



# SAINT ANN'S SCHOOL

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Head of School

June 22, 2020

Dear Saint Ann's Families, Faculty and Staff,

As I wrote to you in my letter of May 26, our board and school leadership at every level have been anticipating and planning for multiple fall contingencies. I am writing now to update you. We are still at work developing our plans, which are evolving and will continue to evolve as circumstances change or as new regulatory guidance and requirements emerge. Nonetheless, we wanted to give you as much information as we can as early as possible.

Our top priority remains the physical and emotional health of our students, faculty, and staff. At the same time, while we have shown that distance learning can be exciting, robust and engaging, we believe it is always a substitute for—and not the equivalent of—being together in person.

If we decide to bring students and teachers back to campus in September, we will be implementing a reduced density, hybrid-learning model that will allow for social distancing in our classrooms. This will effectively reduce our classroom density by 50% (except in those instances where classrooms are already of sufficient square footage to accommodate the usual number of students who occupy them). This means that for grades 6–12 we will not be able to have all students at school in person every day. When at school, students will experience face-to-face learning with their teachers. When at home, students will engage through online platforms and interaction with their teachers as they did this spring.

If we open our buildings in September, it is our expectation that all enrolled students will attend school in person when their grade is on campus. If your child is in an elevated health risk category or is otherwise unable to attend in person, we will have a formal process in place for you to request a waiver.

**Even if New York State and New York City allow schools to open in September, Saint Ann's will only open if we can ensure the safety of our community to the greatest extent possible. We plan to make a final decision in early August based on the information we have at that time. We may need to make different decisions for different divisions based on the available information.**

## Survey

So that we can better assess the needs of Saint Ann's families, parents and legal guardians are asked to please take a moment to [fill out this short survey](#) once for each child you will have enrolled at Saint Ann's in September. By filling out the survey you can communicate to us if you have concerns about your child's ability to attend school in person this fall for any reason. *Please do not discuss specific medical information on the survey.* We will follow up with families who express concerns.



## Scenario Planning Overview

### *Scenario I: Reduced Density Hybrid Learning*

- School buildings are open for in-person learning in a reduced density model that allows for social distancing or other guidelines/restrictions in place.
- Our current modeling for this scenario brings preschool, kindergarten, lower school and lower middle school (4th and 5th grade) students to school in person every day, while upper middle school (6th-8th grades) and high school students would attend in person every other week and learn from home when they are not physically at school.
- We have performed a classroom capacity analysis informed by public health guidelines.
- In an effort to reduce exposure, PS, K, and LS students would convene for the entire day in a single classroom. Some of these groupings may be smaller than in a “normal” year depending on individual classroom capacities. In this scenario, specialty teachers in these divisions would teach classes from separate locations on campus to be broadcast to students in their classrooms in an effort to minimize cross exposure between classrooms. Students would primarily leave their classroom only to go to the bathroom, to the gym or to do outdoor activities.
- Grades 4 and 5 would operate as a pod, meaning they would use dedicated classroom spaces for their division on the upper floors of 129 Pierrepoint Street, rather than traveling throughout the entire building or between different buildings for classes.
- During the weeks that students in grades 6–12 attend school in person, classes will be held in the other spaces in our buildings and in rented spaces in the neighborhood. During the times they are attending classes online, we will make available supervised, Wi-Fi equipped spaces on campus if needed to accommodate students (in any division) who cannot stay home.
- Across divisions, a typical school day will look different than it did when we left in March. Students and faculty will have new routines designed to mitigate risk which will be clearly communicated in advance.

### *Scenario II: Distance Learning*

If school buildings are not permitted to be physically open in September we will begin the year in distance learning mode in a similar format to what we used this spring. We are gathering feedback over the summer to assess lessons learned so that we can continue to build on our successes and troubleshoot for the fall. We will also have specific plans in place to welcome and provide orientation for new students and for younger students making transitions across divisions and grades.

### *Scenario III: Combination*

School is open in September with social distancing or other guidelines/restrictions in place, then closed for periods of time if infection rates in New York City spike again or cases of Covid-19 occur within the school, requiring a shift to distance learning for the entire school or specific divisions within it.

### *Scenario IV: No Restrictions/Best Case*

School is open as usual with no restrictions. We view this scenario as unlikely at present.



