



An open letter to Springwood School as we begin the 2020-21 school year

Moving toward the opening of school on Monday, August 17th, is an event most of our school community is anticipating. But for many, it may be a stressful, overwhelming, and frightening day. I know families have been anxious to hear the plan for the reopening of school. There are myriad details that are not covered in this document but will be communicated by teachers as we work through the school days. The purpose of this letter is to provide the foundational guidelines to begin the school year.

These past five months have been challenging and difficult for many. The personal journeys related to COVID-19 have been as numerous as there are people. We have endured frustrations of isolation from friends and family, the disruption of life, and some have even faced the virus head-on. We all want things to go back to normal, yet the COVID experience created unpredictability and tore at our very nature and culture in a way our generation has never experienced.

In this sea of uncertainty, we seek to reunite our school community by opening classes on campus. Safety concerns, the effectiveness of education, and the needs of our children for personal, social, and educational development dominate our thinking. I know, personally, these past five months have been the most intense, overwhelming and challenging months of my life in trying to understand the needs of our school community, students, parents, faculty, and staff.

It is complicated to determine:

- is it safe or unsafe to open school on campus or should classes be virtual?
- do we wear masks?
- how far apart do we need to be?
- how do we sanitize facilities?
- when do we open and how do we do that?
- do we play sports?
- do we have chorus and theater?
- the list goes on and on.

Here's what we know:

- Teachers want to be with their students. They crave the opportunity to teach.
- Parents want to do what is best for their children. They want them to develop mentally, physically, socially, and spiritually. They want them to be happy and to enjoy life.
- Students want to be with their friends. They want to be together, to socialize, to play together, to eat together, to experience life together; for life to get back to normal. School is the primary place all of that happens.

Here is what else we know:

- We are all trying to determine how to approach this pandemic. We have a hard time deciding what is true and what is not true.
- The news covers the virus from every angle. Which angle do we believe?
- The way we need to address this pandemic as a school community will change as we go through the school year.

Here is what WE BELIEVE

WE BELIEVE it is essential to be together on campus as a community

WE BELIEVE we can reduce the risk transmission of the virus within our school community if we meticulously and with great discipline follow designated protocol when we are together.

WE BELIEVE:

- Masks are worn to protect others
- Masks are better than no masks
- N94/95 masks are better than cloth masks
- Multi-Layered cloth masks are better than single-layer cloth masks
- Masks are better than face shields (face shields do not contain aerosols, microscopic water molecules dispersed through the air, which are a primary transmitter of the virus)
- Masks are necessary indoors or within 6 feet of another person outdoors

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- Six-foot physical distancing is better than closer distancing
 - Small groups (10 or under) are better than larger groups (10+)
 - Outside is better than inside
 - Fresh air is better than air conditioning (AC)
 - Individual room AC units are better than multiple room / central AC
 - Fresh air circulation with a door or window open is better than a closed AC room

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- Hand washing is essential to reducing the virus
 - Hand washing is better than hand sanitizer
 - Handwashing frequently (every 2 hours) is better than infrequently
 - Hand sanitizer is better than nothing

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- Anyone experiencing any combination of symptoms related to the COVID-19 virus, severe cold or flu symptoms, should not be on campus and should attend school virtually from home.

WE BELIEVE there is **No More Normal**. Consequently, **we are committed to school being as familiar as possible. FAMILIAR means On-campus, In-person, In-class**. We will provide as many extra-curricular activities as we deem viable based on our current knowledge for the health and safety of our community.

WE BELIEVE aerosols are the number one issue related to virus transmission based on what we know today. Aerosols are the microscopic, invisible water molecules that float in the air and do not dissipate or fall to the ground within three feet of a person. They hang in the air and circulate throughout a room, placing people at a higher risk of exposure to the virus. Aerosols are a significant influence on

determining our protocol for dealing with the virus. Consequently, we will only be using classrooms with individual air conditioning units for student activities and, when feasible, we will group students in cohorts to reduce potential exposure.

