

FAQ

Updated 8/18/20

Q: Will all students return for in-school instruction at the same time?

A: Yes. All students return to school for in-person, full-day instruction five days a week.

Q: Has the SNEP reopening plan been reviewed by medical professionals?

A: Yes. Our plan was designed and reviewed by a committee that included several health care professionals. In addition, our committee was in consultation with a board-certified infectious disease specialist as well as the public health director for the Niagara County Department of Health.

Q: Will SNEP be offering a fully remote learning option for the school year?

A: The SNEP faculty and reopening committee are focusing efforts on in-person learning, five days a week, as a goal for all students. A fully remote, continuity of learning plan has been created in the event the school must be closed for a period of time. We anticipate an increase in absenteeism and are working to prepare for those cases. Unless there is a formal full school closure, there is not an option to choose full remote learning for the entire year through Stella Niagara.

Q: Why isn't there a fully remote learning option for families at Stella this year?

A: We have looked at that option and concluded that it is not feasible for our school because we only have one teacher per grade who will be responsible for in-person teaching all day.

Q: Will there be any type of health monitoring for students and staff upon arrival every day?

A: Health and temperature screening of students and faculty will be self-reported in the morning before arriving at school everyday. Any student or faculty member who has a temperature above 100F, and/or cannot answer the health screening questions negatively, will be expected to stay home. Entrance into the building will be monitored to ensure that only students with no fever and negative answers to screening questions will be allowed in class. Information regarding a self-reporting app will be forthcoming.

Q: If a child/staff has COVID-19 symptoms, will they be required to stay out of school until they produce proof of a negative COVID-19 test?

A: Students and staff will be allowed to return to school with a note from their healthcare provider, a negative test, and resolution of symptoms.

Q: What if a student or staff member has a fever that has an identified source other than COVID-19?

A: Students and staff will have to be 24 hours fever free, on treatment (antibiotics), and have a note from their primary healthcare provider.

Q: If a child tests positive for COVID-19, what will be the protocol for the other children in the school?

A: SNEP will report all exposures to the Department of Health and follow all recommendations once received.

Q: What will happen if a student becomes ill during the school day?

A: We have set up a new health isolation area. Students will immediately report to this supervised area where all Department of Health guidelines would be followed.

Q: Will kids be required to wear masks all day?

A: At this time, SNEP will require students to wear masks whenever they cannot maintain appropriate social distancing and whenever entering, exiting or moving about the classroom or school building. Students will not be required to wear masks when eating lunch, when outside (so long as there is proper social distancing), or when seated during instruction. If a student wishes to leave their mask on, they may do so. Specials teachers may require that students wear masks during instruction. As an added measure of protection, SNEP has purchased clear portable personal space dividers for each desk.

Q: What if a child misplaces their mask at school, or forgets to bring one to school? If students are allowed to remove masks, will there be a place for them to be stored so children don't end up wearing someone else's mask?

A: SNEP has a supply of disposable masks available for any student who forgets to bring one, or whose mask may be lost or contaminated. Each classroom teacher will devise a system for proper labeling and storage of masks during mask breaks.

Q: Can students wear masks with logos?

A: Masks are considered part of the SNEP uniform, and all designs and logos should be appropriate and not offensive or a distraction to the educational environment. Masks supporting local organizations and businesses are acceptable. Slogans are not.

Q: Are bandanas and neck gaiters acceptable forms of face coverings?

A: While initial New York State DOH and CDC guidelines do not specifically recommend against neck gaiters and bandanas, some research finds that many of those face coverings are thin and single-layered and provide little protection against the spread of COVID-19. At this time, SNEP is not allowing the traditional bandana secured at only one point with a hanging lower border as a form of face covering. The use of any other face covering, including neck gaiters, should depend on the construction and fabric used to make the item. All face coverings should be form fit, covering both the nose and mouth, and they should be made of densely woven fabric. We are asking parents to select face coverings that offer maximum protection against the spread of the virus.

Q: Do I need to purchase masks for my child?

