A kite with a red and orange body and a long tail is flying in a clear blue sky. The kite is positioned in the upper right quadrant of the image. The background is a bright blue sky with some light, wispy clouds. At the bottom of the image, there is a strip of green grass.

The Children's School

**Planning for the
2020-21 School Year**

Released August 10, 2020



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INTRODUCTION

The Illinois State Board of Education, The American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Centers for Disease Control recommend that students attend in-person this fall to ensure their continued growth and development both academically and socially-emotionally.

We are excited to welcome families back to our school community. While we know this Fall will be different from the past, we are committed to providing purposeful, child-led, progressive learning experiences for our students. We are aware that each family situation is different, and we are thus offering two options for school attendance in the first trimester. For all grades K-8, we are offering a Hybrid In-Person Learning Option in which students attend in person in the mornings and learn from home in the afternoons. For grades 3-8, we are offering a Fully Remote Learning Option.

We ask every family to [fill out this form](#) by Wednesday, August 12, indicating your choice of Hybrid Learning Option (grades K-8) or Fully Remote Learning Option (grades 3-8), as well as indicating your need for childcare between 12 and 3 p.m.

Our commitment to providing safe, on-site learning, as well as meeting the social and emotional needs of our students and staff, is unwavering. Safe and consistent health practices, both in and out of school, will afford us the best chances to return to and stay on campus for in-person learning this school year.

We are required to adhere to the reopening school guidelines jointly provided by the [Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Department of Public Health](#). According to Governor Pritzker's [Restore Illinois Plan](#), the state is currently in Phase 4, with the following parameters in place:

1. Schools will be open with [Illinois Department of Health \(IDPH\) approved safety guidance](#);
2. Gatherings of 50 people or fewer are allowed in one space;
3. Masks and physical distancing will be required.

This plan has been created with input from teachers, parents/guardians, board members, administrators, and our TCS Health Advisory Committee.

Please note that while the The Children’s School is working diligently to plan for a variety of scenarios, all plans are subject to change due to guidance from the Governor’s Office and Illinois State Board of Education as well as health directives from the Cook County Department of Public Health, Illinois Department of Public Health, and Centers for Disease Control. Depending on the circumstances with the pandemic, either locally, regionally, or across the state, we may need to amend these plans or pivot to another model over the course of the coming weeks or months. If so, we will give parents/guardians as much notice as possible.



SCHOOL REOPENING OVERVIEW

(as of 8/10//2020)

- Students' first day of school is Tuesday, September 1st. The entire first week of school (September 1-4) will be **half days only** with dismissal at 12:00 and **no remote learning** in the afternoon.
- The half-day Hybrid In-Person Learning Option model will be in place until at least October 2, 2020 PENDING changes in the health metrics or other data.
- Hybrid In-Person Learning Option:
 - IN PERSON: 8:30 am - 12:00 pm
 - REMOTE: 1:00 - 3:00 pm
- Fully Remote Learning Option:
 - REMOTE (emphasis on synchronous instruction): 9:00 am - 12:00 pm
 - REMOTE (emphasis on asynchronous instruction): 1:00 pm -3:00 pm
- **Please fill out this form by Wednesday, August 12th to indicate your choice of Hybrid In-Person or Fully Remote Learning Option so we can plan and staff accordingly.**
 - You will need to make a commitment for the first trimester (September 1 - November 24).
- The success of this plan requires cooperation and responsible decision-making from every family. We are asking each family to sign this **Family Safety Agreement**. In addition, please start preparing for the first day of school now by having your child wear their snug-fitting masks for longer durations of time. Also, please reinforce social distancing practices with your child(ren), even when outdoors.



HEALTH & SAFETY

The Children's School plans to meet and exceed current Illinois Department of Public Health and CDC guidelines as we prepare our facilities and plan programming for the fall. Below are general health and safety guidelines that The Children's School will follow.

