



RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN

2020-21





Guiding Principles in the Development of the 2020-21: Return to School Plan

Protecting the health, safety, and well-being of every member of our community is our highest priority. Duke School created a COVID-19 Response Task Force (CRTF) to seek solutions to challenges presented by the pandemic and to plan for a rich, safe, and continuous learning experience for the coming school year. Duke School's Leadership Team is grateful for the input of our faculty/staff committees. Our planning has been informed by results from our spring parent survey, and we are grateful to our Duke School community for your feedback and support. In developing our plan, Duke School is committed to these key guiding principles:

- Prioritizing the health and safety of our students, employees, and families;
- Ensuring the delivery of a robust, comprehensive, and mission-consistent educational program;
- Aligning with local, state, and national health authorities;
- Responding and adapting to a rapidly evolving environment;
- Promoting equity and underscoring the dignity of every person in all our efforts; and
- Demonstrating fiscal resilience and responsibility

Members of the Duke School COVID-19 Response Task Force

- Craig Spitzer, Chair, CRTF; Trustee
- Lisa Nagel, Head of School
- Kathy Bartelmay, Curriculum Director
- Laurie Braun, Trustee
- Corey McIntyre, Trustee
- Russell Rabinowitz, Director of Finance and Operations
- Bimal Shah, Chair, Board of Trustees

Members of the Duke School Health Advisory Group

- Ethan Basch, M.D.,
University of North Carolina School of Medicine
- Susanna Naggie, M.D.,
Duke University School of Medicine
- Michael Cohen-Wolkowicz, M.D.,
Duke University School of Medicine
- Bimal Shah, M.D.,
Duke University School of Medicine

Guiding Organizations

Duke School will continue to follow the governor’s executive orders for the state of North Carolina, as well as the clinical guidance statement of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s guidelines for the reopening of schools, and public health guidance issued by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services.

- American Academy of Pediatrics
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- North Carolina State Executive Orders
- North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
- Durham County Public Health Department
- INDEX
- National Association of Independent Schools
- Southern Association of Independent Schools
- North Carolina Association of Independent Schools

American Academy of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



National Association of Independent Schools



North Carolina Association of Independent Schools



On-Campus Learning

Students and employees return to campus, with modifications to integrate enhanced health and safety procedures that equal or exceed national, state, and local safety criteria. School will only fully reopen if the North Carolina Governor's executive orders permit us to do so. *More details on page 5.*



Distance Learning

Students and employees work and learn remotely. We will pursue Distance Learning if the North Carolina Governor's executive orders mandate us to do so. *More details on page 8.*



Bridged Distance Learning

We will offer a Bridged Distance Learning model to families who request or require this option, recognizing with this model that not all on-campus activities will be possible in a virtual setting. *More details on page 8.*

Planning and Modeling Processes

Throughout the spring and early summer, the school teams and sub-committees met multiple times weekly, developing models to provide an exceptional, continuous educational learning experience while keeping paramount the safety of our students and employees. The academic leadership subgroups of the COVID-19 Response Task Force have developed three models for teaching and learning next year and strategies for enacting these models: **On-Campus Learning**, **Distance Learning**, and **Bridged Distance Learning**.

As we have developed our plan, we have taken into consideration significant strides in professional development; expanding square footage through the addition of modular classrooms; procuring PPE, cleaning supplies and furnishings; HVAC modifications; enhancements for outdoor learning; 1:1 technology devices for students; and general technology upgrades; offer the safest, most robust, and continuous educational program to our students throughout the year, toggling as necessary between these modes of instruction as circumstances dictate.

We are currently working on comprehensive and detailed policies and procedures to translate models into action.

We will remain nimble and responsive to recommendations of our guiding organizations. We are prepared to adjust course based on directives of the state of North Carolina, or changes in the trajectory of infections or risk in the population.



