

# **FIT Academy: Return to school plan (Draft 08/16/2020)**

*Preliminary and subject to change - Not for public release*

## **PART 1: OVERVIEW OF FIT ACADEMY RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN**

FIT Academy's return plan was developed in accordance with Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) recommendations and Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) requirements. It was developed based on the *Safe Learning Plan* unveiled by the State of Minnesota on July 31, 2020. As the pandemic is evolving, so is the state plan and as a result, so is FIT Academy's plan. Our top priority is to ensure the health and safety of our students and staff while optimizing equitable opportunities for meaningful and sustainable instruction. The state plan also states as one of its top goals to "prioritize in-person learning, especially for younger learners".

### **Definitions: Learning Scenarios**

Scenario 1 - In-person / On-Site Learning: Traditional school attendance every day

Scenario 2 - Hybrid Learning with Strict Social Distancing: Learning that involves a combination of in-person and on-site learning and meets strict MDH social distancing requirements including 50% capacity

Scenario 3 - Distance Learning, all instruction provided remotely

### **Definitions: Distance Learning Modes**

Synchronous Learning: Refers to instruction where the teacher and learners are interacting at the same time including in the classroom, via live video, or other forms of interaction. In this mode, students must follow a schedule in order to interact with the instructor and other learners.

Asynchronous Learning: Refers to instruction where direction is provided by the instructor to be reviewed by learners at a different time. In this mode, students and families are largely independent in their scheduling of instructional time.

Remote Learning: Remote learning describes participation from home for students who are in scenario 2 (hybrid) when their cohort is not on site.

### **Highlights of Minnesota's Safe Learning Plan**

- The state plan requires the school to work in collaboration with regional health officials and establish a school response team.
- The state plan requires schools to establish base learning scenarios as determined by county infection rates.
- The state plan does allow schools to move to a more distanced mode at their choosing
- The state plan allows schools to move to a less distanced mode in consultation with MDH and local health authorities.
- The state plan allows families to opt for distance learning (Scenario 3) regardless of the school's base model.
- The state model requires schools to provide parents at least 5 days notice should a more distance model be required due to an increase in infection rates. (this is not confirmed)

- The state plan requires that schools still meet required statutory instructional hours on an established student schedule (change from last year).
- The state plan requires the school to follow all MDH cleaning and procedural requirements including masking of students and masking or face shields for staff with exemptions allowed in certain developmental, medical, or behavioral health conditions. Exceptions are also allowed for certain types of activities.
- The state plan requires that the school provide technology support for all families as needed
- The state plan requires schools to continue to provide meals for students who qualify for free and reduced lunch
- The state plan requires schools to provide free daycare during school hours to families of qualified essential workers for school enrolled students up to 12 years of age on days when students are not scheduled to attend on-site
- The state plan allows the school to increase student attendance on site for services that cannot be delivered in distance learning or whenever the school deems it to be necessary

### **General Outline of FIT Academy's Plan**

- Families and staff will be expected to follow all MDH requirements and protocols including communications and procedures related to student symptoms or illness.
- Families will be asked to declare a desire to stay with the base model or opt for distance learning by Tuesday August 11<sup>th</sup>. After that date, families may change programs at the end of the quarter. Families may opt to distance learn at anytime for medical or health related reasons.
- Families may be allowed to opt for distance learning at any time upon conference with the administration once the school year has begun.
- Families wishing to opt out of distance learning into the school's base model will be allowed to do so at the end of a quarter.
- The school will set in-person capacity in accordance to base model and MDH requirements.
- Students enrolling beyond our in-person capacities will be placed in distance learning until space becomes available.
- In scenarios 2 (Hybrid Learning) and 3 (Distance Learning), we will develop student and teacher schedules that are primarily synchronous in accordance with requirements outlined in the state plan.

### **Components of Our Base Plan**

- Our general calendar and important dates will remain the same. We will move professional development and staff days during the school year to Wednesdays. [Click here to view updated calendar](#)
- In all scenarios, synchronous instructional schedules will allow time for special education and ELL accommodations.

