



2020 - 2021 K-8TH GRADE REOPENING FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Questions taken from staff and family surveys regarding SFS Reopening, answered by members of the Reopening Task Force (see appendix). Please refer to the Town Hall videos, accessible through ParentSquare, for more information. We will no doubt continue to learn more about the virus. These responses will be revised as county and state guidelines are updated.

How will the school make safe and equitable decisions in accordance with updated data and governmental restrictions? How can the school be confident about these decisions?

As Governor of California Gavin Newsom said, "Learning is non-negotiable. And so is the health and safety of the caretakers of our children." The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) strongly advocates that all policy considerations for the coming school year should start with a goal of having students physically present in school and that evidence-based policies for school re-entry should foster the overall health of children, adolescents, staff, and communities.

We will continue to follow state and local guidelines. If we can adhere to the guidelines, our obligation is to work toward being physically present with our students. Planning for reopening must be a partnership between staff and families, with guidance from the Board of Trustees and the Reopening Task Force. To that end, we have integrated the thoughts and needs of our staff and families through surveys, virtual meetings, and personal communication. We are also incorporating the observations and lessons learned during SFS Summer Camp 2020.

Will SFS wait until there is a COVID-19 vaccine or treatment to reopen campus?

No. Since the importance of in-person learning is well-documented, the SFS campus will reopen when it's safe to do so. Though *School on the Go* (SOTG) accomplished much in learning and socialization, it is difficult to replicate the in-person experience, in particular, for young children.

Given the current status of San Francisco County and Governor Newsom's recent mandate, is it safe for SFS to reopen? How is "safe" defined?

The risk of COVID-19 at SFS cannot be eliminated completely, but can be mitigated very effectively. In the Bay Area, there have been relatively few cases of serious illness and death. In adults, this disease has been primarily affecting those who have been unable or unwilling to comply with masking and physical distancing measures. In children, sickness is a result of their home environment, not external contacts.

Our understanding of SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19 has grown considerably since the beginning of the epidemic, which will allow SFS to reopen eventually with greatly diminished risk.

- The risk of transmission can be mitigated significantly with the use of masks, physical distancing, and handwashing.
- Adults, not children, are the key drivers of transmission.
- Reopening depends on local conditions.

As of July 8, 2020, in California, COVID-19 transmission has been low in people under 18 years old (approximately 1% of all cases), and there have been no deaths. Analysis of state data shows that transmission is more likely in less controlled environments outside of school.

SFS reopening decisions are based on scientific data, the ability to adhere to guidelines, and the disposition of its constituents. Safe reopening will also depend on adherence to a social contract (please see below) and honoring the trust between community members.

- Safety relies on the ability to adhere to CDC and SFDPH guidelines, and SFS has the resources necessary to modify its campus and procedures accordingly.
- SFS has the fortune of having infectious disease and public health experts in its community and on the Reopening Task Force who know the school intimately.
- Our community is small enough and committed to each other such that a social contract can be adopted with trust and confidence, and the expectations of risk management within school families can be met.

What is a social contract and how will it work?

A social contract is an agreement among members of a community to cooperate for social benefits, for example, by sacrificing some individual freedom for the maintenance of the community. In our case, staff and families must be united in their observance of universal precautions, even if it requires sacrificing some individual freedom, for the ability of our children to return to campus for in-person learning and the sake of our community.

This requires trust, transparency, and partnership to preserve the wellbeing of all. Our community members have different risks, philosophies, and comfort levels, and we will propose guidelines that will strike a balance that will be comfortable for most if not all families.

Please refer to the Family Handbook COVID-19 Addendum to see SFS's Social Contract.

How will SFS comply with the SFDPH guidelines on reopening campus?

Our daily routines and campus will be modified. Examples include (but are not limited to):

- Daily student and staff screening
- Masks for everyone on campus
- Static cohorts

- Physical distancing between individuals and between cohorts
- Restricting campus visitors
- Handwashing throughout the day
- Enhanced ventilation, hand washing/sanitizer stations, cleaning and sanitizing
- Protocols for sickness

What are the alternatives to on-campus learning that SFS is considering, and how will it decide which approach to use?

During *School on the Go*, we learned that different grades were varyingly suited for distance learning. Since the spring semester, SFS has been considering multiple alternative scenarios to on-campus learning including all online, rotating some grades online and some grades on-campus, and a mix of online and periodic outdoor meetings.

As of July 2020, we are able to accommodate any of these scenarios, but we are constrained by state and local regulations. We also want to acknowledge the concerns and accommodate the needs of the staff and families.

