



## **Opening Plan**

**2021-2022**

**August 2021**

# Table of Contents

<b><u>Introduction</u></b>	<b><u>4</u></b>
What Has Guided Our Thinking? .....	4
How Has Our Understanding of COVID Improved? .....	4
Communicating our Plan to Family & Community .....	4
What Will Campus Life Look Like?.....	5
<b><u>Section I: Health and Safety</u></b>	<b><u>6</u></b>
<b>Morning Attendance and Start of the Day</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Mandatory Daily Online Screenings</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Staff and Student Testing	7
Positive Screens/Management of Ill Persons	7
Day Students	7
Domestic and International Boarding Students:	8
Response to Positive COVID Case(s)	8
Returns to School	9
<b>Face Coverings &amp; Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)</b> .....	<b>9</b>
Who Must Wear Them and When?	9
PPE training and Best Practices	10
What Types of Masks and Protection are Appropriate?	10
General Guidelines	10
Provision of Masks	11
<b>Hygiene</b> .....	<b>11</b>
Handwashing	11
Cleaning & Disinfection	12
Food Service	12
Meal Health and Hygiene Protocols	13
Restrooms	13
<b>Social Distancing</b> .....	<b>14</b>
Creation of Cohorts	14
Space Configurations	14
Classrooms	14
Common Areas	15
Music, Wind Instruments, Sports	15

Arrival, Departure, and Scheduling	15
<b>Metrics Used in Decision-Making</b> .....	<b>16</b>
Metrics for Quarantining a Class	16
<b><u>Section 2: Social-Emotional Well-Being</u></b>	<b><u>17</u></b>
Support Team.....	17
Community Support and Programming.....	18
<b><u>Section 3: Facilities</u></b>	<b><u>18</u></b>
Utilization of Space.....	18
Safety Drills.....	18
Ventilation & Personal Sanitation Upgrades .....	18
<b><u>Section 4: Transportation</u></b>	<b><u>19</u></b>
<b><u>Conclusion</u></b>	<b><u>19</u></b>

## **Introduction**

Oakwood Community,

Days after our seniors graduated under the Copper Beech tree last June, we began preparations for the start of the 2021-2022 academic year. While opening school amidst a global pandemic is not without challenges, we are confident in both our preparations and what we have learned over the last eighteen months. Adhering to guidelines as set forth by the CDC and NYSDOH while incorporating additional measures unique to the Oakwood Friends School community and campus, we will welcome students, faculty, and families this fall for in-person learning.

We continue to invest significant time, energy, and resources into preparation of the campus, the classrooms, the dining hall, dorms, fields, and theater. We have implemented several tiers of health and safety enhancements, campus upgrades, curricular measures, and family, student, and faculty supports for the 2021-2022 academic year.

### ***What Has Guided Our Thinking?***

Three main principles have guided our thinking and planning in response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- prioritizing the health and safety of our school community, both physical and social-emotional
- providing a comprehensive academic experience, including multiple elective offerings, music, theater, and team sports
- building community, social and civic engagement, and providing support for student voice and leadership

### ***How Has Our Understanding of COVID Improved?***

While COVID continues to impact our society and school community, there are several key areas in which we have a stronger understanding of health and safety supports at Oakwood.

- Masks work. We will be masked any time we are inside buildings (except for lunches)
- 100% of our Faculty and Staff are fully vaccinated
- Over 95% of age-eligible students are fully vaccinated
- All classrooms and common spaces have air purifiers and fresh air ventilation
- Throughout the fall term Oakwood will provide 48 weekly pool tests within the community. These tests will cover all unvaccinated as well as a random sample of vaccinated individuals

### ***Communicating our Plan to Family & Community***

Daily, Oakwood maintains communications with peer institutions, monitors COVID numbers, and reviews the most updated CDC/NYSDOH guidelines. Specifically, we will:

- Publish our reopening plans on our website and update them as they evolve.
- Provide resources, education, and training on COVID-19 prevention and safety, including information on CDC and DOH COVID-19 guidelines.
- Ensure that students and faculty are trained in how to follow COVID-19 prevention protocols safely and correctly, including but not limited to hand washing, proper face covering wearing, social distancing, and personal hygiene.
- Use verbal and written communication (e.g., signage) to encourage all students, faculty, staff, and visitors to adhere to CDC and DOH guidance regarding the use of PPE, social distancing protocols, traffic flow throughout buildings, and other health and safety protocols as outlined.
- Respect and support every family within our community, recognizing that this pandemic has affected each of us in a myriad of ways.

