



# BRIDGTON ACADEMY

REOPENING PLAN 2020-2021

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## Overview

This spring, the novel coronavirus created an unprecedented challenge across our country and the world. Since then, the Bridgton Academy community has come together in a shared understanding of what it would take to return to school in the Fall. Open and meaningful collaboration and a rigorous approach to planning led to the following plan to reopen the Academy for the 2020-21 school year. We are deeply committed to the idea that the best teaching and learning environment is one in which students and teachers engage one another in-person. We believe we are uniquely positioned to welcome students, faculty, and staff back to campus while ensuring that the health and safety of those on our campus are the highest priority. The state of Maine continues to have among the lowest incidence rates of COVID-19 in the country and the trend of critical statistics offers a favorable forecast. Our rural setting and our small size offers an advantage in managing COVID-related challenges, with tremendous opportunities for the growth of our young men, through socially distanced learning and recreation, as well as social and emotional wellness.

This plan reflects the work of our administrative leadership working in concert with our staff, and in consultation with the Independent School Association of Northern New England, public health experts, as well as resources provided by the Centers for Disease Control.

# Guiding Principles

1. The health and safety of all members of the Bridgton Academy community is our highest priority.
2. Mitigation efforts to protect against the spread of COVID-19 will require significant changes in every aspect of Academy life.
3. Our mission will be the inspiration for, and driving force behind, the changes we will need to make until this pandemic subsides.
4. Our policies and protocols will follow guidance of the CDC, as well as state and local public health authorities.
5. We will coordinate our efforts with counterparts at other schools and professional associations, as well as regularly consult up-to-date resources throughout this process.
6. Ongoing professional development on best practices in campus health and hygiene.

## Opening of School

The beginning of the year at Bridgton Academy will be crucial in providing all of our students with clear instructions and the vital information they need about our safety practices and our protocols to keep the community safe. This work will be a collaborative effort across all areas of school life and will be conducted in close coordination with the faculty, staff, students, and families. Through established protocols such as testing and self-quarantine before reporting to campus, registration and move-in, transportation to and from campus, and engagement in co-curricular activities, we see the beginning of the year as an essential element in keeping the Academy safe and healthy.

### Self Quarantine and Testing

All students will attest that they have completed a 14-day quarantine immediately preceding their arrival to campus. Self quarantine involves eliminating non-essential interaction in public places; wearing a face covering



and maintaining social distancing in all circumstances when leaving the house; and reducing interaction with anyone outside of the household. Further, all students will be required to present a negative COVID-19 test upon registration. The test should be the PCR, either nasopharyngeal or saliva test, taken within seven days of arrival at Bridgton. Within 4-5 days after registration, students will be tested again on campus with their cohorts.

### Students Who Cannot Self-Quarantine

Upon arrival to campus, these students will be housed separately from their cohorts and will be tested as soon as possible. They will remain in quarantine until we receive a negative result for COVID-19. During this time, students will need to follow all campus quarantine protocols. If your travel involves flying to Maine, please make your plans known to Ms. Tucker.

# Ongoing Health Practices

There is no single strategy that will eliminate the risk of virus transmission on any school campus, and until a vaccine becomes available, a layered approach will be necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19. At Bridgton Academy, this layered approach comprises regular health screening and testing when necessary, quarantine and isolation practices, staff training, as well as school-wide communication of expectations in regard to social distancing, personal hygiene, hand-washing, and face covering. Our consultation with medical professionals, state CDC, and public health experts have shaped all of these practices and protocols.

