



Merryhill
School®



REOPEN ► REUNITE
2020 Return to Campus Guide

Dear Merryhill School Families,

Last March, when schools closed on short notice and in response to the rapidly evolving COVID-19 health crisis, Merryhill School teachers and curriculum specialists pivoted within days to a distance-learning model.

We developed a rich array of online learning experiences and modified schedules to accommodate a variety of family schedules. Our team was justifiably proud of our work to teach from a distance – but were never complacent or content. In response to feedback from our students and parents, we adopted the growth mindset we promote to our students, and improved our practice each week.

It is in that spirit that we approach next school year. Although we are fully planning to return to campus, we recognize HOW we return will likely be different. As such, we have designed flexible models around plausible scenarios to respond to external conditions and regulations. Recognizing that some of these scenarios will again require remote instruction, we have improved our distance-learning capabilities and are training school leaders and teachers to perform well in a range of situations. We cannot predict how the school year will play out, but we are prepared to engage, nurture, and inspire our students, whether they are in our classrooms or your living rooms.

We began our preparation for School Year 2020-21 by establishing priorities and guiding principles, identified here and further developed in the pages of this Return to Campus Guide.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- [1] Act with commitment to our school's mission and core values.
- [2] Prioritize student, faculty, and staff health, safety, and wellbeing.
- [3] Prefer traditional (face-to-face) learning over distance learning whenever it is safe to do so.
- [4] Develop lesson plans and learning activities that support our capacity to be flexible and nimble in responding to changes in health circumstances throughout the school year.
- [5] Provide school families with a high-quality, fully online option for next school year.



LEARNING MODELS

Two Options for 2020-2021

LEARNING MODELS

Option #1 RETURN TO CAMPUS

Merryhill School is resolved to do everything it can to safely reopen our campus because we believe that doing so is in the best interest of our students.

While distance learning is an effective methodology when done well and when health and safety conditions leave no other option, it is not an ideal long-term substitute for the interpersonal, social and emotional benefits of traditional school.

This position is supported by numerous child-advocacy organizations, among them the American Academy of Pediatrics, which recently issued the following guidance:

“...the AAP strongly advocates that all policy considerations for the coming school year should start with a goal of having students physically present in school.”

Our **Return to Campus** model features plans for three possibilities, allowing us to respond quickly to circumstances in our own school community as well as changes in local, state and national policies:

- [1] **Traditional School:** on-site instruction, with NO capacity limitations
- [2] **Intermittent Distance Learning:** to be employed if there are classroom or school closings due to incidences of COVID cases on-campus
- [3] **Hybrid Schedule:** a mix of traditional school and coordinated distance learning to accommodate on-site capacity limitations required for safe-distancing and stable-grouping regulations.

As we get closer to the start of school in August, we will know whether a Hybrid Schedule will be required based on regulatory guidelines and our enrollment by grade.

What does a Hybrid Schedule mean?

A hybrid schedule will be deployed for a class (or our school overall) **ONLY IF** our enrollment exceeds capacity limitations required to accommodate safe-distancing and stable-grouping regulations.

If this model is deployed, there will be A and B schedules. Each group of students - A or B - will be on campus two or three days per week. On weekdays when students are not on campus, they will be learning from distance learning plans (DLPs) designed and managed by their teachers.



LEARNING MODELS

Option #2 FULLY ONLINE

Merryhill School Online Academy is an option designed for families reluctant to send their children back to an on-campus environment in the fall.

This entirely optional, FULLY ONLINE program will be offered for students in Grades K-8, and has been designed to fulfill two critical criteria:

- ▶ Remain grounded in our school's mission and values and
- ▶ Incorporate additional Online School expertise

