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INTRODUCTION TO SCHOOL REOPENING

This document is intended to outline the strategies Thornton Academy has developed in preparation for reintegrating back to in-person classroom instruction. Our plans are in accordance with the State of Maine's [Framework for Returning to Classroom Instruction](#), which provides a roadmap to follow as we navigate the 2020-2021 school year. As always, all decisions are being made in alignment with the most up-to-date directives and guidance from the Maine CDC, Maine Department of Education (MDOE), and Office of the Governor.

⇒ **Guide to Reopening Videos**

We have created the following brief videos to address many of the policies we've put in place to keep students safe, including daily self-screening, hallway traffic flow, and face covering requirements. We encourage you to watch with your child, and help them understand the importance of following these practices.

[Upper School Reopening Video](#)

[TAMS Reopening Video](#)

⇒ **Our Commitment to Safety**

As we continue to adjust to the uncertainty related to the COVID-19 global pandemic, we remain as committed as ever to ensuring the safety, health, and well-being of our students, families, faculty, and staff. Keeping our learning community as safe as possible is always our primary concern.

We intend to continue following best-practice recommendations and mandates from relevant health and education experts when determining the best course of action for TA. These sources include our school physician, the Maine CDC, Maine Department of Education (MDOE), and Office of the Governor. All decisions are being made in accordance with their guidance and with the best interest of our students and community at the center.

We will also continue to assess the many factors that impact the experience of students, families, and faculty. We have done our best to create strategies that are attuned to the academic and emotional needs of students and families, and honor the ongoing feedback we receive from our community. When possible, we want to minimize the effect of this pandemic on our students' learning experience.



STUDENT HANDBOOKS

Each new school year, both our Upper School (grades 9-12) and middle school (grades 6-8) publish an updated student handbook. Below you will find links to the 2020/21 handbooks, with COVID-19 specific addendums. Additionally, we have included an updated version of our Communicable Disease Policy with specific COVID-19 addendums below.

- [Upper School Student Handbook](#)
 - [Upper School Student Handbook COVID-19 Addendum](#)
- [TAMS 2020/21 Student Handbook](#)

⇒ **Communicable Disease Policy**

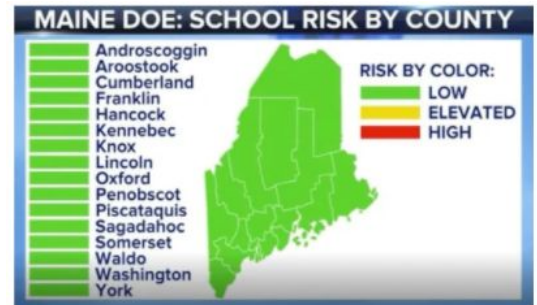
It is the purpose of the Communicable Disease Policy to prevent and control the transmission of communicable diseases and to promote health and wellness within the Thornton Academy community. The term communicable disease shall mean an infectious or contagious disease spread from person to person, animal to person, or as defined by the law.

The health risk to immuno-depressed students and staff shall be determined and documented by their personal physician. The health risk to others in the school environment from the presence of a student or staff member with a communicable disease shall be determined on a case-by-case basis by the person's personal physician, a physician chosen by the school, or public health officials. [Read the full policy here.](#)



MODES OF INSTRUCTION

Thornton Academy will follow the guidance of the Maine CDC, MDOE, and Office of the Governor when determining the appropriate mode of instruction. We will consult the Maine School Health Advisory Map, which will be updated regularly by the CDC and DOE, and will adjust to current public health conditions indicated by color designations. Each county will be assigned one of three possible colors based on transmission risk: **red**, **yellow**, or **green**. These designations correspond to recommended modes of instruction.



⇒ Color Designations

- A **red** designation suggests that the county has a high risk of spread and in-person instruction is not advisable. Students will participate in a 100% remote learning format.
- A **yellow** designation suggests that the county has an elevated risk of spread and schools may consider a hybrid model of both in-classroom and remote learning as a way to reduce the number of students together at any one time.
- Counties with a **green** designation have a relatively low risk of COVID-19 spread and schools may consider in-person instruction, as long as they are able to implement the required health and safety measures. (Schools may need to use hybrid instruction models if there is insufficient capacity or other factors.)

