



Susan Odell Taylor School

Reopening Plan 2020-2021

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Introduction

The Susan Odell Taylor School (SOTS) is a small independent school serving students in prekindergarten through grade 8 in Troy, New York. We anticipate our student population to total about 85 students in the 2020-2021 school year. We have multi-age classrooms with a low student-teacher ratio. Students attend school on two campuses, with prekindergarten through grade 4 located on our Pinewoods Campus and grades 5-8 located in an independent building on our Sage Campus on the Russell Sage College campus. Within our community of learners, students are given the opportunity to participate in an engaging educational experience that integrates academic rigor with joyful learning.

The Susan Odell Taylor School Reopening Plan was produced by the school's Reopening Task Force, which is made up of administrators, trustees, and parents.

COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus. As such, new research and guidance may be developed and released over time. This plan was developed in accordance with the information and guidance available in July 2020. However, this plan may be updated from time-to-time as new information or guidance is released by appropriate agencies and entities. Updates will be posted to the SOTS website and communicated to our school community in keeping with this plan.

Communication to Families and Our Community

The SOTS intends to provide on-going communication to our constituents by utilizing our usual methods of communication and messaging. These include:

- Publishing the Reopening Plan on the SOTS website, with updates as needed
- Providing resources on COVID-19 prevention and safety per the CDC and DOH guidelines on the SOTS website
- Providing immediate messaging through the K-12 Alert system
- Posting information on our social media channels
- Emailing information to families in our Weekly Update, which is sent every Wednesday
- Orienting parents about our safety and prevention protocols through an all-school livestream Meet, as well as a COVID-19 section in our 2020-2021 Parent Handbook which is sent home and is accessible on our website.
- Orienting faculty and staff about our safety and prevention protocols during pre-opening meetings the week of August 31
- Installing signage throughout the buildings instructing all students, faculty and staff to adhere to CDC and DOH guidance regarding COVID-19 prevention and safety, including but not limited to hand hygiene, face coverings, social distancing, respiratory hygiene, and sanitization of the classroom environment.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Sectors

The SOTS has divided our campuses into “sectors,” which will allow students to interact with a consistent cohort each day. There will be no interaction between sectors by students or adults, with the exception of the school nurse and the office manager. Each sector has a self-contained HVAC system, as well as a separate entrance, classroom spaces, sinks, and bathrooms. Teachers/staff will remain in their sectors for the school day, except for restroom and eating breaks.

The sectors at the Pinewoods Campus are: Prekindergarten (main building), Kindergarten (main building), the 1/2 Class (main building), the 3/4 Class (separate building referred to as “the Bungalow”). The 5/6 Class and the 7/8 Class together comprise their own sector in the Walker Building on the Russell Sage College Campus.

Admittance to Buildings

For the safety of our students, only faculty, staff, and students will be permitted to enter the buildings. Anyone else will require permission from the Office Manager or an administrator to enter. Deliveries will be left at the door. Teachers/staff will be notified by the office manager when they receive a delivery.

Daily Screening

Vigilance will play a role in mitigating illness amongst the members of the SOTS community. All will have a role to play and regular screening will be a part of that plan.

On a daily basis, students are required to have their temperatures checked by a family member **PRIOR** to leaving their home for school. **Students with a temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher will not be allowed to attend school.** Additionally, students will have their temperatures checked approximately one hour after arrival at school. A student who has a temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher at school will proceed to the designated quarantine space and be sent home. (See Signs of Illness).

Each day parents/guardians are required to confirm to the school prior to the student’s arrival that the student does not have an escalated temperature. Families are not required to report the actual temperature, nor may the school keep records of student temperatures. An email to Mariann Haggerty, office manager, with the student’s name and the word CLEAR in the subject line will be sufficient documentation of a temperature less than 100 degrees Fahrenheit. (The Reopening Task Force continues to research other appropriate means of verification, including Apps.) Verbal clearance by any faculty or staff member is not sufficient.

Faculty and staff will be required to complete a daily screening questionnaire that includes a daily temperature check and questions about: the presence of symptoms of COVID-19,

proximity to someone who has COVID-19 symptoms, and travel outside of New York State. Students (with help from a parent/guardian) will be required to periodically complete the screening questionnaire.