Since each classroom has its own individual air conditioning unit, it becomes its own independent environment. As an added precaution, we will keep external classroom doors ajar slightly. The draft causes aerosols to settle to the ground reducing potential transmission of the virus.

Here is the backbone our plan to reopen:

We will hold classes on-campus, in-person beginning at 8 am August 17th, 2020.

We will adhere to a strict protocol of expectations based on 4 C's

- Cover Face
- Create Space
- Clean Hands
- Consider Symptoms

COVER FACE

- Face masks are now considered the best deterrent to the transmission of the virus.
- Face masks will be worn at all times when indoors or within 6' of someone outdoors who is not a member of your immediate family.
- Face masks will be required for students from 2nd - 12th grades and all adults on campus as mandated by the Governor of Alabama.
 - Based on our knowledge at the writing of this document, children below the age of nine (9) are considered a low risk of contracting the virus, although they may be carriers.
- Not all face masks are created equal.
 - We do not recommend gaiters (polyester single layer neck and face coverings) or single-ply cloth masks.
 - We recommend layered paper masks or three-ply cloth masks.
- Masks may be solid colors, prints or patterns and Springwood lettering or logos. They should not contain lettering, markings or logos with any political, athletic team or business logos and/or advertisements that will become a distraction to the school community.
- We recommend students come to school with at least two (2) masks every day.
- **A mask must cover the face from the bridge of the nose to the chin, and preferably fit snugly under the chin.**
- "Cover face" also applies to when a person sneezes or coughs.
 - Cough or sneeze into a tissue and discard the tissue immediately in a trash receptacle then wash or use hand sanitizer.
 - Cough or sneeze into your elbow to reduce the water droplets being circulated into the air.
 - Cough or sneeze into your hand, then immediately wash or use hand sanitizer.
- We encourage teachers to hold as many activities as possible outdoors to provide a mask break for students as long as the students maintain the 6' physical distancing.

CREATE SPACE

- Physical distancing of 6 feet must be maintained whether indoors or outdoors with anyone who is not a part of the same family household.

- Covered outdoor walkways throughout campus have “S” graphics denoting the physical space necessary when walking on campus.
- Classrooms have been redesigned to ensure physical distancing of desks while students are in class.
- Bathrooms will have limited occupancy due to physical distancing.
 - They will be monitored by faculty and staff during class transitions.
 - There is a specific protocol for students that teachers will enforce should the bathroom use become necessary during class time.
- Use only outside classroom doors located in each classroom for entry and exit:
 - **There is no access to central hallways and common areas** in the Elementary, FAC, Media Center and High School building, except for access to the restrooms through the closest doors.
- **Parents and visitors to campus will not be permitted access to any buildings on campus until further notice.**

CLEAN HANDS

- Students need to wash their hands multiple times during the school day.
- The purpose of handwashing is to kill and remove the virus from hands which are a primary transmitter of the virus when you touch your mouth, nose and or eyes.
- Teachers will facilitate scheduled handwashing throughout the day. (Arriving on campus, after using the restrooms, mid-morning, before and after snacks and lunch, mid-afternoon, and before leaving school)
- Handwashing techniques need to be a vigorous 20 second, soapy process.
- Each classroom has a sink for handwashing except three rooms on the right side of the High School (Mrs. Thomas, Mrs. Camp and Dr. Jackson) and Mrs. Miller's room in the FAC. Temporary hand washing stations will be located in the back of the High School and outside Mrs. Miller's room in the FAC.
- Use hand sanitizer whenever hand washing is not available when entering a room, handling equipment or commonly used handles or faucets.

CONSIDER SYMPTOMS

- Self-check for temperatures over 100.4 and COVID-19 symptoms before coming on campus.
 - **Parents must check their students each morning before bringing them to school to ensure our school community's safety.**
 - **If a child (or adult) is experiencing a fever or other COVID-19 symptoms, they should not come on campus until they have been symptom and fever-free for at least 24 hours without fever reducing medications.**
 - COVID-19 Symptoms include:
 - ~ fever or chills
 - ~ 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, vomiting, or diarrhea

- Work from home if experiencing COVID symptoms, a fever over 100.4, flu symptoms, a cold, or runny nose.

