



Aug. 7, 2020

My dear St. Raphael Parents,

I want to thank you for your responses to my request to indicate your preference for an in person or virtual learning environment for your child/children for the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year. Our responses (177 SRS and 80 SRNS students indicate approximately 85% favoring in-person instruction) are very helpful as we attempt to plan use of space and classroom instruction. Since I asked, this issue has received a great deal of coverage. We are awaiting ADW direction on what is possible and what is beyond our control. I did want to let you know that the framework of our plan has been approved by ADW, and now we are working on the specifics. We are planning for in-person instruction using all our space, and we will group students in small cohorts of 1 teacher to a max of 14 students for Monday through Thursday classroom instruction. We will provide distance learning to those students who will participate virtually. We will post the plan for your review, aiming for Monday afternoon of next week, and then we will ask for your decision to begin the school year. Yes, one more survey! Thanks for your patience and understanding as we navigate this most unusual learning season.

When I say “final decision,” please note that if we open and our in-person month of September goes smoothly and conditions will support continuing, we will open up the in-person option again at the end of September for your child to continue it, leave it, or join it. On the flip side of the discussion, at any point health indicators could necessitate a change to distance learning. Hopefully after last weekend, we are aware that we will continue to receive guidance from state and local government. Although our draft plan offers in-person and distance learning options, at any point, we could all pivot to distance learning if Montgomery County moves back to Phase 1 or circumstances at SR indicate it is appropriate.

Please see this Initial Checklist for Back to School from Judy Kettl, our nurse:

1. Have you turned your health forms in to the school nurse? Whether in-person or virtual instruction:
 - All new SRS students including all kindergarteners are required to complete ADW Form 3
 - All new SRNS students are required to complete ADW Form 3P
 - All incoming 7th grade students are required to submit an updated Immunization record showing your child has received a Tdap and Meningococcal vaccine.
 - Any student who may require medication during the school day must have the appropriate medication authorization form completed.

All forms are available on the school website. If you have questions, email our school nurse, Judy Kettl, at jkettl@straphaels.org.

2. Have you updated your health emergency information in TADS for each child? Please review and update all information as necessary. If you are thinking that one of your emergency contacts might possibly have to pick up your child from school, please add him/her to the Transportation form as well.





3. As part of our in-person reopening plan, all SRS and SRNS parents will be required to check daily temperatures of each child, answer a few questions, either at home (SRS) or at drop off (SRNS). All information will be submitted to the school or a staff member at the door. (more details to follow as we finalize our plan) .

- Every household must have a working temporal thermometer.

4. In accordance with the CDC and Maryland Department of Health Guidelines, we are requiring every staff member and student to wear a mask.

- All students, SRS and SRNS, must have three masks available every day. One for the morning, one for the afternoon and one to remain at school as a spare.

Resources for Parents:

American Academy of Pediatrics - healthychildren.org

CDC.gov

You are well-read and I know have varied resources to help you make your decision. There is so much good data, but I think we need to respect that there are many factors impacting what each family chooses. There is not a right or wrong choice; there is not a “right side” of the issue. For that reason, we are attempting to offer both a distance and an in-person option at St. Raphael. To help me in my research I have been blessed by input from some of our many SR health care professionals. If you are looking for additional information, attached I have included some points shared by some of our very own SR friends.

Praying for His blessings on us and those we love!

Sincerely,

Teri Dwyer
Principal

