

SARATOGA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL

REOPENING PLAN

FALL 2020



Saratoga
Independent
School

Inspire Today. Prepare for Tomorrow.

Updated August 4, 2020

INTRODUCTION

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy." Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

As we prepare for the reopening of school in September in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, our very first priority is the health and safety of every member of the school community. We will continue to communicate the important information in this plan to all members of the community as we move toward reopening. The plan will be reviewed as new information becomes available, and we will make changes in procedures, as necessary.

Equally important is maintaining the quality of the education and sense of community that S.I.S. provides to our students, whether in person or remotely. In-person teaching and learning are being re-examined in light of the changes and restrictions made necessary by new protocols and procedures (e.g., masks, six foot distancing, time devoted to enhanced personal and institutional hygiene, etc.). Opportunities for outdoor learning and gathering are being added to our schedules.

A school-wide remote learning daily schedule has been shared with parents. Teachers are planning concurrently for in-person and remote learning so that we will be prepared for either in September. We will engage students in our curriculum in person or remotely and will carry on S.I.S.'s values of leadership, respect, creativity, active engagement, and meaningful learning.

Our administrative team, faculty, and staff are partners in the creation and implementation of the following list. S.I.S. families are a critical part of the success of these efforts, and we appreciate their willingness to adapt and follow new health and safety guidelines, and to help their children understand the importance of new rules and responsibilities. We are grateful for their support and for that of our Board of Trustees during this most unusual time.

Lisa Brown
Head of School



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HEALTH AND SAFETY

Our first priority is the health and safety of our school community. Protocols and procedures are in place to protect our students, staff, and guests. Guided by our school motto, we will “take care of ourselves, each other, our school, and our community.”



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HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Individual health and temperature checks for every adult and child entering the school building
- Only students and staff will be allowed in the building unless specifically invited
- Anyone with a fever of 100° or higher will not be allowed to enter the school
- Anyone with symptoms of illness will not be allowed to enter the school
- If students or staff members experience symptoms or a fever during the day, they will be isolated in the nurse's office until they can be picked up
- The nurse's office has been moved to the end of the primary wing; it is large, has a private bathroom, an area for isolation, and is located next to an exit
- In the event of a Covid-19 outbreak, and school closure, the school will move to remote learning and will be thoroughly sanitized and disinfected



HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Everyone entering the school will be required to wear a mask and use hand sanitizer
- Masks will always be worn by adults and by students as required by the NYS DOH and Education Department
- Social distancing measures are in place throughout the entire building
- Hand washing and sanitizing signs are prominently displayed throughout the building
- Additional signage will be posted as reminders of safety expectations
- It is being recommended that faculty, staff, and families not travel out of the country or to states on the Governor's travel advisory list for two weeks before school starts or expect to quarantine for two weeks after returning ([click here for the list of states](#))
- If faculty, staff, or families travel out of the country or to the states on the Governor's travel advisory list ([click here for the list of states](#)) during the school year, they will be asked to quarantine for two weeks before returning to school
- Covid-19 testing of school personnel will follow DOH guidelines; if a member of the school community is exposed to Covid-19, the school will inform the community and contact the County Health Department immediately
- Daily at-home washing of masks, water bottles, snack/lunch bags/boxes will be required

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH

- Faculty and staff receive training and resources to assist in students' social and emotional health after returning to school
- S.I.S. will continue to follow Responsive Classroom guidelines, activities, and techniques to engage students in the community, with special attention to building a sense of comfort and security, as well as responsibility, amid changes due to the pandemic
- Special attention will be paid to students whose families have experienced illness or death as a result of the Covid-19
- Close communication with families will assist the school in providing support to students



STUDENT EXPERIENCE

While some aspects of school will be different this year, our goals will be to involve students and ensure a sense of safety and security as we carry on S.I.S's values of leadership, respect, creativity, active engagement, and meaningful learning.



