

# From the Head of School



Friday, August 20 2021

## Dear Friends,

The school year is almost here, and I am so excited! Along with my enormous enthusiasm about greeting students, colleagues, and families as they return to campus, I am also adjusting some of FCS's COVID-19 planning with regard to vaccines and testing.

During the 2020-2021 school year, Friends' Central established a well-earned reputation for COVID-19 safety. We provided in-person education with mitigation efforts that were strong and well adhered to. We ended the year without a campus outbreak, something few schools achieved. We want to do all we can to repeat that remarkable statistic. As we look forward to our opening day of school, the administrative team, medical advisors, and I have been paying close attention to the increase in COVID-19 cases in our area. We are particularly concerned about the Delta variant, which is highly transmissible and is spreading among children who are currently too young to be vaccinated.

Based on this evolving news and our deep concern for the safety of our students, we are making two immediate changes to our opening plan, with some additional changes in the works.

First, we believe that testing our unvaccinated community members and community members who have elected not to disclose their vaccination status as the school year begins will provide an important data point and help us kick off a safe year at FCS! If you have not yet completed our [vaccination form](#), please understand that sharing this information is required and time sensitive.

To this end, we have scheduled baseline testing for unvaccinated community members on September 8 from 2-6 pm. If your child contracted COVID-19 after June 1, 2021, please contact [healthservices@friendscentral.org](mailto:healthservices@friendscentral.org). Details on how to sign up for this testing will follow next week. If that date does not work for your family, please secure your own testing on September 6 or 7. Documentation showing a negative test will be required for unvaccinated students and adults to start the school year.

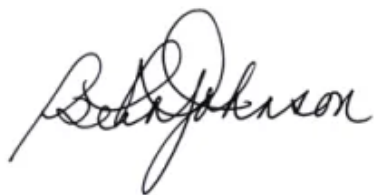
We have also decided to engage in some form of surveillance or pooled testing during the fall as a start and will communicate these plans with you as soon as they are formulated.

Second, although our vaccine compliance among employees is already above 97%, we are now requiring that all employees, contractors, and volunteers who come on campus or are in contact with our students be vaccinated, with the first dose acquired by August 27. An employee who qualifies for a medical or religious exemption will be required to be tested weekly and to submit results to the School. Like all employees, those employees who qualify for a medical or religious exemption will also be required to adhere to strict mitigation measures, including masking and distancing. We will continue to evaluate requiring vaccines for eligible students.

Although vaccinations for eligible students are not required at this time, I must tell you that we do expect that eligible students will be vaccinated, and we will continue to evaluate requiring them. In the meantime, if you are considering vaccinating your child and would like more information, please contact your principal or my office, and we will be happy to arrange a consultation with a physician. You may also wish to see this [interview](#) on the importance of vaccinating young people with CHOP doctor and FCS parent Jeff Gerber.

This will be a wonderful year!

Warm regards,



Beth D. Johnson  
Interim Head of School



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