



2ND NATURE ACADEMY

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Kindergarten - Grade 4

MIDDLE SCHOOL
Grades 5-8

HIGH SCHOOL
Grades 9-12

*Back to School
During COVID-19*

2020-2021

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Overview

The top priority of 2nd Nature Academy is to create a safe and healthy environment for students and staff, not only during this pandemic, but at all times. This school year will be no exception. 2nd Nature Academy staff has always taken it upon themselves to provide a healthy education model that focuses on social, emotional, physical, and cognitive health and well-being for its students and staff. As we return for the new school year, we are aware that students may be dealing with many issues and anxieties. As a staff, we are committed to supporting our students and minimizing these concerns as best we can. We always begin our year with team building and social-emotional development. This year, we believe this to be more important than ever.

Teachers and students take advantage of all that the outdoors affords them and appreciate the many great assets our campus has to offer. The importance of these natural resources for the development of children does not go unnoticed, in the best of times. During a pandemic, however, we have been made increasingly aware of how critical these resources are. We are extremely fortunate to have access to fields, forest, paths, ponds, and our animal barn. While outdoor education has always been part of our pedagogy, for all ages, we have accepted this pandemic as an opportunity to grow and enhance these programs. We take pride in our outdoor education leadership and recognize our role in continuing to lead into the future and a "new normal."

The leadership team has extensively analyzed back to school guidance put forth by both New Hampshire and Massachusetts, the NH Department of Education Non-Public Schools, and the NH Department of Health and Human Services, as well as guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Centers for Disease Control. We have also consulted with medical professionals, met with teachers and staff, consulted with parents, and formed a committee to create policies and procedures for in-person learning for the 2020-21 school year. We strongly feel that most students fare far better when learning at school rather than via distance learning platforms. Based on our research and findings, 2nd Nature Academy intends to provide 5-day a week in person learning for the 2020-21 school year. However, we recognize that in-person learning will not be the best alternative for all families and we will work with individual families to provide alternative distance learning

options for students who cannot return to school for reasons related to COVID-19. In the event of a dramatic increase of local COVID-19 cases and/or a government mandated school closing, 2nd Nature Academy will explore the option for the return to distance learning.

We will continue to pay close attention to the latest updates and recommendations and be prepared to act accordingly. We feel encouraged by the efficacy of the increased health and safety measures and will continue to maintain the highest standards in health and safety protocol. Given the uncertain and ever-changing landscape of COVID-19 however, all policies put into place for the 2020-21 school year are subject to change based on:

- An increase of positive COVID-19 cases in the area
- Data made available to schools
- Recommendations from local and state officials
- Changes in health policies put forth by DHHS, CDC, American Academy of Pediatrics, and other health organizations
- Necessary adaptations to our program based on our experiences
- Ability to meet the needs of the students
- Ability to meet the needs of the staff
- Positive COVID-19 case at the school

Communications

2nd Nature Academy recognizes the importance of accurate and timely information dissemination. The school will communicate with students, parents/guardians, and staff on a consistent basis using various platforms including:

- iContact newsletters
- Email
- Remind App
- School website

The school will notify families in the event that a student or staff member becomes sick with COVID-19 and will be informed of class or school closure. The school will also keep families informed of policy updates and changes as they become available.

COVID-19, like other respiratory illnesses, is most commonly spread through respiratory droplets. It is still unclear how long the virus can remain on surfaces or if it remains in the air as an aerosol. In order to mitigate the chances of contracting COVID-19 at school, 2nd Nature Academy will be implementing the following strategies to help reduce the risks of contracting COVID-19.

Outdoor Education

Many skills needed to succeed in school and beyond can be acquired while learning outside. Essential skills (often referred to as soft skills) such as problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, communication, adaptability, flexibility, teamwork, and leadership are best gained during collaborative [Project Based Learning](#)* activities and [Place Based Learning](#)* experiences.

Students will spend as much time as possible learning outside until the weather is no longer conducive. Classes will have assigned outdoor classrooms on campus with seating and shade tents, as well as access to the myriad

of outdoor learning opportunities on campus including fields, forest, farm, ponds, vernal pools, and natural land formations.

When students must be indoors, windows will be opened, when practical, to allow for air flow.

Face Coverings

All staff, as well as students in grades 1-12, will be required to wear cloth face coverings over their nose and mouth while indoors and when social distancing is not possible. Face coverings will also be required when moving around the classroom, halls, to and from lunch, and when working on group activities in close proximity to other students or staff.

