

Parents/Guardians and Sky Islanders,

In three weeks, on August 17, we will start the Fall 2020 semester remotely. Being together still puts us at high risk of contracting the coronavirus. Teachers and students and their families all deserve to be safe at their places of work, so it is imperative that we have a real plan in place prior to reopening school. That plan is outlined below. A more detailed and comprehensive set of policies and procedures will follow.

I know that there may be disappointment among our students and families, and we sincerely appreciate your continued support during this difficult time. The decision to reopen remotely has not been an easy one. Health and safety continue to be our primary concern. For the protection of each of us right now, we are called on to shift how we come together.

Students who do not have an environment at home that is conducive to taking remote classes will be allowed to enter the school during class times each day to access the educational program. This follows state law.

- Students physically at school will be supervised but will not receive additional in-person instruction.
- Support services will be provided to students as required by an IEP or 504 Plan.
- Laptop computers will be provided so that each student can access the remote instruction.
- Desks will be set up safely distanced in the Multipurpose Room, colloquially known as the Cafegymatorium.
- Bathrooms are available, and students should bring their own lunch and snacks.
- Students will not be allowed to interact in-person with any teachers present, and office staff will be available only for emergencies during the day.
- Student phones, according to the normal school rule, will not be allowed into the classroom.

All students who enter school premises to access the curriculum will be required to have their temperature read and to wear a mask. Students who have an elevated temperature will be required to quarantine, and a parent will have to immediately come and pick up their student. Students who show any virus symptoms should not come to school. If already at school, they will be quarantined and a parent will be required to pick them up.

The first week, starting August 17, will follow a schedule of early release each day at 12:30 p.m., and will provide an orientation to the program, an opportunity to choose electives, and a run-through of the class schedule on Thursday and Friday. A regular full-day schedule of classes will begin starting Monday, August 24.

July 27, 2020

We have developed a state-approved distance teaching and learning plan that will ensure our teachers provide Sky Islanders with a valuable education during the precautionary stay-at-home.

Improvements to the remote instruction for the fall reopening include:

- Classes for all students will be provided by the teachers remotely from their classrooms. They will create, as much as possible, a classroom environment that reflects a normal school day.
- Classes will follow a regular school day, and students will be required to be 'in class' remotely during their class times.
- Participation will be enhanced with the use of the Microsoft Teams platform, which allows everyone in the class to ask questions and engage in group conversations.
- Classes will 'meet' in the block schedule, Monday/Thursday and Tuesday/Friday. Wednesday classes will follow the alternating week schedule and will provide class time for tutoring and special instruction, group work, and review sessions.

Sky Islands will reopen for in-person teaching when the virus is under control. The World Health Organization has advised:

Deciding to close, partially close or reopen schools should be guided by a risk-based approach to maximize the educational and health benefit for students, teachers, staff, and the wider community, and help prevent a new outbreak of COVID-19 in the community. (source [WHO website](#))

As much as we all want to be back in school together, we are taking that advice and guiding our in-person reopening according to the science-based approach outlined by the World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control. There is no perfect way to reopen schools during a pandemic. Even when a location has COVID-19 under control, there's no guarantee that schools can reopen safely right away.

New forecasts show the US will likely report more COVID-19 deaths in the next 4 weeks than in the previous 4 weeks. According to the University of Arizona's Zuckerman College of Public Health, while the curve does seem to be flattening out, conditions are much worse than they were a month ago or in mid-May.

Thank you and stay safe.

*Shari*

*Dr Shari Popen*

Director, Sky Islands School

July 27, 2020