



RIVERMONT COLLEGIATE

# Return to School Plan

FALL 2020

## Introduction

Returning to school in the fall safely is our top priority. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recently released a statement urging schools and policymakers to do whatever possible to keep students in classrooms. Among other guiding statements, the AAP wrote, **“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.** The importance of in-person learning is well-documented, and there is already evidence of the negative impacts on children because of school closures in the spring of 2020. Lengthy time away from school and associated interruption of supportive services often results in social isolation, making it difficult for schools to identify and address important learning deficits as well as child and adolescent physical or sexual abuse, substance use, depression, and suicidal ideation. This, in turn, places children and adolescents at considerable risk of morbidity and, in some cases, mortality.”

The need to maintain institutional flexibility has been a recurring theme within the guidance from educational and healthcare sources alike. As the future is uncertain and likely to involve varying degrees of protective actions, we will be using a color-coded framework to describe Rivermont’s response levels, which are outlined below.

As with all decisions, we begin with our mission in mind. Our mission and core values continue to guide us, now more than ever, as our nation confronts the tumultuous events: school closures, political division, racial and economic inequities, police brutality, and societal unrest, and the erosion of global relationships. Indeed, our mission rings true and is, perhaps, all-the-more important touchstone for us today.

***Rivermont Collegiate’s mission is to empower academically driven students by cultivating their intellect, character, and creativity.***

## Guiding Principles

While we recognize that there is no risk-free scenario, our goal will be to continue to serve this mission given difficult, ever-changing circumstances.

- The cultivation of student intellect, character and creativity is predicated upon healthy students and a safe educational environment. To this end, Rivermont will make informed decisions (outlined in this document) about returning to in-person classes based on recommendations from public health agencies, state and national officials, and our accrediting agencies, amending our plans as needed while maintaining the flexibility to support the health-related needs of individual families.
- Given challenge, guidance and time, intellect becomes wisdom. Rivermont teachers are committed to maintaining a rigorous educational experience for all students, and this commitment extends to situations in which increased safety measures require learning from home. Teachers will emphasize big ideas and core concepts, allowing for flexibility but with rigid expectations about demonstration of learning within fixed grading periods.
- Character is demonstrated through a strong sense of personal and social responsibility. Students will be supported to meet expectations about attendance, participation and study habits. Increased communication between the school and families will help support and ultimately empower students to take ownership of their learning. It takes a village to raise a child. During this difficult time, developing a feeling of social responsibility will help all of us feel mutually supported – we're all in this together.
- Creativity means cultivating innovative thinkers who respond inventively to unknown challenges, unhindered by conventional frameworks. This is a period of global upheaval when past paradigms are being called into question. As a small independent school, Rivermont has the opportunity and ability to think outside the box. Our students likewise will be called upon to creatively meet the challenges set out by their teachers and to make the most of the opportunity afforded by our small classes and diverse school community.

# Scaled Response System Overview

This section will outline the basics of each of the 4 color-coded response levels for grades K-12. Later in this document key programmatic areas within the school will be further explained, using the basic framework below. Critical information on Rivermont's expectations for family's cooperation in support of this plan is also included here. This will prepare parents, students, and faculty with a basic framework for understanding how the school will likely respond to key benchmarks and recommendations. Please note that PS-JK-specific plans may differ from those in K-12 and are detailed at the conclusion of this document.

Our ability to remain open will strongly be determined by the health of our classrooms, students, and teachers. If your child is feeling ill (even with cold or allergy symptoms), **PLEASE KEEP THEM HOME**. Due to the current situation, we are unable to call in outside substitute teachers, so if our teachers get sick, we may need to close the classroom until they are able to return.

## Response Level GREEN

## Response Level YELLOW

## Response Level ORANGE

## Response Level RED

### Response Level Green:

School as usual, before the emergence of COVID-19. We would only return to Green in the event that the risk from coronavirus is no longer a threat to public safety. It is not likely that we will return to Green in the 20/21 school year, so this document addresses the Yellow, Orange, and Red response levels.