NOTE: *The rules for social distancing outlined by the CDC will prohibit Thornton Academy, along with many schools, from welcoming all students back on campus at one time. This means that unless the rules for social distancing change, either a **green** or **yellow** designation will require us to adopt a hybrid mode of instruction.*

You can find the most up-to-date York County risk designation and TA's corresponding mode of learning online at [TA Ready to Reopen](#).

ACADEMIC SCHEDULE

Our academic plan is designed to provide a structure that allows us to move fluidly between the state’s School Health Advisory Map’s risk designations, as well as provide an accessible option for students who need to opt out of on-campus learning. *Whether remote or hybrid, all students in grades 6-12 will follow the same schedule.*

⇒ Student Groups

The student body (grades 6-12) has been split in half by last name (A-K and L-Z) and each student has been assigned two days to attend classes on-campus. Students with last names starting with A-K will attend Monday and Tuesday, and students with last names L-Z will attend Thursday and Friday. Wednesdays will be an *asynchronous* remote day for all.

Both the TAMS and Upper School daily schedule will begin at 9:00am and students will be dismissed at 2:40pm. Information about the daily block schedule is forthcoming.

Students with last names A-K

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday*	Thursday	Friday
In-person learning (or remote if chosen)	In-person learning (or remote if chosen)	Remote instruction for all; asynchronous (not live; directives shared by teacher via Google Classroom)	Remote instruction, synchronous (live)	Remote instruction, synchronous (live)

*Wednesdays will alternate between maroon and gold days. See 2020/21 school calendar [here](#).

Students with last names L-Z

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday*	Thursday	Friday
Remote instruction, synchronous (live)	Remote instruction, synchronous (live)	Remote instruction for all; asynchronous (not live); directives shared by teacher via Google Classroom)	In-person learning (or remote if chosen)	In-person learning (or remote if chosen)

*Wednesdays will alternate between maroon and gold days. See 2020/21 school calendar [here](#).

Our hybrid schedule will allow students to participate in a full maroon and a full gold day on campus each week, with their remaining classes spent remotely in a *synchronous* format. This means that students will participate live and in real time on their remote days. During each scheduled class session, students should log on to the remote classroom in a timely fashion. Teachers will engage students in a variety of tasks, including direct instruction, independent work, and discussion. Instructional strategies may vary from class to class, but students learning remotely will have access to their teachers, who will engage them in coursework.

EXAMPLE: If your student attends classes on campus on Mondays and Tuesdays, the rest of the week will be spent at home following their regular schedule. They will be expected to login to classes at the regularly scheduled class time on their remote days. They will attend and

participate in remote classes alongside their peers who are also remote, as well as those attending their on-campus classes on Thursdays and Fridays.

In order to maintain a quality experience amidst all the challenges presented by current conditions, we have done our best to retain all of our faculty; this means some may be instructing remotely. If your child's teacher is instructing remotely, when he/she attends live classes on campus students will be directed to a designated, supervised space to connect with the live instruction from their teacher.

⇒ **Remote-Only Option**

While we encourage students to participate in person during their scheduled days (to the degree that it is safe for individual students), we understand that there are many factors to consider and that in-person learning may not be an option for some students. Regardless of York County's risk designation, all classes will be streamed online at scheduled times, providing a 100% remote option for students who are unable to attend in person for any reason.

Should you decide that your student requires a remote-only learning model, we ask that you let us know at your earliest convenience for planning purposes. Upper School students should notify Marsha Snyder at marsha.snyder@thorntonacademy.org. TAMS students should notify Principal Tiffany Robert at tiffany.robert@thorntonacademy.org.

⇒ **Special Education and Related Services**

Students will access their special education classes and learning centers in the same way that they access their regular education classes. When on campus, services will be delivered in person, and on remote days, students will log in to access services synchronously. Case managers will provide further guidance about how to receive needed support on Wednesdays. Related services outlined in the IEP will be provided either remotely or in person. To limit visitors on campus, all IEP meetings will continue to be held via Zoom. You will receive a link when your child's meeting is scheduled. If you have questions or concerns specific to your child's special education program, please contact Heidi Butler, Assistant Special Education Director at heidi.butler@thorntonacademy.org.