Following recommendations by the CDC and NYSED, the SOTS will not require routine mandatory COVID-19 testing or antibody testing of students, faculty, or staff as a screening mechanism. The decision about whether a test should be conducted will be determined by a healthcare provider or the Rensselaer County Department of Health.

Signs of illness

Parents, guardians, faculty, and staff will observe for the following signs of COVID-19:

- Fever or chills (100 degrees Fahrenheit or greater)
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Parents, faculty, and staff will be instructed that any student or adult with a fever of at least 100 degrees Fahrenheit and/or symptoms of possible COVID-19 virus infection should not be present in school.

- Pinewoods Campus: Any student who exhibits symptoms of possible illness will be sent to the school nurse or Mariann Haggerty, office manager. A health assessment will be performed to determine whether the student should return to class or be sent home. If necessary, the ill student's parent/guardian will be contacted by email and K-12 Alert for pick up. The student will wait in the designated quarantine space until a parent/guardian arrives. The student will be under socially-distant visual supervision by Mariann Haggerty or the school nurse until picked up.
- Sage Campus: Any student who exhibits symptoms of possible illness will be sent to the designated quarantine space on the first floor. A faculty/staff member at Sage will be assigned to monitor the student. A health assessment will be performed to determine whether the student should return to class or be sent home. If necessary, the student's parent/guardian will be contacted by email and K-12 Alert for pick up. The student will be under socially-distant visual supervision until picked up.
- If the quarantine areas have been utilized, Mariann Haggerty will notify the custodial staff that the space will require cleaning and sanitization.
- Faculty and Staff: Any adult who exhibits one or more of the listed symptoms at school will be required to go home. A staff member who has been in the sector of the ill adult

will be asked to cover for the ill adult. If there is no one available, a substitute who has completed the daily questionnaire will be contacted by the teacher or the office manager.

Cleaning/Closing Response to COVID-19 Symptoms

The SOTS may close the sector of a person who exhibits COVID-19 symptoms to allow the custodial staff to clean and disinfect all areas used by the sick person. Families will be notified by K-12 Alert and email that their child's sector is closing for a period of cleaning and sanitization.

Return to School

All persons who have screened positive for COVID-19 symptoms will need to contact their healthcare provider for assessment and/or testing.

- At a minimum, a return to school will require documentation from a healthcare provider that an individual is clear to return to an in-person learning environment.
- If an individual from the school tests positive for COVID-19, the SOTS will immediately contact the Rensselaer County Department of Health. The SOTS will take direction from the Rensselaer County DOH on the appropriate response.
- A negative COVID-19 test may be required for readmittance to school.

Quarantining A Sector

There may be times when the spread of COVID-19 within our community needs to be addressed.

- If a student from a given sector is confirmed to be COVID-19 positive, then that student's class will quarantine at home for the following 14 days. If the student who tested positive has a sibling in a different sector, the sibling will quarantine at home but the sibling's classmates will not, unless the sibling tests positive as well.
- If a family member of a student is confirmed to be COVID-19 positive, the SOTS will take direction from the Rensselaer County DOH on whether a sector needs to be quarantined.
- Quarantined students will participate in remote learning during the course of their quarantine.

Closing School

The SOTS, like all schools in New York State, is subject to the Executive Orders of Governor Cuomo and will close if the Governor decides it is necessary. Additionally, if a high percentage of students and/or faculty/staff are absent due to illness, the SOTS may close. In either case, the school will enter a phase of remote learning.

Contact Tracing Support

The SOTS must notify the Rensselaer County DOH immediately upon being informed of any positive COVID-19 test by an individual within the school, including students, faculty, staff, and visitors. The Rensselaer County DOH will implement restrictions and monitoring of COVID-19 infected or exposed individuals. The SOTS will notify families and faculty/staff members who may have had contact with an exposed/infected individual but privacy laws prohibit the SOTS from disclosing the name of the individual.

Face Coverings

All persons in the school buildings who are not able to maintain a social distance of 6 feet must wear cloth-based masks. This applies to all students, faculty and staff. In addition, masks must be worn in all public areas such as hallways, bathrooms, school buses, and during movement around the school campuses.

