



## SANDY SPRING FRIENDS SCHOOL

*Let Your Lives Speak*

### Summary Description of SSFS Program Plans for Fall 2020

SSFS intends to open school on September 1, 2020, with virtual instruction, augmented by in-person social enhancements described below. All academic and co-curricular programming for grades K-12 will be conducted online via the School's learning management systems. It is our intention to rely on virtual instruction for the first semester (ending late January 2021). Prior to the end of the first semester, the School will make a determination about how we will start the second semester.

**Social Meetups:** Feedback from the community has highlighted the importance of interpersonal interactions to the life of our community. This is reinforced by considerable research that indicates social interaction is essential to students' social and emotional growth and health. To meet this important need during a time when virtual instruction is required, the School will provide for on-campus sessions of classroom groups (Lower School) and advisory groups (Middle and Upper Schools), on a rotating basis, approximately every three weeks when School is in session. These meet-ups will happen in "pods," or "cohorts" that will have contact only with other persons in the same group when on campus, for the duration of the need for remote learning (first semester or longer). In other words, interactions during these on-campus groups will take place only among the students and the teacher/advisor in that group, for the first semester and longer if necessary. Social distancing, face masks, hygiene and sanitization measures, along with utilizing outdoor spaces whenever possible, will be required. While we hope every family will take advantage of this important step to offset the isolation of virtual learning, participation will be voluntary. A group will be on campus for three to four hours, and a more specific schedule is being finalized and will be shared soon.

**Food Service:** Lunches will be provided for students on any day that they are on campus.

**Transportation:** Basic, point-to-point bus service will be provided for the first semester, with limited stops in a few areas, and limited capacity, for those students who may need transportation to and from campus during their time with their social pod. The School encourages families to arrange for transportation to and from school just before, and just after the on-campus sessions. No beforecare or aftercare program will be offered during this time.



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**Preschool Program:** The SSFS preschool program is licensed by the State of Maryland as a daycare provider. At this time, daycare programs are allowed to operate in person within very clear anti-COVID requirements. For these youngest students, a virtual learning program, which by its nature makes demands that are beyond the development of this age group, is not a viable alternative long-term. Consequently, SSFS plans to offer a limited, in-person preschool program for the coming school year on our campus for PK3 and PK4 students in compliance with Maryland and Montgomery County stipulations. We are working with the state licensure office and our COVID response team to determine the programming balance that addresses both the need for student and faculty safety and the need for in-person programming for our youngest learners. More information about this program will be forthcoming.

**Boarding and International Students:** SSFS plans to open its dormitory for 7-day domestic and international boarding students for the new school year. International students must arrive on campus August 15th and participate in a 14-day mandatory quarantine under the School's supervision. COVID testing will be part of the program. With this approach, the boarding and international students will be able to form a functional "family group" that can then isolate itself from outside contact and pursue their academic program on campus. Students will live in Westview Dormitory and be assigned to single occupancy rooms. Students who cannot arrive by August 15th will have an opportunity to enter the on-campus program, beginning with a mandatory quarantine period, on October 1 or January 2. More information on this boarding program option will be available soon.

**Campus Access:** During the first semester, campus access will continue to be limited to essential employees and those students who are participating in the limited on-campus programs described above. Building access will be tightly restricted. Parents who are dropping off or picking up students will be required to remain in their cars. All visitors will be on campus by pre-arranged appointment only.