Cleaning and Sanitization of the classrooms:

- Each teacher will sanitize the surfaces of their classrooms between classes.
- Classrooms will be cleaned and disinfected each evening.

Delivery of Classroom Education:

We will approach the educational process in three specific ways:

- The first is on-campus, in-person classes,
- The second is virtual classes which will occur only when there is a need to suspend on-campus classes for one or more grade levels or individual classes, one or more buildings, or in the most severe case for the whole campus, and
- The third model is in between the first and second models. It is our hybrid model. The hybrid model permits students who are not feeling well due to COVID, flu, or severe cold symptoms, to log into the live classroom on campus to virtually attend class.

The key to all three delivery models is full implementation of the Learning Management System we initially introduced in the Spring of 2020. The FACTS -SIS (RenWeb) Learning Management System becomes a one-stop-shop for students, parents, and teachers related to classwork, assignments, teacher resources, homework, and assessments. If you have questions about how you will access LMS, there is information on the Springwood web page to direct you.

More information and further explanation of the system and how each teacher will want you to use the LMS in their classroom will be provided by the teachers as you meet in class with them next week.

Here is what you need to know for the opening of school:

NOTE: Our policies and procedures for school operation during a pandemic follow the most recent guidelines from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the State of Alabama, and local health officials.

We will prioritize compliance with local guidelines first, then state, then national.

We convened a Reopening Task Force (listed at the end of this document) who reviewed and consulted with us to reopen the school.

Arrival on campus:

- When students arrive on campus, they go straight to their first-period class. There are no areas for them to gather in buildings since central halls or commons areas are not being used at this time.

Building Access:

- Only students, faculty, staff, designated vendors, or volunteers will be allowed in any building on campus.
- No parents will have access to any building on campus unless granted special permission.
- For any adult, faculty, staff member, designated vendor, or volunteer to gain access to a building on campus, they must first report to the Fine Arts Center (FAC) and have their temperature checked and respond to the COVID-19 symptom questions.

- **No one with a temperature in the 100.4 range or who cannot successfully answer all the COVID-19 questions will be permitted to enter a building. They will be asked to leave the campus immediately.**
- **Students are not required to have their temperature checked or answer the COVID survey questions at the beginning of the school day.**
 - **However, parents are expected to check their student's temperature and COVID-19 symptoms.**
- There is no public access to central hallways in any building. Only essential personal whose offices are located in a central hallway or need equipment located in the central halls will have access.
- The Primary and Elementary Buildings, FAC, Media Center, and High School main entries will not be accessible to students or parents at any time.
- The only access to any classroom is through external doors to each classroom.
- Students will turn right when they exit classrooms (even if they are going to the first room to their left) and move around the building to the right to their next class to ensure physical distancing.

Special Issues related to campus protocol:

- Each student must bring their own supplies such as pencils, pens, markers, etc. for personal use and should not share items with another student or faculty member.
 - Any shared toys, apparatus, or equipment will be sanitized after each use.
- No lockers will be available during the pandemic protocol.
- No water fountains are available during the pandemic plan.
 - Students should bring a personal water bottle with their name on it.
 - No drinks or food will be shared at any time.
 - Jr and Sr High students need to have personal earphones or headphones to participate in virtual classroom opportunities while on campus.
- Students, faculty, and staff will use specifically designated bathrooms determined by their location on campus.
 - Access will be limited to 3 students at a time (one [1] at a time in the Primary and Elementary Buildings) because of physical distancing.
 - Bathrooms will be cleaned regularly after each significant use to reduce contact transmission of the virus.

Lunch and Breaks: All snacks (brought from home) and lunches will be either eaten in classrooms or outdoors. Our lunchroom service is fully functional and will provide preordered lunches through a scheduled touchless delivery system.