HEALTH SERVICES

Thornton Academy decisions related to health protocols are being made in alignment with the most up-to-date directives and guidance from the Maine CDC, Department of Education, Office of the Governor, and Thornton Academy school physicians. Any amendments to the following protocols will align with this evolving guidance.

⇒ **Daily Self-Screen**

Parents/guardians are asked to conduct a self-screening with their student before leaving for school. The following questions must be asked daily; if the answer to any question is yes, the student must stay home.

Am I experiencing:

- Fever of 38°C/100.4°F or higher?
- Chills or repeated shaking with chills?
- Sore throat?
- Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing?
- New cough?
- New loss of taste or smell?
- Vomiting or diarrhea (3 or more loose stools in 24 hours)?
- Contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the last 14 days?

Two (2) or more of the following:

- Fatigue
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Stomach pain
- Rash
- Swelling of hands or feet
- Red eyes/eye drainage
- Diarrhea

Any student who becomes unwell while at school must immediately go to the nurse's office while maintaining social distancing and full compliance with face covering requirements.

⇒ **Reporting Absences**

Due to COVID-19 related policies, parents/guardians are no longer able to call and report their child's absence from school (for either illness or non-illness related absences). We ask that you notify the school about absences via the Absent Student Reporting Form for [TAMS](#) or the [Upper School](#). A school nurse will contact the parent/guardian to follow up and determine when a

student is able to return to school. The Absent Student Reporting Form can also be found on the [school's website](#).

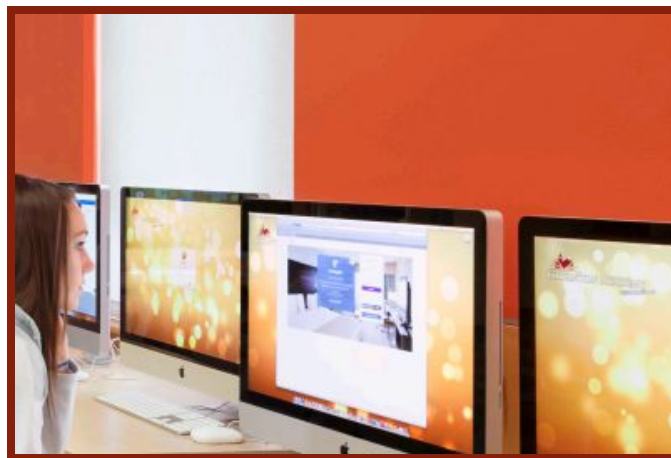
NOTE (for Upper School students): Tardies and dismissals may be reported via phone to 207-602-4450 or email to tardies.dismissals@thorntonacademy.org. All messages to this email address will generate a reply that includes the "Absent Student Reporting Form" should an absence need to be reported.

⇒ **Return-to-School Expectations**

Thornton Academy will adhere to the most up-to-date recommendations from the Maine CDC and our school physicians regarding a student's return to school after experiencing symptoms of COVID-19. A member of our school nursing team will support students/families in understanding the expectations. **For additional questions related to health services, please contact our nursing team at: health@thorntonacademy.org.**

⇒ **School Nurse Protocols**

The school has created a protocol to support student and staff health care needs on campus in the safest manner possible. [This video](#) provides an overview of what a student may expect when visiting one of the nurses' offices this year.



OPERATIONAL ADJUSTMENTS

⇒ **Absent Student Reporting Form**

Due to COVID-19 related policies, parents/guardians are no longer able to call and report their child's absence from school (for either illness or non-illness related reasons). Parents/guardians are asked to use the [TAMS](#) or [Upper School](#) online Absent Student Reporting Form to notify the school when their child will be absent.

⇒ **Bus Protocols**

Students must complete the daily self-screen before entering the bus. Masks/face coverings must be worn by all students on the bus. All students must wash their hands or use sanitizing gel upon entering or exiting the bus. All students must adhere to social distancing mandates. Please refer to the applicable bus transportation department for any additional safety measures.

⇒ **Hallway Traffic Patterns**

In an effort to support proper social distancing, students and faculty/staff will be expected to adhere to walking traffic patterns in the hallways and one-directional stairwells. Floor and wall arrows and sectional tape will be used to help create reminders.

⇒ **Daily Self-Screen**

See above under “Health Services.”

