

September 4, 2020

Dear Paul Cuffee School Families:

On behalf of the School's teachers, administrators and support staff I would like to welcome you to the 2020-2021 school year! For the past eight weeks we have all been wondering what will happen for the start of school, and on Monday Governor Raimondo announced full in-person reopening for the State of Rhode Island, with the exception of Providence and Central Falls, which will reopen under the partial in-person model. The purpose of this letter is to explain the partial in-person model for each of our schools.

As we enter this school year, we all need to remember that these are unprecedented circumstances. Compassion and teamwork will get us through these continuously changing times. Please remember we are committed to safety, social-emotional wellbeing, and academic success. We ask that you continue to show us the grace and understanding you've demonstrated in the past few weeks as we've worked to develop a model that attempts to meet everyone's needs.

Lower School School hours 8:00-2:00, subject to change

Students at the lower school who have chosen in-person learning will come to school every day, except for the days listed in the calendar as distance learning days, and students who have chosen distance learning will learn from home every day for the first trimester, which ends December 15. All in-person classes will be organized by small, separate classes where students will remain in classrooms for the day, except for outdoor learning and recess. **The school day for in-person learning will end at 1:00 each day for the first two weeks of school.** Students in distance learning will have an assigned teacher and will participate in lessons facilitated by their teachers according to a set schedule which we will send to you prior to the first day of school. Monday, Sept. 21 is a distance learning day for all students.

Chromebook distribution for lower school students will take place at the lower school between the hours of 8:00am and 4:00pm on Thursday, Sept. 10. Students who have selected distance learning **MUST** pick up a school-issued chromebook as well as other materials prepared by the teachers on this day. Students who are learning in person will not receive a chromebook on this day. They will receive all of their materials in person on the first day of school, September 14.

Middle School School hours 9:20-3:20 subject to change

All in-person classes at the middle school will be organized by small, separate classes where students will remain in classrooms for the day, except for outdoor learning and recess. Students at the middle school who have chosen in-person learning will attend school in-person on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. **On Wednesdays, all middle school students will be in distance learning. This schedule will be in operation for the "partial in-person" period of time but may also continue for the full in-person phase.**

- On Monday, Sept. 14 only sixth-grade students who selected in-person learning will attend school in-person. Sixth-graders who opted into distance learning will also begin via Google Meets on this day.
- On Tuesday, Sept. 15 only sixth and seventh graders who selected in-person learning will attend school in-person. Seventh-graders who opted into distance learning will also begin via Google Meets on this day.
- On Wednesday, Sept. 16 all sixth and seventh graders will be in distance learning.
- Thursday, Sept. 17 sixth, seventh, and eighth-graders who selected in-person learning will attend school in-person. Eighth-graders who opted into distance learning will also begin via Google Meets on this day.
- Friday, Sept. 18 will be an in-person day for all grades at the middle school who opted into in-person learning.
- The following week (Monday, Sept. 21, Tuesday, Sept. 22, Thursday, Sept. 24, and Friday, Sept. 25) are in-person days for all students who selected in-person learning, and Wednesday, Sept. 23 is a distance learning day for all middle school students.

Students in distance learning will have an assigned advisor teacher and will participate in lessons facilitated by their teachers according to a set schedule which we will send to you prior to the first day of school.

Upper School

School hours: 9:15-2:15 the first two weeks, 9:15-3:20 for 9th, 10th, AP students, and students in need of additional support starting Sept. 28, 2020

Students at the upper school who have chosen in-person learning will come to school two or three times a week. **During the first two weeks of school**, students will report as follows: Grade 9 Monday and Thursday;
Grade 10 Wednesday;
Grade 11 Tuesday;
Grade 12 Friday.

Starting on Sept. 28, students will report to school on the following days:

Grade 9 Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday;
Grade 10 Monday, Wednesday and Friday;
Grade 11 Tuesday and Thursday;
Grade 12 Wednesday and Friday.

Monday, Sept. 21 is a distance learning day for all students.

Students in distance learning will receive information directly from the upper school.

Transportation

The bus routes are not yet finalized, but it looks like every student who lives outside of the walking distances (1.0 miles at lower school and 1.5 miles at middle school) and who identified that they will require a bus will be eligible for transportation. We expect to send the bus routes home the week of September 7. Students must wear face masks while on the bus and there will be assigned seating.

Indoor air exchange

The State of Rhode Island released facilities guidelines for school last week and we have visited each classroom to ensure proper ventilation and airflow, which is a mitigating factor to prevent the spread of COVID-19. We have made major facility upgrades at each of our schools to improve the airflow in our buildings so that a greater exchange of fresh air is supplied to every classroom. Balometer testing has been conducted at the lower school and is scheduled for next week at the upper school and those reports will be made available. Since there is not an HVAC system at the middle school, we will be opening windows and classroom doors, and we have installed air exhausts at either end of the hallways on both floors.

Face masks

Face masks are required by all who enter the buildings and on school buses, with the exception of those who have a documented medical exemption. Face masks must cover the nose and mouth at all times. Face shields, masks with air ventilation, and neck socks/gaiters are not allowed. The School will provide face masks for anyone who needs it, but students should bring their face masks every day. Cloth face masks are the easiest to supply because they can be washed easily. It should be tight, yet comfortable. It should be kept clean. It should be washed every day, exchanged for a new mask if visibly soiled. It should not be lent or borrowed. It should be kept in good condition. If it's damaged, you should get a new one. Masks should always be worn in shared spaces. Only remove masks when you are alone and in a private space, or outdoors distant from others. Students should have had plenty of time over the summer to get used to wearing masks, but students who have not worn masks should get in the habit of doing so before school begins. Face masks can fog up glasses so use a nose bridge or anti-fogging product.

Responding to COVID-19

The best strategies to reduce the spread of illness in schools are wearing masks properly, distancing from others, and maintaining good air exchange in classrooms. Combined with washing hands frequently and disinfecting surfaces frequently we can be sure to have a safe school opening. Parents must do their part to keep children home when sick or symptomatic, including cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, new loss of taste or smell, fever, chills, muscle or body aches, headache, sore throat, fatigue, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea. Parents who are called to pick up their children because they are sick or symptomatic must come to get their children within one hour of being called. All parents must complete a COVID-19 testing consent form and insurance information by Sept. 25. That link can be found here: <https://health.ri.gov/forms/surveys/consent/> and forms will be sent home next week.

Parents will be required to complete a self-attestation form before school every day for each child. We'll be using a new phone app called Pik My Kid which will make completing this form easy for you. Any student who presents at school, or on the daily attestation form a parent completes, as having symptoms that are considered to be a probable case, will need to have a COVID test completed. A student with a negative test, will be able to return to school once their symptoms have improved, which includes being 24 hours fever free without the use of fever reducing medications. A form will need to be completed by the parent documenting the testing and the return to baseline symptoms. A student who tests positive will be able to return to school after they have completed the necessary isolation period determined by the RI Department of Health. The school will be working directly with the RI Department of Health to assist with contact tracing and determine any necessary notification of other families within the school about a positive case.

This is all a lot of information, and I want to be available to you for questions and concerns. If I can address your concerns then I will, and if not, I will put you in touch with a school representative who can. Just email me at reopening@paulcuffee.org.

We're all really looking forward to school opening, although very different than before. Best wishes to you all as we keep calm, stay safe, and open school.

Yours truly,
Chris Haskins