

# **Veritas Prep's** **Reopening** **Handbook**

Veritas Prep Charter School  
2020-2021 School Year

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# School-Wide Reopening Logistics

## Phased Reopening Timeline

Veritas will utilize a phased approach to reopening the school building. We will start with a hybrid model, and potentially move to a full-in person model (5 days per week) if and when health and safety as well as MA Department of Education guidance permit.

### Phase 1: Students Currently In-Person

- 38 students in hybrid (2 day per week) model. Prioritized highest needs students, and prioritized lower grades.
  - 5th: 13 students
  - 6th: 8 students
  - 7th: 6 students
  - 8th: 4 students

### Phase 2: 5th Grade Students Return in-person

- 5th Grade Students return on Monday, April 5th
- 5th Grade Teachers return on or before Monday, March 29th

### Phase 3: 6-8th Grade Students Return in-person

- Students return Monday, April 26th\*\*
- Teachers return on or before Wednesday, April 14th

**\*\*Please make special note of travel guidance as April 26th is right after April Vacation\*\***

Travel regulations and restrictions are outlined by the State of MA and can be found on the State's website: [www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov).

**In the event of any travel during April break or otherwise, families must inform the Nurse Kim Ravizza and follow instructions from her as it pertains to returning to the building.**

# Student Cohorts

There are two different cohorts of students for the 5th grade. Students and families opted into a 5 day in-person model on a March 2021 family survey.

- **Cohort A:** In-Person Learning 5-days per week
- **Cohort B:** Full Remote Learning

**In-Person Teachers:** As often as possible, the in-person teachers will be the teachers they have had for the whole year. In some cases, we may have to staff rooms in which the child will learn on the computer from their classroom teachers and have another adult as an academic tutor facilitating the in-person instruction.

Please note that responses on the student survey given out to each grade level in March is binding through the end of the school year.

# School Schedule

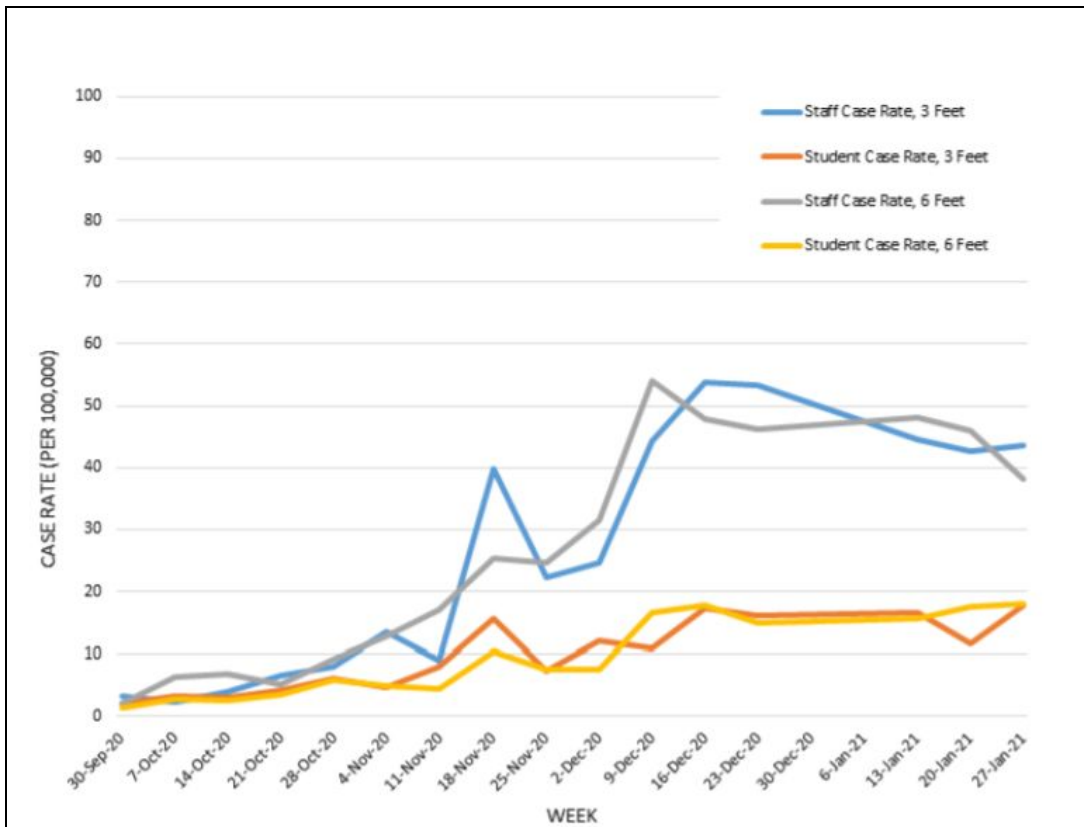
Both cohorts A and B will follow the same schedule each day. Mask breaks are built into the schedule for in-person students and are breaks for students who are learning remotely as well. The schedule has been slightly modified to allow for outdoor mask breaks and staggered lunch blocks.