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STUDENT EXPERIENCE

- If NYS allows for in-person learning, all grade levels will be welcome to come to school for full days, Monday through Friday
- Visual cues and signage for social distancing, handwashing and sanitization, mask wearing, and new hallway traffic patterns will be posted
- Reconfiguration of classrooms will allow for social distancing
- Plexiglass table dividers in all classrooms will assist with social distancing and prevent the spread of germs
- Outside spaces will be adapted into learning spaces
- Daily schedules will be reconfigured to minimize movement and contact
- Lunch will be outside or in classrooms; students will have the option to bring their lunch or buy a grab-and-go lunch
- Recess will be outside, with touch-free games and activities; use of recess equipment will be limited and sanitized after each use
- Water fountains will be closed; students will be expected to bring reusable water bottles and teachers will assist in refilling
- One person will be allowed in the restroom at a time; restrooms will be cleaned and sanitized regularly
- Masks will always be worn by adults and by students as required by the NYS DOH and Education Department
- Large group meetings, assemblies, special presentations, and field trips will be reimagined to comply with new health and safety measures
- Students and faculty will wash hands regularly throughout the day

COMMUNICATION

S.I.S. takes pride in the connections developed and nurtured with all members of the school community. Communication between school and home is always paramount; it is critical during a pandemic to inform and reassure families that their children are cared for and protected at school.



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COMMUNICATION

- Reopening tours for parents and staff are taking place over the summer
- Reopening orientations will take place before the start of school for staff, faculty, parents, and students to go over new protocols and answer questions
- S.I.S. will continue to send out regular newsletters and include reopening information
- Remote learning and hybrid learning plans have been developed should the need arise
- Special events, assemblies, and field trips will be reimagined, as necessary; social distancing, limited density, and safety will be the priorities when planning special events
- The school community will be informed of a Covid-19 case, following legal guidelines and medical privacy laws



SCHOOL OPERATIONS

Every effort has been made to keep our school community safe and healthy. New procedures, protocols, equipment, and safety measures are in place.



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SCHOOL OPERATIONS

- Parents/caregivers will not be allowed in the school for drop-off and pick-up
- Masks will be required for all adults while inside the school building, and for students as required by the NYS DOH and Education Department
- Masks will be worn outside if required by the DOH and Education Department
- Intensive cleaning and disinfection will take place daily, using cleaning materials recommended by the NYS DOH
- Ventilation systems have been updated; windows will be open when possible and MERV 11 and MERV 13 air filters, as recommended by the Governor, have been installed where necessary
- Signage for health and safety expectations are posted throughout the building
- Traffic patterns will be designated in classrooms, hallways, and stairwells
- Common spaces and outdoor spaces will be adapted to new uses as necessary
- The school will continue to hold required safety drills with six-foot distancing
- Mail and package delivery and pick-up has moved outside to limit school visitors

SCHOOL OPERATIONS

- The cafeteria will put its sustainability efforts on hold to assist in limiting the spread of germs
- Boxed lunches and plastic utensils will be used
- Students will eat outside, in classrooms, or in the cafeteria; more lunch periods will be scheduled to limit density
- Arrival and dismissal procedures have been adapted to maintain social distancing and limit density
- Students will enter the building via three entrances: the Main Entrance for Intermediate and Fifth Grade; the Library Entrance for PreK, Kindergarten, and Primary; and the Field Entrance for Middle School
- The number of visitors and vendors permitted on school grounds and inside the building will be limited and closely monitored
- All visitors will be required to go through the health screening process
- Busing is dependent on local school districts; we await information.
- Students who ride the bus will be required to wear masks and maintain social distancing
- Arrival times will be staggered
- Watch for new traffic patterns in the parking lot

REMOTE AND HYBRID LEARNING

We are moving toward September on two parallel paths, planning simultaneously for reopening and for remote/hybrid learning.



