



August 6, 2020

Dear Rivermont families,

The phrase “the new normal” is thrown around these days, but it is of little comfort for those who struggle with uncertainty. We know that some have expressed their desire for a specific if/then-type decision tree, but this situation defies simple formulaic responses. The fact is that our entire world is grappling with the challenges of carrying on, despite the circumstances.

We hope to start school in Level Yellow. It is possible that we’ll return in Level Orange, but we won’t be ready to make that decision until later this month.

The good news is that we’ve assumed very stringent safety measures, and we’re able to respond swiftly, as things change in the coming months. We’ve made significant changes to schedules, classroom locations, foot traffic patterns, and sanitization measures. Our small class sizes and grade-level cohorts, together with the mask-wearing requirement for everyone K-12th grade, places Rivermont among the safest schools for the Fall of 2020.

Criteria for the change from one response level to another might come from several sources: The Governor’s Office, the Health Department, the Office of Education, the CDC, or within our school itself. We will make decisions regarding response levels using the community’s testing data to guide us. As the number of positive cases within the broader community, and the number of cases within the Rivermont community cannot be predicted, our plan addresses the need to maintain institutional flexibility on several levels.

While much is yet unknown, we do have more information now than we did just a few weeks ago. For example, the Community Transmission current designation of our area is “Minimal to Moderate,” meaning that 6-14% of the COVID tests taken have been positive, on average, over two weeks. Researchers who study COVID transmissions and mitigation strategy effectiveness are finding promising news: mask-to-mask interactions, even in close proximity and for long periods, are surprisingly safe. Coupled with our other policies, we feel that if conditions remain favorable, we can safely return to modified in-person classes.

Here’s a **partial list of increased safety measures** we’re putting into place this Fall:

- Mandatory Masks for all faculty, staff, and students K-12.
- Wearing masks is required for all faculty and staff
- PS-JK masking will be taught, normalized, and encouraged (as tolerated) for the students
- PS-JK faculty will receive scrubs, which will be washed daily (they deal with more body fluids than the K-12 teachers) by an aide.
- Faculty and students will receive dual-layer masks, with adjustable earloops and a sporty Rivermont logo
- Teachers will receive a face shield
- All families, faculty, and staff will be required to submit travel/symptom disclosures before returning to campus.
- Mandatory temp checks performed at home DAILY before coming to school
- Kiosks and staff will administer additional daily temperature screenings for all faculty, staff, and students immediately upon arrival
- Longer pick up and drop off windows to better facilitate distancing and screenings upon arrival
- We will not allow unscheduled visitors, including parents, to enter the buildings and all visitors will be required to wear masks
- Our modified daily schedule includes extended passing periods to facilitate socially distanced campus movement and longer lunches
- Foot traffic patterns will be altered to promote directional movement
- Classrooms will be equipped with webcams and document cameras to enable hybrid and online instruction

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- All lessons will be live-streamed to students' school accounts via TEAMS.
- All live-streamed lessons will be recorded for later playback, should it become necessary.
- Students not attending in-person classes will be required to attend live-streamed classes in real-time unless given an excused absence, approved by the administration.
- Lunch areas will have dividers, as will reception areas.
- PS-5th-Grade classrooms are grouped into isolated 1-class cohorts, where specials teachers will go to the homerooms
- Specials teachers will relieve homeroom teachers so they can rest and plan.
- Administrators will assume recess duties to free up time for K-5 teachers to rest and plan.
- Choir, Band, Athletics, and clubs have been canceled for the Fall and will be reviewed for revival each semester
- Before and aftercare have been canceled
- We are discouraging students from taking advantage of our athletic partnership with Bettendorf High School, minimizing exposure
- We are not going to use outside substitutes if at all possible
- Middle school classes have been located with distancing in mind, including demolishing a wall on the third floor of the Mansion to make room for larger middle school classes (among other changes)
- Some elementary classrooms will be swapped to create more space for larger classes

What happens if a student, teacher, or other staff members tests positive for COVID?

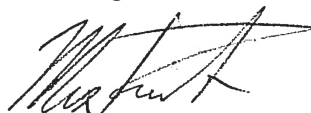
Any student, teacher, or staff member who tests positive for COVID will be required to quarantine for a period lasting from 10 days since the onset of symptoms (not the date of the test). The school is required to report that to the County Health Department, and they will assist us in completing the process of contact tracing, as well as determining the most appropriate response. They will not be allowed to return until the ten-day quarantine has passed, and they are fever-free for a minimum of 24 hours (without fever-reducing medication). We will evaluate each case individually, in consultation with the health department.

We're all worried about health and safety for ourselves and loved ones, economic stability for ourselves and the country in general, civil and political unrest, strained race relations, strained global partnerships, travel bans, and disrupted supply lines, and the list goes on! But as scary as those monsters seem, there is still much good to be done — and we are ideally positioned to do that good work.

The Rivermont commitment to students extends far beyond academics. We rejoice in seeing them grow, overcome challenges, and cultivate their best selves. Our curriculum extends far beyond arts, humanities, math, and sciences, to include character and creativity. This year is an opportunity for us to be a stabilizing, calming, and positive force in our students' (and their families) lives. We will continue to learn and grow right alongside our students this Fall. Our intellect, character, and creativity will set the tone for what will be another wonderful year of challenges and triumphs.

When we look back at all this, we'll tell others how we learned to dance in the eye of the storm — and it will be a tale of victory! Rest up because it's almost time to start dancing again.

Best Regards,



Max Roach
Headmaster