

UNITED FRIENDS SCHOOL

Updated as of September 3, 2020

Rooted in the Quaker testimonies of Simplicity, Peace and Social Justice, Integrity, Community, Equality and Care for the Earth, United Friends School educates students to meet the rest of their lives with courage and conviction by engaging them in critical inquiry, solution-seeking, and participation in social action. United Friends School nurtures the intellectual, spiritual, and emotional growth of students and guides them to see the Light in themselves and in others.

United Friends School has made every effort to consider advice and guidance disseminated by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, the Center for Disease Control (CDC), Children's Hospital of Pennsylvania (CHOP), Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), local public school districts, and our extensive peer network of educators & administrators from local Independent Schools. Our school's administrative team has worked tirelessly with members of the faculty, board, staff, and parent community in considering how to best open our campus to learners. We recognize that what may seem good practice now may have to change once we put our procedures into practice when school begins. **As such, please consider this to be a fluid document that will be updated during the pandemic.**

Guiding Principles

- o The health and safety of United Friends School's students, faculty, staff, and community will always be the first consideration in every decision that we make.
- o Our approach to opening UFS this year will be a risk reduction strategy to reduce exposure and limit transmission. There is no such thing as "zero risk" in anything we do, and certainly not during a pandemic.
- o Because the social and emotional benefits of responsibly welcoming students back to campus is crucial to their overall development, we place high value on reopening for all students in preschool through 8th grade, on a full schedule. Please understand that this decision may need to be changed at any time due to the rapidly changing nature of the pandemic.

Decision-Making

Our Health & Safety Plan is a collective “best effort” at anticipating the needs of our community in a very complex time. We continually monitor the prevalence and spread of COVID-19 in our local area. Should cases in our community rise, or under the direction of state or federal mandates, UFS may have to move to remote learning or make modifications to this plan at a moment’s notice. The need for patience, understanding, support, and flexibility is something that we must ask of our parents, faculty and staff.

Health & Safety Training

All faculty, staff, and parents will be thoroughly trained in our new health & safety policies and procedures. This is an all-hands approach and training will be ongoing throughout the school year.

Prior to our students arriving on campus, they will receive a special video presentation on how to properly wash their hands and wear their masks from some of their peers. Teachers will continue to facilitate and reinforce this learning at school. Children are adaptable and capable of learning these new processes. With much practice at home and at school, we are confident that they will become the experts in your family.

Communications

We expect that there will be changes to our plans and procedures along the way, as conditions continue to evolve in our area and new guidance is given by the CDC, state and local health departments. Parents will be informed of any changes to our plan in a timely manner. In the event of a COVID-19 positive case within our community, the health department will be notified and inform guidance given to families on quarantining procedures. As of now, all contact tracing will be performed by the Bucks County Health Department.

An all-school Parent Orientation is planned for August 11, 2020 at 6:30pm. During this zoom presentation, we will walk you through the Health & Safety plan. Families will be able to submit their questions via Zoom’s chat feature. A Zoom link will be shared prior to the meeting, on the 11th. Division-wide orientations will be offered at the end of August to continue our preparation for bringing students back to campus.

Social Contract

United Friends School is working hard on mitigation strategies to provide our faculty and students a safe campus to come back to in a few short weeks. Reopening our campus safely will be highly dependent on the partnership of the community members, on and off campus. Although the risk of viral transmission cannot be completely eliminated, it can be lessened significantly by a social contract between all members of our community. Our unified commitment to adhere to this contract will be critical to help keep our in-person learning environment open as much as possible.

We expect all staff and families to be respectful of each other, to collectively safeguard the health and safety of others, and to abide by the policies, procedures, and orders related to COVID-19 implemented by the state, county, and school.

The following are community expectations in anticipation of reopening and must continue throughout in-person learning.

- Use and reinforce mask-wearing, physical distancing, handwashing, and meticulous hygiene outside of school.
- Limit exposure by avoiding large gatherings or situations in which people are not observing recommended behaviors, such as wearing masks and practicing physical distancing.
- As much as possible, avoid air travel or [travel to areas that are currently experiencing high rates of infection](#). Refer to the *Exclusion From and Return to School* policy as outlined on pages 9 & 10 to determine the need for quarantine if any travel out of state is necessary.
- Observe routine medical practices, e.g., routine annual checkups, immunizations, and flu vaccines.
- (For faculty & staff) Stay home when you are sick or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.
- (For families) Keep your children home when they, or any member of your household, are sick or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.
- Conscientiously conduct & participate in the **daily** health screen through a mobile app, Ruvna. More details on using the Ruvna app are forthcoming.
- Partner with faculty & staff to help children learn the new Health and Safety protocols.
- Limit the personal items your child brings onto campus each day and reinforce policies around not sharing of food, supplies, and other items with other students.
- Notify UFS regarding sick household members or if any household members have had close contact (less than 6 ft for more than 15 min) with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. Depending on the situation, your student may have to stay home for 14 days.
- Notify the school and undergo testing if you suspect your child or a household member has COVID-19 and await test results from home.
- Be kind, attentive, and helpful to anyone around who may be in need of support in following safety health practices. Provide respectful and gentle safety reminders and suggestions to those who may need them, and respond graciously when others provide them.