ON-CAMPUS LEARNING

We hope to begin the school year with students safely learning on-campus as consistently as possible, as this model allows us to deliver our program in the most comprehensive fashion. Student and employee safety are paramount as we develop our procedures and routines. A formal policy document is currently in development in concert with our health advisory group, and we will share this with the community in the coming weeks. The following will serve as guiding strategies for safety and risk mitigation:

Classrooms and Common Areas

- Decreased numbers of students per classroom leveraging modular classrooms to expand square footage to accommodate all students with appropriate social distancing
- Maintaining consistency in grouping of students (cohorting) in self contained classrooms throughout the day
- Restricting cross-over of classes or cohorts during lunch, bathroom use, and transitions between spaces with cleaning between groups
- Maximizing use of outdoor learning spaces by each classroom
- Use of signage for hygiene and physical distancing reminders throughout the facility including in classrooms, shared spaces, bathrooms
- Restricting use of shared space, including student storage and desks
- Limiting movement throughout buildings
- Use of individual space for mealtimes and maximizing outdoor lunch
- Modifying ventilation in accordance with best practices
- Use of masks (students and staff) and other barriers to decrease risk of transmission following public health guidance
- Adherence to physical distancing guidelines following public health guidance
- Training and monitoring of proper and frequent handwashing throughout the day
- Increased availability of hand sanitizer through premises
- Use of staggered schedules to limit student interactions in common areas
- Postponement of large assemblies and gatherings
- Postponement of school food service (pizza), shared food, and water fountains
- Restructuring of outdoor play and physical education
- No Before-School Care to eliminate cross-over risk of students or cohorts
- ASP will remain in place, with modifications, including only a 5-day plan, to reduce crossover risk of students or cohorts
- Prime Time will remain in place, with modifications to reduce cross-over risk of students or cohorts

General Daily Practices and Procedures

- Use of health screening app daily prior to arrival on campus
- Staggered arrival and pick up times
- Temperature screenings upon arrival to campus
- Entrance and use of buildings limited to students and employees

Supplies

- Use of 1:1 technology devices
- Individual supply and material use
- Thorough and frequent CDC-informed cleaning protocols

Envisioning an On-campus Day



Before School

As you prepare your child for school, you assess their physical condition, taking 20 seconds to complete and submit your child's daily screening on the *Ascend* app. You share a daily reminder to maintain distance with classmates, wash hands throughout the day, refrain from sharing snacks, and follow the teacher's safety guidance.

Before-School Care

In order to avoid cohort crossover, Before-School Care is not offered for fall semester.

Arrival to Campus

To accommodate temperature screening and hygiene procedures at entry, there are set time slots for students' arrival; with intervals among grades/divisions. When you arrive in the car line, a staff member greets you, takes another temperature check of your student before they leave the vehicle, and confirms with you that you have completed the *Ascend* app. Your student follows "Sparky" physical distancing signage on the sidewalks. Upon arriving at their classroom, your student cleans their hands at sanitation stations located outside every classroom. As always, staff members are positioned along the sidewalks to guide the way for every student!



In the Classroom

Entrance and belongings storage

As faculty welcomes your student to the classroom, we will begin morning meeting or advisory, consistent with our belief in fostering belonging, promoting emotional safety, and offering the comforting structure of daily routines. Your student attends their meeting from their seat or safely distanced outside. There is one desk or designated space provided for each student, and each student's space has been adjusted according to distancing guidelines. They keep their backpacks and belongings with them at their seats throughout the day.

Self-containment and class size

Each grade level is now split into four sections (eight sections for Preschool) to de-densify. Student cohorts or grade level classes are capped at 15 or less, as is possible. Crossover with other classes in shared spaces is minimized, with students moving infrequently through buildings.

The Duke School inquiry based curriculum continues, with individual, small group, and collaborative activities undertaken only with physical distancing. Careful curriculum development allows students to develop projects and communicate without physical contact. Specialists travel to classes. Scheduling takes into consideration minimized cross-exposure and days, as well as length of classes. Students use their own supplies and materials. Teachers plan for regular social-emotional and physical outdoor breaks, reviewing distancing guidelines and offering gentle reminders, as they maximize outdoor learning and play on our beautiful campus.