### ***What Will Campus Life Look Like?***

Ensuring the safest possible campus environment will require some changes to the way we do things at Oakwood. In the truest sense of the word, **community** responsibility and engagement will be essential:

- Everyone will be expected to wear face masks while inside.
- We will modify the way we use a variety of spaces on campus, including classrooms and large public areas, to ensure appropriate physical distancing. Outdoor classroom spaces will be utilized, including a four-season greenhouse, tents, and patio spaces.
- Dining Hall: students will have four scheduled times for lunch, allowing for increased social distancing. In addition, several outdoor (tented) locations are available for 'to-go' lunches.
- Large gatherings like Morning Collection, Meeting for Worship, and Community Meeting will still occur, but with appropriate modifications such as usage of multiple locations, Zoom simulcasts between buildings, outdoor events, and grade-level breakout meetings.
- Strict guidelines will be in place and clearly communicated to the community regarding specific protocols and steps taken in the event of increases in COVID cases and/or illness within the community.
- The School is requiring all eligible members of the community to be vaccinated, with exemptions - such as medical - considered on a case-by-case basis.
- During times of high community transmission, the School will test everyone who is unvaccinated on a weekly basis along with a random pool of vaccinated employees and students.
- Sports: for indoor sports (volleyball, for example) we will require masks both on sidelines and on the court. Outdoor sports, players and coaches will be masked on sidelines, with no

masks on field of play or running courses.

We have confidence in both the flexibility and resilience of the Oakwood community to embrace these policies. Our collective willingness to support one another is at the center of this work and will help us all benefit from the relationships and interactions that make Oakwood life so special. As part of orientation week, we will discuss protocol and procedures, answer questions, and help provide a better sense of what a 'typical day' will look like this fall.

## **Section I: Health and Safety**

### ***Morning Attendance and Start of the Day***

Oakwood Friends School is a boarding and day school serving students in 5<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Boarding students reside in two on-campus dormitories and day students arrive via district buses, school-contracted buses, family vehicles, and on foot. This fall Oakwood will continue morning email health checks but will not be performing morning temperature checks. (Research has demonstrated these daily temperature checks to be an inaccurate measure of COVID exposure/risk.)

The School expects that families will self-monitor at home and be vigilant about checking their family members' temperatures if a fever is suspected. As in previous years, students arriving late should report to the main office. Vendors, contractors, and other visitors who have received permission to be on campus will also have a designated point of entry on campus. All visitors will fill out a COVID screening form.

### ***Mandatory Daily Online Screenings***

Regardless of vaccination status, daily health monitoring is essential in helping to mitigate the spread of COVID.

- For those entering buildings, including students, faculty, staff, and when applicable, contractors, vendors, and visitors, OFS implemented mandatory health screening questionnaire to identify any individuals who may have COVID-19 or who may have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus.
- Each day families will complete a Google Form Student Health Survey.
- Each morning day student families will self-monitor and remain home if symptoms occur
- Each evening boarding students will check in with dorm parents, remaining in the dorms, under the care of the school nurse, during the academic day if any symptoms are suspected.

Daily monitoring for potential COVID-19 symptoms is important to track your family's health status. If anyone experiences new symptoms, they should see their healthcare provider and/or get tested for COVID-19, especially if they may have had a potential exposure to COVID-19. Any forms or online questionnaires will be updated periodically to make sure they reflect updated understandings of COVID-19 as expressed by the CDC and/or DOH. The school will not retain individual medical or health information from these forms or questionnaires.

### **Staff and Student Testing**

At this time, following recommendations by the CDC and NYSED, OFS will be conducting weekly onsite noninvasive (saliva) PCR testing of students and employees. All unvaccinated community members will receive weekly testing, along with a random sample of the vaccinated population. Note: 100% of faculty/staff are fully vaccinated.

If a student or employee is symptomatic, the decision of whether a test needs to be conducted will be determined by the individual's healthcare provider or the local department of health. OFS may also require testing to prove that an individual who has previously tested positive for COVID-19 while at school is "clear" to return to the School. These types of tests will not be part of OFS' weekly testing program, rather, it will be the responsibility of the individual who is symptomatic or who has previously tested positive.

