



Saint Ann's School Fall 2021 Health and Safety Plan

As we approach the 2021-2022 academic year, there is still uncertainty around the timeline for approval of and mass distribution of the Covid-19 vaccine for children ages 2-11. We also continue to await guidance from the New York City Department of Health about school protocols at a time when the Delta variant is rapidly circulating in our region.

As a result, we plan to open school with a conservative, layered approach to protecting the health and safety of all community members while prioritizing full-time in-person learning for all students.

The policies and practices described here are informed by the guidance from medical experts, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the New York State Education Department. We will continue to monitor the public health landscape and update our practices as appropriate, as we have throughout the pandemic.

Many of the protocols below are similar to last year's, while others are new or updated. The policies and practices described below are intended, to the greatest extent possible, to prevent the spread of Covid-19 at school.

VACCINATION

We have already implemented a policy that requires all employees to be vaccinated against Covid in order to work at Saint Ann's.

Given the strong evidence of the effectiveness of vaccines and how vital they are to protecting the health of our community, especially those with underlying health conditions that put them at higher risk of serious consequences from Covid, we will also require all eligible students—currently those 12 and above—to be vaccinated. Over 96% of eligible students have already submitted proof of vaccination to the school. Remaining currently eligible students must submit proof of having received a first dose to the nurses no later than September 3.

As additional students become eligible by turning 12 this fall, we will require students to receive a first dose within two weeks of their twelfth birthday.

Because trials on the safety and efficacy of the vaccine for children younger than 12 are ongoing, if and when these students become eligible for vaccination we will update families at that time on what the school will require to be in compliance with our student vaccine requirement.

UNIVERSAL MASKING

All students, faculty and staff will be required to wear [high-quality, well-fitting masks](#) while in any school building regardless of vaccination status. Make sure your mask fits snugly against your face, and choose a mask with layers to keep your respiratory droplets in and others' out.

Employees, all of whom will be fully vaccinated, may remove their masks *only* if they are alone in a classroom or office. Unvaccinated students must also wear masks outdoors whenever they are engaged in high-contact sports or activities. The school will have masks available on an as-needed basis.

Universal masking regardless of vaccination status will be one of the most important aspects of our layered approach to protecting the health of all students, faculty, and staff.

VENTILATION AND WINDOWS

The school will rely on the same ventilation systems that were in place last year. These include MERV 13 filters in the HVAC systems and air scrubbers equipped with HEPA filtration.

We inhabit many different kinds of spaces, and this variation makes it a challenge to give a one-size-fits-all overview on windows and ventilation. The ventilation system in each space on campus and the general practices we will follow are below.

Bosworth Building 3rd Floor and Below, Plaza Classrooms and Rotunda

A modern HVAC system introduces fresh air and filters air in these spaces. Additional air scrubbers equipped with HEPA filtration, if present, will be left running 24/7.

Bosworth 4th Floor and Above, Preschool, Kindergarten

There are air scrubbers equipped with HEPA filtration in every instructional space and these will be left running 24/7. We will also open the windows wherever possible.

Townhouses and Farber Building

The townhouses at 124 Pierrepont have a modern HVAC system that introduces fresh air and filters air in these spaces. The system is designed to work best with the windows closed but teachers can choose to open windows. There are air scrubbers equipped with HEPA filtration in every Farber Building instructional space and these will be left running 24/7.

TESTING

All unvaccinated students will be required to submit a negative PCR test taken within 72 hours of the first day of school. This means tests must be conducted between 9/6-9/8 and emailed to testresults@saintannsny.org by 8:00pm on 9/8. Please plan accordingly; some test sites may be unavailable on Labor Day. Only fully vaccinated individuals who have provided proof of vaccination to the nurses will be exempt from this requirement.

As we did last fall, we have sought expert guidance from epidemiologists in designing a testing protocol that will enable us to detect any outbreaks at school early, while spread is limited and more readily controlled. This was a crucial and effective tool for us last year in inhibiting community spread and maximizing in-person learning. Beginning the week of September 20th, we will implement a PCR-based surveillance testing program to test 25% of the unvaccinated student population each week. Saliva-based test kits for the fall semester will be distributed at the beginning of the school year. Since we recognize that very young children have difficulty producing saliva samples, we will have an additional on-site nasal swab testing option for preschool and kindergarten students here at school. We will share more details about this option, and our full testing plan, in the coming weeks.