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Masks

Masks are worn inside by all students and adults, following most recent public health guidelines as of August. Your student is taught appropriate ways to affix masks and to avoid touching their face or their mask as much as possible.

Handwashing

A minimum of three handwashing breaks per day is provided. Proper hand washing routines are reviewed, and fun songs as appropriate accompany this process. Your student will also be guided to use hand sanitizing stations frequently.

Lunch

Students eat lunch outside as frequently as possible. Inside or outside, physical distancing is observed. Students wash hands before and after lunch. No food sharing is permitted. Wednesday pizza lunch is postponed during this time. Students bring their own snacks and water bottles. Water fountains are closed. Staggered lunch schedules minimize cross-over.

Recess and Playground

Recess is scheduled to minimize cohort cross-over and is held in accordance with public health guidelines. Classes take advantage of our wooded areas, gardens, acreage, and natural landscapes for play and plentiful exercise. Physical distance is still observed.

Restrooms

Students are permitted to use the restroom independently and care is taken not to have groups in the restroom. Toilets are affixed with lids, and students are taught to close lids prior to flushing. An adult is available to remind students of handwashing and other necessary steps. Signage and waiting spaces are designated for each restroom.

Dismissal

Before leaving school, students wash and disinfect their hands again. Dismissal times are staggered, and students are dismissed as parents arrive. Details about arrival and dismissal times will be shared in August.

Lower School After School Program (ASP) and Middle School Prime Time

Students are grouped in grade level cohorts of less than 15 when possible, and crossover is minimized. All extra-curricular activities are canceled for fall semester, including team sports, band and drama productions, Dragon Quests, and private music lessons. No tutoring is permitted on campus for fall semester.

Consistent with Duke School's approach, we are developing specific health protocols and procedures rooted in current research and best practices. Protocols for students presenting with symptoms or elevated temperatures prior to arrival or during school are being developed with much care and will be shared before On-Campus Learning begins in the fall. Similarly, reporting, tracing, quarantine, and isolation guidelines will be shared in August, based on developing information.



DISTANCE LEARNING

Duke School is prepared to make the transition from On-Campus Learning to Distance Learning as seamless as possible while maintaining authentic, meaningful learning experiences. If Duke School were to begin the 2020-21 school year with Distance Learning or need to toggle to Distance Learning during the year, the following will serve as guiding strategies for Distance Learning:

- Emphasis on social-emotional learning and student-teacher connection through daily synchronous activities such as Morning Meetings, Advisory, and small group learning sessions
- Offering of social gatherings, access to school counselor services, and continued specialist experiences
- Use of personal, school issued devices for every student in Preschool through Eighth Grade and upgraded technology features to enhance the virtual classroom
- Continual assessment of the optimal balance of synchronous and asynchronous learning, consistent with best practices and approaches garnered from summer professional development
- Use of Google Classroom to simplify parent, student, and teacher management and communications
- Continued emphasis on project-based inquiry work, virtual field trips, and expert visitors to the virtual classroom, adapting and innovating to maximize experiential learning in a digital environment
- Opportunities for caregivers and families to participate in virtual gatherings to promote communication between school and home as well as to build community connectedness



BRIDGED DISTANCE LEARNING

We will offer a Bridged Distance Learning Model this fall to families who request or require this option in order to meet your family’s needs and preferences. This model is an off-campus option, allowing your child to learn remotely from home while bridging your student’s experience to campus. Bridged Distance Learning will include a mix of remotely participating in some live class time and completing work asynchronously. The exact structure of the Bridged Distance Learning day will vary by grade level and will be planned by the classroom teacher(s) and the Division Director.