MERRYHILL SCHOOL ONLINE ACADEMY

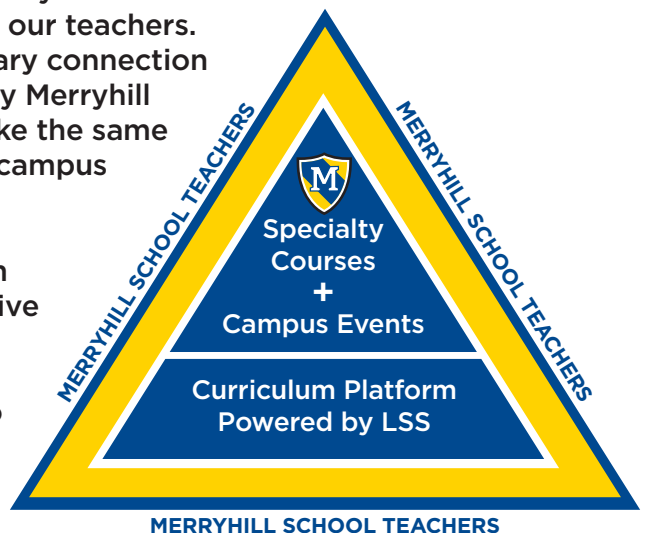
NEXT STEPS

To ensure a place in our Online Academy, you will need to **register your child by Friday, July 17**. More details regarding how to register will be forthcoming in follow-on communications from school leadership.

How will the Online Academy work?

First and foremost, the Merryhill School Online Academy will be an extension of our school, our campus community, and our teachers. Children enrolled in this program will still feel a primary connection to Merryhill School, as they will be taught primarily by Merryhill School teachers, they will have the opportunity to take the same specialty courses, and they will participate in virtual campus events throughout the year.

The delivery of the fully online, year-long curriculum will combine our school's teaching with the interactive learning platform supported and powered by our partner school, Laurel Springs School (LSS). Leveraging the Laurel Springs' platform allows us to draw upon proven online curriculum content and teaching mechanisms, yet do so in a way that is tailored for our Merryhill School students.



About Laurel Springs

Founded in 1991, Laurel Springs was the first online school in the U.S. The school holds two accreditations, WASC and AdvancEd, and currently serves more than 4000 students around the world. Every year, Laurel Springs School seniors matriculate to the most prestigious colleges in the country. More important for us, Laurel Springs' curriculum meets our standard of academic challenge and excellence and is designed to be taught online. We have designed the joint courses to maximize flexibility for children learning from home.



HEALTH & SAFETY

Our Commitment to You

We look forward to welcoming students back to campus for the 2020/2021 school year.

We are committed to providing a rich and varied learning experience in a safe and healthy environment.

We will be implementing modifications to campus operations based on state and local regulations and guidance from the CDC, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and local regulations, as they apply, in order to safeguard our students, parents, faculty, and staff against the spread of COVID-19.

As of this writing, CDC and AAP recommendations for safe operation of schools include all of the practices listed here. As requirements and health and safety “best practices” change regularly, we will send updated health and safety protocols throughout the summer and school year.

We will be taking multiple precautions, but please understand that even as we do our best to protect the health and welfare of everyone, eliminating the risk entirely is beyond our control. We ask that you partner with us on the following protocols to lower the risk of possible virus transmission:



Health Checks

- ▶ Before entering the facility, all staff and students will be temperature-checked.
- ▶ If a student becomes ill during the day, parents will be notified and asked to take their child home immediately.
- ▶ If a child becomes ill with fever and/or flu-like symptoms, they may not return to campus until the fever is gone for AT LEAST 24 hours.



Safe Distancing & Small, Consistent Groups

- ▶ Group (cohort) size and composition will be limited for all programs.
- ▶ Indoor seating will be spaced a minimum of 6 feet apart.
- ▶ Adult access to the building will be restricted to faculty, staff, and essential services.
- ▶ Pick-up and drop-off will take place outside the campus.



Sanitation

- ▶ Students and staff will be required to wash their hands or apply hand sanitizer throughout the day.
- ▶ High-touch surfaces and items will be disinfected throughout the day and each night.



Face Coverings

- ▶ For all staff, face coverings are required inside the facility.
- ▶ Students in first grade and above will be required to wear face coverings during the school day.
- ▶ For Preschool, Pre-K and Kindergarten, face coverings are recommended inside the facility.
- ▶ Based on evolving local guidance, there may be modifications and/or further requirements.



Meals

- ▶ Students will be required to bring their own lunch.
- ▶ Lunch will be eaten exclusively with the same small class/cohort.