

Dear Doane Stuart Community,

As we begin a new school year, we will continue to adhere to the guiding principles of health and safety as well as our mission-driven approach to maintain an optimal learning environment for all our constituent groups while following the recommendations from the CDC, the State of New York, and Rensselaer County. Accordingly, we will adjust some protocols to achieve a more normal social and academic environment. With that said, all protocols are subject to change as new guidance and directives are received from the county, state, and the CDC.

We believe being in-person in the classroom is critical to our students' success. Our protocols are designed to keep the community safe and to limit the need for frequent quarantining from exposures. Our reopening protocols are as follows:

### **Masks**

Wearing masks will be a personal preference for all students, faculty, staff, visitors, and vendors inside of the building. We will prioritize the use of outdoor spaces for meals, meetings, and academic classes, as weather permits. There will be designated "mask only" areas for students to congregate in comfort and safety. Furthermore, masks are not recommended for the following:

- Activities Outdoors
- Meals/Snacks
- During PE and recess (outdoors)
- During athletic practice and competition (outdoors)
- When class is held outdoors

### **Lunch Service**

Students will be instructed to wash their hands prior to lunch. Lower and Middle School students will eat in the Commons. Upper School students may eat in the Commons or outside but eating in the hallways/lounges is no longer acceptable. Upper School students are encouraged to eat outside, weather permitting. The Juice Factory will continue to serve as our catering partner. Menus will be sent monthly (rather than weekly).

### **Athletics**

The Athletic program will return to normal. Spectators will be permitted, and mask use is personal preference. Following all Physical Education classes students will wash their hands.

## **Before School, After School, and Extended Day**

These programs will return to normal practices with participants following mask guidelines.

## **Visitors**

Visitors, resource personnel, and vendors will be allowed on campus and must follow the same personal preference masking policies as students and employees. Anyone entering the school that is not a student or employee must stop at the receptionist office to receive a school pass.

## **Morning Arrival/Afternoon Dismissal**

We will return to pre-pandemic arrival and dismissal procedures. Lower School students, as well as students being transported by bus, will arrive at the St. Agnes entrance. During Lower School arrival, **parents should remain in their cars**; faculty members will assist students with exiting cars and entering the facility. Upper and Middle School students will arrive at the main entrance. All students will be dismissed from the main entrance, except those riding the school buses. Dismissal will go back to a pre-pandemic schedule:

- Monday - Thursday:           LS & MS: Dismisses at 3:20pm  
  US: Dismisses at 3:25pm
- Friday:                            LS & MS: Dismisses at 2:20pm  
  US: Dismisses at 2:25pm

## **Cleaning Protocols**

Surfaces and high-touch areas will be disinfected at least once a day. Rooms will be fully disinfected if there is a COVID exposure in the room. The school replaced all ventilation filters in our heating system and classrooms, offices and common areas remain equipped with air purifiers to maintain good air quality.

Faculty and staff will continue to reinforce safety practices by encouraging students to wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Hand sanitizer stations are available throughout the facility.

## **Vaccination**

We will not require students, staff, or visitors to submit proof of vaccination, yet we strongly encourage all members of the DS family to vaccinate themselves and loved ones. We are not requiring testing of non-symptomatic students or staff, nor are we screening unvaccinated students or staff. We will continue to follow guidance from the CDC, NYSDOH and RDOH and we will communicate details as they become available.

### **COVID exposure**

Any student or staff member showing symptoms of COVID-19 may only return to our facility with a negative test result. If any student or staff member has an exposure to a positive case of COVID-19 they may remain in school while wearing a mask for 10 days and should test 3-5 days from the initial exposure.

If a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19 they must quarantine for 5 days and return to school if symptoms are getting better and they are fever free for 24 hours. **After testing positive, a negative test is not required to return to school.** On returning to school on day 6 they are required to wear a mask for the next 5 days (10 days from a positive test or symptoms starting). For more information, or if wearing a mask is not possible, there is a testing option that can be found here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/isolation.html>

### **The Nest (Virtual Learning)**

There will be no option for virtual learning.

**These protocols are subject to change as new guidance and directives are received from the County, State, and the CDC.** Our priorities remain the safety and academic success of your children.

### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-childcare-guidance.html>

All the best,

Marcy Cathey

Head of School