

Mustard Seed School

Mustard Seed School

FIFTH ST.

WILLOW AVE.

Mustard Seed School

change makers

Fall 2020-21
Re-opening Plan
August 2020

A Letter from Mr. Postema

August 2020

Dear Parents,

This fall will be unlike any back-to-school opening we've experienced before. In this document, you will find the possible scenarios for the re-opening of school, based on the information that we have available at this time. *We're planning to implement Scenario B: a hybrid model that involves both on-site and distance learning. We're on track for our regular start date, Thursday September 10.*

As you know, our plans are subject to change as the course of COVID-19 unfolds. We'll be in constant communication with you and we'll update our [website](#). You should always feel free to reach out with questions. We have provided contact information on the last page.

As we enter this new season, doing things in ways we have never done before, I invite you to partner with us on this journey. This school year is going to take all of us working in concert. It's going to stretch us in ways we never imagined. I need and value your partnership especially at this time.

I know this is not easy. I want to assure you that the Leadership Team and I have put a lot of thought and care into planning for the safest start possible. We've sought input from parents, faculty and staff, and the Board of Trustees.

We will continue to seek your feedback. We're learning and growing together. And we have hope: God is with us.

Our mission to inspire minds, cultivate hearts, and remove barriers remains the same. We're a community that knows and cares for each other. And we will get through this—together.

Looking forward to seeing you (mask and all!) in the fall!



Thomas S. Postema
Head of School



Scenarios

We are closely monitoring the COVID-19 pandemic. As data and recommendations change, so too will our plans. We will update our website to reflect any changes and we will communicate with you. The top priority in any plan for the fall must be the health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff. We continue to learn from other countries, school leaders, the CDC, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and state and local leaders

If

Then

Scenario
A

If Government and CDC allow schools to reopen **and** we are in Stage 3



MSS opens with some modifications including reduced capacity as needed

Scenario
B

If Government and CDC allow schools to reopen **and** we are in Stage 2



MSS opens with a hybrid program of staggered on-site attendance and distance learning

Scenario
C

If Government orders another shutdown



MSS switches to distance learning with modifications for the youngest students

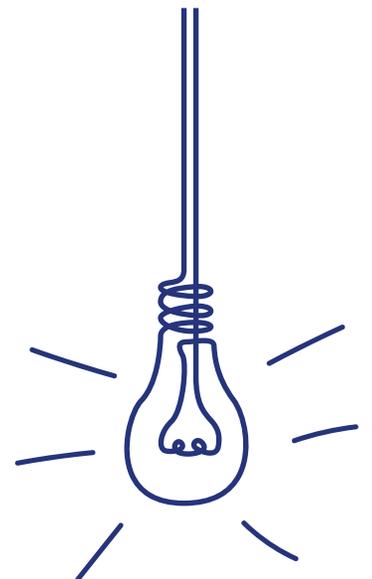




We have modified the school program to limit the in-person interactions of students, faculty, and staff, while preserving the integrity of our program.

- Classes will be configured by grade level.
- Cohorts of students and teachers (a group of students who do not mix with other classes and who interact with a limited number of teachers) will be established to reduce exposure.
- Use of shared spaces like the art studios, music room, etc. will be limited. Classes will mostly stay in one classroom.
- Specialists like music, art, and PE teachers will provide some instruction virtually, even when students are on campus.
- Class size will be limited based on square-foot recommendations.
- Worship will take place in individual classrooms, not in a larger group setting.

Program Modifications

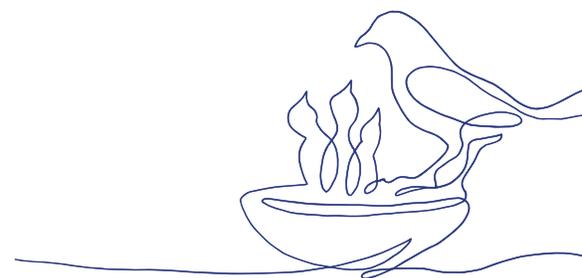




Scenario A On-site Learning

If schools are allowed to be in session and NJ is in Stage 3, then preschool through grade eight will have on-site instruction for a regular schedule Monday-Friday.

