

NORFOLK
ACADEMY

1728



PLAN FOR REOPENING

Fall 2020

Bulldog Safe and Strong



Headmaster's Letter: *A Culture of Caring and Shared Responsibility*

August 4, 2020

As our nation, state, and community grapple with the complex and seemingly relentless challenge of the global pandemic, I find myself appreciating the value of our core principles. As we continue to craft our plan for reopening school in the fall, we are guided by our school's Philosophy and Objectives, words that have shaped us into the united, compassionate Bulldog community that we are and will continue to be. We will prevail through this time of extraordinary challenge by remaining steadfastly committed to our fundamental mission—assisting students to develop maturity of mind, body, and character in a community of trusting relationships, shaped by the Honor System.

Responsibility is a word that shows up with remarkable frequency in the school's founding documents, and that word must serve as a call to action for all of us—school leaders, faculty, parents, and, above all, our students, whose growth toward understanding and wisdom provides the purpose for this institution. We have a responsibility toward each other, to act in ways that seek to promote the health and safety of all, from the least to the most vulnerable in our community. Even our simplest gestures—washing our hands thoroughly, wearing masks properly, isolating ourselves if we feel minor symptoms—show our mutual responsibility. This work is truly a series of interlocking partnerships, starting with home and school, which ripples out to the wider community. We are committed to the care, safety, and wellbeing of every child and member of this community.

As we draft our plan for reopening, we are acutely conscious of the ever-changing context; right now, as I write, coronavirus cases in Tidewater are climbing at a concerning rate, outpacing other areas of Virginia. We do not know what the local situation will be in late August, but we know that our plan, as it takes on more detailed shape, will seek to accommodate the needs of every Bulldog family and meet the educational needs of every child while keeping safety at the forefront. It's a tall order, but we are fortunate to have the resources to meet this extraordinary moment—starting with our faculty and staff, who have the expertise, experience, and passion to serve the educational needs of each child; our expansive campus, providing ample space indoors and out; and technology, which we have continued to expand throughout this summer. Above all we have the innovation, imagination, energy, and spirit to turn our vision into reality.

Sincerely yours,

Dennis G. Manning
Headmaster

Our Reopening Plan will continue to be refined throughout August as more information becomes available. We will provide updates as needed.

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Norfolk Academy may update or amend this Reopening Plan as operating conditions change and/or as direction or guidance from the Virginia Department of Health determines.



Our Learning Plan: Flexible, Responsive, and Innovative

All reopening scenarios depend on a variety of interconnected factors, including permission by state and local governments to allow children to attend classes on campus. Indeed, the American Academy of Pediatrics noted in its Guidance for School re-entry: “Schools are fundamental to child and adolescent development and well-being.” Norfolk Academy appreciates the profound benefits that arise from the multitude of interactions that happen in school, so we plan to provide the in-person learning option for every student.

However, we also know that changing circumstances, whether for the entire region, or for an individual family, may make it impossible for students to attend school in person without interruption throughout the year. We might, in fact, have times when certain classes or grade levels may be primarily in-person, while other classes or grade levels may be primarily or entirely involved in distance learning.

Therefore, our reentry strategy is based on a flexible approach to three macro scenarios, **all of which include the option for a family to choose distance learning for their child/children:**

- All on campus
- On campus by grade levels or by division
- Distance Learning for all

Health and safety are the main considerations in formulating our plan and making adaptations. Norfolk Academy is implementing reasonable preventative measures, and we will continue to update our approach in response to new information. Despite the protocols and procedures in place to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19 on campus, there are inherent risks. Our plan is designed to minimize risk, but it cannot eliminate it.

In all circumstances, throughout the year, families will be able to choose a distance learning option. We are committed to meeting the needs of all families.