It is critical for planning purposes to know which families will request or require this plan this semester, and we have included with this communication a form to complete and return by July 24 to indicate your intention. The following will serve as guiding strategies for Bridged Distance Learning:

- Use of personal, school-issued devices to promote user-friendly, consistent, and enhanced remote experience
- Prioritization of synchronous work through webcams or other devices
- Use of Google Classroom to simplify parent, student, and teacher management and communications
- Use of enhanced technology and devices at school for synchronous access and improved connectivity between home and campus
- Development of scheduling in core areas to support participation remotely
- Use of technology to support cross-curricular teaching, curriculum integration, and exchange
- Opportunities for caregivers and families to participate in virtual gatherings to promote communication between school and home as well as to build community connectedness

Campus Safety Measures and Procedures

DAILY STUDENT LIFE



Temperature checks upon arrival on campus



Maintain six feet of physical distancing at all times



Limited number of students in each classroom/space



Eliminate shared equipment (e.g., computers, art supplies)



Staggered arrival and departure times



Altered field trips, athletics, and third-party enrichment programs/activities



PPE use and frequent handwashing at sanitation stations on campus



Utilize outdoor space as much as possible



Daily screenings using the *Ascend* app

SCHOOL UPDATES



A new, isolated space for those showing COVID symptoms to wait for pick-up



Signage throughout campus with safety reminders



Increased ventilation throughout the building



Increased cleaning procedures and frequency

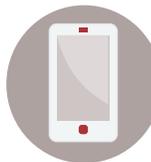
ON BEHALF OF OUR STUDENTS

Duke School has made the following critical strides to enact our models in the most robust manner:



Modular Classrooms and Outdoor Space

We have leased modular classrooms to create additional square footage. With this acquisition, all students can be on campus daily, adhering to physical distancing guidelines. We have identified adjacent outdoor space to classrooms and throughout our 47 acres to offer opportunities for rich learning and student-led inquiry projects.



Base Camp Health's *Ascend* Application

We will use Base Camp Health's *Ascend* application to track student and employee symptoms and temperature checks daily. Each morning, prior to arriving to campus, parents will log into *Ascend*, answer a few questions, and follow the recommended course of action based on CDC guidelines and Duke School policy.



Technology Equipment and Enhancements

We have made a significant investment in 1:1 devices and enhanced classroom technology to bridge between physical and remote learning environments this year, promoting a continuous learning experience for all students, and allowing for individual use of devices when on campus. Enhanced technology will also allow us to provide a virtual experience for those students who cannot participate in On-Campus Learning.



Professional Development

Our teachers have participated in extensive professional development experiences regionally and nationally this summer. They have refined virtual learning techniques and methods to provide authentic, meaningful experiences through distance learning, while promoting wellness, social-emotional development, culturally affirming and responsive programming, and connection with students that are vital in the pandemic impacted environment.



Duke School Cares Fund

The Duke School Board of Trustees, with support from generous Duke School donors, has established the Duke School Cares Emergency Grant Fund. This fund provides emergency funding for currently enrolled families experiencing financial hardships that threaten the academic progress of their children during their time at Duke School. For more information about the Duke School Cares grant or to contribute, please contact the Duke School Development Office.

Duke School's Leadership Team

Our community's health and safety are of the utmost importance, and we want to encourage you to contact our team with questions or concerns about how we are serving your family. The Duke School Leadership Team is here to provide learning continuity for your child(ren) and a strong, safe community for your entire family.

- Lisa Nagel, Head of School
- Kathy Bartelmay, Director of Curriculum
- Kenneth Chandler, Director of Development
- Emily Chávez, Director of Equity and Justice
- Jenny Murray, Director of Middle School
- Russell Rabinowitz, Director of Finance and Operations
- Nicole Thompson, Director of Lower School
- Linda Vargas, Director of Admissions

Duke School thanks its **extraordinary faculty and staff**, who helped develop many of the strategies outlined in this plan through committee work and who are enrolled in online classes throughout the summer to prepare for the year ahead!

Duke School remains grateful to every family for your support and understanding. This unprecedented time calls us to live our mission like never before. As we partner to face the challenges ahead, we model the core values of our community, inspiring all of us to think boldly and creatively shape our future as we prepare the next generation of problem solvers for our complex world.