Given the differences in learning, viral transmission, and governmental regulations for different student groups, SFS strives to provide the best education for each grade level as possible. In-person learning depends on variables such as:

- inclusion of SF County on the state's watch list and the possibility of obtaining a waiver
- staff/space constraints and availability of modulars or off-site classrooms
- the possibility of bringing younger students to Gaven St. in a phased manner before bringing the entire student body back.

It is highly likely that individual cohorts or the entire school will need to transition from one mode of learning to another during the school year. These transitions may not be instantaneous as faculty will require some time to make the conversion.

If a cohort or the entire school needs to be quarantined and return to *SOTG*, how will it compare to the spring's program?

We are proud of the curriculum we provided when COVID-19 necessitated an unprecedented, sudden closure of the school. The innovation and determination of the faculty was admirable, and the family support and partnership were vital.

Since then, there have been many lessons learned and improvements planned. *SOTG* in 2020-21 will be more accessible to more students. iPads will be provided for all students from Kindergarten to 8th grade. All students and families (Preschool - 8th grade) will be provided with SFS Google logins to facilitate access to GoogleMeets and Google documents.

SOTG will feature equitable engagement as well as student voice and agency. The goals for the updated curriculum include increased accountability for students, consistent messaging, hands-on or project-based learning, group discussions, collaborative projects, science labs, time allotted for outdoor activities, and tutoring.

Why aren't daily temperature checks included in the health screening for everyone?

Since COVID-19 illness is so frequently asymptomatic, temperature checks are an unreliable way of screening for infection. Temperature checks are not required by the SFDPH, CDPH, or CDC.

How is COVID-19 transmitted in children and/or adolescents?

Since March 2020, we have learned that children age 10 and younger have fewer ACE2 nasal receptors that bind SARS-CoV-2. As a result, children are less frequently infected and experience less severe illness.

When children get COVID-19, it is most often from adults, often within their household contacts. They are not major sources of transmission to each other or adults. As adults, staff are more likely to transmit to each other.

Though children don't get as ill from this coronavirus, can they be carriers of the virus? Are there long-term complications of having COVID-19?

Studies have shown that 90% of children experience mild or moderate symptoms, and 4% were asymptomatic. Fewer than 1% require intensive care.

In studies of household transmission, children are the primary source of infection less than 10% of the time. They are more likely to get the virus from the adults within their household. Nonetheless, they can be carriers of the virus, and therefore, masking is extremely important. If a student lives with a highly vulnerable adult (i.e., older than 80 years or with significant respiratory disease), consider masking at home or having the student stay at home.

The multisystem inflammatory disorder, seen in children after severe infections, occurs in settings of high exposure to the virus and has not been seen since the widespread use of masks. There is no evidence that there are any long-term effects on children after COVID-19 infection.

Is it possible for students, especially the youngest, to wear masks all day?

Yes. Worldwide experience and our own summer camp have shown they can be very compliant. Masks will not be worn during lunch or naps.

What types of masks are effective?

Simple, comfortable cotton masks are recommended. Please see the [CDC guidelines on masks](#) for more information.

What is a “cohort”? How will they be determined, and how often can cohorts be changed?

Students and teachers will be grouped in cohorts depending on the size of the class, available staff, and room size (allowing more than 6 ft distance for all staff/students). This will vary by grade. Optimally, cohorts should remain stable for as long as possible (e.g., an entire semester) but may be adjusted when necessary. The details for each grade have not been finalized and are dependent on available faculty and space as well as the latest iteration of state and county regulations.

In addition to keeping the composition of cohorts stable, each cohort will have designated indoor and outdoor spaces, and they will limit contact with other cohorts.

How should protocols be adapted to protect middle school children since they are more susceptible?

Everyone, including middle school students, should use universal precautions (masks, physical distancing, and handwashing), the best modes of protection against transmission.

What will the schedule look like?

At present, we intend to follow the [2020-2021 school calendar](#) as previously published with the exception of the first day of school. We are planning a phased start on August 24 with all preschoolers on campus by August 26.

A significant change this year, regardless of COVID-19 health and safety measures, is the Middle School shift to a later start and end time, 8:45 am - 3:45 pm.

