



# Plan for the 2021-2022 School Year

November 16, 2021



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The River School's response to COVID-19 has always been guided by science, current public health advice, medical advisors and leadership of national and regional educational and independent school associations. We are committed to in-person operations this school year and another year of learning and joy for the children.

We know that young children benefit from in-person instruction, as well as from the familiar routines of the school day. We proved last year that we can provide an excellent academic program and meet the social-emotional needs of our students while prioritizing health and wellness. We all must approach this school year with vigilance, flexibility and compassion.



Our comprehensive scenario planning for the school year includes:

**In-Person, On-Campus Education**

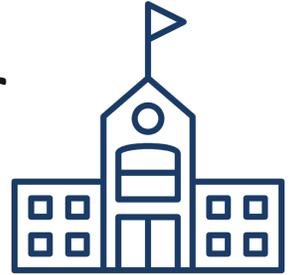


**Short-term Distance Learning Program** (e.g., perhaps for a few weeks for a single classroom, or for several students in a classroom, if quarantining protocols require it.)

**Longer-term Closure School Wide** (e.g., in the event of a mandated closure)



# 2021-2022 School Year



We are fully committed to delivering a safe, joyful, on-campus learning experience for the students for the 2021-2022 school year. It is critical for all families to commit and adhere to the health and wellness protocols established for risk-mitigating behavior **inside and outside of school** to ensure the safest environment possible for the children and our faculty and staff. ***Please review the separate Health & Wellness Protocols section within this plan for details.***

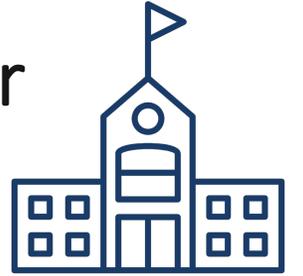
River leadership will closely monitor:

- Community compliance outlined in River's Social Compact
- Multiple classroom cohorts having confirmed cases or evidence of community spread between one classroom and another
- Metrics in DC and surrounding counties, including new cases reported, testing positivity rate, etc.





# 2021-2022 School Year



The COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated increased levels of diligence, resiliency, adaptability and patience. We aim to be transparent, responsive, and, above all, mindful of the children’s health and well-being. Please bear with us should we need to quickly adjust schedules or temporarily close the campus during the school year.

## Risk Acknowledgement

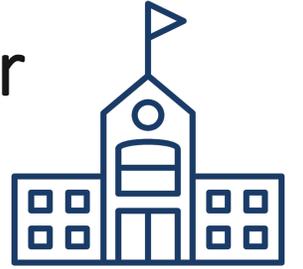
It is important to state that there will be risk associated with attending school this year due to the pandemic. The River School stringently implements all appropriate health and safety measures advised by the CDC, DC Health and our medical advisors to mitigate exposure risk—but we cannot eliminate risk entirely. River implements prudent and reasonable health and wellness protocols designed to reduce the spread of COVID-19 on campus for the 2021-2022 school year, and they will continue to be updated in response to new information.\* Despite all that we will do to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19 at school, there are inherent risks associated with being on campus. The River School families acknowledge and voluntarily assume these risks, including the possibility of testing positive for COVID-19.



*\*Everything in this plan is subject to change quickly as conditions may change beyond The River School’s control. Please keep this in mind as you review.*



# 2021-2022 School Year



## A Note on Community Responsibility



At River, we pride ourselves on our caring, connected community and our commitment to maintaining a safe environment for our faculty, staff and children. With the COVID-19 pandemic, we have all been called upon to reaffirm our community values and commitment to everyone's physical and emotional well-being, extending beyond the directives within our Social Compact. We need to keep interactions with one another respectful. We need to be sensitive and mindful of individual experiences and concerns. And, we need to be able to trust one another.

## Social Compact



Every River parent and faculty/staff member is required to sign and adhere to a **Social Compact**, available through the [Magnus Health Portal](#) and included in River's Community Handbook, the formal acknowledgement and agreement that each of us will conduct ourselves during this pandemic in a way that respects basic safety principles and values the health and safety of River's community.

In order for the 2021-2022 school year to be successful at River, we all need to act responsibly for the sake of the community. The small size of our community, the commitment of River families, and the favorable outcome of the 2021-2022 school year reassure us that adhering to the expectations and common goals within the Social Compact is both possible and fundamental. We know if we follow it, in-person learning can be safe, and a robust, live academic program is possible.