- There will be no morning breaks for snacks for the Jr and Sr High students.
 - Due to additional time demands on the daily schedule and the need for extra time between classes, snack time is no longer in the daily schedule.
 - Students are encouraged to bring snacks from home to be eaten during the transition between 2nd and 3rd period classes.
- Lunch will be served from the west walkway outside the FAC near the external kitchen door.
 - Students can bring their lunch or order from the lunchroom.
 - Microwaves will not be available.
 - Lunches will be individually prepared based on orders taken in the classroom by the first-period teachers.

- Students can eat lunch either in their classroom or outdoors (near their assigned classroom) depending on the weather conditions.
- Junior High students will eat at the beginning of 5th period.
- Senior High school students will eat at the end of 5th period.

Sessions:

- JH and SH Sessions will begin the day on the first and third Wednesday of a five-day week.
- They will occur virtually.
- 4th-6th grades will participate in Sessions at the discretion of their classroom teacher based on the appropriateness of the theme or subject matter.

Extra-curricular activities including athletics, drama, and chorus will be analyzed and handled on a day-to-day basis contingent on the local virus situation.

Field Trip and Class Trips:

At this time, we have suspended all field and/or class trips. When health conditions permit, we will resume off-campus class trips and activities.

Busses and School transportation:

- Springfield will continue to run morning and afternoon busses between LaGrange and the school.
 - Masks are required to ride the bus
 - Temperature checks and COVID survey questions will be asked because of the closed AC environment of the bus
 - A window will be opened slightly to reduce aerosols
 - Physical distancing will be observed on busses with children seated every other row, alternating window and aisle seating
- All use of busses will be limited during the initial months of the school year, and determination of the use of busses will be made on a one-by-one basis guided by the most current CDC, state or local COVID-19 guidelines.
 - Until such times as buses can be used efficiently, it is recommended that parents plan on driving their students to extra-curricular events

Extended Care will be a very tightly monitored program because of the need to mix K4-6th graders in one room together.

- Masks will be required for all students and teachers. The afterschool program includes students of various ages from PreK through 6th grade. This wide range of ages makes grade level isolation impossible during afterschool. Masks are the best option to limit exposure to airborne aerosol contaminants indoors.
- Students will be seated with the same grade level or with siblings while inside. Tables will be spaced 6 ft apart, and each table will be set up by grade level or by family.
- Students' temperature will be taken when arriving in after school and they will be asked how they feel using the COVID-19 survey questions. We understand that some sicknesses and temperatures can show up in the afternoon, and after nap time for the younger students, and we want to ensure the safety of all participants.
- Doors will remain open while students are inside to reduce aerosols.
- Extended Care is an additional cohort. If a student or teacher from Extended Care tests positive for COVID-19, it may be necessary to ask the entire group to quarantine for 14 days.

COVID-19 Exposure or Contraction Protocol

We are fortunate that each classroom has independent single air conditioning units. It allows us to approach each class individually to reduce the transmission of the virus.

- Students in grades K4-6 will function in cohorts of self-contained classrooms with individual classroom AC units.
 - Self-contained classes in grades K4-6 will learn together, eat together, play together, have restroom breaks scheduled together. They will be treated as a separate family unit while on campus to reduce the transmission of the virus.
- Specials teachers (Music, Art, PE, Academic Support) come to the student's classroom or lead virtually rather than having students move.
- The 7th-grade class will function as a cohort, but they will not be in a self-contained classroom. The 7th grade class will move together to the classroom of each of teacher.
 - Teachers will sanitize the room between class periods.
- Grades 8-12 will not be in cohorts, nor self-contained classrooms. Class schedules will not permit the same strategy as we are using with Grades K4-7. Therefore, the use of masks, physical distancing, hand hygiene, and not attending classes on campus if you are not feeling well or have tested positive with the virus are all essential to enable us to remain in class on campus.

The self-contained cohort classrooms enable us to handle each classroom (cohort) from K4-7 separately. Each exposure or individual contraction of the virus will be evaluated to determine if isolation, quarantine, or a virtual classroom model is necessary.

Please note that our procedures reflect the latest information available to us at the time. Any or all procedures may change based on the latest information, validated by local health officials and school leadership. Communication of procedural changes will be distributed to inform the school community of new protocols or approaches to handling the virus.

