



OUR COVID-19 FAQs

The following questions are answered below:

- Is Riverside required to meet all the state mandates?
- What does drop off look like?
- How do classes in elementary school look?
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Is Riverside required to meet all the state mandates?

Yes, we are required to follow all of them. Our status as an independent school does not give us any more leeway on these mandates than restaurants or movie theaters have with governor's mandates. Fortunately for us, some of the more onerous mandates do not apply to us because we do not provide bussing or have a cafeteria. Our decision has been to meet all requirements at minimum, and exceed them where it makes sense to us.

What does drop off look like?

At each dropoff spot will be a teacher or volunteer with an infrared thermometer. Once temperature is taken, students will proceed directly to their classrooms.

How do classes in elementary school look?

- Elementary students are spaced at least 3' apart in their classrooms. You may see some plexiglass shields in some settings.
- Students generally have their own learning tools and will not share materials.
- PE will be outside.

How do classes in middle school look?

- 6th graders are spaced at 3', and 7th-8th graders are spaced at 6'.
- For us to be able to maintain appropriate spacing, we have put each grade into a homeroom and they spend most of the day in that designated room, which has a designated bathroom. Teachers rotate in through the day.
- Students will have their own learning tools and will not share materials.
- PE will be outside.

What if I don't feel safe sending my child back to school?

Please share your concerns with us. We may be able to address them. It helps us to know what people are thinking about.

We are ready to offer a parallel synchronous curriculum for remote learners through the use of online platforms, web and document cams, etc. *The intention of this accommodation is to support families with vulnerable individuals in the home or with safety concerns related to COVID.*

Under what conditions will you ask that my child stay home, and how will they keep up with school work?

- **Symptoms:** we are following the [Vermont algorithm](#) with one exception: we are asking students to stay home if they have been exposed to a **suspected** COVID case (the linked document says **known**). What that means in practice is this:
 - If **anyone** in the household has any of the symptoms (cough, fever, shortness of breath, chills, fatigue, muscle pain or body aches, headache, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, congestion or runny nose, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea) we ask you to keep **all** children home and call a provider to see if a test is warranted.
 - If a test is ordered, everyone stays home until results come in. If the result is negative, anyone without symptoms may return immediately and anyone that has had symptoms may return when those symptoms improve (plus 24-hours fever free with no medications).
 - If no test is ordered, anyone without symptoms may return immediately and anyone that has had symptoms may return when those symptoms improve (plus 24-hours fever free with no medications).
- **Travel:**
 - If anyone in the family has traveled, we ask you to follow all quarantine and testing guidelines. [The Vermont Department of Health website](#) has detailed explanations of all the required

procedures, including guidelines for how to host a traveller in your home.

How have you adapted the buildings to meet state requirements?

- There are hand sanitizing stations at each entrance and additional handwashing stations.
- There are more signs around campus explaining what we are doing.
- We limit the capacity of common rooms.
- Restrooms are designated for each pod of students.
- Windows are open as often as possible to increase airflow.
- Spaces are being used differently. For example, the 5th grade room is now the art room, the granary is the computer lab, the 4th grade class is in the yurt, and middle school classes may be in the library, kitchen, or assembly space. Some classrooms will not be used because they do not provide adequate space or ventilation.
- We are running the air handlers in the barn at all times and our heater in the main house has been retrofitted to work as an air handler. We have also added an upgraded filtration system with UV light to the house air handler.
- Every classroom has a box fan in one window to vent air when temperatures allow.
- Many classrooms have air purifiers in them.
- There are clear plastic barriers where required.

What about masks?

- All teachers and students are required by state mandate to wear masks at all times unless eating or drinking.
 - When we resume outdoor learning, students may unmask outside- at teacher's direction- when they are seated an appropriate distance from their peers.
- We are assuming most students will have personal masks, but if they don't we will provide masks. We will also have single-use masks available for students who lose or forget theirs.

What are pods and how does that affect a student's day?

According to state guidelines, Students should be kept in groups of 25 or less. Because of our small class sizes, that allows us to take advantage of larger groupings safely and use those mixed age groups to work on building our supportive community. In some cases two grades/classes will make up a pod. Those pods will use the same restrooms and their teachers may intentionally plan learning activities together or may exchange small groups in order to meet learning needs. Students may have mixed group PE outside and masked.

How will you foster the cross-grade interactions that are such a part of Riverside?

For middle schoolers, there are combined groupings in PE when outdoors and masked. We still have assemblies for grades 6-8, but they are now online. Elementary classes are still in pods made up of two grade-levels, so they may have lunch, PE, and recess together. Elementary has also started having assemblies led by fifth graders using Google Meet.

What happens if someone gets exposed or if there is an illness in the community?

- In none of these scenarios will we share anyone's identity or medical conditions with our community.
- We will follow [these state guidelines](#) when we react to a positive case on campus (they are on page 19 of the linked document). That will involve contact tracing, quarantine, and immediately going remote (either by pod or as a whole school, depending on what best practices suggest).

What about cleaning at Riverside?

We are required to sanitize our facility three times a day (before, during, and after the school day). One of these cleanings happen before the school day, and another happens after. Twice during the school day, students and teachers will clean their own spaces and common areas and sanitize with a 70% alcohol solution spray (70% alcohol: 30% water), which is the same composition as hand sanitizer.

What is Riverside's policy on multi-household gatherings?

These guidelines are changing rapidly as vaccines are increasingly becoming available. Currently, the state allows two unvaccinated people or households to gather at a time, following current masking and spacing guidelines.

What are the guidelines be for families' travel?

We follow the general state guidelines on that, which continue to evolve. The current policy is somewhat complicated and is explained more fully at the link below. [Here is the Link to Vermont's statewide travel policy.](#)

How does vaccination status affect all of these guidelines?

The governor is now allowing fully vaccinated people to visit other vaccinated people without masking or spacing. Vaccinated individuals are also allowed to gather with unvaccinated households unmasked so long as there are no high-risk individuals present. If gathering with multiple households or with high-risk individuals, masking and spacing considerations should be taken. Vaccinated individuals do not have to quarantine after travel or exposure so long as they are symptom-free.

Will there be a Spring Field Trip?

It seems unlikely we'd be able to cross state lines; carpool or sleep in groups representing mixed households; or use parent chaperones according to state guidelines. So, we will not be having traditional spring field trips. Instead we are working on day trip plans connected to learning goals, by pod/grade. So, for instance: 8th grade would probably have two day trips and one day doing a special extended project on campus. All three days would have regular drop-off and pick-up times.

What if I still need more clarity?

You can always email Roy at roy.starling@theriversideschool.org