OFS may also require a COVID-19 test for students to return to the dorms if they must leave the dorm community during the academic year for a weekend or vacation period. Tests may be required of all employees and staff after longer vacation/break periods.

### **Positive Screens/Management of Ill Persons**

Teachers and residential staff will receive training prior to the arrival of students regarding COVID-19 symptoms, reporting protocol, and student health/safety supports.

#### **Day Students**

Any individual who screens positive for COVID-19 exposure or symptoms, if screened at the school, will immediately be sent home with instructions to contact their health care provider for assessment and testing. Students who are being sent home because of a positive screen (e.g., onset of any COVID-19 symptoms) will be immediately separated from other students and supervised in a safe, contained area under the nurse's direction until their parent/legal guardian or emergency contact can retrieve them from school. When possible, the school nurse will provide such individuals (or their families) with information on health care and testing resources. The school will immediately notify the state and local health department about the case if the individual's diagnostic test results are positive for COVID-19.

If an individual's responses to any of the screening questions changes, such as if they begin to experience symptoms during school hours, they must report immediately to the nurse's office for follow-up.

Domestic and International Boarding Students:

For our boarding students after school hours, any onset of symptoms should be reported immediately to the designated residential dorm staff, who will immediately alert the school nurse. Protocols for domestic boarding students are identical to day students with the exception that the students will remain in a single dorm room under the care of the school nurse and designated dorm supervisor until such time that they are picked up by family, designated emergency contact, or designated responsible party, and subsequently cleared by their health professional. If boarding students are suspected COVID(+), there will be designated single rooms on campus immediately and assessed by the school nurse and local healthcare providers.

OFS will follow the local DOH requirements for determining when any community member who screened positive for COVID-19 symptoms can return to the classroom. At a minimum, a return to school will require documentation from a health care provider evaluation, and symptom resolution.

**Response to Positive COVID Case(s)**

If COVID-19 cases are discovered at school, the immediate response will include:

- Deep cleaning as outlined by the CDC, DOH guidelines
- Contact Tracing protocols, carried out by one of Oakwood's trained and certified internal contact tracers.
- Following the most up-to-date guidelines, decisions regarding quarantine or isolation of individuals, groups, classes, or the school. With many variables in play, these decisions will need to be made on a case-by-case basis.
- Oakwood will be transparent and communicative throughout these decisions, if, and when, they arise. See attached CDC flowchart of COVID Symptoms /positive tests for vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals for more information.

In the case of an individual testing positive, OFS is required by NY State to support the DOH in tracing all contacts of the individual, in accordance with the protocols, training, and tools provided through the New York State Contact Tracing Program. Confidentiality will be maintained as required by federal and state laws and regulations. OFS is also required by law to cooperate with state and local health department's currently-in-effect isolation and quarantine efforts.

Whereas state and local health departments will implement monitoring and movement restrictions of COVID-19 infected or exposed persons, OFS will be responsible for notifying faculty

or families of students that they have come into 'close or proximate contact' (based on the CDC's current definition) with a person with COVID-19. Please note that medical privacy laws explicitly prohibit OFS from revealing the name of the individual who has tested positive for COVID-19. We may only reveal that the individual has come in close or proximate contact with an unnamed person, and how we came to know this information (school tracking systems, governmental contact tracing, or another mechanism).

### **Returns to School**

If a person **is not** diagnosed with COVID-19 by a healthcare provider (physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant) they can return to school:

- Once there is no fever, without the use of fever reducing medicines, and they have felt well for 24 hours.

If a person is diagnosed with COVID-19 by a healthcare provider based upon a PCR or antigen test, they should not be at school and should remain at home until:

- Healthcare provider has cleared the community member to return to school.
- It has been at least ten days since the individual first had symptoms or tested positive asymptotically.
- It has been at least 24 hours since the individual has had a fever (without using fever reducing medicine); and
- The individual's symptoms improved, including cough and shortness of breath.