Enhancing Our Distance Learning Program

Our approach to distance learning seeks, to the greatest extent possible, to ensure that students (a) maintain connections with each other and with their teachers and (b) engage in learning experiences across all grade levels and disciplines. Although distance learning will never replace the direct contact students have with their teachers and peers as members of a caring, nurturing campus community, it will allow students to continue to progress in their studies and to foster relationships with friends and trusted adults.

We are committed to ensuring that all students have the ability to participate fully, make progress in their learning, and feel the strong sense of community that is an essential, distinctive facet of a Norfolk Academy education. We are preparing to teach from our classrooms to students who are required to remain home, including installing cameras and audio in many classrooms. As we finalize our plans for reopening, we will be soliciting more information from families about your children's ability to come to school and making provisions to meet your needs.

Norfolk Academy Website

Parents and students are accustomed to accessing an array of information, including the directory, schedules, report cards, and more through the website portal. We will continue to expand the array of online educational material available through our resource boards.



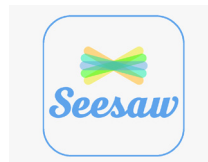
Canvas

Norfolk Academy has expanded the use of Canvas, a web-based learning management system for 1st through 12th grades. This platform promotes the sharing of information like assignments and resources, while also allowing teachers to assess student learning and mastery.



Zoom

A video connection platform that provides a virtual classroom (synchronous) learning environment.



Seesaw (First Grade)

A digital educational platform students use to create digital portfolios. Students and teachers can upload student work in the form of pictures and videos in order to demonstrate learning progress and growth throughout the school year.



Microsoft Office 365 (Grades 1 – 12)

A web-based version of Microsoft's Office suite of productivity applications, including Word, Excel, and Powerpoint. Storage on One Drive allows for easy sharing of work between teachers and students.



Google Apps

Cloud-based productivity and collaboration tools.

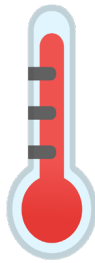
In an effort to upgrade our distance learning capacity, we are installing quality cameras and audio in many classrooms. These enhancements in technology will allow teachers to provide simultaneous instruction to students in the classroom and those who may need to engage in distance learning. We will provide further updates on these improvements.

New Health-Related Protocols and Building Upgrades

Norfolk Academy is implementing practices and protocols to prioritize the health and safety of faculty, staff, and students, limit transmission of disease, and maintain a healthy environment. In establishing our procedures, we are continuing to consult respected health authorities, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); the Virginia Department of Health (VDH); American Academy of Pediatrics; and universities, such as the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and Johns Hopkins's Bloomberg School. We will remain flexible, and we ask for your partnership as we adapt to incorporate best practices based on growing scientific knowledge.

Temperature Checks

Everyone arriving on campus will receive a screening with our temperature scanning cameras, positioned at the entrance points. If the temperature of a student or faculty/staff member is 100.4°F (38.0°C) or greater, the individual will be sent to the clinic for further evaluation and, if necessary due to continued elevated temperature and/or other symptoms, to await a ride (if needed) and depart campus.



Arrival Schedule and Procedures

Students in carpool may arrive between 7:45 - 8:15 a.m. After health screening, students will proceed directly to classrooms through multiple designated entry points that allow students to avoid large groups and observe physical distancing. We are continuing to evaluate any additional changes that will be needed to have an orderly morning arrival.

Masks

Everyone on campus, including essential visitors, will wear masks covering nose and mouth. Individuals who have medical difficulties may be permitted to wear a face shield that extends below the chin but only with a doctor's note. Students will be expected to bring two disposable or washable face masks to school every day, donning one prior to boarding a bus or (if arriving by car) before exiting a car and presenting for the morning temperature check.



While students can use decorative fabric and show creativity, masks may not have messaging, political content, or design that draws undue attention or distracts. Masks must cover nose and mouth, and they must fit the student comfortably, so that students do not have to adjust the mask frequently. Students will be permitted supervised breaks from mask wearing, as health experts recognize that structured breaks improve compliance and provide relief.

