



**Pacem School**

*Celebrating Curiosity - Igniting Passions*

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## **Pacem School Plan for Fall 2020 Given COVID-19 considerations**

Pacem School plans to open for in-person classes in September of 2020 according to its regular schedule. We will make modifications to our operations as defined in this plan for the purpose of keeping our students and staff as safe as possible from COVID-19. This document is primarily a working document for faculty, staff, and parents, but will also be made available on our website. In addition, we will create an executive summary for parents and the public.

This document is based on the guidance released by the State of Vermont Department of Education that can be found [here](#).

Please note that this is a quickly evolving health situation, and we will certainly need to alter this plan throughout the year. We ask for everyone's patience and flexibility as we navigate these challenging times.

### **Health Guidelines:**

#### Daily Health Check:

Staff and students/parents/guardians will be asked to complete an online health questionnaire every day before the student arrives at school. The purpose of this is to ensure that sick students do not arrive at school. Questions in the health questionnaire will include the following:

- In the past 48 hours have you had any of the following NEW symptoms: fever over 100.4 F, cough or sore throat, shortness of breath or trouble breathing, chills or repeated shaking with chills, muscle aches, nausea / vomiting / diarrhea, loss of smell or taste or change in taste, significant new rash, large amounts of nasal discharge that are not consistent with diagnosed allergies?
- Have you had close contact (being within 6 feet of a person for more than 5 min), or contact with mucus or saliva of someone who has lab confirmed COVID-19 in the last 14 days?
- Has a healthcare provider advised you to be tested for COVID-19?
- Has the student or any member of their family traveled outside Vermont to any area requiring quarantine in the last 14 days? (For a current travel restriction map, please see <https://accd.vermont.gov/covid-19/restart/cross-state-travel>)
- What is the student's current temperature?
- Has the student taken any fever reducing medication (acetaminophen, ibuprofen, etc.) in the last 24 hours?

If staff/students answer yes to any of these questions, or have a temperature of over 100.4, they must stay at home. If there is any question about whether or not someone should be in school, please err on the side of caution. If you have questions about a specific symptom, please consult with your healthcare provider before coming to school. If students/staff have a fever, they must be fever free for 72 hours without medication before returning to school.

When students/staff arrive at school, they will verbally be asked the same questions and have their temperatures taken using touchless thermometers. Staff will follow the protocol for conducting the screening as outlined in the state guidance.

If students/staff develop these symptoms while at school, they will be isolated, until they can be picked up. In the case of illness, we ask that parents be able to have someone pick up their children within 30 minutes.

If any students or staff test positive for COVID-19 or have primary contacts that test positive, we will consult immediately with the health department and follow their recommendations for school closure, cleaning, and contact tracing.

**We expect that Pacem students and their families will follow the current Governor's orders around health and safety precautions.** Given the nature of this disease, and the closeness of our community we depend on everyone's cooperation to keep each other safe. The current orders can be found [here](#). As of this writing, the [Executive Order](#) recommends that Vermonters practice social distancing, engage in effective hygiene practices, wear face coverings in public, and limit public group sizes to 75 people depending on the type of event, and quarantine for 14 days if they have visited a [region designated by the State of Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development](#).

In addition, we ask that any students who are engaging in classes and activities with groups of students outside of Pacem let us know so that we can have a conversation about how best to keep our community safe.

Failure to follow the safety guidelines in this document may result in the dismissal of a student from the school.

### **School Day Procedures September-October**

For the first two months of school, we intend to hold our classes entirely outside. (Exceptions may be made for extreme weather events, or other considerations. Students and parents will be notified in advance, if possible.)

#### General layout:

There will be three outdoor classroom areas all located on the upper field where our meeting circle is located. There will be two rented heavy duty tents (20 x 20 ft) with removable sides, one on each end of the field. Our third classroom space will be the meeting circle which will be

covered by a tarp. Our classes will be as published in our schedule (<https://pacemschool.org/academics/weekly-schedule/>). We will have up to three classes running concurrently: a 10 to 12-year-old class, a 12 to 15-year-old class, and a 14 to 16-year-old class. In addition, we will have classes for 8-10 year-olds on Thursdays, but they will not interact with the rest of the community. The assignment of classroom space will depend on enrollment. In the case of heavy rain, the class under the tarp may need to move into another tent, which will be physically divided) Each classroom space will be equipped with a portable whiteboard, a portable hand-washing station, and hand sanitizer. Students will each be issued a clipboard to write on (if they wish) and pads to sit on. Students are encouraged to bring their own folding camp chairs (crazy-creek type or metal frame type.) We will have limited secure storage space, so students will need to bring their own items from home every day.

