



August 26, 2020

Dear Ridgewood Parents/Guardians:

I am delighted to welcome you and your children back for the 2020-2021 school year. At this time last year, I never could have imagined how the 2019-2020 school year would end nor how the 2020-2021 school year would start. I do know that I have not heard of a reopening of school plan that has been embraced by an entire district community. While our [reopening plan](#) is not perfect, it was carefully developed with a safety-first approach to return students to the classroom, advance them academically, and address social and emotional issues that have occurred as a result of this pandemic. I genuinely wish we could have satisfied everyone's needs, but that is impossible under these unprecedented circumstances.

Shortly, you will receive information about a daily electronic symptom checking questionnaire that you must fill out for your child. The questionnaire must be completed every morning before your child can line up for the temperature check to get into the school building. For the safety of the entire school community, I insist that you complete the questionnaire honestly because students who are sick will be sent home immediately. Simply, if your child is sick, keep them home. For more information, please refer to the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) [COVID-19 Public Health Recommendations](#). Also, we ask you to abide by the following guidelines.

- If your family has recently traveled internationally or to a state on [New Jersey's travel advisory list](#), your child may not attend school until the 14-day quarantine period has ended.
- If someone in your household who has had close contact with your child is waiting for COVID-19 testing results, don't send your child to school until you receive a negative test result.
- If you receive a positive COVID-19 testing result, please contact your child's school nurse so that the next steps can be explained.

Each student and staff member is required to wear a washable cloth mask or disposable mask to school unless determined to be medically exempt by our school physician. Neck gaiters are not permitted. If your child is medically exempt, medical documentation must be provided for review by our school physician. Children should be wearing their masks when they step on school property. Spare masks will be available at the schools in case your child's mask breaks during the day. The success of our reopening is directly linked to our observation of safety protocols: wear masks, adhere to social distancing guidelines, and follow proper hygiene. If you see someone who is not following protocols, please remain calm and offer a gentle reminder.

Visitors to school buildings will be limited, and parents will not be able to deliver anything that a student accidentally leaves at home. Appointments with school staff members will be scheduled virtually through Google Meet.

Please be advised that the first day of school, Wednesday, September 2, is a full school day, not a minimum day, as indicated on the current 2020-2021 School Calendar. Live virtual classes for grades 6-12 will be held in the afternoon. Elementary students (L-Z) will have a Google Meet scheduled with their teacher on the afternoon of the first day. A revised 2020-2021 School Calendar reflecting this change is on the Board of Education meeting agenda for Monday, August 31 and will be posted on the website following approval by the Board.



The principals have worked very hard to develop a schedule that meets student needs, parental choice, and staffing restrictions. If you have questions concerning your child's placement, please contact your child's principal. Please expect a letter home from your child's principal detailing building-specific procedures. We have more hand sanitizer, hand soap, paper towel dispensers, and disinfectant in the district than you can imagine. This has been a herculean task, and I thank the administrators, staff, custodial, and maintenance staff who made it happen.

Before closing, I would like to address the abhorrent rhetoric concerning the origin of COVID-19. COVID-19 is a highly contagious respiratory illness caused by a virus and is spread by human transmission. Borders do not stop it; only we can. The Ridgewood Public Schools will not tolerate slurs against anyone or discrimination in any form. Recent events have shed light on the darkest aspects of society, but they have also sparked the rise of voices calling for action and change. Learning about racism and its impact on people is one of the most important goals for the district this year. We must be part of the solution. Everyone who enters our doors or steps foot on Ridgewood Board of Education property should feel comfortable about who they are and how they are treated.

I thank you in advance for your support as we move forward together and wish everyone a healthy and productive school year. Stay safe, and stay calm.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel Fishbein". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Daniel Fishbein, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

C Ridgewood Board of Education