### Response Level Yellow:

Responding to widespread risk, Rivermont will implement enhanced health and safety measures by modifying normal operations. The goal in response level Yellow is to keep all students engaged in face to face learning, in class, unless they are symptomatic or are confirmed COVID-19 positive. Our ability to remain open will strongly be determined by the health of our classrooms, students, and teachers. If your child is feeling ill (even with cold or allergy symptoms), **please keep them home**.

**Parents and other outside visitors are not permitted in the buildings, unless scheduled.**

Facilities will be equipped with additional sanitization stations. All persons on campus will be prompted to wash hands regularly and additional handwashing instructions will be given. Entries and exits will be marked for directional flow, and flooring on any areas where students line up will have visual cues indicating 6-foot distancing.

Students (K-12), faculty, and staff will be required to wear masks. There may be some disruptions to classes and activities that are particularly hazardous, such as assemblies, band, choir, PE, lunch, and recess. K-5 students will remain in their classroom through the majority of the day. “Specials” teachers (art, music, science, Spanish, technology) will come to PS-5 classrooms, to reduce exposure.

We anticipate that some students will not be able to attend classes in person and therefore will require additional support and instruction. The school day will remain largely unchanged and attendance, in person or remotely, will be required unless the absence has been approved by the school. Technology enhancements will facilitate remote learning. Students unable to join live classes will be taught through distance learning, which will be made available both synchronously AND asynchronously. For more information about this, see the specific program-area sections below.

Lunch will be delivered and served in the classrooms for grades K-5. Students in grades 6-12 will experience a modified snack, lunchroom, and dining process. The kitchen may serve lunches in to-go boxes or paper sacks, further minimizing exposure. Students are encouraged to bring their own lunches and snacks from home, to avoid lines and minimize exposure.

**Response Level Orange:**

Responding to a further-heightened risk, Rivermont may implement enhanced health and safety measures that alter students’ schedules, pickup and drop off times, etc.

Most regular classes will continue; however, students will engage a modified hybrid schedule to facilitate class-size reduction and better social distancing. For more on this, see the Teaching and Learning Measures below.

**Response Level Red:**

Should the situation become too hazardous to continue holding school, even with significant modifications, we will enter distance learning. Building on the lessons from the Spring of 2020, Rivermont will endeavor to engage our students proactively and help them continue their education while sheltering in place, safely at home.

Teachers’ experience streaming and uploading lessons during the Yellow and Orange response levels should facilitate a smooth transition to distance learning for all our students, K-12.

Attendance in classes will be taken. The expectation is that all work will be submitted on time. If a child is unable to attend classes in real time or to complete the homework in the allotted time, Ms. Campbell and the teacher(s) will request a meeting with the parents, in an effort to develop a solution.

Teachers will come to Rivermont and teach from their classrooms whenever possible. The lessons will be streamed real-time. Boarding students may still be asked to attend classes in person, at a distance. In middle and upper grades, this should help the online experience feel more normal.

## Enhanced Health Safety Measures

**Response Level Yellow:** Increased health measures and minor-to-moderate alterations to student schedules, movement, etc.

*Reporting Sickness:* Our ability to remain open will strongly be determined by the health of our classrooms, students, and teachers. If your child is feeling ill (even with cold or allergy symptoms), please keep them home.

*Before and After Care:* There will not be before or aftercare available for students, PS-12th grade. Drop off windows will expand, though, as explained below.

*Drop Off:* In an effort to support parents on their way to and from work, as well as to promote better social distancing during pick up and drop off, all students may begin arriving as early as 8:00 AM and depart campus no later than 4:00 PM. Parents and visitors are not allowed in buildings without advance permission.

*Hand Washing:* <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>

*Masking:* Masks are mandatory for all students, K-12, at all times, unless otherwise directed. PS-JK will be taught about the importance of masks and mask usage will be encouraged as much as possible. All faculty and staff will be required to wear masks.