Physical Distancing

Students will be separated in classrooms, keeping 6 feet between students as much as possible.



In some cases, students may be seated in slightly closer proximity, but never at a distance less than 3 feet, the guideline set by the Virginia Department of Health. We expect to use other large spaces in the school as temporary classrooms. Movement between classes will be staggered to maintain distancing.

Lockers

In order to maintain physical distancing and avoid group congregating, we will not be using lockers in grades 6-12. Students will need to carry all supplies in their backpacks and bring those with them to classes; however, we will not expect students to tote all of their textbooks with them daily. Lower School students will be able to use their cubbies in the classrooms, but teachers will regulate movement to the cubbies, so that students are not gathering in close proximity.

Cleaning Practices

To limit transmission through hand contact, teachers will be directing students to wash and/or sanitize their hands frequently. We have installed numerous sanitizing stations (Purell) throughout the buildings. We will be cleaning and disinfecting more frequently throughout the day and in the evenings, using hospital-grade, EPA-approved, green disinfectants. We have acquired electrostatic sprayers, which allow us to disperse disinfectant more effectively and across a larger area; these sprayers will be used to clean buses and in other areas as needed.



Building Upgrades

We have upgraded to touchless operation in our restrooms, including installing hardware that allows doors to be opened using the forearm; upgrading toilets to hands-free options; and replacing paper towel dispensers that have hand cranks with touchless dispensers.

We will encourage the opening of windows and classroom doors to the greatest extent possible in order to maximize airflow. All HVAC units will be equipped with the highest rated filters possible, up to MERV (Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value) rating of 13. These filters are intended to trap the vast majority of airborne particles on the first pass. Our systems are designed to re-circulate air at least once every 30 minutes. These air filtration methods, coupled with appropriate mask usage and physical distancing, are sound mitigation strategies.

Clinic

The clinic has been expanded to allow for assessing individuals who present with COVID-19 symptoms in a separate space from the wellness room, where nurses will assess those who come to the clinic for routine care.



Signs

We will post signs and floor decals to help everyone follow health protocols, including physical distancing, mask wearing, and handwashing techniques. We will reinforce these visual messages with frequent spoken reminders.

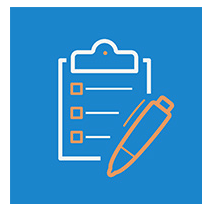


Visitor Policy

In order to maintain safety protocols, we will be restricting visitors to campus. Parents, friends, and non-essential visitors will not be allowed on campus, except for student drop-off and pick-up. Unfortunately, we will not be able to utilize parent volunteers at this time. Essential visitors will also undergo a temperature check and a health history screening.

Reporting to School Community

The underpinnings of our approach to reporting will be transparency and clarity. If a student or



employee tests positive for COVID-19, the School Nurses, once notified, will consult with the Norfolk Health Department to consider next steps, including quarantining of those infected or exposed. We will have a

COVID-19 team that will meet daily to provide clear, detailed updates to families about school activity specifically related to the pandemic, from changing protocols to any positive cases.

The School Day — Changing Rhythms and Practices

Small Groups, Limited Movement

We are modifying schedules to establish and maintain small groupings of students and minimize movement throughout buildings during the day. We will be using space creatively, setting up classrooms in our larger spaces and using tents to allow for more gatherings outdoors. For some Lower School grade levels, we will be adding homerooms in order to accommodate physical distancing in classrooms. Resource teachers will typically travel to homerooms, limiting the movement of students in hallways; PE will be conducted outside whenever possible.



Schedule Changes

We are currently adjusting the schedule for Middle and Upper School students in order to limit movement throughout buildings each day; additional reliance on block scheduling (longer classes) is likely. More details will be available soon.