If a boarding student is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, they will be moved to a single dorm room with separate bathroom while awaiting COVID-19 test results, and then:

- If a domestic boarding student tests positive, they will be asked to go to a parent/guardian for at least 10 days (per the bullet points above) and to seek the guidance of their primary care physician.
- International boarding students without local stateside guardian will remain in a single room with separate bathroom under the care of school nurse and local healthcare professionals, until cleared to return to classes.
- If the student tests negative, they will proceed as with any other illness and our nurse will coordinate appropriate care for the symptoms/illness occurring.

(Note: 100% of domestic boarding students are fully vaccinated, and 100% of international boarding students will be fully vaccinated within the first four weeks of school.)

### ***Face Coverings & Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)***

#### **Who Must Wear Them and When?**

All persons inside one of OFS's buildings must wear masks. This rule applies to everyone

regardless of vaccination status. During indoor classes all faculty and students must be wearing masks. This mandate includes passing time between classes and during study halls and student/faculty office hours.

One-use masks are available to guests and all community members who do not have a mask on hand and need to enter a campus building. In addition, we request families to provide a minimum of five PPE facial coverings (without valves) for their students. (It is always a good idea to keep a spare 1-2 in your student's backpack each day.)

**Individuals are always expected to have their masks with them even while outside**, as they must be prepared to put them on if someone else who is unmasked is unexpectedly unable to socially distance.

### **PPE training and Best Practices**

- All community members should already know the proper usage and the reasons why PPE is essential. If they do not, training will be provided.
- Residential faculty will work with dorm students in developing weekly routines revolving around proper cleaning of their reusable masks and hygiene in general.

General mask-wearing exceptions include:

- In outdoor classrooms, patios and open field spaces where social distancing of 3' or more can be maintained.
- Staff and administration, when alone in their offices.
- Teaching faculty when alone in their classroom spaces after 3:30 (prior to evening deep cleanings and after students and other individuals leave these spaces for the day).
- A student who is having difficulty breathing should immediately be given a mask break and if the difficulty continues, be evaluated by the nurse. During these breaks, faculty should accompany the students outside and evaluate if the situation necessitates the nurse or if the student can return to class.
- Students may remove their mask to eat if it is done in an area of the school determined to have the appropriate capacity for social distancing during mealtimes.
- A teacher has discretion to determine whether it is safe for a child to remove their mask.

### **What Types of Masks and Protection are Appropriate?**

#### General Guidelines

Acceptable face coverings for COVID-19 include but are not limited to multi-layered cloth-based face coverings and surgical masks that cover both the mouth and nose. It is important to note that face shields worn without other face coverings are not considered adequate protection against

COVID-19 and should not be used except in combination with an acceptable mask.

Faculty and students may use face coverings that are transparent at or around the mouth for instruction or interventions that require visualization of the movement of the lips and/or mouths (e.g., circle time, speech work, or speech therapy). These alternate coverings may also be used for certain students (e.g., hearing impaired) who benefit from being able to see more of the face of the faculty or staff member.

#### Provision of Masks

As the COVID-19 pandemic is no longer a new situation, it is expected that all community members already have a supply of reusable cloth masks. Each family and employees are encouraged to purchase or make five cloth face masks (one for each day of the week) per child to reduce environmental waste. Face masks should be labeled with the child's name or initials, so it is clear to whom the mask belongs. Residential Staff will work with the boarding students on proper care, cleaning, and usage of masks.

For children, faculty or staff who forget their masks, the school will have a supply of disposable surgical masks on hand (adult and child-sized) that community members can use at no charge.

Face masks should be washed, disinfected, or replaced after each day's use and must not be shared. Students and families should take responsibility for maintaining their individual face coverings. The CDC provides guidance on its website for additional information on cloth face coverings and other types of PPE, as well as instructions on use and cleaning.

If needed, OFS will provide students and faculty with training on how to adequately put on, take off, clean (as applicable), and discard PPE, including face masks.

## ***Hygiene***

### **Handwashing**

OFS follows all hygiene requirements as advised by the CDC and DOH. These include:

- Ensuring all students, faculty, and staff know proper hand and respiratory hygiene. Families and guardians should reinforce these habits at home
- Creating extra time in the schedule for handwashing, especially after restroom breaks, recess, using shared equipment, passing times between classes, P.E. classes, advisory periods, or other special activities and outdoor community events.
- Multiple touchless hand sanitizer dispensers are installed throughout the school filled with at least 70% isopropanol (or 60% ethanol) alcohol-based sanitizer for areas where handwashing is impractical.