A: Yes. We are asking all parents/legal guardians to purchase face coverings for each child. SNEP does have an adequate supply of face coverings, masks, and other required PPE on hand should a student need a replacement. If possible, we would ask that your child bring at least one extra mask with them each day.

Q: Will teachers teach children how to properly wear masks?

A: Yes. SNEP will train all students on how to properly put on, take off, clean (as applicable), and discard PPE, including but not limited to, appropriate face coverings. This training will be completed during online virtual classroom meetings with teachers and families. And, we will spend time at the beginning of the school year to review the proper wearing of masks.

Q: Can face shields be used instead of masks?

A: Face shields worn without other face coverings are not considered adequate protection or source control against COVID-19 and may not be used alone. If a student wishes to wear a face shield in addition to a mask, they may do so.

Q: Will kids have opportunities to wash their hands and not just use hand sanitizer?

A: Yes, hand sanitizer is only recommended for older students. All students will have ample opportunities to wash hands.

Q: Will students still move from class to class during the school day?

A: SNEP has adopted a “cohort” model where the students remain in their primary room throughout the day for instruction and the teachers will move from class to class. Students will travel in their cohorts to the gym, to the dining hall and to any outdoor activities when possible.

Q: Will parents/legal guardians still be allowed to bring their children into the school?

A: No, in order to maximize safety and lower risk teachers will be available to escort young children into the building.

Q: How will school drop-off and pick-up be handled?

A: We are currently finalizing plans for drop-off and pick-up. These procedures will be communicated to parents/legal guardians in the coming weeks.

Q: Will specials be offered?

A: Yes. Specials teachers will travel to classrooms to teach Art, Music, Library, Technology, Outdoor Education, Character Education, Spanish and Religion. Students will travel for gym class which will take place outside whenever possible. Students will be asked to wear their gym uniform on Physical Education and Outdoor Education days to eliminate any need to change clothes at school.

Q: What does the classroom set-up look like for the kids who are not in the double sized classrooms?

A: All desks are six feet apart and will have clear personal space dividers on them.

Q: Where will lunch be held and what will it look like?

A: We will space students 6 feet apart in line to get their lunch....we have markers for the floor to help them. The lunch personnel will have shields AND face masks on as they serve the kids, and everything will be pre-wrapped (silverware), dressings and/or condiments in small containers. Kids will wear their masks coming into the dining room and take them off once they are settled into their assigned seat.

Q: What is the cleaning schedule for the dining room?

A: The dining room will be fully cleaned and disinfected between each lunch period.

Q: What is the cleaning schedule, and what are they cleaning?

A: SNEP will conduct regular cleaning and disinfection of the facilities and more frequent cleaning and disinfection for high-risk areas used by many individuals and for frequently touched surfaces, including desks and cafeteria tables which will be cleaned and disinfected between each individual use, if shared. Where cohorts share spaces, cleaning and disinfection will take place between each cohort's use. Cleaning and disinfection will be rigorous, ongoing and will occur at least daily, or more frequently as needed.

Q: How will recess and gym look this year?

A: Recess and gym will take place outside whenever possible. During gym class students will remain 12 feet apart in accordance with Department of Health guidelines.

Q: Will students share balls, bats, etc.?

A: No, students will not be sharing equipment.

Q: What will students wear to school on gym or outdoor education days?

A: Students will wear their gym uniform to school and throughout the day when they have gym or outdoor education

Q: What is the gym uniform, and where can I purchase it? What about when the weather gets colder?

A: Our gym uniform is a gold t-shirt with the logo and blue shorts. We will let parents know where and when gym uniforms will be available. When the weather gets cooler, plain navy sweats are allowed.

Q: Will clubs be offered this year?

A: Yes. Clubs are very important to our families and enjoyed by our students. We are still finalizing exactly what they will look like.

Q: Will extended care (before and after care) be available this year?

A: Yes. SNEP will continue to offer extended care. More information about that will be communicated to families in the coming weeks and reviewed during online virtual classroom meetings with teachers and

families. All safety precautions and requirements (e.g., masks and distancing) will still be in place during extended care.

Q: Is my child in Montessori expected to wear a mask all day?