- Parents/guardians are responsible for providing clean cloth face coverings every day.
 - We recommend that students keep a supply of clean cloth face coverings in a labeled Ziploc bag in their backpack. A second labeled bag for soiled face coverings is also suggested.
 - All face cloth coverings must be clearly labeled with students' names.
 - We recommend that students use a bulldog clip, binder clip, mitten clip, or similar method to secure face coverings to their clothing for safe-keeping while not in use.
 - Lanyards or cords are not recommended to secure face coverings, and will not be allowed unless the lanyard has a safety breakaway clasp.
- Mask breaks will be provided and students will be distanced during these breaks.
- Accommodations will be made for students who, because of age, physical limitations, underlying health conditions, or disabilities, cannot safely wear face coverings or who need extensive support to wear them correctly and/or safely.
 - Parents/guardians are responsible for furnishing the school with a doctor's note indicating a student's exemption for wearing a face covering.
- Kindergarten students will not be required to wear face coverings, but parents will have autonomy in this decision and may request that their child wears a face covering.
- Staff will provide training to students for the proper use of face cloth coverings and signs will be posted illustrating their correct use.
- Cloth face coverings must be laundered in accordance with CDC guidelines.

Teachers may alternatively wear clear face shields for specific teaching when students must be able to adequately see the teacher's face and clearly hear pronunciation, i.e. early reading instruction, foreign language instruction.

Face coverings will be worn while:

- Waiting to enter, or entering, the school building
- Leaving the school building
- Arriving to, or leaving, a classroom
- Traveling in hallways and transiting between classes or to the restroom
- Engaged in classroom or group activities where students may come closer than 3 feet of other students or staff

Distancing

The NH Department of Education and NH DHHS has recommended that groups of students remain together in cohorts. No recommendation has been made for cohort sizes. Based on our normal small class sizes, each

class will be considered a cohort. Many different strategies and arrangements will be put into place to allow for safe distancing while at school.

- Class sizes will remain small throughout the academy.
 - Kindergarten: 15
 - Grades 1-2: 16
 - Grades 3-12: 18
- Cohorts will be kept together and teachers will avoid mixing cohorts.
- Specialist teachers will visit classes rather than having cohorts change rooms whenever feasible.
- Recess will be scheduled so cohorts do not mix on playground areas.
- Extra furniture will be removed from classrooms to allow for distancing when inside.
- Flexible seating options will be utilized to create spacing between students.
- Non washable items, such as carpets and cloth items, will be removed from classrooms.
- Each student will be issued their own supplies and will not share materials.
- Students in grades 5-12 will be expected to provide their own computer or tablet devices. School laptops will be reserved for children in grades 3-4. School tablets will be available for students in grades 1-2 for projects, and will be properly sanitized between uses.
- Specialist teachers will teach lessons outside or, when necessary, in homeroom classrooms.
- Students will be given assigned seats, when in the classroom.
- Seats will be spaced a minimum of three feet apart.
- Physical Education will take place outside whenever feasible.
- Lunches will be staggered to allow distancing at lunch tables. Students will be spaced three feet apart at tables and classes will be spread 6 feet apart.
- Students will not be allowed to congregate in halls.
- Student visits to lockers and cubbies will be scheduled so distancing takes place.
- Visible markers will be utilized to indicate safe distance for waiting in line for bathroom use.
- Hallways will be marked for unidirectional flow.
- Students will use assigned entrances to the building to avoid contact with other cohorts upon entering and exiting.
- Carpool lines will be spaced accordingly at various locations outside of campus buildings so classes do not come in contact with each other at pick-up time.

Hygiene

Students and staff will wash hands periodically throughout the day, including:

- Upon arrival
- Before and after meals and snacks
- When returning indoors
- When hands are visibly soiled
- After wiping or blowing nose
- When hands come in contact with the face

Sanitizer will be used when there is no access to running water. Instruction and demonstration of proper handwashing will take place at the start of the school year and periodically thereafter. Teachers will monitor handwashing and sanitizing to ensure proper technique and safe use of sanitizers.

School Supplies

2nd Nature Academy students will not share school supplies.

- Parents/guardians will be responsible for providing school supplies for the 2020-21 school year.
- Material fees will go to cover the additional costs of flexible seating, outdoor classroom setup, staff PPE, disinfectants, hand sanitizer, etc.
- Teachers will email home a school supply list for the students registered in their class.
- Students in grades 5-12 are responsible for bringing computers or tablets from home.

Cleaning and Disinfection

Cleaning and disinfection will be routinely performed by staff, not students. 2nd Nature Academy will follow guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting as set forth by the CDC and the EPA.