DAILY HEALTH MONITORING AND STAYING HOME WHEN SICK

Mandatory daily health screenings for all students and employees will be sent each morning via Ruvna, and everyone will be screened when they arrive at school. The screening process will not involve a temperature check. Parents will be responsible for reporting whether or not their child has a fever using the Ruvna screening questionnaire.

ALL possible Covid-like symptoms must continue to be treated as possible Covid regardless of vaccination status and must be reported to the nurses. No individual should come to school if they are experiencing any Covid-like symptoms. They should report their symptoms to the nurses using the Ruvna app, stay home, and get tested as soon as possible. Covid-19 symptoms include fever, which is a body temperature greater than or equal to 100°F, respiratory symptoms (cough, difficulty breathing), vomiting, diarrhea, runny nose, body aches, loss of taste and/or smell, or sore throat.

COMMUNICATION

The school will communicate regularly with parents and guardians via email and/or text messaging, the school website, and the Parent Portal (<https://portals.veracross.com/sa/parent>). Families should ensure that they know how to access the Parent Portal and review their contact information regularly to ensure that it is up-to-date.

Signage will be in place throughout campus reiterating healthy hygiene practices, mask-wearing, and capacity limits for classrooms, elevators, stairs, restrooms, and so on.

REINFORCING HEALTHY HYGIENE

We will continue to teach and reinforce healthy hygiene practices, including frequent handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or the use of hand sanitizer, especially after using the restroom, before and after eating, and after nose-blowing, coughing, or sneezing.

CLEANING

Housekeeping staff will continue to clean and disinfect all spaces, including bathrooms, frequently throughout the day, with particular attention to high-touch surfaces, and will follow the manufacturer's instructions for all products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).

Teachers should continue to wipe down desks (or floors in the case of dance) at the conclusion of each class with isopropyl alcohol solution that is available in every classroom. In PS/K/LS, homeroom teachers should wipe down desks and surfaces after snack and lunch time.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

Following guidance from the CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics, social distancing will be employed to the greatest extent possible while we prioritize full-time in-person learning. Many classrooms for students in grades 7-12 will return to full capacity. Students in grades 4-6 will attend classes in classrooms in which desks are placed three feet apart. Desks in Preschool, Kindergarten, and Lower School classrooms will be arranged to allow for the maximum social distancing possible, but given the nature of teaching and learning social distancing will not always be strictly enforced in these divisions. Universal masking will be an essential layer of protection in all Saint Ann's classrooms.

LUNCH

Lunch service will resume in the cafeteria for 7th-12th grade students. 8th-12th grade students may also go out for lunch. 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students will eat lunch in assigned classrooms.

In Preschool, Kindergarten, and Lower School, lunch will be eaten in classrooms.

CONTACT TRACING, ISOLATION, AND QUARANTINE

In the event of a positive case of Covid at school, we will continue to cooperate with the New York City Department of Health to perform contact tracing, notify close contacts, and provide those individuals with guidance.

- Any individual who tests positive for Covid-19 regardless of vaccination status must continue to stay home from school and isolate for ten days.
- Saint Ann's will require **unvaccinated** students who are identified by school as a close contact of anyone with a confirmed case of Covid to quarantine for 10 days and test before returning to school. This policy is more conservative than what the NYS Department of Education requires in school settings where universal masking is in place; we will continue to monitor the situation and adjust accordingly.

- For **fully vaccinated** individuals who are considered close contacts of a positive case, we hope to be able to implement a policy that will reduce disruptive quarantines by allowing students in this scenario to continue to attend classes and test after three days unless they experience symptoms. However, we are awaiting final guidance from the NYC Department of Health regarding fully vaccinated and masked individuals in a school setting who are considered close contacts of a positive case.
- Any time a fully vaccinated person is symptomatic, they must stay home from school and report their symptoms to school nurses promptly.
- ALL Covid cases among employees or students **MUST** be promptly reported to school nurses. We are required to report all cases to the NYC Department of Health.

Please bear in mind that individual health information is confidential. Some Covid case information may be shared anonymously so that everyone has timely, accurate, and uniform information. Faculty, staff, and students should avoid speculating or sharing information they may have about another community member's health with either students or colleagues.

