2020-2021 REOPENING PLAN

Guidelines for Returning to School  
July 29, 2020

The Parkside School 2020-2021 Reopening Plan
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OUR “WHOLE CHILD” APPROACH

At Parkside we strive to identify each child’s unique learning style and then nurture their capacity to learn through our program of interdisciplinary teaching, individualized attention and collaborative problem solving.

• **Interdisciplinary**
  We offer a rich program including a full academic regimen; extensive exposure and practice in the arts; experiences with movement and physical education; as well as therapeutic services in speech and language, occupational therapy, and counseling — all sharing a common connection to our understanding of your child.

• **Individualized**
  Our small class size (8-9 students per class) and high teacher-student ratio (4:1) allows us to know each student and every family. It also enables us to tailor our program in highly personalized ways. We set out to discover each individual’s learning style and needs — then, we design our program to carefully bring out the best in your child.

• **Collaborative**
  Teamwork, cooperation and care for each other are hallmarks of our approach that can be seen throughout the school — from group classroom projects among students to ongoing, interdisciplinary team meetings for staff. Our staff meets frequently to reflect on and refine our practice.

OUR MISSION

The Parkside School welcomes elementary school children from diverse ethnic, social, and economic backgrounds, who have a range of language-based learning difficulties. We serve the whole child by offering a thoughtfully designed, comprehensive array of academic and support services.

Our goal is to enable our students to pursue learning in their areas of strength, to acquire tools and strategies to progress in their areas of challenge, and to develop respect and understanding for themselves and others.
Our Reopening Task Force

The health and safety of our students, families and staff is our first priority as the situation around COVID-19 continues to evolve in New York and across the country.

The planning outlined in this document is the work of The Parkside Reopening Task Force which consists of board members, faculty and parents tasked with addressing the needs and safety of our community as we plan a return to in-person learning.

The Task Force consists of five working groups:

• Facilities
• Health and Safety
• Communications
• Program
• Mental Health

Our goal is to open full-time in September, offering families the option of remote access to learning.
If we are able to reopen, we will be able to do so full-time and with all children and staff in the building.

With the understanding that some parents will opt for their children to continue to learn remotely, Parkside is set to accommodate those families who choose to remain home due to health and safety concerns.

Each classroom is set up with a 360-degree camera, microphone and speakers to provide at-home students the same education as their peers. In the event that we need to return to remote learning, Parkside is ready to continue the robust program it began in March.
Orientation for new and returning staff will be conducted virtually on Zoom the week prior to the start of the 2020-2021 school year.

As part of the orientation process, staff will be informed of the “new normal” for educating students, including specific trainings including but not limited to:

- Arrival and dismissal procedures
- Flow of traffic in the building
- Logistics of specialty classes and therapies
- Use of OWLs for live streaming
- Protocols for both staff and student illness
- Professional development
- Communication with parents
The health of our students and staff are paramount to reopening The Parkside School facility.

- In accordance with the CDC and DOH guidance, Parkside will perform health checks and screening of both students and staff on a daily basis.
  - Each staff member and family will be required to complete a daily screening questionnaire/checklist before entering the building.
  - Parkside’s full-time nurse will provide guidance on recognizing signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
  - Temperature checks will be conducted as students and staff enter the building. If an individual presents with a temperature greater than 100.0°F they will be denied entry or sent directly to our dedicated isolation room to await pickup by an adult.
• In addition to our nurse’s office, an isolation room, solely for cases of suspected COVID-19 will be managed by the nurse until a child or staff member can go home. This area will meet the requirements of the DOH and the CDC.

• If a member of our community tests positive for COVID-19, all appropriate parties will be notified, including staff, families and the state and local health department.

  • Contract tracing procedures will follow, and Parkside will support the local health department in tracing all contacts of the individual in accordance with guidelines set by the New York State Contact Tracing Program.

