Health Office	Increase of reporting over 7-14 day period may trigger campus closure
Faculty/Staff Availability	Do we have the necessary number of faculty/staff available to cover classes?	Absenteeism	Increase of reporting over 7-14 day period may trigger campus closure
Resource Availability, Equipment & Facilities	Do we have all necessary equipment and PPE available to protect employees and students?	Availability of PPE (e.g., face coverings, gloves, gowns) and hand sanitizer	100% of equipment in place and inventory well stocked in order to open campuses
Student/Parent Response	How many families are opting for 100% distance learning?	Increasing number of families request 100% distance learning for their child(ren)	If more than 75% of families opt for distance learning, School may shift to 100% distance learning
Area Schools	Are AISGW schools closing?	AISGW schools close for in-person learning	
Community acceptability/ behaviors	Is the community habitually complying with requirements and recommendations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student, faculty/staff compliance with physical distancing, mask wearing, etc. Daily health screening data submission 	Increase in % of non-compliance with other metrics may trigger campus closure

**Adapted from the OpenSmart guidelines*

Phased Reopening of Campus

When Sidwell Friends reopens its campuses, the School will bring students back to campus using a staggered approach, beginning with our youngest learners. The staggered approach to reopening will give students the chance to get acclimated to the new classroom configurations and safety protocols. The exact details of the staggered reopening schedule will be shared prior to the opening of the campuses.

Athletics and Physical Education

Sidwell Friends is a member of two athletics leagues, the Independent School League and the Middle Atlantic Conference, which have canceled interscholastic athletic competitions for the fall of 2020. If conditions allow and restrictions for athletic competitions are lifted, all three seasons will be compressed into the period between January and May of 2021.

In lieu of competition, the Physical Education and Athletics Program will offer comprehensive skills training, and fitness and health education, prioritizing safety and student wellness. Physical distancing measures will be in place while allowing students to engage in physical activity, training, skills development, and team- and community-building activities. Outdoor spaces will be used, weather permitting.

If the School is operating in the distance-learning mode, Athletics and Physical Education will be conducted virtually.

Lower School Physical Education Program

- Children will focus on gross motor skill development using outdoor spaces.
- Gym may be used with proper physical distancing in small intact cohorts.
- Small cohorts will remain intact for physical education.
- Students will maintain a minimum distance of six feet from one another.
- Students will avoid sharing equipment whenever possible.
- Shared equipment will be cleaned and disinfected between users.
- Handwashing protocols will be in place before and after physical education.

Middle and Upper School Physical Education and Athletics Program

The School will schedule physical education classes and athletics programs for Middle and Upper School students at the end of the academic day. Specific details regarding the physical education and athletics schedule will be published prior to the start of the academic year. Middle School students will be allowed

to opt out of physical education and athletics. Until restrictions regarding locker room use are lifted, students participating in physical education or athletics will come to School wearing comfortable clothing and shoes appropriate for physical activity. Students will be able to choose either team sports or physical education classes.

Team Sports

- High-level skill development
- Detailed instruction in individual mechanics
- Tactical sessions
- Video analysis
- Nutritional counseling and personalized strength and conditioning programs
- Identity, camaraderie, and accountability gained by completing a program with teammates
- Off-season sports that allow athletes to develop their skills in a traditionally winter or spring sport in addition to a fall sport

Physical Education Classes

- Popular areas of fitness available to students who opt out of team sports
- Optional Saturday sessions for supplemental training with coaches and access to safe, monitored, physically-distanced outdoor space

Safety Protocols for Athletics and Physical Education

The Athletics department will continue to update its plans and consult with local and national organizations, such as the National Federation of High School Associations (NFHS) and the Maryland Sports Commission, in order to determine appropriate protocols needed to make any offered sport and activity as safe as possible. Until local authorities and our leagues lift restrictions for school athletics, student athletes will engage in skills practice and physical training and refrain from activities that involve close contact. The Physical Education and Athletics Program will issue additional guidelines and safety protocols for athletes.

Safety Protocols for Athletics and Physical Education

- Appropriate physical distancing of six feet maintained on sidelines and benches during practices
- Physical distancing of 12 feet during active drills
- No close physical contact between students during drills
- No locker room or weight room use until further notice
- No sharing of athletic towels, clothing, or shoes
- No shared water bottles; students must use their own
- Workouts conducted in cohorts of students, with the same cohorts working out together on a regular basis
- Virtual team meetings encouraged whenever possible and feasible
- All athletic equipment, including balls, cleaned during workouts
- Individual drills requiring the use of shared athletic equipment permitted, with cleaning before use by the next individual
- All athletic equipment, including balls, cleaned after each workout and prior to the next workout
- No spectators or live audiences
- No team huddles
- No shaking hands or fist bumps
- No spitting
- No sunflower seeds

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Co-Curricular and Auxiliary Programs

The wide array of co-curricular and auxiliary programs offered at Sidwell Friends is an important part of the student experience. In order to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, the School will modify student activities to allow for physical distancing and to support the use of virtual and online platforms in lieu of large, in-person gatherings. In Middle and Upper School, club meetings will move to an online platform. Students can participate in virtual interscholastic conferences and competitions for Model UN, debate, chess, MATHCOUNTS, etc., but the School is suspending in-person conferences and competitions. Choral ensembles, instrumental music ensembles that involve wind instruments, and theatrical productions will move to an online format, and they will livestream their performances until local authorities lift restrictions for large gatherings. The School will use a virtual platform for student assemblies, special programs, and speakers. Weekly Meetings for Worship will be held in small cohort groups or virtually.