We will rent one or two porta-potties which will be located in the parking lot next to the path that goes down to the field. In addition, we will run power and internet from the VCFA buildings that are closest to the field for the use of our students.

#### Outdoor procedures:

Entry and Health screening: All students and staff will undergo a daily health screening (see above.) The health station will be at the top of the path right next to the parking lot. Students are asked to come to school between 8:15 and 8:30 to leave enough time for the screening. Depending on the schedules of students, there will be one or two other designated arrival times that students are asked to come in. If students are not able to arrive in the designated times, they must make arrangements to be met by the staff. We ask that students only do this when absolutely necessary. Students will be socially distanced (with distances indicated on the ground) while waiting for their screening. Whoever is dropping the students off is asked to wait at a distance until they have cleared the health screening before departing. In the case of rain, students are encouraged to wait in their cars for their health screening. Following the health screening, students and staff are required to wash their hands prior to entering the classroom space.

Classrooms: In the classroom tent area, students and teachers will sit at least 6 feet apart, and wear cloth masks. If students are working individually and can sit at least 10 feet away from each other, they may temporarily take off their masks. (Note that these are draft guidelines, and more conservative than what is in the state guidance.) In the case of heavy rain, if the sides of the tents are rolled down and all students are under the tent, masks must be worn, and 6 ft distance must be maintained if at all possible. Students will need to sanitize their hands before and after touching their masks. Teachers will continue to take daily attendance in their classes to facilitate contact tracing, if necessary.

Breaks: Morning breaks and lunches will all be outside. Activities will be organized so that students are 6 feet apart. Morning meeting will take place in the meeting circle with all participants 6 feet apart. All morning meeting participants will be required to wear cloth face

masks. If the weather is poor, classes may have separate morning break activities in their designated areas.

We will have limited storage capacity in our outdoor classroom area. Students will need to bring the following items with them each day:

- A fully charged laptop or tablet to do schoolwork on, if required for individual student's classes. (We have laptops that we can loan to individual students on a long-term basis. We will also have a limited amount of power so devices can be recharged during the day.)
- A clipboard to do hand-written tasks on. (We will give these out to students at the beginning of the semester)
- Notebooks, paper, pencils, pens, and books to use. We will not be able to share these supplies.
- Any other supplies or materials needed for individual classes (specified by teachers) or for individual student projects
- Personal chairs
- Plenty of warm clothing appropriate for the weather of the day
- All of the food and water that they will need during the day. (We will have water available for hand-washing, but not drinking.)
- Cloth face-mask. (It is recommended that face-masks have a loop of elastic on them so they can be worn around the neck, when not required.)
- Personal container of hand-sanitizer that is easily accessible.

Extreme weather: In the case of extreme weather, classes will move inside. If this occurs, we will follow our indoor protocols as described below, and notify parents as soon as possible. Students may not yet have an assigned work space. If that is the case, students will sit at least 6 feet apart using their outdoor chairs. Note that our classrooms are more than big enough to accommodate this spacing.

### **November - April**

Indoor Procedures: (Note that these are draft procedures and may change depending on the situation on the ground in November and the experience of our students, faculty, and families at the beginning of the year)

After November 1 (or later if we have a warm November) we will move our classes indoors. We will have different protocols for indoor classes. Our expectation is that students and staff will maintain a 6 foot distance from each other and wear masks at all times when indoors.

Entry and health screening: Students will enter the building through the glass doors off the parking lot. The health screening station will be at the entryway to the main Pacem hallway. Health screening will follow the same protocols as listed above. Socially distant spots for waiting will be marked on the floor. After clearing the health screening, students will individually leave their coats and boots in the hallway and proceed directly to their classroom.

