



Dear Community Parents,

As Community School plans for reopening in the fall, we are guided by two key concepts: The health and safety of students and employees come first, and children learn best *in school*. We are all keenly aware that being physically present in school is vital for children; it is where they learn to get along with others, work in groups, explore new ideas, and discover the wonders of the world while working with their teachers. Therefore it is essential that we make Community School as healthy and safe as possible when we return in August. This will lead to lower levels of illness and reduce the chance of school closure, while actively doing our part for the greater community.

To that end, we have created a health task force composed of parent health experts, administrators, and teachers to rethink what school looks like from a health and safety perspective. This group will help guide us as we work to mitigate the risk of infection, ensuring that whenever possible we will have students in the classroom.

Our health and safety task force is made up of the following:

- **Eleanor Bergquist**, mother of four Community School students. Eleanor has worked as an infectious disease epidemiologist for over 15 years and spent much of that time working on pandemic planning and response. She has worked for the CDC, St. Louis County Department of Health and the NYC Department of Health and Mental

Hygiene. She holds an MA in Medical Anthropology from the University of London, an MSPH in Parasitology from Tulane University, and a PhD in Behavioral Science (public health) from Saint Louis University.

- **Meghan Mathison**, mother of two Community students. Meghan is manager of quality and compliance at St. Louis Children's Hospital supporting the COVID-19 Incident Command Center. She previously has worked as a physical scientist at the US Environmental Protection Agency, and performed data analysis for the H1N1 Pandemic Response at the US Department of Health and Human Services. She holds a Masters of Public Health in Epidemiology and Biostatistics from The George Washington University, and a BA in Political Science from Notre Dame University.
- **Helen Kranbuhl Parsons**, mother of one Community student and one alumnus. Helen is a pediatrician with SSM Health Medical Group, is a Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and has been board certified in pediatrics since 2003. She earned her MD from the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine, her BS in Biology from Duke University, and served her pediatric residency at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center.
- **Tricia Reeb**, mother of three Community School graduates. Trish is well known to us all as our school nurse, a position she has held for the past 12 years. She previously has worked in Behavioral, Community, Primary and Home health care. She is a Registered Nurse, and holds a MS in Nursing from the University of Missouri St. Louis and a BS in Nursing from the Catholic University of America.
- Additionally, Fifth Grade teacher Sarah McCarthy and SK teacher Amanda Hazelwood, along with administrators Kathy Fitzgerald, Lynn Christopher, Kathleen Kelly, and I are members of the planning team.

A key part of our planning centers around the need to minimize the interaction of students with each other in less-controlled ways, such as passing in the halls, sharing equipment or restrooms, or gathering in large groups. Minimizing these interactions reduces the chances that virus will spread from one student to many, and enables us to contact trace (determine who a potentially sick student has come into contact with) more quickly and easily in the event that a particular student or teacher is suspected of having been exposed to coronavirus.

Minimizing "random" student interaction means that, if we do have a student experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, rather than sending hundreds of people home until we can identify with whom they interacted, the affected group is much smaller; perhaps as few as the others in their

homeroom. Contact tracing is quicker and easier, which simplifies testing, leading to students and teachers returning to school much more quickly.

Many things will probably change between now and when we reopen in August, and we continue to actively incorporate guidance from the county, state, and federal levels. To give you a sense of our current thinking, among other measures we are considering:

- **Emphasis on Homeroom Groups:** Eat lunch in homerooms (more easily done with small class sizes/large classrooms), including use of 100% compostable materials to eliminate use of dishes; dedicated restroom facilities for each homeroom, with no others using them; social distancing in older grades' classrooms
- **Grounds and Facilities:** Increased use of the outdoors, where it is believed the spread of virus is significantly diminished; dedicated arrival doors for each grade (e.g. entry into classrooms directly from the outdoors without walking through hallways); hold classes outdoors in woods and fields when allergens/weather allow it; social distancing during outdoor PE; smart screens in every classroom to provide instruction to lessen specialists coming into contact with multiple homerooms; smart screens to allow students to participate in virtual assemblies
- **Health Procedures:** Health and temperature checks (using no-touch thermometers) on arrival and mid-day; use of personal protective equipment when appropriate; frequent hand washing and/or use of hand sanitizer
- **Cleaning/Sanitation:** Enhanced cleaning techniques such as electrostatic sprayers indoors after school, and outdoors on playgrounds and other areas throughout the day as needed; open windows to promote airflow when allergens allow it (believed to significantly reduce risk); hourly cleaning of high-touch surfaces such as hand rails and door knobs throughout facilities

We are moving forward on many of these right now. We have ordered new custodial equipment, begun purchasing student desks that we can use in place of larger multi-student tables, arranged with our food service provider the delivery of hundreds of lunches on a daily basis to classrooms, purchased 40 no-touch scanning thermometers, and looked at the implications for morning drop off and afternoon pick up, as well as Extended Day. The list goes on, but with three months to prepare we will be ready for reopening.

Although it is impossible to remove all risk, we do know that these and other procedures will greatly reduce the chance of widespread outbreaks of illness at school. And that is our goal:

Institute procedures which mitigate risk, and thereby keep children in school. It is certain that we will learn even more over the summer, and likely that our plans will evolve, so we will incorporate what we learn in our planning for the fall. We will continue updating you throughout the summer.

We do realize that these new procedures will temporarily change the school. But we need to do what is necessary to keep the school open and safe for children and adults. We know school is where children learn best, and we are working hard to put procedures in place that will help keep them physically here, where they belong.

Please feel free to let any of us know if you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob". The letters are stylized and cursive.

Bob Cooke | Head of School