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REMOTE AND HYBRID LEARNING PLAN

As we plan for reopening in September, we are planning, too, for the possibility of periods of both remote learning and hybrid learning as we move through the year. We will be ready to start this year with the foundation of all that we learned about remote learning over the last several months, and we continue to build on that foundation with ongoing research, collaboration with colleagues, and professional development.

Our most immediate goal is to reflect the values inherent in our mission and keep students and families connected with school through remote learning and regular communication with parents from teachers and the Head of School. We will continue to re-imagine S.I.S. traditions and activities, as we did in the spring, to engage students from a distance.



REMOTE AND HYBRID LEARNING PLAN

Our six major goals for remote and hybrid learning are:

- To engage students in active learning
- To engage students socially and emotionally even when at a distance
- To create a strong sense of community for students and their families
- To continue to follow our curriculum, moving forward with content and skills
- To communicate content in a manner that is equivalent to in-person learning
- To assess students in a manner that takes into consideration the unique characteristics of remote learning, with a focus on active demonstration of skills and knowledge



REMOTE AND HYBRID LEARNING PLAN

Each remote learning day for Kindergarten through Eights Grade will follow this schedule:

- 9:00 – 9:10 Brief morning gathering to check in and get organized for the day (live)
- Combination of live classes, pre-recorded lessons, special area classes, office hours for individual and small group meetings
- 10:00 Morning Meeting / Advisory (live)
- Combination of live classes, pre-recorded lessons, special area classes, office hours for individual and small group meetings
- 11:30 – 12:30 Lunch and recess
- Combination of live classes, pre-recorded lessons, special area classes, office hours for individual and small group meetings
- Brief end-of-day gathering – 2:45 pm (live) * time may vary depending on grade level

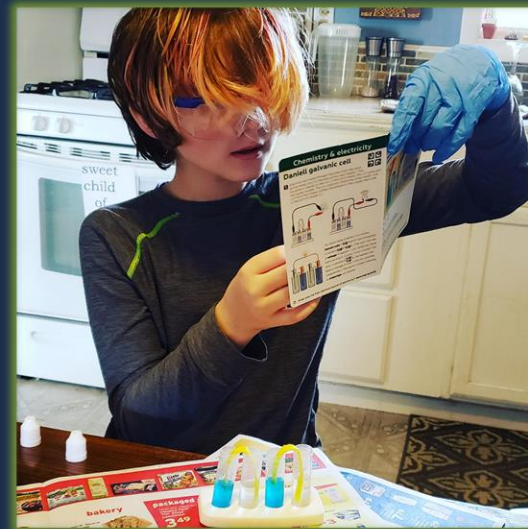
The daily schedule for PreK will be similar:

- 9:00 – 9:10 Brief morning gathering to check in and get organized for the day (live)
- Combination of live lessons and activities, pre-recorded lessons and stories, special area classes, office hours for individual and small group gatherings
- 10:00 Morning Meeting (live)
- Brief end-of-morning gathering – 11:30 am (live)
- Combination of live lessons and activities, pre-recorded lessons and stories, special area classes, office hours for individual and small group gatherings
- Brief end-of-day gathering – 2:45 pm (live)

REMOTE AND HYBRID LEARNING PLAN

Each teacher will provide students and parents with a weekly remote learning calendar, which will include links for live meetings and online resources. In addition to other learning platforms (SeeSaw, Zoom, Google Meet, etc.), all classes, beginning with Primary, will use Google Classroom for in-school and remote learning, so that students will be familiar with it when it is necessary to use it during periods of learning at home. Time will be spent during the first weeks of school to acquaint Primary and younger Intermediate students with Google Classroom in a manner appropriate to their age. Kindergarten and Primary will continue to use SeeSaw.

We will offer guidance and resources for parents to assist in using platforms that are new to them, and we will help families who need computers or tablets for their children.