Cohorting/Group Size

A top recommendation of both the [AAP](#) and the [CDC](#) is cohorting students to create self-contained groups that limit the number of different people who interact with each other.

As much as possible, individual classrooms (maximum 15 students) will be self-contained. There will be no whole-school interactions such as Group Gathering or all-school lunch.

All large parent/community events will be virtual. Please add these to your calendar:

- Parent Orientation August 25, 7-8 pm
- Curriculum Night week of September 16 (possibly on different evenings for different classrooms)

Masks

Masks must be worn by staff and students while in the school building at all times EXCEPT when eating or drinking. Masks are also required when students and teachers are outdoors.

Research indicates that the most effective masks are:

- Made of fabric, preferably 100% cotton and tight-weave
- At least 2 layers
- Closely fitted around nose and mouth
- Not made from synthetic materials, fleece, or bandana

Masks may be removed during designated "mask breaks" when students are either outdoors or indoors in a designated area, spaced at least 6 feet apart, and not moving around.

Teachers, staff, and students are asked to wear a clean mask each school day. Masks can be laundered or washed by hand in hot, soapy water for 15 minutes.

Students are asked to keep a spare mask at school. The school will have a supply of paper masks available for when a child's own masks cannot be used.

PLEASE WATCH THIS VIDEO ON PROPER MASK WEARING.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Tv2BVN_WTk



MASK-WEARING TIPS FOR CHILDREN

- 1 Let children pick out masks featuring a character or theme they enjoy
- 2 Set consistent expectations for when/where masks should be worn
- 3 Model consistent mask-wearing behavior
- 4 Offer positive reinforcement for consistent mask-wearing
- 5 Have children wear masks daily, gradually lengthening the duration of time

The infographic features a teal background with a white border. On the right side, there is a photograph of a young boy with brown hair, wearing a white surgical-style face mask and a white long-sleeved shirt. He is giving a thumbs-up gesture with his right hand. The text on the left is in white and yellow, with the title in white and the numbered list items in yellow.

Hand Washing

“Frequent handwashing as a modality of containment is vital” (AAP, 2020). All persons will wash hands or use hand sanitizer upon entering the school building, before and after restroom use, after coughing or sneezing, after returning inside from outdoors, before and after using any shared materials, and before and after eating snack. Students will be instructed on proper hand-washing/hand-sanitizing techniques.

Physical Distancing

Social distancing of 6 feet between individuals will be maintained as much as possible at all times—in classrooms, hallways, and other indoor spaces as well as outdoors.

Staff will rearrange classrooms and other spaces to meet social distancing requirements to the greatest extent possible. Note that student desks/tables are NOT required to be 6 feet apart. The AAP is recommending 3-6 feet distance between desks.

We know that interactive play is a hugely important part of children’s learning and social-emotional well-being. We will allow play such as board games, block building, imaginative play, etc. However, we will put routines and signage in place to remind of social distancing as much as possible when children are not playing. This will include controlling traffic flow in classrooms and hallways and staggering visits to restrooms, cubbies or lockers, and other areas of the school to avoid crowding.

Sharing Materials

Students will use their own materials and will not share—e.g., pencils, scissors, Chromebooks—to greatest extent possible. When using any shared materials such as books, blocks, some art supplies, etc., students will be instructed to wash hands/use hand sanitizer before and after using. Shared materials will be cleaned and disinfected daily to the extent possible.

Water & Snacks

Students should bring full water bottles to school. It is preferable to have a water bottle with a straw due to masks. Bottles can be refilled at bottle filling stations (by teachers for younger students) if needed.

Students may bring a small snack to eat during the morning. This should be a small item that can be eaten quickly and with little mess. Students will remove their masks one at a time in a designated area in order to eat their snack.

Arrival/Dismissal

Students may arrive at any time between 8:30 and 9:00 a.m. Please enter one at a time and maintain 6 feet distance while entering or waiting to enter.