Lunch

Nutritious boxed lunches will be provided by Meriwether Godsey, our current food service provider. All students may bring their own lunches, although the school will not provide refrigeration or heating for student lunches. Students who bring their own lunches should have them in a sealable container and should be able to serve themselves without any assistance. Students may also bring snacks to school as the Bulldog Bookstore will not be available for snacks.

We will not be using the refectory space for lunches. Students will eat in their classrooms or in outdoor spaces; we are developing a schedule that allows for an enjoyable lunch, recognizing its importance as a time for building friendships, while maintaining safety protocols.

Hydration

Our students have adopted the healthy practice of frequent hydration, and many already bring water bottles to school. **In the upcoming year, all students will need to bring a filled water bottle to school each morning;** we have installed additional touchless bottle filling stations, and we will eliminate use of water fountains in the upcoming year.

Dress Code Changes

We are slightly relaxing the dress code this year, in large measure because students will not be able to change their clothes for P.E. **While the rules of the dress code remain in effect, we are making the following modifications:**

- Boys in grades 7-12 will not be required to wear ties.
- Boys will wear collared shirts (no t-shirts) and may wear shorts of appropriate length and fit.
- Girls are permitted to wear shorts of appropriate length and fit.
- Students participating in physical education classes (grades 1-9) must wear athletic footwear on days when they have PE.

Recess/PE

We plan to hold recess and physical education classes for the Lower School. These will be outdoors whenever possible. Students will not change clothes for PE. Students will stay in class groups for recess and will observe physical distancing; in some instances, when permitted by teachers, PE and recess may be used as a period for a break from mask-wearing.



Large Gatherings

We will adapt our schedule to eliminate large gatherings. Chapel will be done utilizing camera/ audio technology, so that students can remain in their classrooms while viewing 9th grade and Senior speeches.

Transportation

We have been working with Tranquest, our transportation provider, to secure sufficient bus capacity to enable us to have only one rider per seat, with the exception of siblings who would be asked to sit together. We will also require riders and the driver to wear face masks at all times while on the bus, and the windows will be kept open in order to maximize the flow of fresh air.

After School Activities

Athletics

Recognizing the multitude of benefits that derive from team activity, we are still investigating our ability to organize students for athletic training after school. The Virginia Independent School Athletic Association (VISAA), in which Norfolk Academy competes, has canceled its postseason for all fall sports, while leaving decisions on the regular season up to individual schools and conferences. We will provide more details soon.



Performing Arts

Initially, we will need to suspend an array of musical activity that has proven to increase infectious spread of COVID-19. Choral activities, in particular, have proven to spread the virus more than general conversation; instrumental groups, which require students to sit in close proximity, also are risky, particularly if students are playing instruments that require expelling large quantities of air. Therefore, we will be pausing chorus and band; string players, whether in orchestra or chamber groups, may



be able to meet. We anticipate that teachers will be able to provide some individual lessons in person, if they can be done with masks and social distancing, while other lessons may need to be done using technology for distance learning. We are considering our approach to drama and dance, and we will provide further details.

Before and Aftercare

Before Care will be open from 7:15-7:45 a.m. Aftercare will be available for the Lower School from 3:15-6:00 p.m., and physical distancing and masks will be required. The students will be allowed outside as usual (weather permitting) and will be able to take their masks off outside.

Enrichment

We plan to have limited enrichment offerings during the fall, but we are still compiling that list. More details will be coming. Physical distancing and mask-wearing will be observed during enrichment programs.





Home and School Partnership

The Bulldog Family. Our Norfolk Academy Family. Yes, “family” is a word that we use to define and describe ourselves, and it is one that reflects the close bonds that shape relationships here, beginning with the connection between teachers and students. Yet in using that word, we understand that we are a school family composed of many families, each with its own distinctive attributes.

At this time of crisis due to a highly infectious, rapidly spreading virus, each of us must act in a way that prioritizes the safety of others. This will undoubtedly be challenging, and it will require sacrifice for the good of all.