Currently our **On Campus, In-Person Plan Highlights** include:

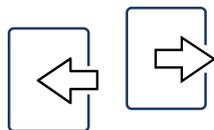


**Limited number of students per class** with consistent faculty members

**Established cohorts** to reduce mixing of groups (*see Cohorting section of this plan*)



**Increased outdoor time** (e.g., playground, PE, yoga)



Use of **multiple entrances and exits** to allow for increased social distancing



**Enrichment Classes** will be held virtually in the fall, with in-person classes for fully vaccinated children in the second semester.



## Health & Wellness Protocols



The River School follows guidelines from the [CDC](#), [DC Health](#) and independent school associations. All River families, faculty and staff are expected to adhere to the health and wellness protocols in this document. Additionally, River's Social Compact (see page 6) outlines responsibilities and precautions outside of school.

DC | HEALTH



We strongly believe all children, regardless of their age, need to feel safe and connected in order to learn best. Faculty spent a great deal of time in the first weeks of school helping the children adjust to their new routines. We integrate the practices we've established for health and wellness into our lessons and practices. The social emotional aspect of our program is of critical importance during this pandemic. Like last year, special care is taken so the children feel connected socially to their cohort and to their teachers, and so they can learn to recognize and express their own emotions and develop positive and empathetic relationships.



**River's registered nurse, Elizabeth McDermott**, oversees health protocols and their implementation, including helping with daily student and staff health screenings.



## Health & Wellness Highlights



Dedicated space for **nurse's office**



Strict protocols for **hand hygiene**



**Parent attestations** of student's health using a daily illness symptom check in the Magnus Health App



Firm policies regarding vaccinations, illness and submission of **health forms** (*see following pages for more details*)



**Mask requirements** for students and all faculty and staff (*see separate Mask section, page 13*)



**Restriction** of non-essential visitors and adults



**Staggered morning arrival and afternoon dismissals** to limit the number of children entering and exiting the building at one time



**Training for all faculty and staff** on risk mitigation protocols



**Documented protocols** for quarantine and return to school for unvaccinated community members (*section starts on page 18*)



## Health-Related Procedures



Families are required to maintain all health standards, vaccination requirements (*see next page for more details*), communications about illnesses, and adherence to confidentiality standards.



Families must complete a **health screening every day through Magnus Health**, the secure, HIPAA-compliant portal. You received detailed information via email about how to navigate the online health screening through the Magnus Health App. No child or faculty/staff member can enter our buildings without completing their daily health questionnaire. ***There are no exceptions. And, please submit the questionnaire by 7:30 am each school day!***



Families are required to **keep student(s) home from school** if any COVID-related symptoms are noted, such as nasal drainage, nasal congestion, cough (not due to documented baseline conditions), shortness of breath, headache, nausea, diarrhea, sore throat, loss of smell, fever, muscle ache, and/or fatigue.



See also the **Quarantine Protocols and Return to Campus** sections of this document (*starting on page 19*).

## Vaccines

A blue line-art icon of a syringe with a single drop of liquid next to it.

- All River faculty and staff on campus are required to get the **COVID-19 vaccine** *without exception*. Boosters are required as well.
- As of November 3, 2021, for **students 5 years of age and up, the COVID-19 vaccine is a required immunization (due by December 31, 2021)**. Those students who turn 5 during the school year must be fully vaccinated within 60 days of their birthday.
- When the **COVID-19 vaccine** becomes available for our students under 5 years of age, it will be a required immunization.
- The **flu vaccine** was required of all faculty, staff and students by October 31, 2021.

## Health-Related Procedures



We have dedicated space on the third floor for a nurse's office. If a child becomes ill, parents are asked to come pick them up within one hour. **To limit trips to the nurse's office, please do not bring your child to school if they are feeling unwell, even if they are not experiencing a fever or other COVID-19 symptoms.**

## Everyday Preventive Actions



**Wash your hands** frequently.



**Avoid touching** your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.



Stay home when you are **sick** (similarly, keep sick children at home).



**Clean and disinfect** frequently touched objects and surfaces.



**Wear a mask** when you go out in public (*see separate Mask section, page 13*).



**Cover your cough or sneeze** with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.



Visit the [CDC site](#) for more tips.