- Students in grades K, 1, 2 (Pond) will enter through the Courtyard gate on Oak Park Ave
- Students in grades 3, 4, and 5 (Lake) will enter through the Alley Door (off of Pleasant Avenue)
- Students in grades 6, 7, and 8 (Ocean) will enter through the Pleasant Ave door

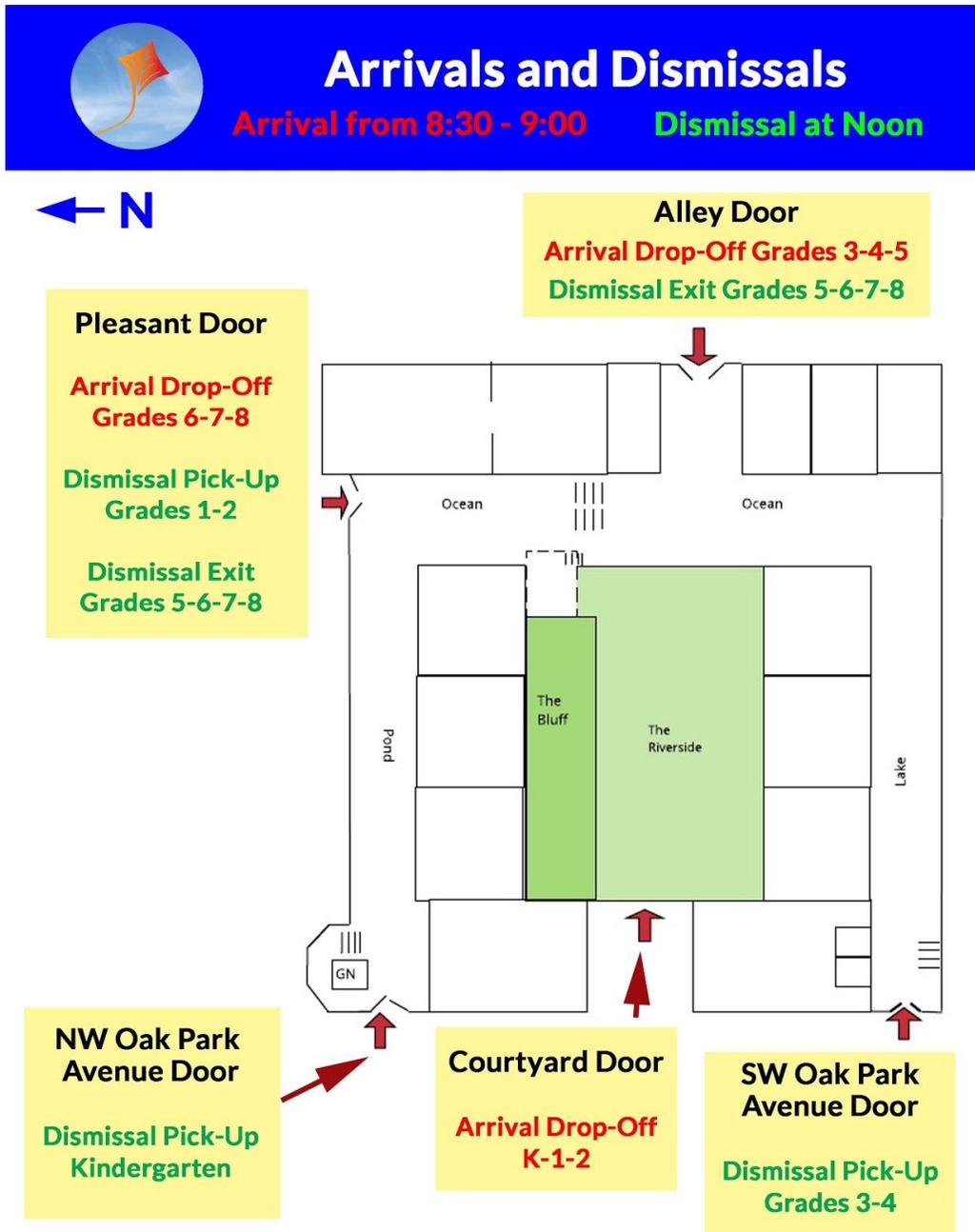
Parents will not enter with children but will say goodbye at the door.