- Providing hand sanitizer, wipes, or automated dispensers in common areas or near shared workplace items (copy machines, computers).

### **Cleaning & Disinfection**

The school's custodial staff is primarily responsible for cleaning and disinfection. A comprehensive COVID-19-specific cleaning plan per guidelines has been developed.

In addition to the work of the custodial staff, classrooms and common areas will be stocked with child-safe, CDC-approved disinfectant spray so that students and teachers can also contribute to cleaning efforts at periodic intervals during the day. Extra time has been built into the schedule for hygiene maintenance - both handwashing and the disinfection/cleaning of surfaces.

The following extra steps will be taken in classrooms, bathrooms, offices, and common areas:

- Touch-free amenities, such as towel, soap or hand sanitizer dispensers have been installed in campus buildings as well as several water-bottle refilling stations.
- Students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to bring their own labeled water bottles for refilling.
- In general, shared materials have been minimized. However, shared items (hallways, door handles, railings, bathroom and entry/exit doors, lunch tables, gym equipment, etc.) will be cleaned and disinfected by the custodial staff daily. Between these cleanings, supplies are publicly available to encourage student/faculty cleaning of these necessary shared spaces multiple times during the day.
- When possible, students will each have their own personal classroom supplies (of pencils, crayons, paper, etc.) that they will draw from rather than using common materials. Each child's supply will be labeled and stored in a method that ensures separation of materials. The school will supply some of these materials.
- Middle School students will have a designated school-day Chromebook. These devices will be used to access classroom material, Google Classroom, and other coursework. At the end of each day, the individual Chromebooks will be returned for charging and cleaning.
- Materials and tools used by staff or employees are regularly cleaned and disinfected using registered disinfectants
- Custodial staff will keep logs that include the date, time, and scope of custodial cleaning and disinfection.

### **Food Service**

OFS contracts with a third-party food services company, Brock Food Services. Brock was founded in 1927 and services dozens of schools throughout the northeast and mid-Atlantic region. Brock Food Services adheres to the highest standards of health and hygiene protocols. Employees

working in the OFS dining hall and kitchen will adhere to all OFS policies as well as all Brock health and safety procedures. All Brock employees follow the same vaccination requirements as OFS, will undergo daily health screening, wear PPE, and coordinate with Brock headquarters and OFS administration to ensure protocols are being followed. (All Brock employees at Oakwood are fully vaccinated).

- For the fall trimester Brock employees will serve a variety of delicious individual items/meals to students, staff, faculty for breakfast, lunch and dinner.
- Middle School students will have lunch in two separate shifts to ensure proper social distancing can be maintained during lunch.
- Upper School students will also be split into two shifts and have several designated areas, both inside and outside, in which they can eat their meals throughout campus.
- Dinners: the smaller boarding population allows for socially distant meals for students and on-campus faculty in the dining hall. Some students may also choose to eat in the dorms.

#### Meal Health and Hygiene Protocols

Teachers will:

- Always wash their hands before helping students with any snack or meal.
- Be alert to hygiene protocols during all mealtimes.
- Model appropriate social distancing and hygiene while eating with children.
- Remind students of safety rules at mealtimes.
- Always wash hands before resuming work after a meal.

Students will:

- Always wash hands before and after meals.
- Eat meals socially distanced in designated outside and inside spaces each day.

The entire school will:

- Wash hands before and after eating.
- If eating indoors, adhere to CDC and NYS guidelines/mandates regarding social distancing requirements while eating unmasked indoors.
- If eating outdoors, adhere to CDC and NYS guidelines/mandates regarding social distancing requirements while eating unmasked outside.
- Refrain from sharing food of any kind with each other.
- Clean their dining hall table with sanitizing spray and paper towels after finishing meals.

#### Restrooms

- Restrooms will be cleaned and disinfected during the day, following recommendations established by the DOH.
- Supplies will be available and community members will be expected to wipe down used

- spaces after each use
- Restrooms designed for multiple people will be limited to a capacity that ensures proper social distancing.
- Wherever possible given ADA compliance rules, OFS has installed barriers between toilets and sinks to reduce the risk of aerosolization, particularly in the dorm spaces, where bathroom, shower, and sink usage is greater.