## Face Masks

A simple line-art icon of a person's head and shoulders wearing a face mask, positioned to the right of the "Face Masks" section header.

- All River faculty and staff wear **face masks** throughout the school day and while in the building.
- **Children 2 years old and older** wear face masks throughout the day with appropriate breaks given during designated times (e.g., during snack and/or lunch) and at the discretion of the teachers.
- [View River's Mask Tip Sheet!](#)
- Any **adults arriving on campus** are required to wear an appropriate face mask while on site, even while in their cars or outdoors to walk a child up to the building. **River will continue to restrict non-essential visitors from campus until conditions allow for more adults on campus.**
- For more information, view [DC Mayor's current mask order](#) and [details on exceptions.](#)



## Cohorting/Daily Routines



- ✚ One of the health and safety measures recommended by the CDC and DC Health is that we keep children in the **same small cohorts** throughout the day and avoid mixing these cohorts for activities as much as possible. This limits the exposure of children to others and ensures effective contact tracing should a child or teacher become ill.
  
- ✚ **Cohorting** benefits include:
  - ◎ The **reduction of contact** with shared surfaces
  - ◎ The ability to conduct **more targeted testing**
  - ◎ More **efficient contact tracing** in the event of a positive case
  - ◎ **Fewer exposures** in the event of a COVID-19 positive community member
  
- ✚ In order to maintain this safety precaution, **River is unable to offer Before Care and After Care services this fall**. We will revisit this decision if the guidance changes during the school year, as we know this might be challenging for families.

## Cohorting/Daily Routines



**Arrival and departure times** are staggered to create sufficient social distance on our sidewalks.



**Playdates with children outside the class cohorts:** Though we cannot prevent families from organizing safe and socially-distanced playdates with small groups of friends outside of school, they are of concern given the potential ripple effects of contact tracing with a COVID-19 positive case. Fewer exposures help keep the community safer. Please consider this when planning your children's interactions.



**Carpools:** We understand the need for some families to create a carpool to and from school, but we recommend that you avoid them to the extent possible.

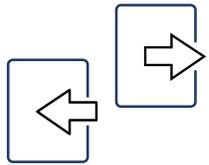
## Enhanced Cleaning and Sanitization of Campus



- **Increased frequency of daily cleaning and disinfecting** in shared areas and high touch surfaces (e.g., bathrooms, handrails, doorknobs)
- **Nurse's office cleaned and disinfected** regularly and as needed
- **Bathrooms cleaned and disinfected** every 2 hours and as needed
- **Upgraded HVAC filters and installation of air purification system** featuring bi-polar ionization technology to increase indoor air quality and ventilation
- **Open windows in classrooms** to allow for fresh air and cross ventilation
- **Rigorous nightly cleaning** of facilities with disinfectants products that are on the EPA list as effective against COVID-19



## Morning Arrivals and Afternoon Dismissals



We use multiple doors at the front of the building for **morning arrivals** and afternoon departures.



We strongly encourage ***all families*** to use the carpool line instead of walking up to the building, in order to limit foot traffic and volume of people. River staff helps direct the children to their classrooms.



**For those who do walk**, you should plan on a quick goodbye at the drop-off point in front of the school.



**Morning arrival** begins at 8:00 am and ends promptly at 8:45 am. For late arrivals, park out front and call Bob Jones at the front desk (202-337-3554) for someone to come out to your car and escort your child to their classroom.

**Until all the children are fully vaccinated and/or further notice, parents cannot enter the school building.**

### **Afternoon dismissal:**

Half-Day: 11:45 am - 12:15 pm

Full-Day: 2:45 pm - 3:15 pm

## Travel &amp; Quarantining This School Year



✚ The current **plan for unvaccinated travelers (which includes all River students under the age of 5 and those children 5 years+ who are in the process of becoming vaccinated as of November 3, 2021 )** is:

- Quarantine for 10 days and be monitored for symptoms of COVID-19 during that time, coming to school after the quarantine period, as long as they don't develop COVID-19 symptoms; **OR**
- Obtain and submit to our Nurse, Elizabeth McDermott, a negative PCR test result (testing taking place at least 72 hours after returning home). **The traveler must still quarantine for a full 7 days, despite a negative PCR test result, to ensure no COVID-19 symptoms arise. The student can return to school on day 8.**

✚ **Fully vaccinated community members do not need to quarantine or test upon return from traveling**, but they should monitor closely for symptoms for 14 days. Similarly, visitors to the DMV are asked to monitor for symptoms while here and get tested if they develop COVID-19 symptoms.