No student possessions other than outdoor clothing should be stored in the hallway. The number of students in the hallway at any time will be kept to a maximum of 10. Students will wash their hands before entering the classroom. Depending on their classroom location, they will either use one of the sinks in the kitchen or bathrooms, or a portable handwashing station outside the classroom door.

**Classrooms:** Each age group (8-10 year olds; 10-12 year olds; 12-15 year olds; 14-18 year olds) will be permanently assigned to a single classroom. Every student will have a permanently assigned desk or table in their designated room. All desks/tables will be at least 6 feet apart. If the state is in "Step II" all desks/tables will face the main whiteboard in the classroom. If the state is in "Step III" desks/tables may be arranged so that students are in a circle facing each other. If a student has classes with two different age groups, they will have an assigned desk/table in both classrooms. Students are expected to be at their desks during class time. Each student will have a spray bottle of disinfectant that they can use to sanitize their own space. If a student wishes to be at Pacem at a time when they do not have a class, they may, with the permission of the teacher in charge, sit at their assigned desk in a classroom as long as they do not disrupt whatever class is in session. Each student will be issued a box at their desk to hold their personal items. They may leave anything they like in their boxes, but desk surfaces will need to be clear at the end of the day for cleaning. Each classroom will have a teacher desk in it. Teachers will not be able to leave their personal items on the desk, and will need to sanitize it at the beginning and end of each class.

**Breaks and lunch:** If at all possible breaks and lunches will be outside following our outdoor protocols. If lunch needs to be inside, students will eat at their own desks.

**Dismissal:** Classes will be dismissed in a staggered fashion to minimize the number of students in the hallway at any one time. This will be coordinated by the teachers at the end of the day. All students will exit the building in the same direction (towards the parking lot).

### **Cohort and class size**

All classes will be kept to no more than 8 students. There will be some mixing between classes, however the maximum number of students enrolled in our regular program will be 25.

Our new program for 8 to 10-year olds will be kept entirely separate from our older students, and will have a maximum program size of 15.

### **Distance learning options**

Students may choose to continue with distance learning instead of attending in person classes. While we are outside, it may not be possible for students to engage in class activities synchronously (during class time), however, teachers will make class materials available to students through Google Classroom so that they can continue to complete class activities while

at home. (We are hoping that classes will make use of the outdoor environment, and will not necessarily be in the classroom area and accessible to wifi at all times.)

When classes are held inside, the goal is for students to access classroom activities in real time through Google Meet if they are not in the classroom. If a teacher determines that this does not work for their class, alternate arrangements will be made.

Students, with parental consent, are asked to inform their teachers a week ahead of time if they are planning to use the distance learning option, and are asked to continue distance learning for at least two weeks. Exceptions to this will be made if a student suddenly needs to switch to distance learning because of symptoms of illness or quarantine requirements.

We will work with each student on an individual basis to accommodate their needs around in person vs distance learning options.

### **Facilities considerations:**

#### **Cleaning:**

When we are outside, the porta-potties will be sanitized periodically throughout the day. They will be locked when we are not in session to limit outside people using them. Other items will belong personally to students and teachers and will be the responsibility of the owners.

When we are inside, teachers will be responsible for sanitizing high touch areas in their rooms (door handles for example) and their own workspace at the beginning and end of each class. Bathrooms will be sanitized periodically throughout the day, and bathroom fans will remain on for the entire school day. The entire school will be cleaned as required.

Bathrooms and porta potties will be stocked with sanitizing spray. All members of the community will be asked to sanitize high touch bathroom surfaces (door knobs, etc.) when they are done.

Ventilation: ventilation that will bring outside air into the classrooms will be installed.

### **Faculty Illness**

Faculty will be required to meet the same health guidelines as their students. In light of this, we expect that there will be many more days when faculty are not able to be at school. In addition, because we need to limit the number of outside individuals who are interacting with our students, we will have a limited capacity to get substitutes. We will do the best we can to have faculty provide class material that students can complete and will combine classes as necessary to provide supervision. Please understand, however, that some disruption to our schedule is inevitable. In the event of faculty illness, it may be necessary to move some classes to distance learning temporarily.