When we are able to return to campus, the daily schedule will be created to facilitate maximal distancing while sharing space (e.g., entrances, playgrounds, picnic tables) between cohorts. Specific grade-level drop-off times will be staggered by 10-15 minutes, but should approximate the following:

Division	School Day	Drop Off - Before School	Pick Up - After School
Preschool			
3s	9:15 am - 2:45 pm	9:00 - 9:15 am	2:45 - 3:00 pm
4s	9:00 am - 2:30 pm	8:45 - 9:00 am	2:30 - 2.45 pm
K – 5 th Grade	8:30 am - 3:15 pm	8:00 - 8:25 am	3:15 - 3:30 pm
6 th – 8 th Grade	8:45 am - 3:45 pm	8:15 - 8:40 am	3:45 - 4:00 pm

The weekly schedule may combine days on campus with days online (e.g., Distance Learning Fridays).

Is it safe for faculty to travel between cohorts?

Yes. Faculty who teach multiple cohorts will be protected by masking, physical distance, and handwashing. Physical distancing will be most important for staff (especially faculty who teach more than one cohort). The number of staff who come into contact with each cohort will be limited. Specialists will be gradually phased in, beginning with remote instruction. Log sheets will be kept for each classroom to record all staff who come into contact with a cohort to facilitate contact tracing should it become necessary.

How will lunch be served/eaten?

Students will wash their hands before and after lunch. Whenever possible, lunch will be served outdoors with students spaced 6 ft apart. Kindergarteners - 5th graders will be served in individual bento-style boxes. Students will bring their own utensils and a water bottle to be taken home and washed each day.

How will you assure proper ventilation?

The use of classroom and outdoor space will be determined as equitably as possible. While inside the building, doors and windows will be open whenever feasible to permit maximal natural ventilation. Outside air rates are being tested for newer classrooms, and ventilation (hospital-grade MERV 18 filtration) will be provided for older classrooms that previously relied on operable windows.

Will staff undergo routine/surveillance testing for COVID-19? Students?

School staff are essential workers, and include teachers, specialists, extended day instructors, administrators, kitchen staff, maintenance team, and any other employees who may have contact with students or other staff. All staff returning to campus will be tested ahead of time. Our aim is to have all staff tested regularly, as testing capacity permits and as practicable. On an ongoing basis, unless regulations dictate otherwise, staff will be tested every two months.

What happens if a staff or student tests positive? What about a household member?

In partnership with the SFDPH, the school community will be notified if a staff member or student tests positive for COVID-19. All staff/students within the cohort should undergo testing and isolate for 10 days OR quarantine for 14 days. During the isolation period, students will attend *SOTG*.

If a household member of a staff/student tests positive, that staff/student will stay home and quarantine for 14 days. The School will notify the student/staff's cohort who will continue to attend school on campus.

Per the [SFDPH Home Isolation and Quarantine Guidelines](#) and the [California DPH Guidelines on School ReOpening](#):

If a staff or student has COVID-19 symptoms			
	STAFF	STUDENT	HOUSEHOLD/ CLOSE CONTACT
Symptomatic Individual Steps	Do not come to campus; Notify the school; Isolate for 10 days OR Get tested and isolate at home while awaiting results <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If results are positive, see steps below for positive individual • If results are negative, isolate at home until you feel better. Once 24 hours have passed without fever (without taking fever reducing medication), you may return to campus 		
If a staff, student or household/close contact tests positive for COVID-19			
	STAFF	STUDENT	HOUSEHOLD/ CLOSE CONTACT
Positive Individual Steps	Notify the school; <u>Isolate</u> at home until recovered <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If symptomatic, 24 hours without fever (without taking fever reducing medication) and other symptoms have improved, and at least 10 days from initial symptoms • If asymptomatic, then 10 days from test date 		Notify the school; <u>Quarantine</u> at home for 14 days from exposure to positive household or close contact individual(s) to see if you develop symptoms and prevent passing onto anyone else
School Notification	School Community & SFDPH		Cohort(s)
School Actions	Cohort should <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarantine for 14 days • Get tested 		Cohort continues to attend school on campus
	SOTG and Substitute Teacher if necessary	SOTG	If staff, then substitute teacher If student, then remote learning

When would it be necessary to close the entire school?

Individual school closure may be appropriate when there are multiple cases in multiple cohorts at a school or when at least 5 percent of the total number of teachers/student/staff are cases within a 14-day period. The SFDPH may also determine school closure is warranted for other reasons, including results from public health investigation or other local epidemiological data.

Where should one get tested?

For fastest follow up care, we recommend being tested by your health insurance provider. Testing information is also available at <https://sf.gov/find-out-how-get-tested-coronavirus>

Will the SFS community be notified when there is a COVID-19 case at school?

In public health, the patient's privacy is a mandate. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, the identity of the person with COVID-19 will not be shared. However, the School will notify the community if there is a confirmed case on campus.