- For students in grades K-4 and 9-11 in scenario 2 (Hybrid), due to enrollment, staff, and space availability, all students (with the exception of distance learners) will be onsite everyday except Wednesday. Wednesday will be a remote learning day.
- Assignments will be offered as either paper pencil or in electronic form for distance learning families in grades K-5. Grades K-3 will manage their classroom electronically using Seesaw and grades 4-11 will do so using google classroom.
- For students in grades 5-8 in scenario 2 (Hybrid), all students will attend onsite two days a week and remote learn the other three days. Students will either be in a Monday and Thursday onsite cohort or a Tuesday and Friday cohort. Students remote learning while in scenario 2 will also be required to follow the class schedule and participate in class synchronously with the exception of Wednesdays.
- Students who are distance learning will be offered a synchronous structured schedule. Parents who wish to lead instruction for their children at home may opt for an asynchronous schedule. This request should be communicated to their teacher in grades K-5 or Angie Halama, Secondary Coordinator for grades 6-11.
- Teachers will host live classroom instruction using Whereby for distance and remote learners and will also make recordings of instruction available to all families.
- We will use Wednesdays to provide one on one or small group on-site support by appointment as well as provide distance learners opportunities for physical education, electives, and recess (tentative)
- We will provide ongoing technology support to staff and families as needed

### **Expectations of Staff**

- We will provide a safe work environment in accordance to MDH requirements and will provide accommodations to employees who are medically at risk or have medically at risk family members to the best of our ability. This accommodation requires that there is work that the person can do remotely and is related to their assignment or aligned with their qualifications
- We will adhere to the Families First Coronavirus Response ACT (FFCRA) which provides additional PTO time for employees and parents in the case of experiencing symptoms of COVID or quarantine
- With the exceptions noted above, staff must be available to be onsite everyday in accordance with expectations outlined in the school staff handbook
- Be aware of and actively follow MDH requirements for our base learning program
- Be prepared to teach live on Whereby and pre-record lessons
- Be prepared to teach and support online and in a distance learning mode
- Be flexible and adaptable
- Communicate health concerns to the administration in a timely manner

## Health, Safety, and COVID19

In accordance with the current governor's executive order, everyone at school or visiting school is required to wear a mask with exceptions made for those with developmental, medical, or behavioral health conditions. Teachers will have the option of a face shield or a mask. We will also have extra masks for students to use if they forget to bring one from home. We have developed in accordance with guidance from MDH protocols to follow in the case of a confirmed case of COVID or primary exposure. These protocols call for MDH to guide the school through quarantining and contact tracing. In the case of a confirmed case of COVID at school, we will communicate this to the school community and will communicate directly to those who may have been exposed while protecting the identity of individuals as much as possible. This process and recommendations would be guided by MDH.

In addition, we are putting the following measures in place to ensure maximum safety:

- Daily passive screening each day by parents. Please keep children home if they are ill or have a fever and notify the school immediately.
- Upon arrival, students will immediately go to assigned meeting places in the morning
- Some hallways will be designated and labeled as "one way"
- Hallways that remain two-way will have a dividing barrier for opposing traffic
- Students will stay with their group or class at all times, minimizing the mixing of groups
- We will have a cleaning schedule to ensure the building is sanitized in the morning and classrooms and spaces are sanitized when a group leaves and another group might enter the same space
- Students in grades 4-11 will only use lockers in the morning and end of the day. They will use backpacks throughout the day for their books and materials
- Hand sanitizer will be available in all rooms
- Students are not to use water fountains and should bring a water bottle from home
- We have installed foot devices to open bathroom doors
- All staff and students will be required to wear a mask or faceshield unless excuse by a qualified professional

## PART 2: BASE INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN - HYBRID MODEL

### Overview of Onsite Hybrid Plan

Our base onsite learning plan for this year will be a hybrid plan combining some instruction onsite with some instruction remotely. Under this plan, students in grades K, 1, 2, 3, 4, and high school will be attending onsite four days a week; every day except Wednesdays. Students in grades 5, 6, 7, 8 will be onsite two days a week and remote the other three days in a **cohort model**. Students in Cohort A will attend onsite on Mondays and Thursday and Cohort B will attend onsite on Tuesdays and Fridays. In all cases, students will be learning remotely on the days they are not on site. Students will be placed in cohorts based on last name as well as other factors such as sibling schedules or special services. The cohort model is similar to the district 196 plan.

## Components of Hybrid Instruction

- Students attending onsite will experience a full schedule and traditional instruction with the exception of social distancing measures.
- Hybrid students in grades 5-8 will follow the classroom schedule and logon for live instruction in each of their classes.
- Live instruction will be followed by a period of independent work prior to their next class.
- Student support will be provided via chat on Whereby or google classroom.

## Academic Support

Hybrid learners will have access to virtual support from teachers on Wednesdays. Teachers will work with the administration to address the needs of those who need additional support. Students with disabilities or other needs such as language support will continue to access supports outlined in their individual plans.