Dismissal will be at 12:00.

- Parents of students in Kindergarten should pick up at the northwest Oak Park Ave door
- Parents of students in grades 1 and 2 should pick up at the Pleasant Ave door
- Parents of students in grades 3 and 4 should pick up at southwest Oak Park Ave door

Teachers/Administrators will hold signout sheets and mark each child signed out as the child exits the building and joins their parent/guardian or designated alternative.

All students grades 5-8 will sign themselves out and exit through either the alley or the Pleasant Ave. door, maintaining 6 feet distance from others while doing so.



Symptom Screening/Temperature Checks

Temperature checks will be conducted daily by school staff as students enter the building. All staff will also have their temperature checked upon entering the building each day. Anyone with a temperature greater than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (after 2 readings) will not be allowed to enter the building. Temperatures will be recorded and serve as student check-in for the day.

Any individual who tests positive for COVID-19 or shows signs or symptoms of illness must stay home. **Known symptoms** include: fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, congestion or runny nose, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.

We will have a designated space within the school to isolate any student, teacher, or staff member experiencing fever of 100.4 degrees or higher or any symptoms of COVID-19. Parents will be asked to pick up their sick child as soon as possible. Staff members will wear face mask, face shield, and gloves during all interactions with sick children.

Protocols for Containment and Health Alerts

- If someone in the classroom (teacher or student) tests positive for COVID, the classroom will immediately go to remote learning for 14 days. Family members of an exposed student or teacher do NOT need to go into quarantine, but they must monitor symptoms for 14 days. We will issue a health alert to the entire school.
- If a teacher or student who tests positive for COVID has another family member (spouse, sibling, etc.) in the building, that family member should also quarantine for 14 days.
- If a student is exposed to someone with COVID-19 (defined as spending more than 15 minutes within 6 feet of that person), that student will quarantine and do at-home learning for 14 days. We will issue a health alert to that classroom and ask parents to monitor symptoms for 14 days.
- If a teacher is exposed to someone with COVID-19 (defined as spending more than 15 minutes within 6 feet of that person), that teacher will quarantine for 14 days and the class will go to remote learning for that 14-day period.
- If there are 2 or more cases amongst students and staff at TCS, we must report to IDPH.

