

The Village School is a community and we all look out for each other. Out of consideration for each other, each family takes necessary precautions to prevent any possible transmission in and outside of the family. The school is reopening with preparations to keep the school community as safe as possible. This is for a relatively short period of time, until a vaccine is available. We will forgo All School Sing, Reading Buddies and all other group activities until it is safe to resume them.

This plan is based on Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Initial Fall School Reopening Guidance, Protocols for Responding to Covid-19 Scenarios in School, and Fall Reopening Facilities and Operations Guidance. All these manuals were written in close consultation with the Mass. Department of Health, pediatricians, infectious disease experts, parents, teachers and administrators. For more detailed information, go to

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/protocols/>

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/dese-fall-reopening-guidance/download>

www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/2020-0722facilities-operations-guide.docx

Basis for Reopening

1. The DESE (Mass. Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) recommendation: “Our goal is the safe return of as many students as possible to in-person school settings, to maximize learning and address our students’ holistic needs.”

2. Mass. low transmission rate. Massachusetts currently has a low transmission rate, and a low case rate. Our general local rural area also has a very low case rate. (See School Closing section for more information about how the local case rate determines school closing.)

3. Family responsibility. The Village School community has been fortunate to avoid any cases of Covid-19 in Village School families since the shutdown. The Village School community can be viewed as a ‘bubble.’ Because families have been vigilant and taken proper precautions, we feel it is safe for the Village School to reopen, with families continuing to take the same precautions.

4. Isolating each class.

- Each class is viewed as a ‘cohort,’ or a family, or a ‘pod.’
- Each class will not mix or mingle with other classes, including lunch and recess. That way, all germs stay within the pod.
- Children cannot be in the hallway except to use the bathroom or retrieve something from a cubby.
- All children in the building must wear masks.

5. Spaces. Our building has large classrooms. The renovated outdoor pavilion is large enough for a class to work without masks. The renovated auditorium is a large space where children can be on rainy days too, with many windows, all new. Tents are erected for class use. There are many outdoor areas for classes to sit and enjoy working in fresh air. Here is a link about green school yards, which is what we are doing: <https://www.greenschoolyards.org/covid-learn-outside> Note: during the 1907-16 NYC tuberculosis epidemic, no cases were reported for children who were learning outdoors, as many classes worked outside, even in coats.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/17/nyregion/coronavirus-nyc-schools-reopening-outdoors.html?referringSource=articleShare>

6. Ventilation. Each classroom has lots of windows, above and below for fresh air circulation. The building has a good ventilation system for colder weather that pulls in fresh air from the outside and heats it to send to the classrooms. In addition, all bathrooms are having exhaust/extraction fans installed this summer.

Basic Hygiene Plan

1. Self-monitoring is essential.

- No parent, child or teacher can come to school if they feel sick: cough or sore throat or upset tummy or headache. Children with sniffles, nasal congestion, and/or runny noses can be sent to school as long as there are no other symptoms.
- Parents, please do not send a child to school who is feeling sick.
- Any student who comes to school sick or becomes sick, will be isolated in a designated outdoor spot until they are picked up by their parents.
- Because of the high degree of inaccuracy of non-contact, infrared thermal temperature checks on children in a varying temperature conditions, we ask that parents perform a daily temperature check on their child before each school day. Anyone with a fever of 100 or higher, stays home.

2. Handwashing and drinking

- All children must have a water bottle or flask with their name on it. It can be refilled in the classroom.
- All classrooms have sinks and children will be instructed to wash hands frequently.
- Sanitizer dispensers are located at all entrances to the building, and anyone entering is expected to use them.
- All students entering exterior classroom doors are expected to wash hands or use sanitizer.
- K-6th students will each have their own kit of classroom materials (pens, pencils, crayons, erasers, etc.) that are not shared with others.
- Children wash hands when leaving or entering a classroom

3. Hallways.

- Only preschoolers, staff and non-parent visitors will use the main front driveway entrance.
- Kindergarten through 6th graders will use their classroom outdoor entrances or the back playground entrance for entering and exiting the classroom.
- If needed, parents can use the playground entrance to enter the building
- Hallways are used by children *only* for visiting cubbies or using the bathroom.
- All children must wear masks in the hallway and in the classrooms.
- 2nd-6th parents are requested to ***not*** enter the building, but can escort their child to their classroom outside entrance.
- Preschool-1st grade parents can escort their child to their cubby.
- All parents must wear masks in the building.

4. Masks

- **Every student is required to have two masks in the building (provided by parents), and come to school daily with a clean sanitized mask.**
- All children must wear masks in the building.
- K-6th graders will wear masks in the classroom, with frequent mask breaks taken out doors.
- Preschool is outside without masks, *no* social distancing. Preschool staff will wear masks.
- Preschool is required to wear masks when inside.
- All teachers will wear masks inside and outside.
- K-6th graders wear masks when outside, except for mask breaks over 6 ft. apart.