- Our full-time, on-campus nurse will provide immediate assessment and screening for all students who have symptoms consistent with COVID-19. While our goal will be to eliminate spread through social distancing and masking policies as well as a focus on hand hygiene and daily wellness assessments, we have partnered with local medical practices and testing centers for quick and reliable testing as symptoms and spread dictate.
- Bridgton Academy has implemented face covering and social distancing policies while in shared spaces and has redesigned the traffic flow in and out of buildings to mitigate risk of infection, informed by the guidance of the CDC, local practitioners, and public health experts. A heightened emphasis on hand washing hygiene and the reporting of COVID-19 symptoms will be a frequent educational topic during the first semester.
- If a student requires testing while on campus, quarantine protocols are in place to protect the student and the community at large from wider spread. These protocols take into consideration the student's need to maintain distance but also realize the continued academic, social, and emotional needs of the student. If a student is symptomatic and waiting for test results, he will be safely quarantined in a designated and separate dorm area with care provided by a registered nurse under the guidance of a local physician. If the student's test is positive and he is not able to leave campus safely to convalesce, he will be cared for in separate quarters on campus, where he will have the comforts of a traditional dorm room but will be under the medical supervision of a registered nurse. Academic coursework will be accessible as the student's health permits and mental health services will be part of an active recovery procedure.
- Students are required to arrive on campus with proof of a negative COVID-19 test (PCR) performed within 7 days of their arrival. Failure to do so could result in the need for immediate quarantine or finding accommodations off campus until testing can be completed/results returned. In the days immediately following the return to campus by all cohorts, entry testing will be conducted under the direction of Bridgton Hospital and the Maine Urgent Care Network.

- Illness and Exposure testing will be done for any student who is symptomatic of COVID-19 and for members of the cohort who are in close contact with tested students as deemed necessary by the medical team. Surveillance testing in the form of frequent temperature checks and daily health and wellness assessments will help us to monitor for trends and be proactive in the treatment of all illnesses.
- In keeping with current guidelines provided by the CDC, Bridgton Academy will offer each student two reusable face coverings in addition to the five that they are being asked to bring to campus, and access to disposable face coverings as needed. Face shields will be available to those who may require them. Gloves and hand sanitizer will be placed strategically throughout campus and in common spaces, as well as at the entrances to all buildings. Our housekeeping and operations staff are working alongside the Health Office to employ best practices as it pertains to the sanitization of surfaces, commonly used spaces, classrooms and facilities.

## Daily Life

The Academy's successful response to the COVID-19 crisis will depend on the attention paid by all community members to the large and small changes being implemented in daily campus life. Changes are being made to everything from school facilities and traffic patterns, health center practices, class schedules, athletics, chapel and advisor meetings.

### Academic Program

To maximize health and safety, as well as to provide the most access to our

academic catalog, students will be taught in designated cohorts for the Fall semester. In situations where exceptions to this must be made, classes will be taught in our larger academic spaces. Classes will be taught Monday through Saturday morning, as well as during evening hours. This schedule change, as well as additional passing time between classes, will allow for better flow of students between classes and will reduce the population density in high traffic spots in and out of academic buildings and classroom areas.

To augment in-person instruction, our faculty have prepared hybrid academic experiences. In the event that a student needs to isolate or quarantine, he will be able to do so with minimal interruption to his academic progress. In addition to the Hamlin STEM Center and the Humanities building, students in the Class of 2021 will have the opportunity to learn in other community spaces such as the Chapel, the Marcella-Sands Lecture Hall, the Learning Commons, as well as outdoor tent pavilions at several areas on campus. We believe that these facilities will provide ample space for learning and safe co-mingling cohorts, when needed. Each of these adjustments has been made to maximize safety while also continuing to consider the unique academic needs of our postgraduate students.

To maximize student safety, placement testing will no longer take place when students arrive on campus. Instead, testing for English and math courses will be administered online; you will receive information about that process by Monday, August 3rd.



## Residential Life and Cohort System

A cohort is a number of students grouped together in order to limit their exposure to students and staff in the larger community. Each cohort is assigned to a specific dormitory and are grouped together according to their teams and activities, as well as the majority of their classes. They will be connected to a limited number of faculty and staff, including dorm parents, teachers and coaches. The cohort will become the students' second family, in which they will be together and cultivate strong bonds during the upcoming year. As the year progresses and as we learn more about the spread of the virus, we may loosen up on some aspects of the cohort system; however during the fall semester, we will be more insistent on following these guidelines.

On weekends, students will be involved with their teams, with classes on Saturday morning, and with other school activities we have planned. In order to limit the exposure of our students to off campus populations and to limit the spread of the virus, we will be requiring all students to remain on campus each weekend until we leave for Thanksgiving break.

