



Infrastructure & COVID-19 Safety Update

FEBRUARY 2021

HEALTH AND SAFETY PILLARS:

- ▶ A shared commitment to our Community Compact
- ▶ Physical distancing, reduced density, mask wearing, and excellent ventilation
- ▶ Health screening and preventive hygiene
- ▶ Increased cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting of the physical plant
- ▶ Communication, coordination of efforts, and training to our “new normal”
- ▶ Quick and adept response to new public and community information as it emerges

OUR RETURN TO SCHOOL WAS BASED ON SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

Based on data from schools that had already returned to in-person learning, we made the decision to optimize good weather and bring students back to campus in the early fall.

Lower and Middle School students returned to campus for in-person learning the week of Labor Day – among the first in our area to do so. They enjoyed 10 continuous weeks on campus, followed by toggling to remote and then back to in person. Because of concerns related to pod sizes and contacts, as we understood them in August, the Upper School opened virtually, and students returned in a hybrid fashion the week of September 28.

Building on our experience of the fall and emerging data from schools across the country, we brought all students who selected in-person learning back to campus five days a week, beginning on January 20, 2021.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING, REDUCED DENSITY, EXCELLENT VENTILATION, DISINFECTION

Friends’ Central has made the following infrastructure investments to enable Physical Distancing:

- ▶ 11 additional staff hired to ensure small learning pods/cohorts
- ▶ 5 large tents for the City Ave campus.
- ▶ Lower School outdoor pavilion
- ▶ Lower School Nature playground
- ▶ 100 desk shields for use where necessary to increase indoor safety
- ▶ Large, nontraditional areas converted for instruction

Ventilation:

- ▶ To increase indoor safety, FCS contracted with an engineering firm to assess indoor spaces and recommend best practices. Based on their engineering study, we installed MERV 13 filters and bipolar ionization systems where possible and purchased high-standard air purifiers for all other teaching areas.
- ▶ Throughout the warm months, all doors and windows were open whenever possible.

Friends' Central invested in the most effective disinfection processes and equipment modification available and has increased cleaning staff to ensure the safety of spaces for all community members.

- ▶ Each evening, all spaces are sprayed with vital oxide.
- ▶ Throughout the day, cleaning staff disinfects frequent touchpoints.
- ▶ 87 touchless faucets were installed in all bathrooms and Lower School classrooms.
- ▶ Covers have been installed on toilets, and students were instructed to close toilets before flushing and to wash their hands immediately.
- ▶ Water fountains are available for touchless bottle filling, but otherwise disabled.
- ▶ Door knobs were retrofitted for opening with an elbow.

INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT HYBRID AND VIRTUAL LEARNING

- ▶ Webcams have been installed in all FCS classrooms and tents, and alternate teaching locations to facilitate home learning and remote teaching in real time.
- ▶ FCS has purchased Canvas, a learning management platform that is in use for grades 6-12. Canvas has allowed for seamless toggling between in-person and online learning, including learning or teaching from home when others are on-site.
- ▶ All teachers took part in Canvas-specific training and additional training in best practices in online education.
- ▶ Our Chromebook 1-1 program was extended to 3rd and 4th grades, a fleet of iPads was purchased for early childhood grades, along with upgraded iPad software for PreK-grade 2 to better manage the devices and enhance the virtual experience.
- ▶ We increased bandwidth on both campuses, and WiFi boosters and access points have been installed around campus to ensure coverage for all indoor and outdoor spaces.
- ▶ Tech department staff members have responded to over 2,000 help calls from students, staff, and families.

HEALTH SCREENING, PREVENTATIVE HYGIENE, CONTACT TRACING, AND VACCINES

- ▶ The community participated in eight rounds of testing (4,675 tests) which revealed a total of 15 positive cases. This testing confirmed that our mitigation measures are effective and that our in-school community spread remained below that of the community at large.
- ▶ Teachers were issued PPE that included N95 masks and face shields.
- ▶ Decision-making with respect to testing, quarantining, and other COVID-related matters has continued to evolve based on emerging understanding.
- ▶ Students and employees continue to perform daily wellness checks.

- ▶ [Hand Washing](#) and sanitizing
 - The School installed 140 hand sanitizing stations, and we have used over 200 gallons of hand sanitizer thus far.
 - An hourly gong reminds people on campus to pause and hand sanitize.
 - All students have been taught proper hand-washing technique and are reminded to wash their hands frequently.
- ▶ We have had community members in school and members of Friends' Central households report exposures and/or that they have tested positive for COVID-19. We appreciate that employees and families have been forthcoming and cooperative with respect to quarantine and isolation. There is no doubt that this level of shared ownership has kept our community safer.
- ▶ Health Services has worked closely with the County Health Department throughout the fall. The County has helped FCS determine best practices if any student, faculty, or staff member contracts COVID-19.

COMMUNICATION, COORDINATION OF EFFORTS, AND TRAINING TO OUR “NEW NORMAL”

Our collective success has depended on our community adhering to a stringent set of rules designed to keep everyone safe. For example:

- ▶ Communication is frequent and transparent.
- ▶ To reduce the density of people in our hallways, each student and staff member is assigned to an entry door and a path to their classroom.
- ▶ Hallways are marked with directional arrows and signage.
- ▶ Interior and exterior signage supports new community norms.
- ▶ Student trips to bathrooms are staggered.
- ▶ Students were assigned drop-off and pick-up spots.
- ▶ Parents, guardians, and visitors are not allowed in buildings.
- ▶ Students bring their own clearly identified water bottles from home.
- ▶ No food is being served in the cafeteria.
- ▶ Students eat and drink in supervised, COVID-safe settings.

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