⇒ **Increased Sanitization Measures**

See below under “Safety Measures.”

⇒ **Lunch Procedure**

Several mitigation efforts have been established to create the safest approach to providing lunch to students.

- FLIK Dining Services will provide “grab-and-go” options to diminish wait time.
- Signage and floor markings will help students and faculty/staff maintain proper social distancing.

⇒ **Social Distancing**

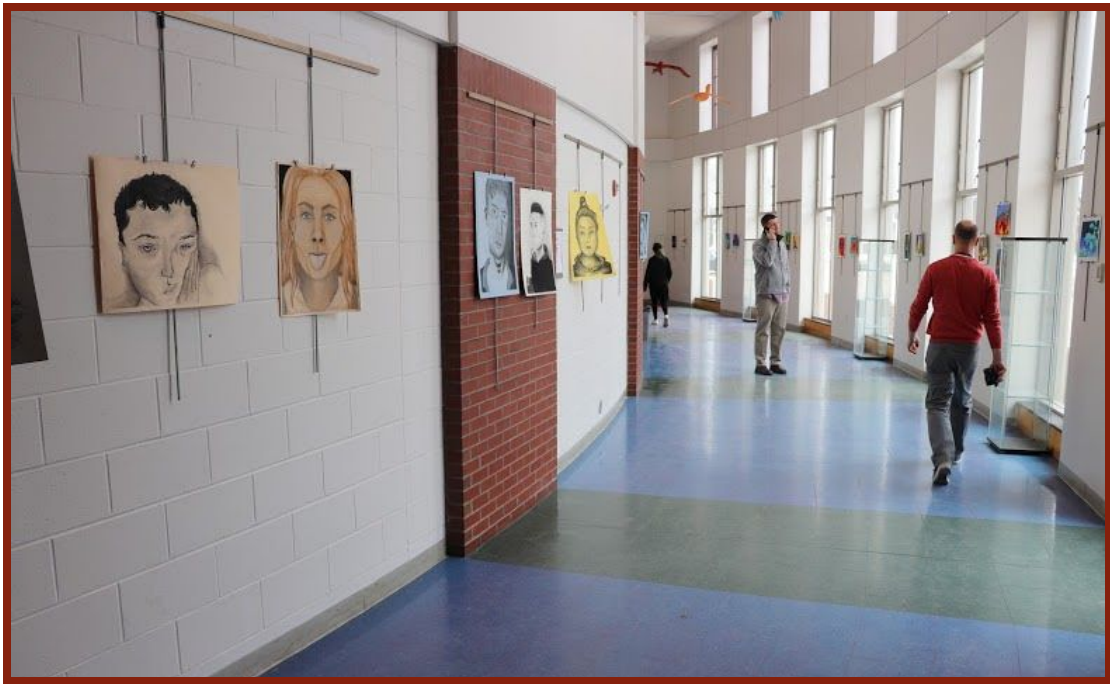
Students will be required to maintain six (6) feet of distance between themselves and others in the hallways and common areas on campus (atrium, attendance office, bathrooms, gym lobby, outside, etc.). The use of a mask/face covering will also be expected in these areas (see “Masks/Face Coverings...” on page 12).

- In classrooms, students will have assigned seating and be required to remain at least three (3) feet away from other students and six (6) feet away from adults at all times.
- Elevators will be limited to a maximum of two (2) people per ride.

The following video from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) may be helpful when learning proper social distancing measures: [Social Distancing](#)

⇒ **TA Release**

In response to the State of Maine’s [Framework for Returning to Classroom Instruction](#), Thornton Academy is allowing all Upper School grades, freshmen through seniors, to apply for TA Release. Release for freshman and sophomores may be removed later in the year, if the Maine Department of Education’s guidelines for schools change. Students granted TA Release MUST leave campus during the duration of the block. To request TA Release, please complete [this form](#).



SAFETY MEASURES

⇒ **Cleaning Protocols**

Faculty and staff will support cleaning and sanitizing classroom desks and other learning surfaces when students vacate the classroom after each class. Cleaning products and proper training will be provided. Additionally, facilities staff members will utilize documented standard procedures for routine cleaning and disinfecting throughout all campus buildings. Particular attention will be paid to high-touch surfaces in restrooms and locker rooms; on stairway handrails, doorknobs and handles (in both rooms and hallways), light switches, vending machines, elevator call and operating buttons; and in the nurse's offices.