Another step we have taken this year is to contract with Squeaky Clean in Bridgton for laundry service for all students. Doing so will limit the time students would need to spend in town, as well as promote another regular good hygiene practice. The reduced fee for this service is \$700 for the year and will be taken out of the Student Related Expense Account.

Meals will be provided in the Goldsmith Dining Hall under the strict guidelines of the Maine CDC, with proper social distancing, scheduled meal times among cohorts, and the option of eating under the



tent as the weather permits. In addition, the Wolverine Den and the School Store will be up and running to provide snacks and other necessary items during the day and after study hall.

## Visitor Policy

As we work to keep the Academy community safe, we will be limiting the number of visitors to campus and will be insisting on social distancing and other practices to prevent the spread of contagions. Given increases or decreases in the Maine infection rates, we may need to make adjustments to this policy. The most important aspects of it will be that visits will be allowed only in specific areas on campus, arranged in advance, and with appropriate social distancing and the wearing of face coverings. That said, it is important for our students and their families to spend time together, and we will discuss the details of these guidelines during registration.

# Athletics

Bridgton Academy believes it is essential to the physical and mental well-being of students to engage in physical activity, athletic competition and extracurricular activities. Athletics and other interscholastic activities will remain central to our work and to the experience of our students. We will adhere primarily to NCAA guidelines for our re-entry into team practices and competition. This phased approach will comprise a shared commitment to the health of our student athletes, coaches, and training staff, thoughtful implementation and intense oversight of heightened protocols, and the sense of purpose that stands as the hallmark of Wolverine athletics.

## Daily Protocols

- There will be outdoor space exclusively committed to our athletic training staff, and for the students who need treatment.
- In order to manage student flow through the locker room spaces, practice and workout times will be staggered to avoid a large number of student-athletes congregating in the locker room area at any given time.
- Enhanced cleaning and sanitization procedures, as well as a specific evaluation of the common touch points in each sport will be an everyday focus for our coaches and Athletic Center staff,
- Every student-athlete will be provided with his own labeled water bottle. We will have fill stations available, with appropriate protocols in place, and students will be required to drink only from their own container.
- Student-athletes will be provided PPE options to utilize in practices and games. Face coverings, as well as additions to equipment such as face shields in helmets, will also be available. It is recommended that student-athletes wear the face coverings whenever possible during practice, outside of times that the face coverings could be detrimental during cardiovascular exercise.
- There will be a travel policy in place for Academy athletic teams, covering protection in vehicles, additional vehicle availability to increase distancing and enabling transportation in smaller groups, and the protocols in place for meals and rest stops during the itinerary. Head coaches and the Athletics administrators will be responsible for adherence to the policy.
- A strict commitment to cleanliness and hygiene practices will be required when using weight room and fitness facilities at the Academy. Workouts will be conducted only within cohorts, under the guidance of team coaches and our strength and conditioning staff. In addition to our current weight room, space will also be provided under tents to allow for more distancing and greater ventilation.
- We remain fully committed to competition schedules in each of our sports, and we will also have policies in place for our opponents, in an effort to keep our teams safe from exposure to the COVID-19 virus. These include adherence to visiting team protocol and policy, daily health and temperature checks, and sufficient data to show that COVID-19 infections are not spiking in the community from which these teams are traveling.

# Key Dates

As we approach the new school year, the following dates are provided for your planning purposes. However, as we know, the crisis may require adjustments in order to provide a comprehensive on-campus experience. With that in mind, we ask for your understanding and flexibility should we need to make changes in the future.

Saturday, August 22: Registration for cohorts in football and soccer  
Sunday, August 23: Registration for cohorts in lacrosse and hockey  
Monday, August 24: Registration for cohort Wolverines, baseball and basketball cohorts  
Friday, November 20: End of Fall Semester classes; students return home  
November 30-December 4: Fall Semester review and finals to be completed remotely  
Monday, January 11: Students report to campus by 8:00pm  
Tuesday, January 12: Spring semester classes begin  
Friday, March 5: End of third quarter (Spring Break begins)  
Sunday, March 21: Students report to campus by 8:00pm  
Monday, March 22: Fourth quarter classes begin  
Friday, May 7: Baccalaureate Dinner  
Saturday, May 8: Commencement Day

## Reopening Plan Team and Contacts

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