How will SFS maintain its unique culture during the COVID-19 epidemic? With restrictions in student and adult interactions, how will SFS preserve its traditions, foster community, and involve its parents/guardians?

We know that community is essential. Without a doubt, it will look and feel different. We will create opportunities and develop innovative ways to build and keep connections. There will be continued partnerships between families and the school facilitated by the Family Association. Last spring, SFS made efforts to preserve its most cherished traditions and ceremonies -- from the stone ceremonies in kindergarten to the 8th grade graduation ceremony to mud pies -- and we will continue to do so in the coming year.

Through it all, we will prioritize empathy, move forward with compassion, know that individuals and families will make decisions for their own wellness but do as much as we can to preserve the community that makes SFS unique.

How do we ensure students can continue to thrive both academically and socially, given the restrictions on interactions, sharing of instructional materials and shared campus spaces?

The best chance our students have to thrive is on campus and in person when possible. The most recent guidance allows our youngest students to be masked, within a cohort, and to work more closely than 6 ft for more collaborative learning. Additionally, the use of technology, whether on campus or online, can contribute to an increase in collaboration and student voice.

Each student will have their own set of frequently used items. Some materials will be shared within a cohort. The guidelines permit material sharing within a masked cohort. Teachers will create hygienic systems for sharing between cohorts and /or purchase additional materials as needed. There will be cleaning daily or between uses.

Is public transportation safe?

BART and MUNI have made masking and physical distancing mandatory.

What will the policy on flights/travel outside of the Bay Area be?

We urge SFS staff and families to avoid higher-risk travel outside the Bay Area while you are working/your student is learning on campus or 14 days before a scheduled return to campus. Higher-risk travel includes situations involving interactions within 6 ft of individuals outside of their household if they or those around them are not wearing masks at all times, especially indoors or in large groups (e.g., air travel). If higher-risk travel is unavoidable, please inform the school and, upon return to the Bay Area, traveler(s) should undergo a 14-day quarantine per [CDC](#) and [SFDPH](#) recommendations.

Will SFS use any off-label interventions to mitigate viral spread?

The School will not adopt therapies (e.g., Betadine gargle) unless approved or recommended by the CDC or SFDPH.

Are faculty members part of the Reopening Task Force?

While the initial work of the school management during the onset of the COVID-19 epidemic was done by the Emergency Preparedness Team and then expanded to include the Reopening Task Force over the summer, the current reopening planning team now includes this year's faculty board members. They are Dimitri Barton '08 (Spanish teacher), James Harding (music teacher), and Michelle Yi-Martin (humanities teacher and alumni parent).

APPENDIX: REOPENING TASK FORCE

HEALTH & SAFETY

- Ellen Chen, MD, SFS Parent and Ambulatory Care Director of Population Health and Quality, SF Health Network, SF Department of Public Health
- Monica Gandhi, MD MPH, SFS Parent, Professor of Medicine and Associate Division Chief of the Division of HIV, Infectious Diseases, and Global Medicine at UCSF/ San Francisco General Hospital, Director of the UCSF Center for AIDS Research, and the Medical director of the HIV Clinic at SFGH
- Darpun Sachdev, MD, SFS Parent and Lead for COVID-19 SFDPH Contact Tracing, Clinical Prevention Specialist, Disease Prevention and Control, SF Department of Public Health
- Paul McGrath, SFS Parent and PE (Mechanical Engineering), MYERS+ ENGINEERS
- Terri Hamer, Chief Financial and Operational Officer
- Emmanuel Legorreta, Facilities Manager

CURRICULUM & SCHEDULING

- Carly Reiter, Director of Design, Engineering, and Technology
- Nancy Nagramada, Head of Upper School
- Kate McElvaney, Head of Lower School
- Stewart Dorsey, Director of Admissions

SITE & FACILITIES

- William Duff, SFS Parent, Trustee, and Site Committee Chair; Founder and Managing Principal, William Duff Architects
- Keith Wolff, SFS Parent, Trustee, and Site Committee Member; President, Wolff Urban Development
- Liza PannoZZo, SFS Alumni Parent; Construction Manager
- Terri Hamer, Chief Financial and Operational Officer
- Carly Reiter, Director of Design, Engineering, and Technology
- Emmanuel Legorreta, Facilities Manager

FACULTY TRUSTEES

- Dimitri Barton '08, Spanish Teacher
- James Harding, Music Teacher
- Michelle Yi-Martin, Humanities Teacher and Alumni Parent