

Dear MMS Parents,

On Wednesday night, we held a town hall that detailed plans for reopening, specifically focusing on daily screenings, testing and quarantining before school begins, PPE, and several other topics. You can find the recording from Wednesday night here, and the powerpoint here. This presentation reflects our thinking and public policies at the moment—but as is our constant refrain, we are updating them to incorporate new research, government regulations, etc.

Starting School on September 9

I'd like to return to two subjects from the Town Hall. The first is our school start date, which I announced will be September 9. Our goal has always been to safely return to our school building as quickly as possible. Although we would have liked to welcome back students on August 24—and told our faculty and staff to plan their summers around this scenario—it has become clear in recent weeks that we cannot. There are several factors. Just last week, we submitted our School Reopening Plan to the NYS Department of Health, and today it is due to the NYS Department of Education. These offices need time to review the multitude of documents from across the state. It's unclear when their response will come, however, New York City Public Schools will start in early September so it's reasonable to assume we will receive any governmental feedback by then. In the coming weeks, our entire building will also be undergoing significant changes. As we announced in last month's town hall, *this year* we are moving away from a multi-age classroom model, repurposing different classrooms, and changing the floors of the Lower School and Upper School. At that time, we were still wrapping our minds around the complexities of major changes to 75 percent of classrooms: moving materials, moving furniture, ordering new furniture, what gets moved first, etc. Now, we recognize more time is of the essence to complete these changes, in addition to updating the HVAC system for optimal air circulation/replacement.

Remote Learning

The second town hall topic I'd like to revisit is the option of remote learning. The presentation was geared toward all-school policies. As divisional leaders have begun conversations with families about this coming year, we are understanding the breadth of factors families are contending with in determining whether they can return safely to MMS. Remote learning is an option for families. As you can imagine, the remote learning experience will look different in each division, since each age group has different developmental needs and uses different tools and approaches, though we will be offering synchronous and asynchronous experiences for all children. Next week, Director of Enrollment Marielle Lopez in partnership with each academic leader—Karina Cruz in Children's House, Jody Quam in the Lower School, and Anna Martucci in the Upper School—will host a virtual event to discuss their remote program and answer other questions. Those dates are August 13 (Children's House), August 11 (Lower School), August 12 (Upper School) from 7:30-8:15 pm.

School Reopening Plan

We would like to share with you now the school's reopening plan. This extensive document combines rules and regulations from the CDC, the New York State Department of Education, the New York State Department of Health, the NYC Department of Education, as well as policies developed by our Health Advisory Committee. We encourage you to familiarize yourselves with all the policies before the start of school. As new public policies are announced or if the Health Advisory Committee determines new rules are necessary, this document will change. We will keep you abreast of any adjustments and will post the reopening plan on the Covid-19 Response page in the coming days.

Mandatory Survey on Lunch, AM/PM Care

All parents should fill out the following survey (due Sunday, August 9) on before school care, after school care, and/or a school lunch program. Once we have a sense of the demand in the community, we will let you know what options we are able to provide in the 2020-21 academic year. Our intention is to share this information by mid August. The Health Advisory Committee will advise the administration on solutions that safely support families with their pre/post-school child care needs.

Survey on Transportation Solutions

If you are interested in carpooling, ride-sharing, or bussing options, please fill out the following survey by Friday, August 14. This option will be paid for and coordinated by parents, though MMS is supporting the initiative with research of potential transportation providers. If you'd like to participate, please consider becoming a coordinator for your area. Again, the Health Advisory will guide policy on transportation alternatives.

Have a wonderful weekend.

Sincerely,
Racheal Adriko
Head of School