



June 30, 2020

Dear HVWS Community,

Governor Lamont and Commissioner Cardona released the Executive Summary for re-opening Connecticut schools late last week and the detailed plan yesterday afternoon. The plan is simple and broad at the same time:

- Cohorting classes
- Maximizing social distancing
- Mandatory face (nose and mouth) coverings for staff and grade school students during the school day when inside
- Frequent handwashing
- Enhanced cleaning

HVWS is committed to the health and safety of all students and staff and will implement any changes carefully and intentionally. Precautions have evolved over time to meet the changing public health circumstances and we can all expect they will continue to evolve. (For example, early childhood classes were previously limited to 10 students; they have now expanded to 14.) HVWS faculty and staff continue to prioritize providing a rich and warm environment based on love and mutual respect. Any changes and precautions will be communicated to students with compassion, not fear. The goal is to create a culture of collective care.

Thank you to all who have shared concerns, feedback, and ideas through numerous emails, phone calls, Leadership Council office hours, and our Town Hall. We have heard you, and whenever possible, will implement your feedback within the boundaries allowable. We have received some follow up questions from parents we are happy to address.

- At the moment, masks are required for all adults when indoors on campus. Masks are also required for grade school students indoors. We are operating our Early Childhood program under guidelines from Connecticut's Office of Early Childhood for day care centers, which do not include students wearing masks indoors. Grades teachers are already discussing ways to add additional breaks outside, allowing students a pause from face coverings as we all get used to wearing them for longer periods upon a return to school.
- Faculty will support learning from home for those students that are at high risk, or live with someone who is at high risk, of complications due to COVID-19. Learning from home while class is in session on campus will not be the same as a full distance learning program. It will include homework and a weekly teacher check-in.

Because enrollment determines planning to such a large extent, Administrative Fees for late enrollment have been in place for many years. The HVWS Board of Trustees has worked to extend several compromises to standing policies such as these to better support families:

- Extending re-enrollment deadlines and waiving all re-enrollment late fees from February 6 through June 30
- Holding off on enrolling new students until after June 30th to ensure re-enrolling families have a spot
- Delaying budget approval
- Delaying issuing employment contracts

We have heard heartbreaking stories of illness, loss of loved ones, and the financial impact COVID-19 has had on the HVWS community. The above decisions were made with individual and collective families in mind. HVWS will be at risk of not opening school on time should enrollment dates be delayed any further. After June 30, decision making must shift to focus on the sustainability of HVWS and its safe operation during a public health crisis.

Our great hope is that families trust their teachers, their class community, and their school to open safely, provide a nurturing environment, and an excellent Waldorf Education. Flexibility to respond to changing circumstances and a trusting partnership throughout the school community will be the keys to a successful 2020-21 school year for all.

HVWS is committed to providing an outstanding Waldorf Education to your child under extraordinary circumstances. We hope to see you—in person!—in the fall.

Warm regards,

The Leadership Council