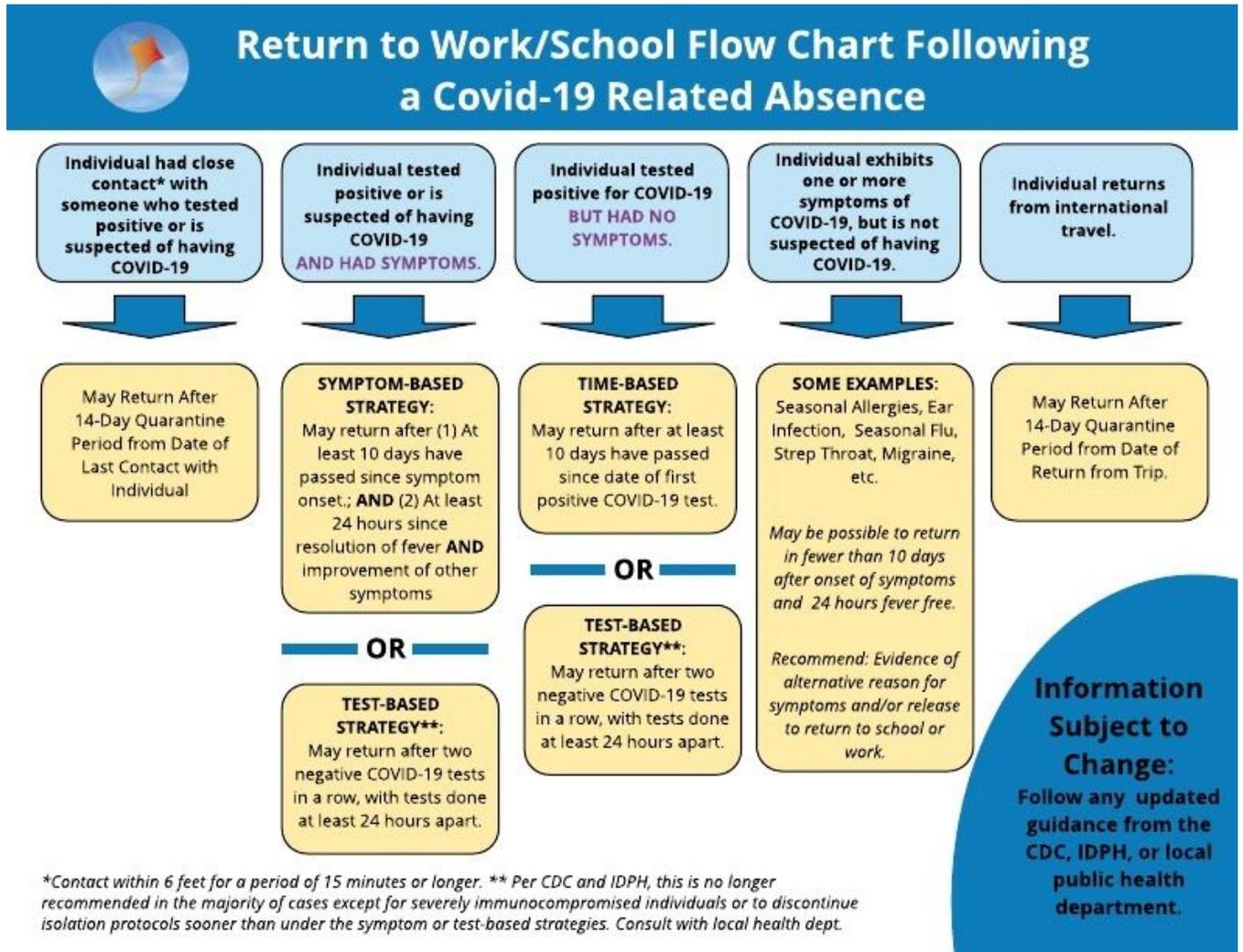
TCS will follow [CDC guidelines](#) on when a student, teacher, or staff member can return to school after illness:

- 10 days after onset of symptoms; **and**

- 24 hours without fever in absence of use of fever-reducing agent; **and**
- COVID-19 symptoms have improved

OR

- Two negative COVID-19 tests in a row, at least 24 hours apart



Please note that in the event of teacher illness, we may be limited in our ability to use substitute teachers due to safety considerations around introducing new people to the school environment. It is possible that a class would need to go on hiatus while waiting for the recovery of their teacher. We will have a non-teacher directed remote learning plan in place for such a situation.

Daily Attendance

If a student is going to be absent for Covid-related symptoms or non-Covid symptoms, their caregiver must contact the school. When reporting illness absences, be sure to report if your child:

- Has been in close contact of someone with a positive COVID-19 test
- Has signs of coronavirus
- Has been diagnosed with coronavirus or influenza (respiratory flu)

Cleaning/Disinfecting

Bathrooms, drinking fountains, door handles, stairway railings, and other frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected daily.

Teachers will clean and disinfect frequently touched classroom surfaces such as tables, doorknobs, light switches, etc. daily. Shared materials will also be cleaned and disinfected regularly.