*Health Screenings:* Each family will be required to complete a school reentry form detailing travel history, possible exposure, and current health symptoms prior to returning to campus. This document will be distributed in mid-August. Students for whom the school hasn't received a school reentry form will be turned away until the form is complete.

Each family must agree to check and record their child's temperature every morning **before** school. Dorm parents will be performing this task for our boarding students. Additionally, students, faculty, and staff will have their temperature and health symptoms checked each day upon arrival.

*Vaccinations:* Rivermont does not issue religious or other exemptions for vaccinations required by the Scott County Health Department. The school's stance is that the science is clear: vaccines save lives and parents are strongly encouraged to follow the recommendations of their family physicians in receiving the appropriate vaccines.

Rivermont is not currently **requiring** our faculty, staff, and students to receive a flu vaccine this Fall. However, it is **strongly recommended** that all members of every household, faculty, staff, and students get the flu vaccine when it becomes available, in consultation with your family physician.

*Cleaning:* All touched surfaces will be sanitized repeatedly throughout the day. We will ask students to participate in cleaning their own areas and items, as needed.

*Movement:* Visual markers and physical barriers (where possible) will promote social distancing and separate directional movement wherever possible.

*Specials:* Specials teachers will travel to individual K-5 homerooms to deliver lessons, rather than having groups of students filtering through their classes each day. Those classes will also be adapted for grades 6-12, to minimize risk.

*Substitute Teachers:* Every effort will be made to utilize a Rivermont faculty or staff member.

*Drinking Fountains:* Fountains will continue to fill water bottles but the fountain bubblers (mouthpieces) will be shut off. Students are encouraged to bring refillable water bottles, clearly labeled with their names.

**Response Level Orange:** Grouping to minimize risk

In addition to the measures taken in the Yellow response level, students will be grouped, alternating in-person and distance learning, to reduce group sizes and reduce potential exposure. People who enter the building may be asked to take additional sanitization measures.

**Response Level Red:** All students engage in distance learning. Teachers will teach from their classrooms and continue to observe all applicable safety measures listed above.

# Teaching and Learning Measures

## ■ Yellow:

Assuming nearly all students are able to return to in-person learning, on campus, response level Yellow will also facilitate those who cannot attend in person.

Teachers will live stream all direct instruction, read-alouds, group discussions, and Q&A sessions. Ideally, students will log in and participate actively in class, via chat questions, etc. **Attendance will be taken, and the baseline expectation will be that students attend their class sessions in real time.** Teachers will partner closely with parents and have posted office hours. Additionally, teachers, mentors, and parents must mutually commit to communicating promptly, in case of problems or concerns.

All sessions/classes will be recorded. Recordings of instructional sessions and materials may be made available for later playback for those with approved absences.

## ■ Orange:

Most regular classes will continue, but on an alternating schedule to facilitate class-size reduction and better social distancing. Students will be grouped into two (2) groups, A and B, which will attend face-to-face classes, as well as online, in a hybrid model. Efforts will be made to place siblings in the same groupings, as well as work with parents within their unique childcare situations, to the best of our ability.

Each day's curricular content will be new, so it will be essential for those at home to attend and participate in real time whenever possible. Those who are unable to attend in real time from home will be required to have parental permission and an acceptable explanation. All efforts should be made to keep students actively involved in their classes at home, in real time, so they do not fall behind.

## ■ Red:

Classes will be taught in live-streaming format and recorded for later playback, to be made available to those with excused absences. Boarding students will shelter in place in their dorms, with the exception of socially distancing in classrooms during synchronous e-lessons, and outdoor activities.