Parents along with faculty and staff must notify the school immediately if they, their child who is enrolled in Springwood School, or anyone with whom their child has had close contact (*Close Contact means 15 minutes within 6 feet of the other person regardless of whether masks were being worn or not*)

- has been diagnosed with COVID-19,
- is awaiting test results for the Coronavirus,
- exhibits symptoms of COVID-19, including but not limited to:
 - fever or chills
 - 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, etc.
- has been exposed to a confirmed outbreak of COVID-19,

- has traveled
 - internationally
 - on a cruise ship, or
 - to a U.S. “hotspot” as designated by CDC or other local public health authorities.

NOTE: When a case is confirmed, contact tracing begins. Anyone who has spent more than 15 minutes within six feet of the infected person (per CDC guidance) regardless of masks will quarantine for 14 days. The 15-minute time limit is not cumulative but applies to individual exposure episodes.

The school will communicate:

- any known cases to the school community without identifying the member of the school communities by name or inference,
- how we will follow guidance from local public health authorities on how to deal with each situation, and
- changes in procedures based on community conditions and public health best practices.

Isolation and Quarantine Guidelines

- **ISOLATION** separates sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick.
- **QUARANTINE** separates and restricts the movement of people exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick. These people may have been exposed to a virus and do not know it, or they may have the condition but do not show symptoms.

<https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/quarantineisolation.html>

A student or faculty member must **self-isolate** for 14 days from date of exposure if they have a known exposure to coronavirus,

A student or faculty member must **self-quarantine for 14 days** if they have symptoms of COVID-19 with no known exposure and are waiting for test results. At the end of the 14 days quarantine, they may return to normal activities if they have not experienced any COVID-19 Symptoms or as long as they have been fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication or have received a negative COVID-19 test result.

If a student or faculty member receives a positive test result, that individual must self-isolate for 14 days, while individuals in the same classroom must self-quarantine for 14 days.

If a classroom, building, or the entire school must quarantine, we will suspend on-campus classes for that group and initiate a virtual classroom educational process.

SWS Reopening Task Force:

Springwood School is fortunate to have a group of health care and community leaders who volunteered to provide direction and review the school reopening plan. The task force has consulted on our plans to reopen on-campus and in-person classes. We are grateful for their commitment to the school being as safe an environment as possible.

- Chris Busby SWS Parent; Director of Commercial and Community Development, Chambers CO Development Authority
- Cindy Brooks SWS- Alumni parent, Director of Business Development & Occupational Health, Lanier hospital

- Drew Dorsey SWS Parent, Director of Operations, Springwood School
- Beth Evans SWS Parent, Health and Science Instructor THINC
- John Hull SWS Parent, Vice President, Aflac Human Resources (US) at Aflac Inc.
- Brad Huguley SWS Parent, SWS Board Member, Caldwell Banker Realtor
- Jennifer Key SWS Parent, Chief Nursing Officer, Piedmont Hospital, Newnan, GA
- Valerie Kambeitz SWS Parent, RN, Clinical Educator 1, EAMC East Alabama,
- Greg Nichols Ex. VP, Administrator, EAMC Lanier
- Dr. Pat Martin SWS Alumni Parent, Orthopedic Surgeon
- Jessica Yeager Former SWS Parent, Chambers County EMA Director
- Holly Carey SWS Parent, Vice-Chair SWS Board of Trustees, Professor of Biblical Studies, Point University
- Millie Wilkerson Office Manager and Receptionist, Springwood School

Conclusion

The plan outlined in this document is designed to provide over-all strategy to the school community. Many of the details will be provided through teachers, coaches and school leaders as we go through the COVID-experience together. The direction of our plan is to keep the educational process moving forward. Details of our plan will be altered as our knowledge of the virus expands. Our commitment is to adapt and continually identify the best approach to maintain the health and safety of our school community.

Sincerely Submitted,



Mr. Lowrie B. McCown
Head of School