5. Social distancing.

- K-6th grade will sit 3-6 ft. apart with masks on in the classroom.

6. Cleaning and Disinfecting.

- All frequently touched surfaces will be disinfected multiple times during the day, including bathrooms.
- Each teacher is responsible for their own classroom, disinfecting frequently touched surfaces 3-4x a day.
- The office is responsible for common areas.
- At the end of each day, all horizontal surfaces in classrooms will be disinfected.
- All bathrooms are cleaned and disinfected daily

General Activities

Recess

- K-6th children play outside wearing masks, trying to keep 3 ft. distancing or more.
- Each class will have a separate area at recess, and cannot mix with other classes in other areas.

Lunch and Snack

- *We request that each K-6th parent purchase a mat for each child, about the size of a yoga mat, approximately 2 ft by 6 ft.*
- Yoga mats work, but K-6th parents may provide bamboo mats, beach mats or other kinds of mats that are waterproof that work well.
- In good weather, K-6th classes will go outside for snack and lunch, sit in their designated class area and each child will sit on their mat, 6 ft. apart.

After School Program is closed, to prevent mixing of pods or classes

Departure at 3:30

- Children will be in their pod group outside. When they see their parent waiting at the white line that separates the parking lot, they can walk to the parent and leave.

Carpooling

- We require that all children wear masks in carpools, because carpools are mixing classes.

Visitors and Specialists

- All visitors must wear masks, sanitize hands upon entering, and check in the office.
- Specialists, such as art teachers, or music teachers, will wash hands before entering a classroom, and wear masks.

Plan for a Case in the Building

When Sick

The single most important thing to do if any of the following symptoms are present is to **STAY HOME**. Our collective health relies, in part, on individual attention and responsibility. Note that some symptoms of COVID-19 are the same as the flu or a bad cold; please do not assume it is another condition. When in doubt, stay home. Don't hesitate to call Rise with any questions.

Please STAY HOME with any of the symptoms listed.

Below is the full list of symptoms for which caregivers should monitor their children, and staff should monitor themselves:

- Fever (100.0° Fahrenheit or higher), chills, or shaking chills (CDC has lowered the temperature from 100.4 to 100.0)
- Cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Headache *when in combination with other symptoms*
- Muscle aches or body aches
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Fatigue, when in combination with other symptoms
- Nasal congestion or runny nose (not due to other known causes, such as allergies) *when in combination with other symptoms*

If staff or students have any of these symptoms, they must get a test for Covid-19 and follow the protocols below before returning to school.

- If a student or staff member has COVID-19-like symptoms, they may return to school after they have tested negative for COVID-19, have improvement in symptoms, and have been without fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications.
- Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 must remain at home at least 14 days and until at least 24 hours have passed with no fever and improvements in other symptoms, without the use of fever reducing medication.
- Staff or students who demonstrate any COVID-19 symptoms should be tested and must follow the protocols outlined in the document.

When a Child is Sick in the School –Isolation

- A child who starts feeling ill or comes in sick, will be isolated at an agreed spot, outside the building, with an adult, until the child can be picked up by a parent.

If a student or staff member is diagnosed with Covid-19

- All parents will be notified immediately when there is a case in the building, and what the exposure is to other students.
- Contact tracing must be done and all close contacts tested. Close contact includes being within less than 6 feet of the person for at least 10-15 minutes.
- Parents in that classroom will also be notified when there has been a secondary exposure.

Updated 9-14-20 If a student is diagnosed with Covid-19, then any members of that class who were ***within 6 ft for over 15 minutes***, are considered "close contacts."

updated 9-14-20 from DESE: Policy of when a close contact may return to school

- Only individuals who are symptomatic themselves or close contacts of those who are confirmed to have COVID need to self-isolate (quarantine). As outlined in DPH guidance, all individuals who are symptomatic should be tested and self-isolate until they receive their test results. This means that if an individual in the student/staff member's household is self-isolating because they are symptomatic, but not confirmed to have COVID, the student/staff member should have limited to no contact with the symptomatic individual to the extent feasible. As a result, the student/staff member should continue to attend school if

they are not symptomatic. More information can be found in the [Protocols for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios](#).

Updated 12-21-20 DPH and CDS recommendations for close contacts

The Department has updated the [Protocols for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios](#) in accordance with recently updated [guidance from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). In accordance with the CDC, **close contacts of individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 must quarantine for the time period listed below:**

- At least 7 days, provided that all of the following are satisfied:
 - They are tested (either polymerase chain reaction (PCR) or antigen test) on day 5 or later from their last exposure to the positive individual and receive a negative test result
 - They have not experienced any symptoms up to this point
 - They conduct active monitoring for symptoms through day 14, and self-isolate if new symptoms develop
 - *While most exposed close contacts do not contract COVID-19, this quarantine option may not identify 5 percent of those who still have the potential to transmit infection after quarantine ends. In other words, 95 percent of individuals who could still transmit infection after quarantine ends would be identified with this strategy.*