**The schedule is still being revised to allow for appropriate distancing during meals and mask breaks.**

# In-School Safety Protocols

Veritas will follow all MA Department of Public Health (DPH) guidelines for reopening school to ensure the safest opening possible to ensure maximum protection of our school community. Our classrooms will be set up according to the state guidelines of 3-6 feet of distance between desks, and 8-10 feet of teacher space at the front of the classroom.

In a study published in the Oxford University Press for the Infectious Diseases Society of America, doctors found “There is no significant difference in K-12 student and staff SARS-CoV-2 case rates in Massachusetts public school districts that implemented  $\geq 3$  feet versus  $\geq 6$  feet of physical distancing between students, provided other mitigation measures, such as universal masking, are implemented.” The graph below represents this finding. Additional information about the safety of this distance can be found [here](#).



**COVID Code of Conduct:** The [Veritas COVID code of conduct](#) gives an overview of safety protocols followed by the school and needs to be signed by every family before they return to the school building. Failure to follow the safety protocols outlined may result in a denial of entry to the school building.

**Daily Assessment Tool:** Families should work together to independently complete the daily [COVID ASSESSMENT TOOL](#) each morning before coming to the building. If the student or family experiences any of the COVID symptoms, they are expected to stay home, consult their medical provider, and report their child's absence to the teacher. Also, families must be cleared by Nurse Kim Ravizza to re-enter the building.

**Masks:** All adults and students in the building will be required to wear masks during the school day, except during mask breaks or meals which are indicated on the schedule.

**Social Distancing:** Classes will be set up with a distance of 3-6 feet between students, and when masks are off, all staff and students **must** maintain a safe social distance of 6 feet or more.

**Hygiene and Handwashing:** The school will promote proper handwashing and hygiene.

**High Touch Surfaces:** Door handles, handrails, bathroom counters and sinks, as well as other high touch surfaces are sanitized frequently throughout the day. Staff are given sanitizing wipes or equivalent products in all rooms to wipe surfaces as needed. Hand sanitizing dispensers are located in all rooms, entryways and other locations throughout the building.

**Nightly Sanitation:** A sanitizing ionizer will be sprayed every night in each classroom. Staff and students must remove all materials and belongings from the classrooms before leaving each day.

**Ventilation:** As part of our updated HVAC system, there is a fresh air circulation system that is constantly circulating fresh air into the building. We encourage staff to keep the windows open as the weather permits. The [NYTimes published an article](#) that links open windows to reduced virus spread.

**Close Contacts & Quarantine Guidance:**

- A close contact to COVID positive individual is defined as “only those who have been within 6 feet distance of the individual for at least 15 minutes during a day, while the person was infectious even if wearing a mask”.
- If the school has identified, or an individual has self-identified as a close contact, they must quarantine based on current guidance, contact the Nurse Kim Ravizza and follow instructions and communication before returning to the building.
- If a household member is symptomatic, tests for COVID and is awaiting test results, we may not come to the building until a negative test result is received. If the test is positive, we will follow the close contact policy above.
- Individuals must inform the school, specifically Nurse Kim Ravizza if we have been tested for COVID and should not return to the building before learning the test result. Upon learning the test result, we will follow the proper protocol for our particular case, the instructions and

communication with Nurse Kim Ravizza, and not return to the building until we have received approval by Nurse Kim Ravizza.

**Travel Guidance:** Travel regulations and restrictions are outlined by the State of MA. The specifics can be found on the State's website: [www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov). In the event of any travel, families must inform the Nurse Kim Ravizza and follow instructions from her as it pertains to returning to the building.

## Mask Breaks

Face masks are required at school and on the bus for all VPCS students and staff. Our schedule includes a minimum of two mask breaks per day for ten minutes when students can maintain a distance of six feet from others for the duration of the break. Mask breaks will be taken outside whenever possible, and if held indoors, windows should be opened for the duration of the break.

Mask breaks will be held outdoors in several spaces. During inclement weather, the school has rented a tent for which students can stand under during the break.

## Visiting the Nurse

With the increased concern around COVID-19, we want to ensure that our school nurse has the time and space to take all necessary precautions and give thorough attention to students who may be experiencing symptoms. It is also extremely important to limit students' exposure to others and decrease the amount of spaces students are visiting throughout the day. If a student presents an issue that could be handled in class or the bathroom, it is best they are not exposed to someone in the nurse's office who might be presenting symptoms of COVID-19.