- The school will provide a family technology orientation in the fall at appropriate levels for each division.
- You will have the opportunity to discuss your family's needs at your child's listening conference before the start of school.
- Arrival and dismissal times will be staggered to minimize congestion.
- Distance learning will only be available to K-8 families with school approval.



Scenario B

Hybrid Learning

Combines On-site
and Distance Learning

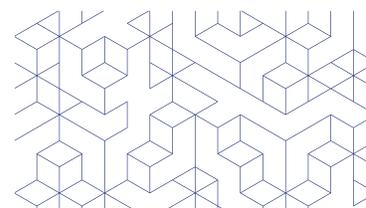
If schools are allowed to open within NJ Stage 2 restrictions, Mustard Seed School will open in a phased manner. On-site classes will be offered at reduced capacity. At the same time, many students will be supported at home through distance learning.

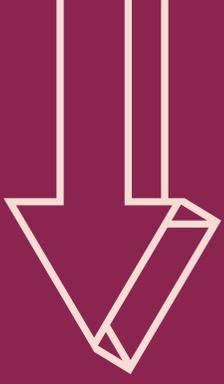
- The school will provide a family technology orientation in the fall at appropriate levels for each division.
- You will have the opportunity to discuss your family's needs at your child's listening conference before the start of school.
- Arrival and dismissal times will be staggered to minimize congestion.
- Distance learning will only be available to K-8 families with school approval.
- Phasing in of additional on-site capacity will be evaluated every four weeks. Our goal is to give families two weeks notice for any planned adjustment to schedules. (*Note: emergency adjustment may be required with little notice.*)



Scenario B Priorities

- Designing a re-entry plan that protects the health of our students and staff to the greatest extent possible.
- Re-establishing on-site learning first for our youngest students who are less able to complete distance learning independently.
- Making resources, including on-site learning, available first to students who are making a transition from one division to another (fourth grade, eighth grade as they prepare for transition to high school).
- Maintaining student support for students with an individualized service plan.
- Maintaining preparedness for a return to distance learning if needed in any division.





Scenario B Phase 1

Mustard Seed School will re-evaluate the phase every four weeks. Our goal is to give parents two weeks notice if the school will move to another phase.

Preschool and Kindergarten

On-site classes for their regular schedule M-F.

First Through Fourth Grades & Eighth Grade

- On-site classes four days a week: M/Tu/Th/F.
- Distance learning on Wednesday.

Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Grades

- One cohort of 50% at each grade level on-site M/Tu.
- One cohort of 50% at each grade level on-site Th/F.
- Distance learning on Wednesday with some live instruction throughout the day
- Schedules will be coordinated for families with children in multiple grades within the guidelines above. *(Note: You would not have a child at school on M-Tu in one grade and Th-F in another grade. However, you may have a child who is on-site four days a week and another who is on-site two days.)*
- Seventh grade will break into two homerooms, one led by Mr. Harris and the other by Mr. Licato.





Scenario B Phase 2

The phase will be re-evaluated as needed.

Preschool and Kindergarten

On-site classes for their regular schedule M-F.

Grades One through Eight

- On-site classes four days a week: M/Tu/Th/F.
- Distance learning on Wednesday
- Parents of students in grades 6-8 may arrange for students to self-dismiss before lunch in order to eat, attend Zoom sessions, and study from home. *Note: In order to work from home in the afternoons, students will need to consistently demonstrate independence in their studies.*

Middle School Distance Learning

During Scenario B Hybrid Model

Live Online Sessions

- Middle School live online sessions are mandatory. They are as important to your child's education as live on-site classes.

Community Building

There will be some live community building meetings throughout the week.

Instruction will happen in a few different ways:

- Over Zoom as the teacher instructs the on-campus students.
- Via asynchronous video lessons and assignments.
- Through research and project work.
- In weekly small group meetings.