# Foodservice Measures

## **Yellow:**

- Snack may be served, and advance ordering may be required. Students are encouraged to bring their own snacks to help reduce line length and wait times.
- Chef Marc and his staff will continue to serve wonderful meals, but efforts will be made to prepackage items for a quick grab-and-go. Chef Marc will use more disposable serving items to reduce potential germ spread.
- Parents are encouraged to use disposable lunch sacks and food wrappings, to minimize potential home/school transference. If families choose to use reusable lunchboxes, parents are encouraged to thoroughly clean and sanitize them daily, immediately upon return from school.
- K-5th Grades will eat in their rooms, avoiding the lunchroom entirely.
- Grades 6-12 will eat in the lunchroom. Serving the K-5th Grades in their rooms will allow more time and room for social distancing during the 6-12th Grade lunch periods.
- The lunch period schedule may be altered to promote social distancing.
- Seating will be structured to encourage social distancing.
- Residential food service for breakfasts, dinners, and brunches will continue without further alterations.

## **Orange:**

The reduction in daily student numbers will facilitate increased social distancing measures.

## **Red:**

Residential food service will continue, as described below.

# Residential Safety

## **Yellow:**

Rivermont houses a small boarding student population that functions like a close-knit family. Our boarding students face the added challenge of living through this period of global crisis while far away from their home country and family, and with the added uncertainty of not knowing when they might be able to go back home. Rivermont takes our responsibility to ensure the safety, physical health and emotional well-being these students especially seriously.

Rivermont's boarding students are housed in two dorms on campus, with females residing in the Carriage House and males residing in the STEAM Center. Each dorm is supported by two live-in dorm parents. Dorm Parents check-in on each student multiple times throughout the day. Dorm parents also help facilitate a daily structure, including regular opportunities for daily exercise. Weekly dorm meetings are held by the Director of Residential Life to communicate information and build community. Students are provided with 3 meals a day during the week and 2 meals a day on the weekend. Custodial staff cleans and disinfects dorm common areas frequently. Cleaning services and disinfectant are provided to dorm students for their rooms and restrooms.

In addition to the above, during the period of COVID-19 risk, the following measures will be adopted within the dormitories:

- Dorm parents will check temperatures of students daily, reporting anything above 100.4, or as directed by health officials.
- Isolation rooms will be designated in the event a student becomes ill.
- Dorm students will wear masks outside of their own dorm rooms during the school day.
- Dorm students will maintain 6-foot physical distance from any person not residing in his or her own dorm.
- No visitors will be allowed in any of the residence areas outside of the school day.
- Hand sanitizer and disinfectant will be placed by the entrance of each dormitory.
- Students will be asked to remain on campus, with the exceptions of walks or bike rides for exercise.
- Rivermont is partnering with a local community health organization, allowing every boarding students to have a designated primary care physician who can oversee medical needs if necessary.

**Orange:**

In a period of further-heightened risk, the following measures (in addition to those outlined above) will be considered:

- Reduced numbers of students coming onto campus each day (see “teaching and learning measures”) will allow for increased social distancing within classrooms for boarding students.
- Residential food service will continue but may be altered to promote further social distancing.

**Red:**

If COVID-19 cases are climbing in our area, Rivermont will ask day students to stay home and enter a phase of on-line learning. Boarding students will shelter in place in their dorms, with the exception of socially distancing in classrooms during synchronous e-lessons, and outdoor activities.

## Extra-Curricular Activities

**Yellow:**

Extra-curricular activities enrich the educational experience of students, providing opportunities to meet the diverse interests of our student body. At Rivermont, club creation is student driven. Any middle or upper school student with a particular hobby or interest may propose a club so long as he or she has found a faculty advisor. This year, we will actively promote the creation of virtual clubs, so that students can find like-minded peers to engage with in virtual spaces. Student Council and National Honors Society will likewise hold virtual meetings. Each club will still have a faculty advisor who will help to moderate on-line meetings. Club time may be built into the daily schedule for upper and middle school students (before and/or after lunch time). Clubs can meet during designated times during the day so long as all the usual masking and social distancing protocols are followed. No in-person afterschool clubs will be held at this time; virtual meetings are encouraged.

Athletics: At this time, fall sports will not be offered at Rivermont.

**Orange:**

If Rivermont moves to a hybrid-learning model, clubs can meet with reduced capacity.