In case of a student or teacher testing positive for COVID, that classroom will be sealed off for 24 hours and then cleaned and disinfected (following CDC guidelines). The class will return to the classroom after 14 days of remote learning.

Outdoor Safety Protocols

Students and staff will be permitted to remove masks when outside as long as 6 feet social distancing is maintained. Outdoor activities will be strongly encouraged throughout the day. Each class will have a designated outdoor space on our campus available to them at any time for academic learning, other activities, or play. These outdoor experiences will allow more fresh air exposure to students and staff and provide safe opportunities to remove masks.

Indoor Air Flow

We will keep windows and doors open as much as possible to allow circulation of fresh air. We will not use fans and air conditioners in order to avoid blowing air around.

Heat-Related Remote Learning Day

Because we are unable to employ air conditioners and fans due to COVID restrictions, we may need to call a remote learning day for any day on which the heat index is predicted to be higher than 95 degrees Fahrenheit (particularly if a high heat index is predicted for several days in a row).

Visitors

We will limit visitors to essential personnel and require visitors to follow all mask-wearing, hand-washing, cleaning/disinfecting of shared materials, and social distancing requirements while in the building.

Travel Restrictions

Families are urged to comply with [Suburban Cook County travel guidance](#) (updated weekly) and are required to follow [CDC travel bans/restrictions](#). We recommend you REFRAIN from traveling to these areas two weeks prior to the start of school - which means any date on or after August 18, 2020.

“Any person entering suburban Cook County living in a high-incidence state, or who visited the high-incidence state for more than 24 hours, is recommended to self-quarantine for 14 days after arrival, or for the duration of their stay in suburban Cook County, whichever is shorter.”

Calendar

Calendar changes to the [2020-21 Academic Calendar](#) include:

- First week of school (September 1-4) is half days only; 12 pm dismissal and NO afternoon Remote Learning
- Winter Break is extended by 1 full week (through January 8) to allow families to travel/receive visitors in the first week of Break and then not return to school for 14 more days
- Other calendar changes, including extending [26a577_0ea5fee28b184dcc81d11acb3fb38c94g](#) Spring Break and extending the school year further into June, are under consideration and will be announced in January 2021

Safety Agreement

We are asking each family to read, sign, and abide by the guidelines of this [Safety Agreement](#).



Teaching and Learning

In this extraordinary year, TCS will continue its focus on both academic and social-emotional learning, nurturing students' curiosity and skills while also caring for them as individuals and as a community. We expect that many students may return to school (either in-person or remotely) with a mix of emotions--excitement and joy but also fear, grief, and anxiety. We are preparing to spend extra time helping students establish community, build strong relationships with teachers and peers, and create space to talk about their emotions and experiences.

This year will no doubt look and feel different from typical years. We will do our best to honor TCS traditions and programs. We ask for your patience and flexibility as we work to figure out how to best spend our time and resources where it is most effective in supporting students and families.

We will hold conferences three times this year (October, January, and May) as usual, but it may not make sense to produce the lengthy narrative reports that we typically write. Rather we plan to focus on rich conversations and close collaboration with parents/guardians, realizing that (especially if we are fully remote), parents may have as much insight into and impact on students' academic and social-emotional progress as teachers.

Please note that the below plans represent our best thinking right now. They are subject to change, not only due to modifications in State of Illinois or IDPH guidelines, but also because we will want to see how things are working for students, teachers, and families and make changes if needed. The schedules below are samples, and they may differ in some of their particulars from classroom to classroom.