⇒ **Handwashing**

Hand sanitizing stations and signage have been installed throughout campus in an effort to remind students of the importance of hand hygiene. Students are expected to wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (or use sanitizer if washing is not possible) in the following circumstances:

- Entering and exiting classrooms
- After using the restroom
- Before and after eating
- Before donning or removing a face mask
- Before and after use of shared equipment
- Upon entering and exiting a school bus or TA vehicle
- After handling shared paper copies, as applicable

When using hand sanitizer, it should be applied to all surfaces of the hands and in enough quantity that it takes 20 seconds of rubbing hands together for the sanitizer to dry. (This [CDC handwashing video](#) may be helpful when learning proper handwashing technique.)

⇒ **Masks/Face Covering Requirements**

All students and adults, including faculty and staff, will be required to wear a mask/face covering when on campus. Masks/face coverings must be worn at all times, with the exception of established breaks and when six (6) feet apart.

- Students will need to provide their own mask/face covering; however, the school will have extra masks available in the event that a student forgets or loses their face covering. A mask/face covering must cover a person's nose and mouth.
- Reusable masks/face coverings should be washed by families daily.
- Masks/face coverings should be replaced when soiled or wet. If the mask/face covering becomes soiled, remove and safely discard disposable masks, or store reusable face coverings in a sealed container or plastic bag for laundering. It is important to perform hand hygiene after changing a soiled mask/face covering.
- Mask breaks will be available for individual students and groups as needed throughout the school day.
- At this time, out of an abundance of caution and in response to the recommendation of our school physician, we will not be allowing gaiters as a face-covering option. Per CDC

recommendations, masks with one-way valves or vents that allow air to be exhaled through a hole in the material, are also prohibited.

- The Maine Department of Education advises that face coverings should cover the nose and mouth, and fit snugly against the sides of the face. Cloth face coverings should have multiple layers of cloth.

The following videos from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) may be helpful when learning about the use and care of face coverings/masks:

- [Cloth Face Coverings Dos and Don'ts](#)
- [How to make cloth face coverings](#)
- [How to safely wear and remove face coverings](#)
- [How to wash cloth face coverings](#)

With prior approval, face shields may be an alternative for students/staff with medical, behavioral, or other challenges who are unable to wear face coverings. Face shields worn in place of a face covering must extend below the chin and back to the ears. **For additional questions related to your student's individual needs, please contact our nursing team at: health@thorntonacademy.org.**

⇒ **Personal Hygiene**

Students are expected to practice the following proper infection control measures:

- If coughing or sneezing, students must cover their mouth and nose with a tissue, or the inside of their elbow, and immediately discard the tissue
- Avoid touching their eyes, nose, mouth, and mask/face covering
- Avoid touching any surfaces unnecessarily
- Refrain from hugs and handshakes

The following resource from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) may be helpful when learning proper hygiene with the control of infectious disease: [Coughing and sneezing hygiene](#)

⇒ **Signage**

COVID-19-related signage has been installed throughout the campus. This signage will remind students to maintain appropriate physical distance, limit in-person contact, remember symptoms of infection and stay home when appropriate, and practice proper hand hygiene.

⇒ **Travel**

Students who travel outside of Maine during the school year must follow the Governor's Executive Orders related to travel.

⇒ Visiting Campus

In an effort to maximize the safety of our school buildings and limit in-person contact, the school will require that all parents/guardians and guests refrain from entering all school buildings without a scheduled appointment.

- If you do have an appointment with an administrator or a member of the faculty, please check in at the Upper School in the main building using the main entrance (near the flagpole) and through the main entrance at TAMS.
- All parents/guardians or guests must follow all of Thornton Academy's safety protocols, including wearing a face covering and using hand sanitizer upon entering the building.
- The reception clerk (Upper School) or administrative assistant (TAMS) will check you in and direct you to an appropriate waiting area until the person you are meeting with is able to join you.
- Student deliveries (lunch or lunch money, athletic or other equipment, forgotten class materials—including iPads or laptops) will NOT be accepted or delivered to students.