Please understand that each of us is responsible for the common good of the school community. All community members should adhere to our social contract in the 14 days prior to returning to campus. UFS will proactively communicate and, as necessary, take administrative action regarding the observance and enforcement of these expectations which may include a student or staff member not being able to participate in in-person learning / teaching.

Symptom Screening & Monitoring

All students, faculty, and staff will complete a daily inventory monitoring for symptoms and virus exposures through a mobile app called Ruvna. **We must emphasize the importance of staying home when sick or when feeling run down.** Gone are the days that one can give their child Tylenol and send them to school. We are pleased to be able to offer students the flexibility of logging into their classroom from home when they aren't feeling well for extended periods of time. This means that your child won't miss important work and will still feel connected to their classroom community from the comforts of home. If your child becomes sick with one of the three key COVID-19 symptoms (fever, difficulty breathing, cough) during the school day, he/she will be isolated in a designated room until a parent arrives. If a child is sent home from school with one of the key COVID-19 symptoms, families in that particular pod will be notified. The ill child must adhere to UFS's *Exclusion From and Return to School* policy as outlined on pages 9 & 10.

Hand washing

Students and adults will establish good hand washing routines from our first day and wash their hands at least: upon arrival each day; before and after eating; before and after outdoor recess; before and after exiting the classroom.

Masks

Masks are mandatory for all adults as well as children in Preschool through 8th grade. Please refer to the Pennsylvania state policy on face coverings for [additional details here](#). Masks may be taken off outdoors with appropriate distancing of 6 feet. Mask breaks will be built into the school day and will be scheduled by the individual classroom teachers. Children may also remove their masks to eat snacks and lunch, and also during any physical activity (PE class).

We have gotten a few questions about masks vs. face shields. While we understand concerns that some young children may not want to wear a cloth or surgical-style mask, our policy is that all students must wear a mask. If families would like to have their child wear a shield in addition to their mask as extra protection, that works as well.

Cloth masks must be washed after each school day. Children should always carry **at least TWO** fresh/clean masks with them to school each day in their backpack.

On the first day of school, children should also bring in 2 extra masks, labeled, in a Ziploc baggie that their teacher will store in the classroom.

Social Distancing

We have gotten creative with our classroom layouts and our classroom assignments. Our indoor instructional spaces have been reconfigured to ensure proper spacing of approximately six feet between students who will

be seated at desks and/or tables. The use of clear dividers will further protect students while seated and doing work at their desks, especially in cases where it is impossible to meet the 6-ft. distancing requirement.

This overall in-person strategy relies on maintaining self-contained groups, or “pods”, throughout the day to minimize interactions and potential spread of infection. Children will remain with their classmates in “pods” throughout the day. During outdoor PE classes and recess, smaller pods will be combined. Teachers will work to maintain the social distance requirements.

<p style="text-align: center;">Preschool</p> <p><i>Mott</i> class has the use of a dedicated playground space to play and learn outdoors as much as their day allows. In addition, our Mott teachers have the use of a secondary learning space to spread out the group when indoors.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Lower School – K to 3</p> <p>There will be one Kindergarten class (Rustin), one First Grade class (Paul), one 2nd grade class (Penn) and one 2/3 class (Fox). <i>All four Lower School</i> classes will be limited to 9 students.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Lower School – 4/5</p> <p><i>Anthony</i> class will move to our “Big Room” to ensure proper distancing, as this group is larger. The Anthony class will have a lead teacher and an assistant, allowing them to break out into smaller groups throughout the day.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Middle School</p> <p><i>Helman-Osborn</i> class will spread out in the Middle School building, utilizing all space available. Classes will be broken out into smaller groups throughout the school day, helping to maximize social distancing while indoors.</p>

Cleaning & Disinfection

UFS’s maintenance crew has been busy getting the buildings ready for our students, faculty, and staff to return. All classrooms, toys, manipulatives, materials, and common areas have been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.

Once we resume in-person operations, enhanced cleaning and disinfection of commonly touched surfaces will happen frequently throughout the day within our classrooms. High traffic areas will also be cleaned and disinfected during the day. Each evening, all classrooms and common areas will be treated with an electrostatic cleaning machine.

Outdoor Play & Equipment

Now more than ever, spending time outdoors is so important and will be a vital part of the student’s everyday experience at school. All of our PE classes will be held outdoors. Big play equipment will be disinfected in between each recess period. Tents will be set up to allow for outdoor learning spaces.