Our school nurse will have two spaces this year; the normal Health Office, and a new extension for sick students to wait in called the Medical Waiting Room. Teachers can send students to the nurse, but we are looking for teachers to use discretion this year in order to eliminate students who use going to be the nurse as a break from class. Teachers should call the nurse before sending a student to their office.

Teachers should not be making any medical phone calls home to parents in the classroom. Any communication to families about a student's wellness must be made through the Health Office. This includes any decisions around a student going home because they are not feeling well. It is beyond important that we document any student's health issues with the school nurse, and is important that when communicating with families they understand the medical protocols that were taken in order to assess the students. If a student is sent back to class and does not seem to be doing well, a teacher must re-contact the nurse instead of phoning home.

# Key School Routines & Procedures

**Arrival:** Teachers will be in their assigned classrooms no later than 7:45. Students will remain on their busses outside until they are let in at 7:45. Students will walk directly to their assigned classroom following 6-foot distancing protocols.

**Breakfast:** Breakfast will be delivered to the classroom each morning. Teachers will pass it out to students who want to eat, and kids can take their masks off to eat. Students should maintain a safe 6 foot distance while masks are off.

**Bathroom & Water Breaks:** Students should bring their own water bottles to be used throughout the day. Water fountains can only be used to fill water bottles, and the individual drinking function will be disabled.

## **Needs Request:**

There will be a smartpass system to ensure only 2 students are out of the class at a time. Teachers will be trained on this system before students enter the building. This system will also allow for contact tracing if needed. If a student needs a pencil, tissue etc, only one student should be out of their seat at a time to allow for maximum social distancing.

**Chromebooks:** Students will need to bring their school-assigned chromebook with them to and from school each day. Power cords will be setup along the floor of the classroom so that students can plug in their chromebooks easily throughout the day. The school will provide extra chargers if students forget theirs.

**Lunch:** Students will pick up their lunch in the first floor community room, masked, and will be 6 feet apart while waiting for their meal. Once their meal is picked up, classes can either go outside (on their designated day) or eat in the classroom while everyone is at a 6-foot distance. **Additional lunch procedures (i.e. which students eat outside on which days) will be provided before the start of school. We will likely need to create groups within classrooms to accommodate a 6-foot distance for eating.**

**Dismissal:** Students will remain in their classrooms until their bus number is called on the dismissal document. Once a student bus is called, they can exit the classroom independently, and must maintain 6 foot distances between other students while transitioning to their ride. (We will Insert video here.)

**Silent Hallways:** We will no longer require students to be silent in the hallways.



# Shared Spaces

Teachers and students need to remain in their assigned spaces for instruction, lunch, and breaks. These have been carefully scheduled out so that our school can remain safe distances between students inside and outside of their cohorts.

Outside space will be assigned and cannot be signed out by a staff member as we have in previous years. This includes the basketball court, the courtyard, the ramp, etc. We can consider neighborhood walks in nice weather, but the ratio of staff to students should not be above 10:1. Please let Kara Wilkes, Director of Operations know in the morning if you plan to take students outside.

Lunch spaces are assigned inside and outside and cannot be adjusted or changed.

The library will be closed because it is not a space we can sanitize easily because of the paper products. The school will purchase independent reading books for each student as part of their welcome back package.

# Student Transportation

5th grade students who reside 1.5 miles or further from the school, and 6-8th grade students who reside 2.0 miles or further from the school will receive bus transportation to and from the school each day. You will receive your individual bus stop and pickup/dropoff information via phone call from the school as soon as it is provided by First Student.

Bus Safety Protocols are the same as our school-wide safety protocols including mask wearing, social distancing, and proper hygiene.

# Student Dress Code

The responsibility for the dress of students rests primarily with the student and their parents or guardians.

## **Allowable Dress:**

- Students must wear clothing including both a shirt with a bottom and a top and shoes.
- Clothing must have fabric in the front and on the sides.
- Clothing must cover undergarments, buttox and private parts.
- Hats and headwear must allow the face to be visible and not interfere with the line of sight of students or staff. Hoodies must allow the face and ears to be visible.

## **Non-Allowable Dress:**

- Clothing may not depict, advertise or advocate the use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana or other controlled substances.
- Clothing may not depict pornography, nudity or sexual acts.
- Clothing may not use or depict hate speech targeting groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious affiliation or any other protected groups.
- Clothing, including gang identifiers, must not threaten the health or safety of any other student or staff.
- If the student's attire threatens the health or safety of any other person, then discipline for dress violations should be consistent with discipline policies for similar violations.