## ***Social Distancing***

OFS will strive to maintain appropriate social distancing (minimum 3 feet desks on center) in all indoor spaces, unless safety or the core activity (e.g., instruction, moving equipment, using an elevator, traveling in common areas) requires a shorter distance or individuals are of the same household. Mask-wearing by all individuals while inside buildings, classrooms, and hallways will also help address cases where three feet of distance cannot be maintained. Outside, OFS will strive to maintain 3' distancing apart from certain aspects pertaining to sports.

### **Creation of Cohorts**

OFS has always valued our relatively small class sizes. When possible, the small classes will allow us to make each class its own “cohort” with a specific schedule and space that has minimal overlap with other groups. Academic-day cohorts will be organized at the Middle School level, mainly in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade as this is an unvaccinated population. When cohorting is used, the same social distancing policies will apply in classroom and dorm spaces. This will, however, reduce the risk of COVID-19 propagation and allow for more rapid and efficient response in the event of infection.

Dorm Spaces: In dorms, students will be grouped into cohorts based on location and building. Each cohort will have exclusive access to a bathroom and hallway spaces. Cohorts in the dorm serve a purpose to reduce risk of transmission in the event of COVID+ students. Students living within a building will collectively adhere to health and safety protocols. For the first five weeks of fall term, boarders will wear PPE in all common spaces as a few new international students need to receive their vaccine sequence upon arrival in the United States. Once those few students are fully vaccinated, PPE will not be required in dorm spaces after 5pm as 100% of residents in dorms will be fully vaccinated and these dorms are their homes. Note: Only boarding students and faculty are allowed in any dorm spaces this year.

### **Space Configurations**

Space configurations and usage will change for the duration of the COVID-19 period. Some of the changes include:

#### **Classrooms**

- Desks moved to be as distant as possible, (minimum 3' on center).
- Shared surfaces or workstations will be disinfected daily, with high traffic areas more often.
- Outdoor classroom spaces provided in the form of tents and sheltered terraces, with moveable desks/seats provided.
- Reconfiguration of large gathering spaces with reduced capacity.

#### Common Areas

- Upper School Students will be encouraged to eat in available outdoor spaces whenever possible. Middle School students will eat in the Dining Hall in two shifts, allowing for both distancing and supervision.
- Larger spaces, such as the Meeting Room, Theater, Gym, Lower Library, Upper Library, Student Lounge, etc. will be configured with socially distanced desks, chairs, tables, and benches. These spaces will be used for a combination of class meetings, academic space, lunch gatherings, and study times.
- Certain hallways and exterior doors will be designated as “one-way traffic only,” and marked accordingly with ‘Entrance/Exit’ signage and directional graphics on the floor.
- Busy staircases may be designated up or down.
- Social distancing signage and floor signage will help reinforce proper spacing and directional traffic flow.

#### **Music, Wind Instruments, Sports**

Whenever possible singing, the playing of wind instruments (including orchestral instruments and classroom recorders/flutes), as well as all activities requiring vocal projection will be performed outdoors. When weather does not permit being outdoors, six feet or greater in all directions is required between individuals, with spacing marked out on the floor of a large gathering space such as the gym and theater. When indoors, modified programming may exclude certain instruments, such as the sousaphone or alphorn. All persons playing wind instruments should wash their hands immediately following their instrumental play.

Sports/aerobic activity that produces heaving breathing will take place outdoors, except for volleyball and basketball. For the fall volleyball season, masks will be always worn on and off the court. Assessments will be made in November regarding basketball PPE policies.

#### **Arrival, Departure, and Scheduling**

A separate document will outline traffic flow, arrivals, and departures. As an overview:

- Buses will drop off in the AM between 7:15 AM – 8:15 AM in front of Main Building
- Car drop-off in the AM will occur in front of Library and Main Building
- Student drivers will park in one of two designated areas - each student driver will be told

where their parking area is before the first day of school.