As we move toward the reopening of school, your practices at home are critically important to helping us achieve a safe environment. In the weeks ahead, we would ask your help in preparing your child for new routines and even new ways of thinking. Please consider the following:

- Test out different masks that meet safety requirements. Some masks are more comfortable than others to wear, and some allow greater ease of speaking.
- If you feel your child has medical issues that preclude wearing a mask, visit your doctor. Face shields are less protective, and students must have a doctor’s note to be permitted to wear a shield, which must extend well below the chin.
- Help your child get accustomed to wearing a mask, covering nose and mouth, for at least two hours continuously. Let your child take a short break and then resume wearing it.
- Physical distancing is challenging to do, and it feels strange to both adults and children alike. It takes practice. Help younger children prepare for physical distancing in school by having them practice meeting with a small group of friends—masks on, physically distanced—for playing. Teens need different support, of course, in adhering to these practices, including conversations and reminders about the importance of these actions to mitigate spread of the virus.
- Develop a back-up plan for childcare. The need to respond to the impact of the pandemic will require flexibility from the school and our families. Many factors may impact the ability of our students to come to campus. Individual students, or larger groups, may need to transition from on campus learning to online learning from home.

We recognize the tremendous challenges facing everyone in our Norfolk Academy family, and we are committed to doing all we can to support you. With actions directed by our love for one another, we will get through this crisis and emerge as a more compassionate, connected learning community. Be Bulldog Strong!

Reopening Plan: Contributors

This reopening plan was created through the work of school leaders and faculty and reviewed by local medical and health care professionals.

Consulting Physicians

Dr. L.D. Britt, Henry Ford Professor of Surgery and Edward J. Brickhouse Chair in Surgery at Eastern Virginia Medical School, Trustee

Dr. Edward C. Oldfield, professor of Microbiology & Molecular Cell Biology and Director of the Division of Infectious Disease at Eastern Virginia Medical School

Dr. Thomas A. Alberico, Virginia Oncology Associates, Trustee

Dr. Fredric Fink, Pediatric Specialists

Health/Safety Agencies and Documents Guiding the Plan

Virginia Department of Education's *Recover, Redesign, Restart 2020 Guide*

Virginia Department of Health—various documents, including guidance for schools submitting COVID-19 Mitigation Plans

Virginia Association of School Nurses, *Recovery Plan Resource for K-12*

Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health, *Schools for Health: Risk Reduction Strategies for Reopening Schools*

American Academy of Pediatrics, COVID-19 Planning Considerations, Guidance for Schools

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Reopening Chairs

Mrs. Linda R. Gorsline, Associate Head and Upper School Director

Mr. Jeff Martin, Assistant Headmaster for Business and Auxiliary Operations

Reopening Task Force

Mrs. Michelle Alexander, Lower School Director

Mrs. Antoinette Bailey, Head Athletic Trainer

Mrs. Esther Diskin, Director of Communications

Mrs. Trish Hopkins, Assistant Director of the Middle School

Dr. Graham Hudgins, Director of Guidance and Counseling

Dr. Rebecca Poston, fourth grade teacher; Ph.D. in nursing from University of Virginia and former co-director of the Pediatric Nurse Practitioner program at ODU

Mr. Jason Watson, Director of Buildings and Grounds

Distance Learning Task Force

Faculty Chairs:

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Members:

Mr. Witt Borum, Assistant Director of the Middle School

Mr. Phil Call, Sixth Grade Teacher

Mrs. Stephanie Cress, Lower School Technology

Mr. Tom Etheridge, Third Grade Teacher

Mrs. Jackie Evelyn, First Grade Teacher

Mrs. Liz Staub, Middle School English Teacher

Dr. Tenaya Vallery, Upper School Chemistry Teacher

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*Mrs. Susan Fuhs, Director of Information Technology Services and Mr. Ed Patterson, Director of Academic Technology, worked closely with the Task Force.

Covid-19 Task Force

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