## Health and Safety

- We have a team of health professionals working with the school administration to create screening protocols that are consistent with the CDC and NYCDOH guidelines.
- Students will need to arrive early to be screened before they enter our buildings. The screening process will include a temperature check and a brief interview to assess whether or not students or faculty have exhibited COVID-19 symptoms.
- If there is a suspected case, the school's nursing staff will work with local health officials in order to determine next steps. We will have an isolation room in each division where students who are exhibiting symptoms can be assessed. New York City contact tracers will notify those who have been in contact with anyone who tests positive. All medical information related to COVID-19 exposure in community members will be kept confidential to the extent that it is possible as required by law.
- Our housekeeping staff will continue to disinfect spaces frequently throughout the day and will be conducting a deep clean of school buildings every evening.
- Hand sanitizer and cleaning wipes will be available in all classrooms for students and teachers to use to disinfect surfaces after every class.
- Hand sanitizer dispensers have been installed throughout the high traffic areas of our buildings.
- Students, faculty and staff will be required to bring and wear masks while in school buildings.

## Events, Sports, and Lunch

- At this time we are not planning to have large gatherings such as plays, concerts and special events in person next academic year. We will continue to find new ways to keep the arts at the center of our program. Large parent meetings will move to online formats.
- The athletic leagues in which we participate will make a decision this summer about fall sports and we will keep you informed as their planning develops.
- In the lower, middle and high schools, school lunch will be served and eaten in classrooms, not in the lunchroom. Preschool and kindergarten students will continue to bring their own lunches and eat in classrooms. A decision on whether high school students (and 8th grade students after Thanksgiving) can leave the building for lunch will be made closer to the start of school in the fall based on an assessment of the health risks at that time.

## After School

Because our After School program brings together students who will otherwise have spent their day at school in smaller groups, and thus creates the risk of cross-contamination and greater disruption in the event of a suspected or diagnosed case of Covid-19, we are not planning to run our normal After School program in the fall. We will assess the feasibility of running the program in the second half of the year as early in the fall semester as possible. If the lack of an afterschool program raises concerns for your family please reach out to the division head of the grade your child is entering: Bonnie in the Kindergarten [bschiffglenn@saintannsny.org](mailto:bschiffglenn@saintannsny.org), Gillian in the Lower School [gbaine@saintannsny.org](mailto:gbaine@saintannsny.org), Margie in the Lower Middle School [mhanssens@saintannsny.org](mailto:mhanssens@saintannsny.org) or Mo in the Upper Middle School [myusufmorales@saintannsny.org](mailto:myusufmorales@saintannsny.org). We will be tracking these responses to understand the scope of the need and assess possible solutions.



## **Student Support**

As always, members of our student support team are available for consultation throughout the summer as students and families navigate multiple uncertainties. Please email School Psychologist Liz Bernbach ([ebernbach@saintannsny.org](mailto:ebernbach@saintannsny.org)) if you would like to set up a phone appointment.

## **Technology**

When you fill out the survey above, you will have an opportunity to indicate whether you anticipate needing a loaner Chromebook and/or wifi hotspot for the fall. Someone will then follow up with you about our process for submitting these requests. Our technology staff has also prepared a one-page tipsheet for improving your network connectivity at home, for those families who experienced technology difficulties with distance learning this spring. [Click here to view.](#)

## **Leaves of Absence**

Assuming that a student has been deemed academically prepared to continue, Saint Ann's will follow its normal leave of absence policy and allow families to hold a spot for their non-attending student for a fee equal to 75% of the 2020–2021 tuition remaining after payment of the deposit. The student may then re-enroll for the 2021–2022 school year. In order to ensure continuity of learning please note any such leave will apply to the entire 2020–2021 school year; a student who is not enrolled in September will not be permitted to attend classes at any point during the school year. (This policy does not apply to students whose leaves of absence to attend one-semester programs elsewhere have been previously approved.)

I hope that this detailed overview of how the coming year may unfold, and the steps the school will take to protect the health and safety of our students, staff and faculty is helpful. Throughout the summer we will continue to monitor the situation and to seek advice from medical and public health professionals. We will communicate with you as needed in the coming weeks, especially should anything impact our intention to let you know of our final decision in early August based on the information available at the time. I am grateful to my colleagues who have worked tirelessly and thoughtfully to develop these plans and protocols in the face of continuing uncertainty.

With my best wishes for a safe and restorative summer,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vince". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.