Athletics: At this time, fall sports will not be offered at Rivermont.

**Red:**

If Rivermont moves to a remote learning model, all clubs will likewise continue remotely.

Athletics: At this time, fall sports will not be offered at Rivermont.

## Early School (PS, PK, JK)

We have heard and agree with our early school parents that distance learning is simply not conducive to our children's full development in these grade levels. We therefore will do our utmost to keep full time in-person classes for as long as possible. Changes to this policy could be made due to a state or DHS mandate that child-care facilities must close, a confirmed case of COVID-19 is reported in the classroom, or other circumstances unforeseen at this time occur. Until then, the early school will operate as follows:

- **Drop Off** - Students will be greeted in their car by a teacher or aide every morning, where their temperature and medical screening will be taken. **Parents must remain in the car and may not enter the building.**
- Students will enter the building through one of two entrances in the ES playground and then directly to their classroom.
- Classroom capacities have been reduced in order to provide more space for students in the classroom.
- Teachers and aides will wear masks at all times and will wear scrubs that will remain at the school and be washed nightly.
- Students will not be required to wear masks but are welcome to do so.
- Students will remain in their self-contained classrooms. Integration of Early School classes/students will be prohibited.
- Classroom objects that are not easily disinfected have been removed from the classrooms and are being stored for a later date.
- The classroom, tables, and all objects will continue to be cleaned and sanitized by teachers and aides throughout the day.
- The entire classroom will be professionally cleaned and sanitized nightly.
- Snack and lunch (for those staying in Afternoon Adventures) will no longer be served family-style. Students are asked to bring a snack to school in disposable packaging. Lunch procedures will be determined at a later date but before the start of school.
- **Pick Up** – Similar to drop off, parents are asked to wait in their cars at the curb; their child will be escorted to the car by a teacher or aide.

**Early and After Care:** At this time, we are not able to offer early drop off or after care supervision. Students can be dropped off as early as 8:00am and must be picked up by 4:00pm.

**Reporting Sickness:** Our ability to remain open will strongly be determined by the health of our classrooms, students, and teachers. If your child is feeling ill, especially with cold or allergy symptoms, **PLEASE KEEP THEM HOME**. Due to the current situation, we are unable to call in outside substitute teachers, so if our teachers get sick, we may need to close the classroom until they are able to return.

# COVID-19 in the School Community

**Reporting a confirmed case of COVID-19:** If a student, faculty, and/or staff member is exposed to COVID-19 or tests positive for COVID-19, we will follow local and state department of health guidelines and CDC recommendations. Additional measures may be implemented by Rivermont; details will be posted to the school's website.

The Rivermont community will be notified immediately if there is a confirmed positive case of COVID-19 on campus. Further details will be provided as appropriate.

## Other Information and Resources

### Technology

In preparation for possible distance learning, students are required to have a computer at home. If you have a computer at home or plan to purchase one for your student, please make sure it meets these minimum specifications:

- i5 gen 8 processor or newer
- 8gb of ram
- 256 Solid State Drive or greater
- **NOTE: No Chromebooks/Tablets/iPads**

Middle and Upper School students are required to bring a laptop, charged and ready for class, on a daily basis.

- Students may bring either a Windows or a Mac laptop.
- Windows laptops require at least a Windows 10.1 operating system.
- Mac laptops must have an operating system that is a minimum of Version 10.11: “El Capitan.”

Student-owned devices are required to have anti-virus software installed on them to be used within the school network. Windows provides a built-in solution, but no matter what product is used, it is required to be up to date on virus definitions and software version.

**Chromebooks do not fit the needs/requirements the students will have for their academics — no Chromebooks, tablets, or iPads.**

### Resources for Student Emotional Well-being

- CDC Helping Children Cope with Emergencies  
<https://www.cdc.gov/childrenindisasters/helping-children-cope.html>
- How to Ask What Kids are Feeling  
<https://childmind.org/article/how-to-ask-what-kids-are-feeling-during-stressful-times/>