The following types of events and activities have been suspended for 2020/21

- Off-campus field trips
- Overnight trips
- In-person interscholastic events (debate tournaments, math competitions, Model UN conferences, etc.)
- Large in-person group events, such as school dances, assemblies, etc.
- Live audiences for theatrical and musical performances

Lower School Aftercare

In a hybrid learning mode, Lower School Aftercare will be offered for Lower School children in grades PK-3 on the Bethesda campus. Students in grade 4 will have access to Aftercare on the DC campus. Students will remain in small cohorts with physical distancing.

Middle School Aftercare

In a hybrid learning mode, Middle School Aftercare will be available for students in grades 5 and 6 on the DC Campus. Students will remain in small cohorts with physical distancing.

Intercampus Shuttle Service

We continue to explore the feasibility of offering transportation between the DC and Bethesda campuses. We will share additional information regarding availability and pricing shortly.

Health and Safety Policies and Procedures

To support the effort to provide a safe, healthy environment during the COVID-19 pandemic, Sidwell Friends is instituting the following health and safety policies and procedures. Our Medical Advisory Team, comprising physicians, epidemiologists, infectious disease specialists, and public health officials, has collaborated with our on-campus Health Services Team to provide guidance so that every member of our community is protected as much as possible.

The enhanced health and safety protocols are intended to mitigate the risk of transmission of COVID-19 based on current research available, whether via personal proximity, airborne transmission, or surface spread. These actions include monitoring personal health and erring on the cautious side before entering campus, maintaining safe distances from one another, and exercising diligence with personal coverings and hand hygiene. The effectiveness of these measures requires every person in the community to consistently observe the following steps.

As a reminder, all parents/guardians must submit updated student health forms for each student before starting school. Contact the Health Services Team if you have questions.

Campus Arrival Protocols

Before leaving home, parents/guardians will take their student's temperature and use an app to answer basic health questions. The questionnaire should be completed no later than one hour before arrival at school. Students who answer "yes" to any of the medical questions and/or have a temperature of 100 degrees or higher may not come to school and should, if their health permits, engage in distance learning for that day.

Staggered drop off times will reduce the number of students simultaneously arriving on campus (you will receive your student's time slot later in the summer). Students should not arrive on campus until their parent/guardian has completed the medical check via the app. Lower School parents will remain in the car with their student(s) until staff confirms that the medical check has been completed; students will then enter through designated doorways. Similarly, Middle and Upper School students may also enter campus once staff confirms that the medical check has been completed. Any student who presents to the health office with COVID-related symptoms will

not be allowed to return to the classroom and will be quarantined in the health office until a parent or guardian can pick them up. In the case of any illness, parents/guardians will be notified by a Health Services team member; the student will then be brought to the pickup area.

Students with Underlying Health Conditions

If your student has a CDC-identified condition that places them in a high-risk group, consult with your child's healthcare provider to determine if your child is cleared for school re-entry. Medically vulnerable students will have the option to engage in distance learning 100 percent of the time, including on days when the campus is open to students for in-person learning. Families may also opt for 100 percent distance learning for students without underlying health conditions. Sidwell Friends will continue to require completion of all health requirements via the Parent Portal under the Health Forms link as a requirement for attendance.

Physical Distancing Guidelines

Students, faculty, and staff should remain at least six feet apart whenever possible. The School will post signs on campus to direct foot traffic for entrances and exits, as well as in interior hallways. Additional physical distancing markers will be present within buildings and outdoors as needed.

Student Cohorts

In the classroom, smaller classes—with 10 to 12 students in a room—will ensure the reduced density required to provide appropriate physical distancing. Some classes and activities will be held outdoors. Students will remain in their cohorts and in the same classroom throughout the day with minimal contact with other students and teachers. The School will space desks at least six feet apart and will install plexiglass dividers on students' and teachers' desks.

To avoid larger gatherings and maintain physical distance, students will no longer visit the cafeteria for lunch. Students will receive individually wrapped or packaged lunches in their classrooms.

Because it is important to maintain a lower density of people on campus, group gatherings will move to an online format. Meetings and activities, including Back-to-School Night, grade-level or divisional Meetings for Worship, assemblies, and parent-teacher conferences will be held virtually. Student clubs will also meet virtually. We are suspending all school trips, dances, and performances with a live audience until restrictions for group gatherings have been lifted.

Unfortunately, at this time, parents will no longer be permitted on campus; outside visitors will also not be allowed in order to maintain a lower population density on campus. This also means that the School is suspending all physical Parents Association gatherings, other School-sponsored events, and outside rentals for now.