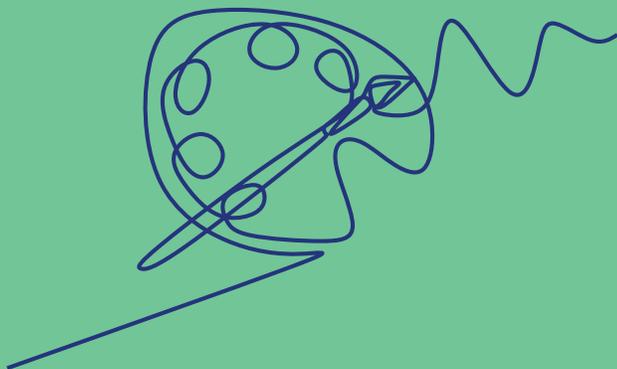
Materials

There may be some materials that parents need to pick up or drop off periodically.





Scenario C Distance Learning



If on-site learning is not allowed or possible to execute safely, all classes learn through distance learning.

- The school will provide a family technology orientation in the fall at appropriate levels for each division.
- You will have the opportunity to discuss your family's needs at your child's listening conference before the start of school.

Early Childhood

- Synchronous: daily morning meetings, daily small-group instruction, weekly classes with specialists.
- Asynchronous: daily activities provided for families through Seesaw.
- Preschool families may opt out until school resumes on campus.

Lower School

Blend of synchronous and asynchronous work to echo on-campus schedule and cadence.

Middle School

Blend of synchronous and asynchronous work to echo on-campus schedule and cadence.

Safety and Hygiene



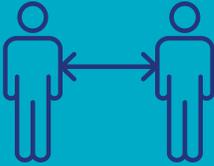
Everyone in the building will wear masks



Temperature check upon arrival and mid-day



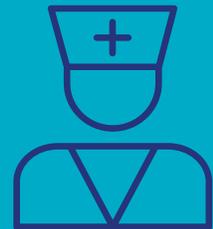
Frequent hand washing



Classrooms reconfigured to allow for social distancing



Hand sanitizer available in classrooms & around the building



Daily nurse support in an isolated space



Regular cleaning throughout the day and deep clean at night

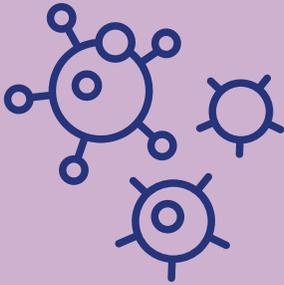


Community snack suspended



Classrooms & building ventilated as much as possible

Procedures in Event of Exposure



- Students, faculty, and staff will stay home if anyone in their household is sick.
- Students, faculty, and staff will quarantine, following advice of the local health department and medical care providers when exposed to COVID-19.
- Distance learning may go into effect for any student or class or for the school at the recommendation of the local health department, if a positive COVID-19 case is identified in the school community.

Technology



- The school has upgraded the phone system throughout building to increase communication among classrooms, the office, and administrators.
- Students will receive a single sign-on for technology for ease of use of apps and software.
- The school will increase utilization of software to support distance learning: Mathspace, Raz-Kids, Seesaw, Savvas, IXL, Google Classroom, Zoom, and Google Meets.

Visitors



- No visitors, including parents, will be admitted without an appointment.
- Scheduled visitors must wear a mask and will not be allowed to enter classrooms.



Outdoor Play

Children need time to play and move their bodies in a safe environment. We have made plans for outdoor play that do not involve use of common space at the park. Decisions about outdoor play will be made at the grade level.

- We have secured space from Our Lady of Grace Church that enables us to offer play next to the school.
- The gym will also be available more frequently for gross motor play indoors.
- Classes may also go for walks or utilize local parks when deemed safe.

Who to Contact with Questions



General Questions

Tom Postema, Head of School
tpostema@mustardseedsschool.org

Preschool and Kindergarten

Emily Sytsma, Director of Early Childhood
esytsma@mustardseedsschool.org

First through Third Grades

Shanna Pargellis, Lower School Director
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Fourth through Eighth Grades

Abby Choi, Middle School Director
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