

Dear Parents and Staff:

We are excited that the school year is about to start in a few weeks (First day of school is September 1 in NJ and September 2 in NYC)! In the meantime, we hope that everyone is enjoying the remaining days of summer. We recently sent everyone a detailed policy document on COVID-19 with specifics about quarantine procedures. But we wish to remind and update you on a few important points.

Our plan to be fully open on-site for all students five days per week next month has not changed. Being on-site is the best educational experience for our children and we were able to balance this with the demands of the pandemic successfully last year with minimal COVID-19 issues. Our recent 6-week summer camp experience (in both NJ and NY) also gives us reason for optimism. Despite having a lot of change session to session in which children attended our camp, a record-breaking number of students and the presence of many new students during a time that the Delta variant was present in the broader community, we had no COVID-19 cases that we are aware of and no class quarantines in either school.

It is very difficult, at this time, to predict how the Delta variant will affect our plans this school year and we understand that parents are apprehensive about this. We are committed to remaining flexible in our approach and supporting our staff and families as best we can as circumstances change. As always, if families have particular questions or concerns on this subject please reach out to either Bill Hicks (bhicks@hwis.org) or Nely Miguel (nmiguel@hwis.org).

Important reminders:

1. A negative PCR test is required for unvaccinated children to be on-site next month. It should be done shortly before school starts- about 5 days before would be a good target date so that the test is recent but also allows enough time to get the results. Please email the results to either covidresultsnj@hwis.org or covidresultsny@hwis.org.
2. Our daily COVID-19 screening questionnaire will be emailed to all families. Completion of this task is required for your child to be admitted to the school.
3. Mask wearing is required of all students and staff in the school including pre-school students as it was last year and on buses.
4. If you are traveling out of the local area this month (local area includes any states contiguous to the state in which the school is located), our policy is to follow CDC recommendations and require the following for unvaccinated children:
 - a. Get a PCR test 1-3 days before your trip
 - b. Get a PCR test 3-5 days after your return
 - c. Quarantine for 7 days after your return
5. If a child tests positive or develops symptoms, the child must remain in quarantine for 10 days from the test date or date symptoms first appeared whichever is earlier.

6. Families must notify the school if anyone in the family develops symptoms or tests positive. In close contact situations children may have to quarantine even if they test negative and are asymptomatic. The school will provide guidance depending on the individual circumstances.

Other Policies

Vaccinations

As we announced last spring, vaccinations are not mandatory for school staff and practically all of our employees are fully vaccinated anyway. We also stated that we would take our guidance from the local health departments regarding children's vaccines when available. If not mandated by the authorities, the school would not mandate them either at this time. We reserve the right to change these policies depending on the circumstances, however.

Testing policy after the first day of school

We have not finalized our policy and it will be announced separately. Last year we required this on a limited basis only after all holiday breaks during the school year which was satisfactory.

Social distancing and masking

Social distancing between children will be 3 feet with masks on. Between children and adults, the requirement is to social distance 6 feet. In addition, masks are required to be worn outdoors unless the supervising adult allows a "mask break" or if heat and humid conditions cause mask wearing to interfere with the child's breathing. Anytime masks are not worn outside, 6 feet social distancing is required.

Parents and other Visitors

For the safety of all school occupants, parents and other visitors to the school will be kept to the absolute minimum. Any visitor must undergo our screening procedures and either be vaccinated or present a negative PCR test. If this is not possible in emergency situations, the individual will be kept isolated from the rest of the school as much as possible and proper disinfection procedures will take place.

With the excellent cooperation we got from families last year we were able to keep the school open with minimal disruption, no re-transmission of the virus of the few cases we did have and no serious illness or hospitalizations. So, we thank parents in advance for their cooperation this year during what we hope will be the last phase of the pandemic.

HudsonWay Immersion School