- At least 10 days, provided that all of the following are satisfied:
 - They have not experienced any symptoms up to this point
 - They conduct active monitoring for symptoms through day 14 and self-isolate if new symptoms develop
 - No test is necessary under this option for the purposes of exiting quarantine
 - *While most exposed close contacts do not contract COVID-19, this quarantine option may not identify 1 percent of those who still have the potential to transmit infection after quarantine ends. In other words, 99 percent of individuals who could still transmit infection after quarantine ends would be identified with this strategy.*

- At least 14 days after the last exposure to the person who tested positive, if:
 - They have experienced any symptoms during the quarantine period, even if they have a negative COVID-19 test; or
 - They are unable to conduct active monitoring of symptoms
 - *This option provides the maximal risk reduction.*

Also, a reminder: Please remember that if a student or staff member tests positive, only close contacts should quarantine. Other students and educators in the classroom should not be instructed to quarantine unless they are confirmed close contacts. A close contact is defined as only those who have been within 6 feet of distance of the individual for at least 15 minutes while the person was infectious. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's updated "**Protocols for responding to COVID-19 scenarios in school, on the bus, or in community settings**" guidance will be posted at <https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop.html>.

Travel Out of State We ask everyone to follow Massachusetts law and requirements when returning to Massachusetts, and quarantining if necessary.

School Closing

The state allows schools to determine when to close. The state is asking schools to base their decision on the Mass. Covid-19 Weekly Report, with color coding for cases in each community per 100,000. The color rating is red, yellow, green or white. White or green, schools stay open.

Yellow or red, closing is likely. Go to <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-response-reporting# covid-19-weekly-public-health-report> to see the Mass. weekly public health report and the rating on each community for that week. The Village School decision about closing will be based on the average rating of our local towns.

In the event of multiple cases in the school, the Village School would close for 10 days for testing and quarantine of students and families. In that event, all children and teachers must have a negative Covid-19 test to return to school. During this 10 day closure, thorough sanitation of the school premises will be performed. In the event of a large outbreak in the local area, the Village School would work closely with the local Board of Health and follow all advice and protocols.

Learning When School is Closed

If a child is sick and stays home, work will be sent home by the classroom teacher. If a class (or school) is closed for more than one week, the class will switch to project and distance learning, provided by each classroom teacher.

In our preparation for a potential shutdown this year, *we request that every family have a computer* at home that can be used for class Zoom meetings and other classes. Chrome books are good cheap tools for online learning, and sometimes people give them away free. Please let us know if you need help finding a computer. *We also request that each family has a gmail account*, which makes it easier to access class materials online. Gmail accounts are free.

Family Hygiene

Each family can have a plan for children coming home every day, such as changing clothes, washing hands, disinfecting the car, etc. We also expect that each family will continue to wear masks in public and continue with the Massachusetts recommended protocols that have kept Covid-19 at bay in our community. The hygiene care that each family takes, will protect our whole community.

Parent Information about Drop off and Pick up

Parking

Please park in the parent lot that is parallel to the road, park on the diagonal, follow the pattern of other cars. That lot extends all the way up to the white yoga hall. Do not park along the playground edge, because that blocks a line of vision for people moving in the lot, and makes it hard for cars to back up when exiting the lot.

ARRIVAL

Preschool parents

Only Preschool parents use the front main entrance. Preschool parents walk their child down to the preschool cubbies, make sure your child uses the preschool bathroom, washes hands well, and then walk your child to drop off at the preschool playground. **When in the building, all children and adults wear masks.**

K-6th parents

At drop off in the morning, K-6th parents park their cars and can either escort children to the driveway (that runs parallel to the back of the school, where the basketball hoop is) so children can walk to the back entrance of the classrooms, or escort their children to the back entrance of their child's classroom. Please parents, do not enter the classroom or enter the building. The teachers will help younger children unpack, put lunches in cubbies and settle in. If a parent has to enter the building to use the bathroom, please use the playground central entrance.

All adults and children in the building must wear masks.

DEPARTURE

Preschool

At 11:30, Preschool parents will usually pick up their children at the front of the building, and will not need to go inside. If a child is in the Afternoon-Lunch Program, then the parent will first check the preschool playground. If their child is not there, then the parent can walk to the preschool room to find their child.

K-6th

Each class will line up in the playground driveway, 6 ft apart, with teachers. Parents will wait at the junction of the parent lot and the playground driveway. When the teacher sees the parent, the child will be sent to meet the parent. There is no playing in the playground at dismissal time. If parents are late, children will return to the classroom and wait for the parent to knock on the back door of the classroom. Please parents, don't be late!

Thank you very much for following these protocols.

This Plan is Subject to Change

The situation with Covid-19 is changing all the time. Our first priority is children's safety and this plan will change as needed to insure their safety. Whenever the plan changes, we will notify parents.