A: The Montessori team is making program changes to reduce the risk of transmission in the classroom. Our class will be in three rooms this year. Each of the rooms will be capped at 10 students for the time being. We are starting the year requesting that students bring at least two (or more) masks per day to school, and a pacifier clip so the face covering can be clipped to their shirt collar. We hope this will be an easy way to keep masks clean and easily available to the student. Children will have to wear them when moving around the building outside of the classroom. Within the rooms in Montessori, the faculty may gently remind students to put it on while moving around the room. These will be reminders only; no student will be reprimanded or disciplined for forgetting. Once a student is seated at a table or work rug with work, they will not be expected to keep the mask on. The Montessori team will repeatedly teach the students in proper wearing and removal of the face coverings. If the teachers find this system to be developmentally inappropriate or physically unsafe for some students, this plan is subject to change. One of the three rooms could be more strict about student face coverings if some parents would prefer their child to wear a face covering most of the day.

Q: What measures will be in place in the Montessori classroom to reduce the risk of surface transmission and crowding of students in the classroom?

A: The Montessori classroom will be divided into three groups this year, rather than two. The three groups of students (cohorts) will not be blended for specials, rest time, circle time or snack time. All Montessori work will be one person only, meaning only one student may use the work materials at a time. Work tables will be one student per table, and students will have personal “work rugs” rather than sharing.

After use, work trays and materials will either be disinfected, or (if they cannot be disinfected because of the material, eg. cardboard puzzles) returned to the staging area to rest for the recommended amount of time before returning to the classroom shelves. Each student will have a zippered bag containing personal work materials (pencils, sharpener, crayons, scissors, glue sticks, etc.). Models and pencils for paperwork will no longer be on trays. Models, if needed, will be posted on walls. Students will have assigned cots and areas at rest time and will rest with cohorts and socially distanced (unless in the same family).

The Montessori reopening plan is a work in progress. We appreciate your patience, and welcome your ideas and suggestions. Please feel free to contact Ms. Julie Perreault with concerns or ideas. jperreault@stella-niagara.com

Q: Will field trips be offered?

A: At least for the Fall semester, field trips are temporarily suspended. We will review the situation as the school year proceeds and hope to be able to offer field trips in the Spring semester.

Q: Will students still participate in school masses?

A: At this time, all activities in the chapel, including masses, are limited to only the Sisters of Stella Niagara. SNEP will work closely with the Sisters to continually evaluate use of the chapel.

Q: Will First Communion and Reconciliation take place this year?

A: SNEP will continue to provide preparation for the Sacraments of First Communion and Reconciliation. SNEP will coordinate with families to determine the timing, schedule, and if necessary, alternative location, for the celebration of these sacraments.

Q: Will students be congregating around the lockers?

A: No, storage for students will be located in or near classrooms. Lockers may be used to store outdoor education materials. These lockers will be at least 8 lockers apart per grade.

Q: Should the governor close the schools again, what is the plan for distance learning?

A: Our Distance Learning Committee has been working all summer to create a thorough plan that will be implemented should schools be closed. This plan will be communicated to all parents when it is finalized. We know that school closing is a possibility this year so all teachers are working to create a curriculum that will work in school or from home. Teachers are prepared to teach remotely through virtual classrooms if necessary. Each homeroom teacher will walk parents and students through their virtual classrooms in an online Zoom

meeting. These meetings will be set up by individual teachers before the start of the school year.

Q: If I am not happy with the distance learning program, do I have the option to withdraw from SNEP and stop payment on my FACTS contract?

A: Yes, parents always have the right to withdraw and stop tuition payments. We like to have a conversation before that happens, so there are no misunderstandings or miscommunication.

Q: The NYS plan was up and then the FAQ answers had some differences. Can you please explain why these changes were made?

A: Please bear with us as we work through these unprecedented times; everything is a work in progress, and changes may be made in order to make this school year as safe as possible.

Q: What if we travel out of state over the Labor Day weekend?

A: If you have traveled to a state with significant community spread, you are required to quarantine for 14 days from the last travel. Please refer to the NYS DOH website for the latest information - <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home>.