- Neither vaccinated parent travel nor visitors affect a River student's ability to come to school, unless the person who traveled becomes symptomatic. In that case, your child should stay home and get tested at the same time as the symptomatic traveler.

## Travel & Quarantining This School Year



-  We monitor travel and quarantining guidance closely and will keep you informed of updates in a timely manner through email communications. **Guidance will change depending on case rates and scientific data.** (Be sure to check your email's Spam/Junk Folders periodically.) River's ability to remain open for in-person learning requires trust and faith that we will all abide by the Social Compact we agreed to and doing your part to keep our community as safe as possible.
-  We understand that families want to travel over the holidays. Please, if you plan to travel at any point during the school year, do the right thing and adhere to River's specific guidelines and quarantine requirements. **Remember, you assume the risk of your child being quarantined upon your return.**

## Quarantining During the School Year



- **River staff members** (all are fully vaccinated) follow the same daily health screenings and all established health and wellness protocols.
- If a **River student** displays/verbalizes symptoms, they will be escorted to the nurse's office on the third floor, where they will be assessed by River's nurse and parents/guardians notified if necessary.
- **If tested for COVID-19**, the River staff member or student must **remain at home** while waiting for the results.
- If the COVID-19 test is positive, **the school community is notified** while maintaining the privacy of the affected community member.

- Positive tests may require **the entire class cohort** to quarantine while investigation and contact tracing take place, per guidelines issued by DC Health.
- If a class of unvaccinated children is quarantined, Distance Learning for that cohort will be provided during the time period those children are at home, including asynchronous and live instruction. Learning Kits will be delivered to homes.
- If there is a positive COVID-19 case in a fully vaccinated class, only the affected student isolates and Distance Learning is not provided to that student (independent work will be supplied).



## Quarantining During the School Year



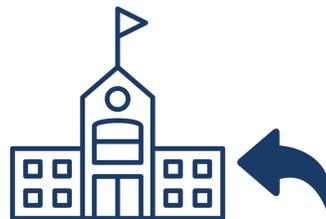
➤ When a River student has received a positive PCR test for COVID-19—**regardless of subsequent test results**—parents must follow the isolation guidelines below to help keep their family and the community safe:

- isolation is required AND
- they should stay home for a full 10 days AND
- until their symptoms are resolved AND
- until they have been fever free for a full 24 hours without medication
- while at home, anyone sick or infected should be separated from others, stay in a specific “sick room” or area, and use a separate bathroom (if available)

➤ For those who have been identified as close contacts, they are required to quarantine for 14 days from the date of last exposure, presuming they do not develop symptoms or test positive for COVID. During this time they should stay at home and not interact with others, because if they become positive, they will be contagious for two days before their symptoms develop.



## Return to Campus Protocols



- +** **River staff and students with COVID-19 symptoms may return to campus:**
  - Upon receipt of a negative COVID-19 test result; **AND/OR**
  - They obtain a treating physician's note indicating they do not have COVID-19 and detailing an alternative diagnosis and clearance to return
  
- +** **River staff and students who test positive for COVID-19 may return to campus:**
  - When at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared; **AND**
  - They have been fever free for 24 hours without medication; **AND**
  - Their symptoms have improved
  
- +** **River students with direct exposure to someone who tested positive for COVID-19 may return to campus:**
  - 14 days from the last date of exposure to COVID-19, presuming they do not develop symptoms or test positive for COVID-19



# Questions? We're Here for You!



Members of River's Administrative Team are here to help and support your family. You can start here!



[Nurse Elizabeth McDermott,](#)  
BA, BSN, RN, NCSN



[Marie Wright](#)  
Director Educational Programs



[Nancy Mellon](#)  
Founder & Head of School



[Meredith Ouellette](#)  
Assistant Head of School



[Tracy Armstrong, SHRM-CP, PHR](#)  
Director Human Resources



[Megan Campbell](#)  
Director Admission