Exceptions to wearing a mask:

- Students working quietly at their desks in classrooms that allow for 6 feet of social distance can take a mask break.
- Students may take mask breaks in designated areas that allow a person to practice 6 feet of social distance.
- A student who is having difficulty breathing should be given a mask break and be evaluated by the school nurse.
- Students in areas that allow for 6 feet of social distance can remove their masks to eat.
- Students who are learning or playing outside in low-risk activities do not need to wear masks. Common childhood games and activities that do not involve prolonged close physical contact are considered low risk.

Provision of masks

Students: Each family is asked to obtain 5 cloth face masks per child, one for each day of the school week. Masks should be labeled with the child's initials. The SOTS will have a supply of masks for children who forget their masks.

Faculty/Staff: Faculty and staff can wear their own face masks; however, the SOTS will also provide face coverings.

Care of face masks

Face masks should be washed or replaced after each day's use. Masks cannot be shared. Students and families are asked to take responsibility for maintaining individual face masks.

Social Distancing

Members of the SOTS community will strive to maintain appropriate social distancing of 6 feet (5 feet between the edge of desks) between all individuals in school facilities and on school

grounds. Face masks are mandatory for any and all activities where appropriate social distance cannot be maintained.

Meetings will be held virtually, if possible, including but not limited to meetings of the: faculty, Board, Child Study Team, parents/teachers, and Committee on Special Education.

Arrival and Departure

***Please note that any student who has not appropriately submitted verification of a CLEAR temperature check by 8:00 am will not be allowed to enter the school buildings. Verbal clearance will not be allowed.**

Pinewoods Campus

Arrival: Parents and buses will drop off students wearing masks between 8:15 and 8:30 am. Students will depart buses and cars and walk to the socially distant markers on the entry walkways. They will proceed to the entry door of their sector. Parents can wait in line with their children but **they will not be allowed in the building**. Students in kindergarten through 4th grade will be greeted by their teachers. Children in prekindergarten will be escorted into the prekindergarten sector by a teacher/staff member.

Departure: Students can be picked up between 3:25 and 3:40 pm. Students will wait to be picked up in their sector (prekindergarten and kindergarten) or outside in socially distant lines (1/2 and 3/4 classes). The PA system will be used to announce the arrival of the bus or car for pick up. When a student's name or bus is called, he/she will proceed to the crosswalk for pick up, using the socially distant markers on the walkway.

Sage Campus

Arrival: Parents and buses will drop off students wearing masks on First Street between 8:00 - 8:10 am. An adult will be supervising drop off. Students will enter the Sage Campus and proceed to their classrooms while maintaining social distancing. This may require students to wait in the hallway to allow for 6 feet between students in the stairwell.

Departure: Parents and buses will pick up students on Division Street between 3:20 - 3:30 pm. Students will maintain social distancing while waiting.

Handwashing

The SOTS will:

- Train all students, faculty and staff on proper handwashing behavior
- Install signage depicting proper handwashing techniques
- Create time in the daily schedule for handwashing prior to and after: use of the restroom, recess, use of shared items and equipment, eating, before/after putting on face masks, after sneezing/coughing and handling dirty tissues.

- Handwashing is preferable to use of hand sanitizers. Touchless hand sanitizers are available to students on the Sage Campus. Teachers/staff at the Pinewoods Campus will spray students' hands with sanitizer as necessary.

Respiratory Hygiene

The COVID-19 virus spreads from person to person in droplets produced by coughs and sneezes. It is important that all persons cover their mouths and noses with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Each student will have a personal box of tissues and will dispose of used tissues in the trash. If no tissues are available, using the inside of the elbow is preferable to using the hands. Always perform hand hygiene after sneezing, coughing, or handling dirty tissues. Signage promoting respiratory hygiene will be posted throughout the school. Teachers will reinforce proper respiratory hygiene behaviors.

Cleaning and Disinfection

The SOTS's custodial staff is responsible for cleaning and disinfecting the school each day. The custodial staff will keep a log of the scope of cleaning and disinfection.

Students and teachers can contribute to cleaning efforts of high-touch areas at periodic intervals throughout the day. Classrooms will be stocked with a child-safe, CDC-approved disinfectant spray.