## Technology for Hybrid Students

Grade	Type of Device	Status for Hybrid Students
K-3	iPad	Recommended
4-8	Chromebook or laptop	Required
9-11	Chromebook or laptop	Required

FIT Academy is committed to providing devices and Wifi to anyone in need. Please contact Katie Hanson at [khanson@fitacademymn.org](mailto:khanson@fitacademymn.org) for additional support.

## Wednesdays for Hybrid Students

For students in the hybrid model, Wednesdays will consist of working independently or asynchronously on assignments provided by their teacher on Tuesdays. Teachers will be available for remote support via messaging or google classroom. Families will also have the opportunity to schedule academic support meetings with their teachers on Wednesdays.

## Why Different Schedules for Different Grades

As stated in our onsite hybrid plan, grades K-4 and 9-11 will attend four days a week to start the year while grades 5-8 will attend onsite for two days per week on a cohort model. The reason for this is twofold: First, our directive from the state *Safe Learning Plan* is to **prioritize onsite learning** and secondly, our families choosing the hybrid plan have overwhelmingly indicated a preference for being onsite. In certain grades, a combination of factors including enrollment, staffing, size of our classrooms, and number of families choosing distance learning are allowing us to have students attend four days a week while meeting all of the requirements outlined in the hybrid model as recommended by MDH and MDE.

### **What Changes Should Families Be Prepared For?**

Families wanting to move from the hybrid model to distance learning due to medical reasons will be allowed to do so at any time. Families wishing to move from distance learning to hybrid will be allowed to do so at the end of the quarter. It is important to note that as this plan will evolve throughout the year and may cause for changes due to a number of factors including:

- County infection rates
- Confirmed cases or outbreak at school
- Changes in enrollment or parent preferences

For those choosing the hybrid plan, should factors related to COVID cause a change to a more restrictive setting, the state's goal is to provide at least 5 days notice to families. **Changes in enrollment and parent preferences could also cause us to transition from 4 days a week to a cohort model at the beginning of each quarter for all grades.**

Our goal is to provide continuity and consistency for our families and our decisions will reflect this. To this end, families in the distance learning plan are least likely to experience a change in the distance learning program.

### **School Hours and Transportation**

School times and transportation at FIT Academy are determined by district 196 as they provide our transportation. We have worked with district 196 to determine the following school times for FIT Academy. Note that we will run regular bused after school for students in grades K-5 at 2:05pm and a second round of buses for students in grades 6-11 at 3:10pm.

#### School Hours:

Grades K-5: 8:05am to 2:05pm

Grades 6-11: 8:05am to 3:10pm

#### District 196 Busing

District busing will change slightly this year in that students will ride the high school buses and transfer at the high schools in the mornings. Students will continue to transfer at the middle schools for the first afternoon buses and no transfer for the later buses. The change to high school transfers may sound intimidating but please consider the following factors:

- Buses will be limited to 50% of bus capacity as recommended by health authorities
- District 196 is currently successfully transferring private elementary school students at the high schools

- Drivers will reserve seats in the front for students in kindergarten and first grade
- High school students typically show more care and concern for elementary students than middle school students
- Because we are starting a week prior to district 196, our students and families will have a week to familiarize themselves with the process without district 196 students on the buses

### Burnsville Bus

We will continue to run our Burnsville bus. In order to accommodate secondary students, our Burnsville afternoon bus will leave at 3:10pm. Elementary students who ride the Burnsville bus will be in after-school care free of charge until 3:10pm

### BusSafety Measures

- Buses will be limited to 50% capacity and all riders must wear masks
- Students will sit one and two students per seat in an alternating pattern
- With the exception of students in K-1, students will be required to load from the back to front and unload from front to back to limit the passing of students
- Please inform your student of these new procedures

For transportation questions please contact Tamra Paschall@ [tpaschall@fitacademymn.org](mailto:tpaschall@fitacademymn.org)

### **Meals and Daycare for Hybrid Students**

We will operate our lunch as we have in the past including the option to bring lunch or order through Lancer. We will also continue to facilitate lunches for students on the free and reduced lunch program when students are not onsite. In accordance with the governor's executive order, we will continue to provide onsite daycare for the children of Tier 1 essential workers on days when their children are not scheduled to be onsite. Students who are on a two-days onsite cohort schedule who require daycare will be scheduled to attend class for four days per week. Our initial plan would have all students who require Tier 1 daycare attending onsite four days per week and in daycare on Wednesdays. We also plan on offering a fee based after-school care for those onsite on an as needed basis. Please contact Assistant Director Tamra Paschall at [tpaschall@fitacademymn.org](mailto:tpaschall@fitacademymn.org) for additional information.