Ventilation/Air Handlers

Work is ongoing with our HVAC company and maintenance crew to determine optimal filters and replacement schedules. Windows & doors will remain open to improve air flow.

Specials

Physical Education classes will be held outdoors. Social distancing of 6ft will be maintained and masks will not be worn. Equipment will not be shared. **Music, Library, Spanish, and Art** teachers will travel to individual classrooms.

Art class notes - Individual kits/materials will be issued to each student.

Music class notes - Wind instruments and choral music will not be part of the music program at this time.

Field Trips

Until further notice, UFS students will not participate in any field trips that would require transportation.

Walking trips to outdoor spots will be encouraged to keep our students in the fresh air as much as possible.

After-School Program

UFS will continue to provide an after-school program for those families that have signed up at the beginning of school. That being said, we will not be able to maintain the “pods” that will be in existence during the school day, so students who attend the after-school program will not be segregated from each other. Those who attend this program will be spending as much time as possible outdoors.

Sports

Our fall soccer program has been canceled. As we get closer to the start of the winter sports season, UFS will make a determination about the need to cancel the basketball program.

Visitors

Visitors will have limited access to campus and must make arrangements with our Front Office Manager. The campus will be restricted to students, faculty, staff, and only essential visitors such as delivery persons and contracted service people. Parents will not be routinely allowed into buildings. Health screenings, masks, and social distancing will be required.

In-person family gatherings will be postponed indefinitely.

Lunch/Snacks

Lunch, snacks, and filled water bottles should be sent to school. Children will eat in their classrooms or outdoors. Students will not be able to reheat any food or refrigerate any lunches at school.

Personal Belongings

In addition to sending in supplies requested by individual teachers, families will be expected to send in a closed tub for their child’s personal belongings, (e.g. backpacks, coats, water bottles and lunchboxes) to be

stored during the school day. This year, the teachers will likely request additional supplies to ensure that each student has what they need at their desks. Students will not share supplies or classroom materials.

Drop-off & Pick-up

Preschool

The Mott class will be dropped off and picked up at the entrance to the small, gated playground. Alternate arrangements will be made for inclement weather. Adults who are responsible for drop-off and pick-up must wear masks at all times.

Kindergarten through 8th grade

Drop-off will run as a car line. Cars may drop off their children beginning at 7:45am. We cannot accept children at school before this time because they must head straight to their classrooms. A faculty or staff member will greet you and let you know that your child may enter the building. We are still working out the plans for student pick-up as transportation plans are still not solidified. More details will be shared in the days leading up to the start of school.

Transportation

Holly Sharp, our Front Office Manager is actively collaborating with the school districts and will be sharing more information once we have more concrete plans from the districts. We encourage families to consider alternatives including drop off and pick up by the family or a caregiver if that is an option.

COVID-19 Illness Policy

The serious nature of the pandemic will require an enhanced and more stringent Illness Policy. This comprehensive policy will be communicated to our community in a separate document. Information included: Exclusion From/Return to School, pod/school closures due to positive cases within our school and/or local counties, and a flow chart of how we will handle students and staff who present with symptoms which at school.

Please help us prepare for our first day of school

To further reduce our community's risk of exposure when we come back together on August 31, we are asking families to:

- Build your child's stamina for wearing a mask. The more comfortable they are with wearing them, the better. [Click here](#) for tips to help small children feel comfortable with wearing masks.
- Re-consider travel plans at the end of August. The more families can limit their risk over the two

weeks prior to the beginning of the school year, the lower the risk to our community at-large. Please refer to the Pennsylvania Department of Health list and requirements for traveling to areas with high caseloads. If you have traveled, or plan to travel, to an area where there are high amounts of COVID-19 cases, it is recommended that you stay at home for 14 days upon return to Pennsylvania. [Click here for a full list of states affected by the quarantine order.](#)

- Adhere to state and local guidelines for mask-wearing and social distancing. The modeling of responsible behavior by adults is key to instilling good habits in children. As the current situation can change rapidly, we are prepared to adjust our plans should cases rise in our area or if there is another mandated closure. Built into our planning for next year is the flexibility to reevaluate and respond to the environment we find ourselves in throughout the year. We will update families as soon as possible with any changes should the need arise.

Special thanks to those who contributed to our Health & Safety Plan...

Pandemic Response Task Force

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References

[CDC How to Protect Yourself and Others](#)
[CDC Considerations for Wearing Masks](#)
[Montgomery County Office of Public Health – Guidance for Reopening for Pre-K to 12](#)
[PDE Guidance and Resources for Pre-K to 12 Schools](#)

Licensed Private Academic Schools shall keep a copy of their Pandemic Health and Safety Plan on file at the school and available to Pennsylvania Department of Education staff upon request.