Face Coverings

All Sidwell Friends community members must wear a face covering while on campus. Each student will provide their own face covering; we recommend that each student acquire five face coverings, labeled with their name; and students should bring a supply of backup face coverings to School. There will be a stock of masks in case a student's face covering is lost or damaged during the day; however, this should not be used as a substitute for bringing and wearing a face covering to campus. Face coverings should be at least three-ply; if you can blow out a candle while wearing the face covering, it isn't thick enough. The face covering should fit snugly around the face and cover the nose, mouth, and under the chin. All face coverings must be in accordance with the School's values articulated in the Community Handbook.

Students may remove face coverings when eating or drinking; during naptime for PK students; for administration of medication; during outdoor play when physical distancing can be observed; if the face covering is damaged and needs to be replaced; and during brief intervals while using a face shield or sitting behind a plexiglass divider.

We recommend that students, particularly younger ones, begin practicing wearing their face coverings before the beginning of the academic year. Make sure the face covering is comfortable, and begin with short intervals (15 minutes or fewer) and work up to longer times. Be sure to practice wearing the face covering outside. Tell your student that this is an important thing they can do to protect their friends and teachers. Make it fun if you can: Inspire them to be superheroes.

Handwashing, Hygiene, and Cleaning Protocols

Handwashing is universally recognized as a best practice in reducing viral transmissions. The School has added additional handwashing stations throughout campus buildings. Students will wash their hands before and after using the restroom; before and after eating; after sneezing, coughing, or blowing their nose; after cleaning desks; after playing outside; and after hands become soiled.

We recommend that parents, especially those of younger students, begin practicing proper handwashing techniques before arriving at school. Wet hands with running water and apply soap. Lather hands by rubbing them together and scrub the backs of hands, between fingers, and under the nails. Keep rubbing for at least 20 seconds—about the time it takes to hum “Happy Birthday” twice. Rinse hands well and dry them with a clean paper towel.

Hand sanitizer will be available in all buildings and classrooms for times when handwashing isn't possible. However, hand sanitizer is not a substitute for handwashing; handwashing is best.

Residency in DC/MD/VA Area Homes Encouraged During In-Person Learning

All community members should comply with the regulations and orders issued by their local governments. Because the School's campuses are located in Montgomery County and DC, we ask that everyone specifically comply with the corresponding laws and health regulations of both.

- The School is asking students to maintain residency in their DMV-area homes throughout the in-person learning period.
- The School is also asking students and families who may have been exposed to COVID-19 due to travel to engage in distance learning for a 14-day period.

Safety Protocols: Facilities

In order to mitigate the risk of transmission, the School has identified steps to additionally enhance the safety of our buildings and physical campus. These include:

- HVAC air balancing and repairs/changes as needed in all campus buildings
- Air purifiers with HEPA filters and UV Light in each classroom
- Increased air circulation by keeping classroom doors open always and windows open when weather permits
- New traffic flow protocols, such as one-way hallways and stairways
- Designated doorways for ingress and egress
- Desks spaced six feet apart, facing one direction, and/or use of plexiglass dividers between students and teachers
- Removal of soft seating, cushions, soft toys
- Use of outdoor spaces for outdoor classrooms
- Additional handwashing stations in buildings
- Increased frequency of cleaning and disinfecting procedures daily; intensive mid-week and weekend cleaning

Safety Protocols: Community Requirements and Practices

- Daily health screenings, including temperature checks and health monitoring, conducted at home prior to arrival at School for students and employees; data reported through app
- Flu vaccination encouraged for students; flu vaccination provided for all employees
- Staggered arrival and dismissal times to avoid crowding
- Proper physical distancing (at least six feet) between students at all times
- Individually wrapped lunches served in classrooms and eaten behind plexiglass dividers
- Requirements for face coverings for all students and faculty/staff
- Frequent handwashing time built into daily schedule
- No visitors on campus, including parents
- Students kept in small, intact cohorts to mitigate viral transmission (10 to 12 students per classroom with one teacher)

Stay Informed

These policies and protocols are subject to change; you can find the latest updates at sidwell.edu/Fall2020.

Staying healthy and safe this year will be a School-wide effort, with everyone doing what they can to protect not only themselves, but the other members of the Sidwell Friends community. While the campus may look a little different this fall, Sidwell Friends students have already shown how strong, flexible, and caring they can be. These protocols may feel strange or uncomfortable to some students. But with practice and preparation, everyone can do their part in keeping the entire Sidwell Friends community safe and healthy.

Resources

- The American School of Japan Roadmap for Reopening
- National Federation of High School Associations Guidance for Opening Up High School Athletics and Activities
- Independent School League and the Middle Atlantic Conference
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Maryland's Sports Commissions Return to Play Committee Report
- The American Academy of Pediatrics COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-entry
- Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health Risk Reduction Strategies for Reopening Schools

Sidwell Friends

3825 Wisconsin Avenue NW | Washington, DC 20016

202-537-8100 | www.sidwell.edu