- Afternoon buses will pick up at 5:00 PM in front of Library and Main
- Afternoon car pick-up at 5:00 PM will occur by the soccer fields and at the gym.
- 3:30 PM (early car pickup) will occur in front of Library/Main Building

**Any needed communication between parent/guardian and the School will go through the Main Office (845)-462-4200 during the academic day and the Administrator on Duty (845-518-6355) after business hours (weekdays after 5:00 PM and weekends.)**

**Families should plan to be punctual in their arrival and pickup times. If arriving late or leaving early is unavoidable, parents must email [attendance@oakwoodfriends.org](mailto:attendance@oakwoodfriends.org).**

### ***Metrics Used in Decision-Making***

During the coming year, there may be times when the school decides to, or we are ordered to, shift to a remote learning model, or otherwise change our program in response to COVID rates. If there is a regional or state-wide lockdown, we are required to follow it.

However, there may be situations within our own county, neighborhood, or school community when community spread of COVID-19 needs to be addressed. Under guidance from the State and local authorities, OFS has identified the following policy so that we can responsibly provide for the health and safety of our students, families, faculty, and staff. Local Dutchess County tracking of total active case and regional percentage positive rates are updated daily [here](#).

### **Metrics for Quarantining a Class**

Considering the CDC's guidelines for quarantines upon COVID-19 exposure, in the case of a positive test, the only full classes that may be required to quarantine out of school will be the 5th and 6th grade, as their students are ineligible for vaccination at this point. If a student in another grade tests positive for COVID-19, we will follow the CDC guidelines regarding close contacts and quarantining for fully vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals.

All decisions regarding quarantine, isolation, and contact tracing will be done so with the health and safety of the entire community held in the highest regard. Acknowledging that 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students are currently not eligible for vaccination, separate policies may apply to these grades in the event of a positive campus case of COVID-19. As with all decisions, Oakwood will follow the most up-to-date CDC and NYSDOH guidelines, and will transparently, quickly, and consistently communicate with the entire Oakwood community.

## **Section 2: Social-Emotional Well-Being**

NY State Education Department correctly identifies social-emotional well-being as a top priority of schools and districts. The Oakwood community recognizes that a strong partnership, a deep sense of trust, and connection between families, faculty, and students is central to this work. OFS recognizes there are individual situations and circumstances that each member of our community has experienced over these last eighteen months. It is now our responsibility, as a school community, to support our students to the best of our ability. To that end, OFS is working to support students during this COVID-19 period in several different ways.

### ***Support Team***

OFS has a strong social-emotional multi-tiered support system in place.

- School Counselor: OFS has a full-time counselor who lives on the campus. This faculty member meets 1:1 with several students a week and provides resources and support to the larger community including faculty and parents. The Counselor also connects families with additional outside social/emotional and mental health supports as needed,
- Student/Faculty Advisory Groups: Small advisory groups of students meet weekly with their faculty advisor. During these meetings, the group discusses areas of strength and stress and develops plans of support as needed.
- Certain students also benefit from counseling through their IEP/IESP provisions. OFS has a designated Academic Support staff who work closely with students with diagnosed learning differences. These supports occur both during the academic day and during evening study times in the dorms.
- International Students: OFS has a full-time international student coordinator who works closely with our international students and families. Several times a term, Zoom calls are organized with families, faculty and advisors to meet with students and parents, discussing progress, areas of growth, and areas of support.
- Dorm parents and faculty advisors play a key role in support of our domestic and international students who are living and learning far from home. Residing on campus five days a week, throughout the term, or throughout the entire year, the connection between residential dorm parents, students, and families is crucial.
- Weekly 'students of concern' meetings occur at both full-faculty and division-level meetings and within an administrative team level. During these meetings, student support strategies are discussed for those students observed to be struggling in school, at home, or with friends. Input from multiple viewpoints is key: faculty, coaches, staff, department chairs, administrators, student advisors, and family.
- Residential Program: Residential dorm parents live both in the dorms and on the campus. These trained faculty work closely with the students in the dorms every night, providing

supervision, support, conversation, and friendship.

### ***Community Support and Programming***

We have worked hard this spring and summer to maintain a high level of community program support, both in-person and at a distance. Several times a term, community-wide programming (student/faculty/families) occurs. These programs have included and are not limited to social/emotional support during times of COVID, navigating society in times of political turmoil, anti-racist work, support of marginalized groups, teen depression, and healthy life choices. A faculty social justice working group has met regularly over this last year and will interface with student groups this fall to support continued dialog and work. Faculty, students, and parents have engaged in anti-racist workshops this past spring and summer and will continue this important work throughout the year. Topics have ranged in focus from Undoing Racism, to De-centering Whiteness, to micro-aggressions in the classroom. We see this Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work that our school engages in as part and parcel of our COVID supports.

