

How did the school make the decision about opening in the fall?

The planning for our fall opening was guided by our experience in the spring, parent and student feedback to our distance learning, consideration of our mission, faculty surveys, medical advice, Centers for Disease Control (CDC), local and state government recommendations, and the best practices from National Coalition of Girls' Schools, National Association of Independent Schools and New York Association of Independent Schools. We have determined that we can open safely meeting all mandates.

Our common goal is to provide the best overall experience for our students and their families and our faculty and their families while prioritizing the health and safety of all. Families and school form a partnership. We all must acknowledge that in order to have the privilege of being on campus, we will make the necessary sacrifices and adjustments to protect our community. We are all responsible for checking the constantly updating CDC and NYS guidelines for health and safety.

On what date is my student expected to be at SEM?

New Residential Students: Wednesday, August 17
Returning Residential Students: Saturday, August 22
New Student Orientation: Wednesday, September 2
First Day of School: Tuesday, September 8

Does SEM do what the Buffalo Public Schools do?

No. SEM will adhere to or exceed the requirements set by NYS, local authorities, and the CDC.

What are the Covid-19 testing requirements for a day student to return to campus?

Every day student must obtain a Covid-19 test within one week before coming to campus and that test report must be submitted to the [school nurse](#). If a student tests positive for Covid-19, they will be required to remain off-campus until 14 days after they are symptom free. If a student tests positive but has no symptoms, they must remain off campus for a minimum of 14 days following the positive test.

We recommend testing by the [Erie County Department of Health](#), call (716) 858-2929 or at the neighborhood health centers at the following locations:

Blasdell - 4233 Lake Avenue, Blasdell, NY 14219
Monday - Friday from 2 - 4 PM

Mattina - 300 Niagara Street, Buffalo, NY 14201
Monday - Friday from 2 - 4 PM

Northwest - 155 Lawn Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14207
Wednesday & Friday from 2 - 4 PM

Please note: insurance information will be needed.

[Pediatric & Adolescent Urgent Care of WNY](#) | 1800 Maple Rd, Suite 100, Williamsville, NY 14221

[Pediatric & Adolescent Urgent Care of WNY](#) | 3055 Southwestern Blvd, Suite 104, Orchard Park, NY 14127

For appointments at any of the neighborhood health center locations below, call 716-875-2904

Are there other Covid-19 related requirements for returning to school?

In the spirit of our school-family partnership, all students and their families will be asked to affirm their willingness to adhere to the expected standards developed by the school to keep our community safe. This includes the school's expectation that all students will adhere to strict physical distancing practices, including wearing masks when physical distancing is not possible (outside their own family) prior to returning to campus. A partnership document will be available for the opening of school.

What new protocols will the school institute to mitigate the spread of Covid-19 on campus?

Masks - We expect that all students, faculty, staff, and visitors (when they are allowed) will wear masks on campus. We ask that all families provide washable cloth masks ([not the kind with valves](#)) for their daughters. We will schedule mask breaks for students to safely remove their masks, when alone.

Physical Distance - 6 feet of physical distance must be maintained in all areas and classrooms in our academic building and on campus. New traffic patterns for moving about the building will be clearly marked. Staggered times for moving in our hallways will be scheduled. In personal residential rooms, masks and distancing will be relaxed.

Space changes - Depending on class size, classes may be moved from their expected rooms to accommodate appropriate physical distancing.

Testing - We require that every student have a Covid-19 test before the start of school. Additional testing may be required throughout the school year; we will determine those testing intervals based on recommendations from the CDC and local and state health departments, and best practices for residential students, and the needs of our school.

Health Monitoring - All students, faculty, and staff will be required to self-monitor and temperature checks will be performed at school before entering the building. No one may attend classes or other school activities or come to work if they are symptomatic or have been in recent contact with anyone testing positive for Covid-19.

Campus Restrictions - We will develop our plans related to visitors to campus, as well as residential and day students' ability to leave campus. No visitors will be allowed in any school building when we open. We may adjust this requirement as we become accustomed to our new procedures.

Sanitization and Cleaning - New protocols are being developed and sanitization supplies and disinfecting supplies will be available throughout the school.

Will the school nurse conduct Covid-19 tests?

No.

Will there be a daily health and temperature check?

Yes.

What about traveling before school starts?

We ask that students and the family members with whom they live not travel 14 days prior to the opening of school. (We ask the same of our faculty and staff.) If so, we will require that individuals follow the current quarantine regulations from NYS. We will ask about travel outside of Western New York as part in our daily health check.

SCHOOL LIFE

Will students be allowed to learn remotely for part or all of the year?

Yes, we anticipate that some students may want or need to learn remotely, for a number of reasons. Contact [Natalie Stothart](#), Assistant Head of School for Community Life with questions.

What about transportation?

As of 8/3/2020, we are awaiting plans from individual school districts. All students will be seated safely distanced apart and are required to wear masks in school vehicles.

We have two, 14 passenger buses. All drivers will be trained in all Covid-19 protocols. There is no need for drivers to touch our students, but in case of an emergency, each bus will be equipped with gloves. Hand sanitizing stations will be placed near our vehicles to ensure all have sanitized their hands before boarding the bus. All SEM vehicles will be disinfected after transporting students.

Should students bring their own cleaning products?

No. SEM will provide cleaning and sanitizing supplies with allergies and sensitivities and efficacy of the product as necessary calculations. Students may bring their own personal size sanitizer and gloves if they wish.

How will meals work?

As they should be, meal protocols are extensive and should be referred to in the Full Opening Plans document. Our food service provider has worked with us to meet and exceed all NYS guidelines, provide appropriate signage and protocols for safe and healthy food service that maintain SEM's commitment to a mealtime that serves to build our community.

What about sports in the fall?

Athletic Director Kacie Mills will advise according to NYS and local league guidelines for safe athletics. No sports will begin before Sept. 21 but there will be exercise and training plans for the preceding weeks.

What about the senior lounge?

SEM administration is working with senior class leadership to plan for safe usage of the lounge.

What about drivers' ed?

Drivers' ed is provided by an autonomous vendor that is not offering services to SEM at this time. We are in contact with the driving school and families will be apprised when it is available again.