- Normal routine cleaning of washable surfaces with soap and water
- Periodic disinfection of surfaces using EPA-approved disinfectants
- End of day thorough cleaning and disinfection
- Use of gloves and face coverings during cleaning and disinfecting

Health Assessments and Screening for Illness

2nd Nature Academy will follow the CDC Guidelines for student screening, assessing health, and exclusion from school. Upon arrival and before entering the school building, students will be screened using criteria from the CDC [Daily Home Screening for Students](#). Students must demonstrate that they have a cloth face covering when arriving at school. Students and staff will also be monitored for symptoms throughout the day.

- Symptomatic persons will be instructed to contact their health care provider to be tested for COVID-19 and must self-isolate at home.
- Asymptomatic persons reporting close contact with someone suspected or confirmed with COVID-19, or who report traveled-related risk should self-quarantine for 14 days from their last exposure or return from travel.
- Person(s) with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 must stay out of school until symptom-based criteria are met for discontinuation of isolation.
- Staff will be educated about the symptoms of COVID-19, and should monitor students for any signs/symptoms of illness. Staff should be instructed on how to manage any student identified with symptoms of COVID-19.
- Any person that develops symptoms of COVID-19 while at school will be removed from close contact with others, masked, moved to an isolation area, and be sent home.
- School personnel will record the symptomatic person's temperature and perform a brief assessment of the person's complaints or symptoms. School personnel will be issued personal protective equipment (PPE) to be used during screening.
- Any person with suspect or confirmed COVID-19 should be reported immediately to public health.
- If the individual requires immediate medical care, the school will call 911 for an ambulance and inform emergency medical services about the individual's symptoms.

Plan for School Closure in the Event of Positive Case(s) of COVID-19

All families in the school will be notified in the event that someone in the school community has a suspected case or has tested positive for COVID-19. Any affected classroom will be closed for 24 hours prior to cleaning

and disinfecting. Members of that class will be asked to remain home for 24 hours. Students and staff who come in direct contact with the community member will be asked to get tested for COVID and/or self-quarantine for 14 days. Persons who have a positive case of COVID-19 must quarantine for at least 14 days and be symptom free for 72 hours before returning to campus. Remote instruction will be provided to students who must remain in quarantine.

2nd Nature Academy will document, report, and coordinate with public health officials to investigate and respond to any person with suspect or confirmed COVID-19.

Breakfast (Before School Care)

We are unable to provide breakfast until further notice. However, we are still happy to serve breakfast sent from home until 8:00 am.

Lunch

2nd Nature Academy recognizes the importance of providing a safe and sanitary space for students to eat lunch. The school also acknowledges the importance of peer group socialization that takes place during lunch breaks. Furthermore, the school appreciates that teachers need a break to eat, use the bathroom, and refresh in order to provide the best care and education to their students. Therefore, students will continue to eat lunch in the lunchroom.

- Students may continue to bring a lunch from home or purchase school lunch.
- School lunches will be prepared and served in accordance with NH Food Service Industry Reopening Guidance.
- Lunches will be staggered to accommodate appropriate distancing between and at lunch tables.
- Students will be mandated to properly wash hands before and after meals and snacks.
- Tables and seats will be cleaned and sanitized between lunches.

Recess

2nd Nature Academy students will continue to have recess breaks every day. Student cohorts will not be combined during recess breaks. Recess will take place outdoors unless extreme weather conditions exist that would make outdoor recess an unsafe option. In the event of indoor recess breaks, students may use the gymnasium.

Visitors and Volunteers

2nd Nature Academy will limit visitor access to educational buildings on campus.

- All parents, guardians, and visitors will be required to wear masks while on 2nd Nature Academy campus when out of their cars.
- Access to educational buildings will be limited to students and staff.
- Parents and guardians will be required to remain in their cars during drop-off and pick-up unless school personnel deems it necessary to do otherwise, i.e. picking up a sick child or attending a scheduled meeting with school personnel.
- Non-essential visitors will not be allowed to enter educational buildings.
- While volunteers are an integral part of a school community, 2nd Nature Academy will not plan on accepting volunteers for the 2020-21 school year.

- The campus café will remain open during school hours. All visitors to the café will be required to wear a mask.

Resource Links

<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2020/06/harvard-expert-outlines-recommendations-for-school-reopenings/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/17/nyregion/coronavirus-nyc-schools-reopening-outdoors.html>

<https://www.education.nh.gov/who-we-are/commissioner/school-transition-reopening-redesign-taskforce>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/reopening-schools-faqs.html>

<https://www.hhs.gov>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/symptom-screening.html>

<https://www.education.nh.gov/who-we-are/commissioner/covid-19>

Note that all policies are subject to change based on policy changes and updates from the CDC, the American Academy of Pediatrics, NH Department of Health and Human Services, NH Department of Education, and local and state officials.