In addition:

- Faculty and staff will ensure that any shared materials are disinfected between student uses. Items awaiting disinfection will be removed from student access.
- All drinking fountains will be closed. Students should bring a labeled, filled water bottle to school each day. Water bottles can be refilled at sinks or water coolers.
- Students will have their own personal supplies (pencils, crayons, markers, etc.) rather than using common materials.
- Touchless faucets, soap dispensers, and paper towel dispensers will be installed in restrooms and by sinks that lack these items.
- No-touch trash cans will be available in all classrooms and bathrooms.
- The playground will undergo routine cleaning; however, the CDC does not recommend using disinfectant on outdoor playgrounds and wooden structures. Shared gym/play equipment (balls, scooters, etc.) will be cleaned regularly. Students will be required to wash their hands before and after outdoor play.
- All heating/ air conditioning units were serviced and new filters installed in July of 2020 at the Pinewoods Campus.

Beforecare and Aftercare

In order to reduce cross-exposure between students in our sectors, there will be changes to our childcare programs. At this time, we are working to identify adults who can manage the students in their sectors during before/aftercare. It is likely that the hours of care will be reduced, in recognition of the need for our students to take a break from the routines in place due to COVID-19. Updates will follow as soon as a plan that maintains the safety and well-being of our students has been determined.

Food

All food will be brought from home, including snacks. Students will have snack and lunch in their sectors. Masks can be removed during eating, as students will maintain social distancing.

Safety Drills

The SOTS will conduct 8 evacuation and 4 lockdown drills at each campus during the 2020-2021 school year. Modifications to prior drill procedures to minimize risk of spreading infection include:

Pinewoods Campus

- Fire Drills - Students will wear masks and exit through their sector egress in a quick orderly manner. Students in the main building will proceed to their assigned gathering spots in the parking lot and line up in socially distant lines. Teachers will instruct students to use the parking space lines to assist with maintaining socially distant lines. Students in the Bungalow will proceed to their assigned spot in the backyard and maintain a socially distant line. Teachers will show students where alternate exits for fire drills are located and assure them that in the event of a fire, all exits can be accessed.
- Lockdown Drills - The teachers and students will practice emergency procedures; however, students will not all “hide”/”shelter” at the same time. The whole class will practice turning off the lights, locking and blocking the entrance to the classroom, lowering the blinds, and maintaining silence. Students will stay at their desks and individually practice going to the lockdown spot in the classroom.

Sage Campus

- Fire Drills - The 5/6 class and the 7/8 class will participate in separate drills on the same day. Students will wear masks, exit in a quick orderly manner, and proceed to their assigned gathering spot. Social distancing will be maintained once the students have exited the building. Teachers will show students where alternate exits for fire drills are located and assure them that in the event of a fire, all exits can be accessed.
- Lockdown Drills - The teachers and students will practice emergency procedures; however, students will not all “hide”/”shelter” at the same time. The whole class will practice turning off the lights, locking and blocking the entrance to the classroom, lowering the blinds, and maintaining silence. Students will stay at their desks and individually practice going to the lockdown spot in the classroom.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Learning Scenarios

The SOTS's learning environment in 2020-2021 will occur on-site, remotely, and through a hybrid on-site/remote environment . The faculty has been evaluating their curricular and learning goals throughout the summer in preparation for the different learning scenarios. A positive outcome of the 2019-2020 COVID-19 school closure was that the faculty, staff and students were able to practice and hone their skills as participants in a virtual school. Last year's remote experience is informing our decisioning about the best, and most effective, teaching and learning strategies to employ as we embark on the new school year. We are committed to implementing our academically rigorous, engaging curriculum across all learning scenerios.

Definitions of the learning scenarios

On-site or in-person learning: Students and teachers are in their classrooms, practicing social distancing and PPE protocols. Teachers and students have personal access to each other and their learning tools. Behavioral expectations are clearly defined and practiced.

Remote learning: Students and teachers are at home, using technology to access each other. Students will access their learning tools in their home environment. Behavioral expectations for remote learning will be clearly defined. Students will practice remote learning behaviors when they are on-site. This will allow for a smoother transition to remote learning.

Hybrid learning: Hybrid learning occurs when some students in a sector are on-site, while others are required to stay home. This means that the teacher has to access students in person and through technology. Teachers may modify their lesson plans to accommodate the fact that learning tools will be accessed in school and at home. Students are expected to adhere to the behavioral expectations of the learning scenario they are in.