LEARNING CONTINUITY DURING QUARANTINES

Division offices are finalizing learning continuity plans in the event that an entire homeroom, class, or grade must quarantine. These may vary by division and will be communicated by division offices in the coming weeks.

VISITORS, DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

Parent Visitors

Parents and caregivers will be required to show proof of vaccination in order to enter school buildings. Parents will be allowed to attend **indoor** parent events held on campus where no children are present only if they are fully vaccinated. To begin the year, parent meetings with administrators, such as division or college office staff, will happen over Zoom and parents will not be permitted to attend indoor sporting events or performances where students will be present. The school will continue to monitor positivity rates in NYC and may adjust this policy in the future as appropriate. When we are able to welcome parents to attend indoor meetings, games, and performances where children are present, they will need to continue to provide proof of vaccination.

Parents and caregivers are welcome to attend **outdoor** events, games, and performances regardless of vaccination status.

Middle and high school parents and caregivers will not be permitted to enter school buildings during drop-off and pick-up.

There will not be early drop-off in the Preschool, Kindergarten and Lower School. In Preschool, fours drop off will be at 8:15 a.m. and threes drop off at 8:30 a.m. In Kindergarten and Lower School, drop-off will begin at 8:30 a.m.

PS/K/LS division offices will outline specific protocols for pick-up and drop-off in subsequent communications.

Other Visitors

Other than parents, the only guests who will be permitted on campus are representatives conducting college office information sessions, families who are invited to participate in the admissions process, and anyone who is providing essential support for students or for school operations. All visitors must register at the front desk and present proof of vaccination in order to gain campus access. All guest speakers will need to join classes remotely during the month of September. The school will monitor positivity rates and may adjust this policy in the future as appropriate.

INDOOR MUSIC & THEATER ACTIVITIES

Instrumentalists who play brass or woodwind instruments will be able to play musical instruments indoors if they remain six feet apart. Instruments will be equipped with PPE that will capture aerosols produced while playing the instrument. Outdoor spaces where instruments are permitted to be played will be prioritized for grades six and below since they are not eligible for vaccination. Students should wear masks whenever they are not actively playing an instrument.

Singing indoors is permitted as long as students are socially distanced (6 feet) and masked. However, outdoor spaces should be used as much as possible when children under the age of 12 are singing. Vaccinated students can sing outdoors masked with no social distancing requirement. Unvaccinated students can sing outdoors while masked and socially distanced (6 feet).

Theater performances indoors will also need to follow the school's universal indoor masking policy. Vaccinated students can perform outdoors masked with no social distancing requirement. Unvaccinated students can perform outdoors while masked and socially distanced (6 feet).

RECREATIONAL ARTS & INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS

All students will need to wear masks when engaging in indoor Recreational Arts and sports activities. High school students and students in 7th and 8th grades will be allowed to attend indoor sports events as spectators during the fall semester as long as they remain masked. All students are allowed to attend outdoor sporting events regardless of vaccination status. The school will abide by any guidance issued by the leagues in which we participate. Regardless of vaccination status, all students must be masked when engaging in high-contact outdoor activities like noon rec and intramural sports.

STUDENT EVENTS & ASSEMBLIES

All indoor student events and assemblies must follow the school's universal indoor masking policy. High school students will be allowed to attend indoor sporting events, assemblies, Friday Meeting and concerts. Seventh and eighth grade students will also be allowed to attend indoor sporting events, assemblies, concerts and grade gatherings.

All students in other grades should limit outdoor gatherings to 50 people and indoor gatherings to 40 people. The school will re-evaluate this policy as more students become eligible for vaccination.

AFTER SCHOOL

We will be offering a pared-down After School program for families who are not able to pick up their children at regular dismissal times and who need supervision for their children. The program is open to students in Kindergarten-5th grade and will run from 2:35-5:30 Monday-Friday beginning on September 13th. We will be podding by grade with the 4th-5th graders combined. We will use classrooms in the Farber building for students in Kindergarten-3rd grade and the Townhouses and Farber building for 4th and 5th graders. Students will be in classrooms with others from their grade and we will keep close records of attendance for contact tracing purposes. All final program details will be shared with families in late August and registration will be open until September 15th.

TRAVEL

Saint Ann's joins the CDC in urging everyone to exercise caution around travel. The CDC's recommendations for domestic travel may be found [here](#).