## **PART 3: DISTANCE LEARNING MODEL**

### **Overview of Distance Learning Plan**

The goal of our distance learning plan is to provide as much flexibility as we can to facilitate learning at home. For most families, this means a synchronous schedule supported by teachers. For some however, this will mean a more independent or asynchronous experience with instruction guided by parents. Our program will vary across grade levels to better serve the needs of learners, families, and optimize use of our resources. Here is a brief description of distance learning at each level:

## **Elementary Grades (K-3)**

We recognize that the needs of each family in a distant learning situation are different and we are committed to a program that is flexible and adaptable. Parents may choose to follow the **synchronous** schedule guided by teachers or an **asynchronous** schedule guided by parents. The curriculum and assignments will be the same but we ask parents to notify teachers of their preference so that teachers can plan and support accordingly. It is important to note that in either scenario students will need adult supervision and guidance at home. The student schedule and curriculum will include daily Language Arts, math, and physical education as well as alternating day science, social studies, and French. Families will also be encouraged to attend onsite for physical education and art on Wednesdays.

Synchronous Schedule: Students following a synchronous schedule will have a regular schedule four days a week including daily live video instruction for Morning Meeting, Reading workshop, and Math workshop. Instruction in science, social studies, physical education, and French may sometimes include video instruction. When not following along with live video lessons, students will work independently on their scheduled content using curriculum made available for parent pick-up or managed through Seesaw.

Asynchronous Learning: Families choosing asynchronous learning will access to curriculum and content via parent pick-up or electronically and determine their own learning schedule. They will also have access to the recordings of live teacher lessons. We also encourage parents choosing to follow an asynchronous schedule to meet with teachers on Wednesdays to coordinate instruction and access resources.

### Content and Communication:

Teachers in grades K-3 will use the seesaw platform to communicate and manage content electronically. Parents will also have the option to opt for paper pencil assignments to be picked-up and returned to school.

## **Grades 4 & 5**

Grade 4 & 5 will follow the plan outlined above for K-3 but will include more live instruction by teachers who are onsite. Students will be presented with a schedule to follow but the recording and availability of live instruction will make it possible for families to adopt a more asynchronous schedule if they wish. Teachers will use the google classroom platform to manage the classroom and content electronically.

## **Grades 6 through 11**

Grades 6 through 11 will follow a regular 6 class per day schedule four days per week. For each of these classes, their teachers will host a live Whereby lesson. Distance learners should sign-on at the beginning of each class for the introduction to the lesson and instructions for the class. Students will sign-off to work independently for the remainder of the class period when instructed to do so by the teacher before logging back on for their next class. Students will have access to support from the teacher



synchronously during the class as determined by the teacher's availability, as well as asynchronously throughout the day. Teachers will record their live instruction and make it available for students to watch asynchronously. All assignments will be shared and managed electronically using google classroom.

### **Academic Support**

Distance learners will have access to onsite support on Wednesdays. Teachers will work with the administration to address the needs of those who need additional support. Students with disabilities or other needs such as language support will continue to access supports outlined in their individual plans.

### **Technology Use and Support for Distance Learning**

Students in distance learning will need a device and access to Wifi. Grades K-3 will need iPads while grades 4-11 will need a Chromebook or laptop. FIT Academy is committed to providing devices and Wifi to anyone in need. Please contact Katie Hanson at [khanson@fitacademymn.org](mailto:khanson@fitacademymn.org) for additional support.

### **Wednesdays for Distance Learners**

We invite distance learning families to make appointments to come in and meet with teachers for academic support and will also schedule optional time for students to come in for physical education, art, and teacher support. We do plan on offering busing to support student attending those services on Wednesdays.

### **Meals and Daycare for Distance Learning Students**

We will continue to facilitate lunches for students on the free and reduced lunch program for distance learning students. In accordance with the governor's executive order, we will continue to provide onsite daycare for the children of Tier 1 essential workers on days when their children have no option to be onsite. This ONLY applies to distance learning on Wednesdays as that is the only day that families do not have an option to be onsite. Please contact Assistant Director Tamra Paschall at [tpaschall@fitacademymn.org](mailto:tpaschall@fitacademymn.org) for additional information.