School Schedule

The school day at our Pinewoods Campus is 8:30 am – 3:30 pm. The school day for our Sage Campus is 8:10 am – 3:20 pm. We plan to implement a similar school schedule across all three learning scenarios. If the school moves to fully remote learning, the teachers will depend mostly on synchronous (real time) learning, with a period of asynchronous learning built into the schedule on Wednesday afternoons. Teachers and students will prepare for remote learning by practicing during periods of on-site learning.

To avoid cross-exposure between sectors and to achieve a safe learning environment during the COVID-19 pandemic, we anticipate the following changes to the schedule:

Art: Sage students will participate in in-person art. Pinewoods students will participate in virtual art classes that will be taught synchronously (in real time) by our art teacher with assistance from the classroom teacher.

PE, Music and Yoga: Due to the 12 foot distancing restrictions for these subject areas and the need to avoid cross-exposure through the teacher, students will have reduced time in these areas. A modified rotational schedule is being developed.

Spanish: Sage students will participate in in-person Spanish instruction. Pinewoods students will participate in virtual Spanish instruction that will be taught synchronously (in real time) by our Spanish teacher with assistance from the classroom teacher.

Recess/Rec: Students will be given additional extended periods of outdoor activity. These periods are being built into the daily schedule and will maintain the separation of sectors.

Social Emotional Well-being

The SOTS is known for its supportive learning environment, and our culture is rooted in caring for and nurturing each person's growth and development. However, we recognize that our students and families are experiencing unprecedented challenges and stressors due to the COVID-19 virus. In the 2020-2021 school year, the school plans to:

- Continue our Mindfulness program to support the development of coping and resilience skills in our prekindergarten through 8th grade students
- Schedule weekly Child Study Team (CST) meetings. Teachers will be encouraged to recommend students/families to the CST at the earliest signs of dissonance so that the team can problem-solve and recommend a course of supportive action.
- Have each student provide a quick daily emotional check-in during Morning Meeting/Circle Time to give the teacher a sense of the child's mindset. Teachers will follow up with students who appear to be struggling with an issue or concern.
- Provide professional learning opportunities to the faculty and staff on ways to support students during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Attendance/Chronic Absenteeism

The SOTS will collect attendance data every day, for both in-person and remote settings. During remote learning, attendance will also be taken throughout the school day. Students who are chronically absent from in-person learning and/or students who are absent from all/portions of the day during remote learning will be referred to the Child Study Team. A supportive course of action will be determined by the CST and implemented.

Vulnerable Populations

People who are at an increased risk for complications from COVID-19 may need added or alternative provisions for social distancing and PPE. Persons with special needs should first consult with their healthcare provider to determine what provisions need to be made to ensure the person's safety. If the SOTS cannot effectively carry out the recommendations, the school will work with the person/person's family to provide a virtual connection to the school through remote instruction or telework.

Technology

All students will be 1:1 with a school-supplied device in the 2020-2021 school year. The devices will be managed through the school's G-Suite for Education Enterprise. Students are required to use the school-supplied device for remote learning, unless permission is granted by the classroom teacher.

All school devices are connected to Securly's cloud-based web filter for schools. Securly allows the school's administration to block/allow access to online activity, including games, social media, and specific content. The school's administration has full visibility into online activity and receives notifications for flagged content with the use of the most sophisticated AI engine in student safety.

After School Enrichment Programs

In order to maintain the highest standards of safety during the COVID-19 pandemic, the SOTS will suspend after school enrichment programs until further notice. It is our hope that we will be able to reinstate enrichment programming in the spring.

Special Education

The SOTS administration will work with the service providers and families of students with disabilities to ensure that IEP goals are met across all learning scenarios.

During periods of on-site learning, our regular schedule will proceed as planned.

During periods of remote learning/hybrid learning, the service providers will work with the classroom teachers to ensure that the appropriate technology and learning tools are in place. Scheduled services should proceed as usual. If a student is having difficulty with the remote learning environment, the student will be referred to the Child Study Team.

Bus Transportation

The SOTS relies upon the transportation departments of our families' districts of residence for busing. Students and their families are expected to comply with the health practices that their public school transportation departments put into place, including wearing masks and socially distancing.

CONCLUSION

The SOTS believes we are currently well-positioned to return to an in-person scenario in the fall. Our small student population, dedicated faculty and staff, and building configurations support our commitment to providing a safe, healthy learning environment for our school community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