# Cell Phone Policy

Cell phones can be a major distraction to student learning. Students should keep their cell phones off and in their backpacks during the school day. If families need to contact their child, they can call the front desk at 413-539-0055 or the child's teacher.

## Academic Model

### **Goals of Hybrid Instruction:**

Though we will return in-person, full time, students and families will still have the option to opt-out of in-person learning this spring. Therefore, teachers will still teach in a “hybrid” model, with some students still receiving instruction remotely and some students in person.

In the sections below, we will outline some required and optional procedures for our academic program, yet one goal remains true: All students must receive equitable access to instruction regardless of the learning model they have chosen. All students have the right to:

- Participate in each class period, and hear their peers participate as well
- Get feedback on their work from their teacher
- Get their questions answered by their teacher and other classmates

A lot of the guidance below will speak about in-person students, but the instructional model and the support for remote students should remain the same as it has since the opening of school.

### **Student Orientation to In-Person Learning**

During the first 3-5 days, students and teachers will orient to in-person learning and COVID safety protocols during the intervention and asynchronous blocks, as well as get to know one another in the new in-person space. Students learning remotely should complete assigned work, and students in-person will learn procedures with their class. Each grade level will be provided a calendar by which to follow to introduce key routines.

Teachers enter the building one week before students arrive, and will take the students that are already in-person with them to practice remote learning procedures into their room.

# Accessing Instruction

Students in-person will use their chromebooks and chromebook chargers to access learning materials, and will continue to login to google classroom, nearpod, edulastic, actively learn and other learning platforms for teachers to access and grade their work. Kids in class will not login to zoom, but the teacher will wear a wireless microphone to pick up students who participate in the in-person space. Kids should continue to bring their

**Hybrid Learning Examples:** Here are three examples from other schools of what learning may look like for students and teachers when there are students at home and in-person. We will create some videos of our students as we enter this model!

- [Video #1](#)
- [Video #2](#)

Remote and in person students should access instruction simultaneously. Remote students will continue to access instruction as they have since the beginning of the year. Teachers will set up their classroom and implement systems so that students can get equal access to their teachers as their in-person peers.

# Specialized Services

In each grade level, the support teacher(s) and/or Associate teachers will staff the student support pod. Students will continue to get their instruction from their general education teachers, per our inclusion model, and students in this pod will receive in-person support from the grade-level special education teachers.

Students who receive pullout services will be prioritized in the support learning pod. Students who are not identified as being part of the student support pod, will continue to receive their student support services from the special education or associate teacher remotely whether they are in-person or at home as they have been since the fall.

Pullout groups will happen in the support pod in-person as much as possible, and the support teacher will either remain in the classroom to provide the instruction, or provide it remotely from another space. The mode of delivery will be up to the makeup of the student support pod.

**Other Specialized Instruction:** Counseling, Speech and OT services will be provided remotely. ESL services in 5th grade will be provided in-person, and services will be provided remotely in other grades.

# School Culture Systems

School culture systems, the promotion system, referrals, the reflection room and detentions, and rock star Monday will operate the same way in-person as they have remotely. Specifically,

## **The Promotion System:**

- Teachers will continue to collect engagement points as they have during all of remote learning for each class.
- For a visual, teachers can now pull up the “Daily Points Report” in Deanslist to show their class the daily total of points.
- \*\*If a teacher wants to use magnets as we have in the past, please let Mr. Davis know to order the supplies.

**Rockstar Monday:** The options for RSM will still be the same: virtual activity or snack. Students in-person will have their snacks left outside their classroom during the lunch block on Monday.

**Referrals:** If a student needs a check-in with someone outside of their classroom, they can input a referral. The culture team will continue to support in a remote capacity (i.e. go in a breakout room with the student) first, and then will intervene in person as necessary in order to limit interactions across spaces.

**Reflection Room:** This space will be closed. If a student needs to be removed from class they will be placed in an individual office space which allows for 6-foot distancing.

**Detention:** Detentions will be held on a classroom by classroom basis, as the school cannot place students in multiple cohorts in the same space. If a teacher chooses to keep a kid late for detention, they will communicate with the family and arrange pickup. Teacher choice.

## Leaving for the Day

Students will have supplies kept with them at their desk, and all supplies must be transported back and forth each day to allow for a full sanitation each evening. Students should remember to bring chromebooks and chargers with them to and from school each day. Other supplies will be available such as paper, pencils, pens, etc in the classroom. At the end of each day, everything, including teacher laptops, second screens, and personal items, must be put away in cabinets or taken home so the room can be sanitized.