Remote Learning

In planning for remote learning, whether for families who choose the Fully Remote Learning Option in grades 3-8, for families who choose the Hybrid Learning Option and are at home in the afternoons, or in preparation for potential times when an entire class or the entire school must shift to remote learning, faculty have thoughtfully considered and included:

- Use of Google Classroom as a single platform for class schedules, calendars, meetings, assignments, and links (e.g., to all-school classes)
- Daily meetings with classes to ensure learning activities are clear and

- social-emotional well-being is monitored
- Synchronous learning experiences, focused on those academic and non-academic areas that are least successful asynchronously, with a minimum of 2.5 hours per day per ISBE recommendations
 - An organized, consistent schedule that closely mirrors a typical school day
 - Embedded peer-to-peer work and collaboration
 - One-on-one communication and individualized feedback for students
 - Parent education and support for various systems/resources embedded in remote learning activities
 - Help with tech needs/provision of tech devices as needed

Definitions:

Synchronous learning (occurring at the same time)--live instruction and learning with students and teachers interacting through video conferencing and other real-time interaction.

Asynchronous learning (occurring at different times)--recorded instruction, self-guided, and individual learning time.

Pond (Grades K-2)

For K-2 students, we are offering a **Hybrid Learning Option** that includes in-person attendance in the mornings and at-home learning in the afternoons.

No Fully Remote Learning Option is offered for K-2. This is based on our strong belief that early childhood learners are not well-served by virtual instruction and prolonged screen time and are also not generally able to complete learning activities independently. Thus for parents who wish to and are able to keep their K-2 students at home, we would advise play-based home-schooling.

We will provide Remote Instruction for K-2 students if the entire classroom or school must shift to Remote Learning. The plan will focus on in-person instruction and class meeting times in the mornings along with supporting curricular materials delivered to families' homes. In the afternoons, the plan will focus on open-ended play and independent learning activities for children.

Please note that these are sample schedules and may vary somewhat due to children's developmental needs and teachers' curricular decisions.

Hybrid Learning Schedule:

Yellow = in-person attendance

White = remote attendance

8:30-9	Arrival (enter through Courtyard on Oak Park Ave)
9-10	Outdoor Exploration/Snack
10-10:30	Group Meeting
10:30-11:30	Exploration (K) or Workshop (1 st and 2 nd)--Reading, Writing, Math, Science, Art
11:30-12	Closing Circle/Read-aloud
12	Dismissal (K at NW Oak Park Ave door; 1 st and 2 nd at Pleasant St door)
Afternoon	Journal/Reflection, Independent Reading, Recorded Read-aloud, All-School Classes, Open-ended play

Whole Group Remote Learning Schedule (in case entire class must go remote):

9-9:30	Morning Meeting
9:30-10	All-school Class (P.W., Art, Library, Music, or Social-Emotional Learning)

10-11:30	Exploration (K) and Workshop (1 st and 2 nd) activities--Reading, Writing, Math, Science, Art, etc* with one-on-one and small group support from teachers
11:30	Closing Circle/Read-aloud
12-1:00	Lunch/Recess
Afternoon	Journal/Reflection, Independent Reading, Read-aloud, One-on-one meetings with teacher as needed, Open-ended play

*Exploration and Workshop materials provided (dropped off at student's house)

Lake (Grades 3-5)

We plan to offer 3rd/4th and 5th grade self-contained Hybrid classrooms as well as a 3rd/4th/5th self-contained Fully Remote classroom. Fully Remote students and Hybrid students will have opportunities for social interaction.

Hybrid Learning Schedule:

Yellow = in-person attendance

White = remote attendance

8:30-9	Arrival (enter through alley door off of Pleasant St)
9-9:30	Morning Meeting
9:30-11:30	Math, Outdoor Time, Science, Project Work, Story editing/Sharing, Choice
11:30-12	Read-aloud
12	Dismissal (3 rd /4 th at SW Oak Park Ave door; 5 th self sign out and exit through alley door)
12-1	Lunch/Recess (at home)
1 -2:45	Independent Reading, Story Writing, Research, All-School Classes (Art, P.W., Music, Library, SEL)
2:45-3	Read-aloud and Closing

Fully Remote Learning Schedule* (for families choosing fully remote instruction or when one Hybrid class has to go remote)