REMOTE AND HYBRID LEARNING PLAN

Hybrid learning can come in a variety of configurations, including alternating schedules of in-school and at-home learning, and students who are unable to be at school due to health reasons or family preference. We will meet those different needs using our remote learning resources and experience. Hybrid learning will adhere to the daily schedule for in-person teaching and learning through a Zoom link set up in the classroom to allow children to continue to learn together.

For both remote and hybrid learning, teachers will work in teams, allocating planning and presentation of material in a manner that meets the learning needs of the children and the planning needs of teachers.

Because we understand well the challenges that remote learning can present to families who are managing multiple children, their own work schedules, and other obligations, we encourage parents to be in touch with us about any concerns.



Frequently Asked Questions

1

What is your plan for the fall?

Our plans for the fall follow two parallel paths: Complete preparation for reopening and planning for remote/hybrid learning. We will be ready for either option, following the requirements put in place by the State.

2

What is the procedure if someone from the school community tests positive for COVID-19?

If a student or staff member appears to have symptoms of COVID-19, he or she will be isolated immediately and arrangements will be made for departure from school. Information will be provided to families and staff. The school will close for one day to allow for emergency cleaning and disinfection. Beyond one day, we will follow all regulations from the NYS DOH and Department of Education regarding school closure for the health and safety of the community. If a student or staff member tests positive, all tracing and closure requirements will be followed as required by the NYS Department of Health.

3

If my child's morning temperature is 100° or higher, whom should I contact?

Please call *and* email our School Nurse, Jen Kmen, immediately at nurse@siskids.org and 518-583-0841 x305.

4

What type of health screenings will you be conducting?

All staff and students will have their temperature checked every morning before entering the school building, and will complete a brief health survey. All visitors will do the same.

Frequently Asked Questions

5

If school is open, but I want to start the year remotely, can I send my student to school when I feel comfortable?

We expect that some families and students with health needs may feel that they will be best served by learning remotely. We will work with individual families regarding the opportunity for remote learning while school is open.

6

Will in-person and remote learning be the same curriculum?

Yes! Instruction will be delivered differently, but the content and skills will be the same.

7

Will students need to wear a mask all day?

We will follow recommendations from NYS regarding mask usage in the school building and outdoors. Students will be outside for some classes, snack, lunch, recess, and PE as frequently as possible. Students will be asked to bring their own masks and wash them at home each evening. If a child forgets his/her mask, the school will have extras.

8

Have you updated your ventilation system?

We are installing MERV-11 or MERV-13 filters in all parts of the HVAC system that require filters. Other parts of the school have an air exchange system that brings fresh air into the building. We have repaired and replaced all window screens and plan to have windows open as much as possible. Students should dress in warm clothing as the weather gets colder.

9

What is your plan for busing?

Our busing is dependent on local school districts. We are awaiting information about changes in transportation policies this year. Families may want to consider driving students or carpooling.

Frequently Asked Questions

10

Will students still have buddies?

Buddies are a significant part of our school culture and we will continue the tradition, ensuring that buddy activities are safe for all students.

11

Will my student need extra/different school supplies this year?

While our goal is to make school as normal as possible for our students, there will be some changes this year. Supply lists will be sent out shortly. In addition to regular school supplies, students will need extra masks, rain gear (jacket, boots, hat), warm clothing, and a beach towel to help with social distancing indoors and out.

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Who is the contact person at S.I.S. if I have questions about Covid-19?

Please contact Jen Kmen, School Nurse, by email at nurse@siskids.org, or by phone at 518-583-0841 x305

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Who is the contact person at S.I.S. if I have questions about the school's reopening plans?

Please contact Lisa Brown, Head of School, by email at lbrown@siskids.org or by phone at 518-583-0841

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Where can I find more information from New York State?

New York State Education Department @ <http://www.nysed.gov/coronavirus>

New York State Department of Health @ <https://health.ny.gov/>

New York State Association of Independent Schools @ <https://www.nysais.org/>

New York State Governor's page on Covid-19 @ <https://www.governor.ny.gov/>