## **Section 3: Facilities**

### ***Utilization of Space***

OFS is fortunate to reside on a 55-acre, 22 building campus with ample space to ‘spread out’ both inside and outside. Outdoor patios, the four-season greenhouse and exterior Middle School courtyard spaces are being utilized as outdoor classroom and gathering spaces. Event tents erected around campus will provide additional space for students/faculty to gather for lunches, meetings, classes, and socialization at a distance. The gymnasium and newly renovated theater space will provide additional classroom space during the academic day. In the library a new classroom space was constructed last summer to accommodate additional classes. In these existing spaces, we are making sure they conform to NYS DOH guidelines for capacity, as well as being retrofitted or upgraded to improve utility

### ***Safety Drills***

OFS maintains an internal guide for conducting drills which strictly adheres to NYS guidelines as to frequency and type of drills to be performed each year. These guidelines are being reviewed this summer and updated before the start of the 2021-2022 school year to account for social distancing requirements. All guidelines are being reviewed for fire, shelter-in-place, and lockdown drills with our local first-response teams, the OFS facilities coordinator, and administration.

### ***Ventilation & Personal Sanitation Upgrades***

Most academic buildings are heated and cooled by forced-air HVAC systems. OFS' facilities director has coordinated with local consultants and contractors to maximize fresh air flow and purification in these spaces utilizing appropriate MERV filters, additional ventilation measures maximizing fresh air intake, opening windows/doors, and installation of intake and exhaust fans in classrooms and offices. All classroom and large indoor spaces have also been equipped with (CDC-approved, 99.9% effective removal) appropriately sized air purification machines.

Dozens of touchless hand sanitizing stations have been installed throughout campus in high traffic areas, including classroom entrances, bathrooms, hallways, offices, and dorms. Additional approved cleaning supplies are stocked in each restroom and the bathroom spaces have additional cleaning supplies and approved dividers between sinks when appropriate. When possible, bathrooms are being transitioned to single occupancy.

## **Section 4: Transportation**

OFS day students arrive to campus via car, local district busing, and contracted buses (and a few on foot). We have identified the following internal steps we can take to ensure the safest possible travel and transportation of our students:

- Require all students who ride buses to wear masks when seated, standing, or getting on and off the bus.
- Require all students waiting for the bus to socially distance.
- Encourage (through our family emails, school handbook, and other forms of communication) any faculty and families who can to walk, bike, or drive to school.
- Encourage the formation of "carpool routes" among cohorts of students—in which families with cars take turns doing a route to pick up and/or drop off 3-4 children from their child's cohort.

In addition to these measures, we will of course work with the district and contracted buses if guidelines for non-public schools are changed, including:

- Educating students and families who utilize buses or public transportation about safe ridership, including mask wearing, social distancing, and complying with other applicable guidelines.
- Making sure our staff who interact with buses are properly trained in any new procedures and requirements.
- Having transparent and open lines of communication with families regarding busing. If you have questions, concerns, or ideas, please reach out.

## **Conclusion**

We are confident in our planning to return to in-person programming this fall. With new HVAC and ventilation systems in the Middle School buildings, appropriate filtration in our Upper school buildings HVAC systems, and significant investment in outdoor learning spaces, and health and safety supplies, we are ready for the year to begin.

We are aware that this remains a fluid situation and understand that as a community we have a shared responsibility and must be ready to pivot and adapt if conditions change. As a sign of commitment to this shared responsibility, families, students, faculty, and staff have all be asked to sign a ‘commitment to community responsibility’ document. This document highlights the impact individual choices and actions have on the larger community and outline expectations for shared best-practices

The COVID pandemic has vividly reminded us how connected we are to each other. It will only be through a strong, consistent, and complete commitment to this shared responsibility that our community will successfully navigate the coming year (of this we have absolute confidence.) We anticipate that the further release of guidelines from both the state and independent school community may necessitate revisions to the document. We are optimistic that our 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students will become eligible for vaccinations during the next few months, and we are confident that this year will be a successful and engaging experience for our entire community. We will maintain updated copies on our school website and available for family and faculty review.

Respectfully Submitted:  
Oakwood Friends School COVID Working Group  
August 31st, 2021

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