9-9:30	Morning Meeting
9:30-11:30	Math, Science, Project Work , Story editing/Sharing, Choice
11:30	Read-aloud
12-1	Lunch/Recess
1 -2:45	Independent Reading, Story Writing, Research, All-School Classes (Art, P.W., Music, Library, SEL), One-on-One meetings with teacher
2:45-3	Read-aloud and Closing

*Families will pick up materials from TCS approximately every 2 weeks

Whole Group Remote Learning Schedule (in case entire school must go remote):

9-9:30	Morning Meeting
9:30-12	Academic Instruction—Writing (Ms. Danielle); Math (Ms. Angela); Science (Ms. Lisa)
12-1	Lunch/Recess
1-2:45	Independent Reading, Story Writing, Research, All-School Classes (Art, P.W., Music, Library, SEL), One-on-One meetings with teacher
2:45	Read-aloud and Closing

Ocean (Grades 6-8)

If there are enough families who choose the Fully Remote Learning Option, we will offer two self-contained Hybrid ML classrooms and one self-contained Fully Remote ML classroom, which will follow a similar schedule to the below. A Fully Remote ML classroom could offer (if families agreed) weekly opportunities to meet up outdoors for academic and social times.

If we do not have enough families to offer one Fully Remote classroom, we will instead offer three mixed Hybrid and Fully Remote classrooms:

Hybrid and Fully Remote* Learning Schedule:

Yellow = in-person attendance for Hybrid students; remote attendance for Fully Remote students

White = remote attendance for both Hybrid and Fully Remote students

8:30-9	Arrival at Pleasant St door
9:00-12	Morning Work, Math, Outdoor Exploration, Class Meeting, Project Work
12	Dismissal (6 th /7 th self sign out and exit through alley door; 8 th self sign out and exit through Pleasant St door)
12-1	Lunch/Recess (at home)
1:00-2:45	Language Arts, Science, Humanities, Independent Reading & Writing, All-school classes (P.W., Art, Music), Student Leadership (clubs and committees)
2:45	Daily Check-Out Meeting

*Remote learners will “beam in” to the classroom for Morning Work, Class Meeting, Project Work, Language Arts, Science, Humanities, All-school Classes (Physical Wellness, Art, Music, Library), Student Leadership, and otherwise as needed. All students (remote and in-person) will sometimes be assigned independent or small group work for periods of the day. It is NOT our intention to have remote students “beamed in” to the classroom continuously for 3 hours every morning or 2 hours every afternoon, but rather to have them come and go according to the day’s schedule (much as in-person learners will come together for group activities and separate for independent activities). Remote learners will not “beam in” for Outdoor Exploration, but will be assigned a similar outdoor activity to do on their own.

A similar schedule will be followed if the entire class or school has to go remote at any time.



Planning Process

- Family Survey on Remote Learning (May 2020)
- Conversations with enrolled families (June 2020)
- End-of-Year Survey for families (June 2020)
- Teacher Survey/Input (July/August 2020)
- Health Advisory Committee Input (July/August 2020)
- Parent Listening Session re: draft Reopening Plan (August 2020)
- Board Approval (advisory vote) (August 2020)



Key Resources

- [Starting the 20-21 school year. Part 3 - transition joint guidance. ISBE, 2020.](#)
- Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), [Part 3 Transition Guidance: Starting the 2020-21 School Year FAQ](#)
- [Schools for health. Risk for reduction strategies for reopening schools. Harvard T.H. Chan, 2020](#)
- [COVID-19 planning considerations: Guidance for school re-entry. American Academy of Pediatrics, 2020](#)
- Illinois State Board of Education [Fall 2020 Learning Recommendations](#)
- Illinois Department of Public Health [School Guidance](#)
- TCS Health Advisory Committee (Dr. Michael Angarone, Dr. Magda Houlberg, Dr. Muriel Jean-Jacques, Ms. Laurinda Karston, Dr. Regina Kim, Dr. David Shoham)