  • Our Co-Heads of School will cooperate with all state and local health department contact tracing, isolation and quarantine efforts, and will follow the recommendations of the DOH in determining short-term closure procedures as well as a thorough cleaning of the facility.

PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS ENTERING THE BUILDING:

• Students will wait on the school bus until they can physically distance as they exit the bus and enter the school building.

• Students who walk to school will be assigned a specific door to enter.

• Visual signs will adorn the walls and floor to support the maintenance of six feet between individuals.

• Temperature checks and hand washing or application of hand sanitizer will be conducted.

• Parents and caregivers will need to wait outside, and practice safe physical distancing. Only staff and students will be permitted to enter the building.
• Facility cleaning and disinfection will be increased and intensified, especially high-touch surfaces, common areas, and high-traffic zones as per CDC guidelines.

• Mask wearing will be expected for staff and students for the majority of the day.
  • Exceptions will be made during snack/lunch times and when classes can be conducted outside observing physical distancing guidelines.
  • Both staff and students will get “mask breaks” when in safe conditions.
  • Parkside will provide PPE for students and staff as needed.

• Classroom/therapy supplies will be individualized. All equipment will be sanitized after use as per CDC and DOH guidelines.

Parents, visitors and delivery personnel will not be permitted inside the school building for any reason.

All open houses, professional development, parent-teacher conferences, meetings and events will be conducted virtually via Zoom.

There will be no afterschool enrichment programs offered on site.

Field trips will be conducted virtually until deemed safe.
We are reimagining our space design, furniture layout, queues and transit within the building to meet the demands of our new normal.

• An extensive analysis of our classrooms and physical space determined that we are able to meet the six-foot physical distancing guidelines in each of our rooms, due to our small class size.

• All communal areas will be maintained in accordance with physical distancing and limiting the number of persons per area.

• All bathrooms are equipped with motion-sensor lights, paper towel dispensers and faucets. This will minimize touching surfaces while in the bathroom.
Since the CDC recommends children being outdoors as much as possible:

• Parkside will be utilizing its two outdoor spaces (back yard, and third-floor terrace) to minimize indoor learning time.

• We are working with our council member and community board to close off 74th Street between Central Park West and Columbus Ave. during specific hours to add additional outdoor time for our classes.

• Increased air circulation will be a top priority inside the building.
  • Parkside has researched new exhaust/filtration systems.
  • Windows and doors will be kept open as much as possible to help with air circulation.
  • Our doors close automatically during fire drills to allow for increase airflow during school hours.

• The flow of traffic into the school for arrival, the use of hallways and staircases and dismissal of students has been mapped out.
  • In accordance with the SED, Parkside will continue to conduct fire and lockdown drills maintaining physical distancing for students inside and outside the building.
Parkside students bring their own lunch and healthy snacks.

• Students will eat their lunch and snacks in their classroom.

• Physical distancing and all personal hygiene practices will be maintained during these times.
Because we are a special education school, many students arrive on DOE buses.

- The Office of Pupil Transportation will be providing guidance for matrons and bus drivers.
- Parkside will reinforce mask wearing, physical distancing and bus rules with students.
- We will encourage parents to drop off, carpool or walk to school as much as possible.
- Families and staff using any type of transportation must wear face coverings and do their best to maintain physical distance for the safety of themselves and our entire community.
The social-emotional well-being of our families and staff is integral to The Parkside School philosophy.

- Parkside administrators have set up regular channels of communication with the hopes that transparency and constant updates will make everyone feel more prepared for the return to the school building.

- Staff have been preparing students during our summer program for the big and small changes they will face when they return to school.
  
  - Parkside will no longer be a place of physical hugs and high fives from friends, therapists and teachers.
  
  - We are developing ways where students can feel connected and loved without physically touching.
• It is important to maintain that Parkside is a place of joy for students.

  • Our team of educators and therapists will prepare students that there may be a change again in the future with a return to virtual learning.

• When we return to in-person learning, curriculum will be heavily dedicated to social-emotional learning and support in classrooms.

In an effort to provide social-emotional support for parents and staff:

• Parkside will continue to host virtual Town Hall meetings for parents.

• Our Social Work department will offer voluntary support groups for staff and parents.
As an 853 school, Parkside will continue to meet all state requirements regarding:

- Attendance
- School Days
- Fire and Safety
  (including physically-distanced fire drills and lockdown drills)
Parkside is committed to ensuring students and staff have access to technology and the internet for successful learning both in-person and online.

- All students and staff have access to devices, training and resources to enhance their use of technology.
  - This summer, additional computers were purchased to provide access for teachers during the school day and enable them to provide instruction to those students who remain at home.
  - Additional wireless devices were purchased to increase internet access.
Parkside has and will continue to provide devices as needed to students, families or staff, who require them in order to fully participate in Parkside’s educational program.

Professional Development is still being offered virtually to staff this summer and will continue through the school year. To date topics have included:

- "Elements of ‘No Secrets’ Lessons”, a series of six two-hour workshops
- “Woodin Math: Whole to Part Relationships”, a series of three two-hour workshops

Parkside students will continue to utilize the Zoom platform and SeeSaw for continuation of remote learning needs.
Our unique approach to education includes tailored academics, specialty subjects, and therapies.

• Since Parkside is an 853 school, all students have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).
  • We will continue to provide all mandated IEP-related services, including speech therapy, occupational therapy and counseling, in accordance with the IEP goals for academic attainment, and in regular communication with parents.
  • Our collaborative relationship will continue with the Committee on Special Education, Region 10, and others.
• Our program will continue to follow its guiding principle to serve the whole child with a full array of academic subjects.
Our rigorous and structured classroom programs are interwoven with a range of complementary services, delivered in whole groups of eight or smaller and often one-to-one.

• These **cohorts** will remain together to limit exposure to the COVID-19 virus.

• We will continue to provide each student with a highly individualized program with accommodations for their strengths and challenges.

• We are steadfast in our belief in delivering instruction through various modalities.

• Although teachers and therapists will not meet face-to-face with parents, conferences will continue virtually, with a continued commitment to open communication that is so valued in our community.

• Our robust program will continue whether we are all in-person, some students are home, or all students are home.

• Through videos, social stories, and practice activities, teachers and therapists have rolled out a Summer Curriculum focused on topics that will be important as we return to school.

  • These are topics that parents should reinforce at home, including practicing wearing masks, seeing what a 6-foot distance would look like, practicing washing hands for the appropriate 20 seconds, and what it might be like getting a COVID test.

  • The curriculum being taught during Parkside’s summer camp, and materials used, are also being shared with new and returning families who do not have students enrolled in the summer.
We strive for clear, open, and honest communications at Parkside.

• We understand that no matter how well we present our plan and communicate required protocols, families and staff will have many questions.
  
  • We will hold virtual information sessions, including Q&A sessions with a Pediatrician, to address the many questions and concerns held within our community.

  • Regular updates regarding Parkside’s Reopening Plan will be posted at www.parksideschool.org/reopening.

  • During the school year, our weekly *Wednesday Notes* e-newsletter to parents and staff will serve to provide pertinent updates related to COVID-19 and our program in general.

• We welcome your questions, comments and concerns at all times.
A dedicated section on our Reopening webpage has been established to provide useful resources to parents and our community at large.

- At www.parksideschool.org/reopening, you will find:
  - Our Summer Curriculum, developed to help prepare students for the new normal they will experience at school when we return to in-person learning.
  - Asynchronous Learning Resources, including videos and stories by our Parkside teachers and therapists that can be used by parents at their convenience.
The Parkside School Reopening Plan continues to evolve as more information becomes available from the CDC, DOE, NYSED and other relevant agencies. Please refer to our website for the most up-to-date information.

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