



**January 11, 2021**

**Dear Parents and Guardians,**

Our staff is working hard and fully committed to providing our students, families and community with the most optimal learning experience as we prepare to implement our Phase II Re-Entry plan and the start of the 3<sup>rd</sup> academic quarter. As a reminder, students who have elected to begin in-person instruction will be phased-in beginning with PreK-2 and Special Education (low incidence PK-5) on January 25. Students in grades 3-5 who have elected to begin in-person instruction will return to campus on February 1st. All students; whether in-person or virtual, will return to our traditional school hours (8:00 – 2:30 pm). Wednesdays will remain asynchronous for all students with individual/small group interventions occurring as scheduled. All grade levels whose families chose virtual learning will remain virtual during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter.

The key details of our Phase II Re-Entry Plan have been organized below to assist you with preparing your scholar for a great start in-person or virtually.

**Will my student be assigned a new teacher if they are returning in-person?**

Based on the intent to return survey responses, only 24% of the entire Finch Elementary population has elected to return to in-person learning. Our in-person class sizes on average are low while our virtual class sizes remain constant. Additional factors including the number of teachers approved to telework were also considered to manage our ability to provide adequate coverage of classrooms for both in-person and virtual instruction. As a result, a need does not exist to make any changes to class rosters and all students will remain with their current assigned homeroom teacher.

**Will the school day be similarly structured?**

Yes. Effective January 25<sup>th</sup>, all (in-person/virtual) students will return to a traditional full day schedule of 8:00-2:30 pm. Each grade level will follow a consistent schedule with core instruction, Specials, and breaks embedded throughout the day. Students remaining virtual will mirror the daily schedule that Finch students follow during in-person instruction while taking into consideration the best practices of virtual learning. In-person class sizes will range from no more than 12-14 students per class based on the square footage of the classroom while accounting for appropriate social distancing. Students will remain in their homerooms with their teacher/staff member for the majority of the day with the exception of recess and outdoor P.E. instruction whenever possible.

**What will be the instructional delivery model during Phase II?**

Based on the low response of students electing to return to in-person learning, all students (in-person/virtual) will continue learning within a full virtual model using Google Classroom and Zoom. Students who are on campus will have access to their homeroom teacher or an assigned staff member for additional support as required. In-person students may receive additional individual/small group instruction when feasible and as long as it does not impede or delay instruction for the remainder of the

class. Teachers' primary focus will be to provide an equitable, rigorous learning experience for all students, whether they are engaged in-person or virtually.

Non-core/Specials classes will be virtual. Specials teachers (Art, Music, Spanish & Technology) will continue to engage virtually using the Zoom platform. P.E. will meet face-to-face with in-person students and instruction will be delivered simultaneously using the Zoom platform for virtual students. Whenever possible, P.E. will take place outside for in-person students.

### **How will children who qualify for special services get the support they need - SST, 504, Special Education, Gifted, and ESOL?**

Finch teachers will continue to provide differentiated instruction (acceleration, intervention, and remediation) throughout the school day during core instruction and through specialized instruction. Students will receive all services in accordance with the virtual or simultaneous delivery model. Teachers will continue to adhere to the principles set forth by the IDEA and by meeting the individualized needs of the student as outlined in their IEP or 504 plan to the greatest extent appropriate in the virtual environment. For specific information pertaining to your child's IEP, please contact our Special Education Lead Teacher, Dr. Beverly Gullatt (404-802-4004, or [bgullatt@atlanta.k12.ga.us](mailto:bgullatt@atlanta.k12.ga.us)). For 504 & SST plan information, please contact Megan Bland (404-802-4030, or [mebland@atlanta.k12.ga.us](mailto:mebland@atlanta.k12.ga.us)).

### **Will students who return in-person have access to instructional materials at school?**

Yes, each student returning in-person will receive a complete set of school supplies and resources provided by the school. Other than assigned technology devices, students should NOT bring outside materials from home. Additional resources are available upon request for students who remain virtual and desire to refresh their materials. Headphones are recommended for all students and are available upon request.

### **Should in-person students report to school on asynchronous Wednesdays?**

No. The campus will be closed every Wednesday to allow for deep cleaning of classrooms and the entire facility. All students (in-person/virtual) will engage in asynchronous learning on these days and are expected to log-in to with their teachers, interventionist, specialist, or counselor for individual/small group instruction as scheduled.

### **What safety procedures are in place to mitigate the spread of the COVID virus at the school?**

#### **COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY**

Any return to in-person learning requires collective responsibility for every APS Student and Employee. Failure to do such significantly compromises the health and safety of others. It is imperative that everyone adhere to the safety guidelines outlined. Failure to meet these expectations may result in corrective action by administration and removal from the in-person model.

#### ***Maintaining Physical Separation***

Limiting face-to-face contact with others is the best way to reduce the spread of the coronavirus. Signage is posted throughout the campus to remind everyone to remain a minimum of six (6) feet apart at all times.

Finch is committed to social distancing through a variety of ways:

- Social distancing floor/seating markings are visible in the reception areas, gymnasium, restrooms and in all of the hallways throughout the building to remind and guide proper social distancing.
- Maximum capacity in common areas and communal restrooms have been determined and signage posted as a reminder.
- Nonessential visitors and activities involving external groups or organizations will not be permitted to enter the campus.
- Increased staff have been assigned to monitor arrival and dismissal to discourage loitering and to ensure students go directly to their classrooms upon arrival.
- Opportunities for sustained exposure (15 minutes or more within 6 feet or less from others) will be minimized by implementing the following measures:
  - Maintaining a maximum of 12-14 students in general classrooms
  - Providing visual and verbal reminders to staff and students to stay 6 feet away from each other.
  - Plexiglass barriers have been placed in both the main and front office reception desks.
  - Desks are arranged 6 feet apart and individual desk shields have been procured for all students who attend in-person learning.
  - Hallways, exits and entry doors have been designated as one-way to reduce the likelihood of staff and/or students meeting face to face.
  - Regularly scheduled meetings conducted for school business (Staff/Faculty, School Leadership Team, PLCs, PTA, GO TEAM, Parent Conferences, etc.) will be conducted virtually.

### ***Face Coverings and Masks***

Cloth face coverings are meant to protect others in case the wearer is unknowingly infected but does not have symptoms.

- All students and employees are required to wear a mask that covers their mouth and nose at all times while on campus and during transition on the school bus.
- Staff and students may purchase and wear their own masks; however, neck gaiters, bandanas, and vented masks are not permitted.
- Accommodations may be provided for students who meet the established criteria as outlined by the GDPH. Documentation may be requested for approval by administration

### ***Handwashing and Personal Hygiene***

Good hygiene measures such as handwashing for at least 20 seconds, safe and appropriate use of hand sanitizer, covering coughs and sneezes, and avoiding touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands will be taught and reinforced systematically and pervasively.

- When handwashing with soap and water is not available, hand sanitizer will be used by staff and students.
- Handwashing should be done for at least 20 seconds and occur often, especially during essential times such as: Before, during, and after preparing and/or eating food:
- Students and staff should cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or use the inside of their elbow).
- Used tissue should be discarded in the trash, followed immediately by good handwashing.
- Additional hand sanitizing dispensers have been mounted in the halls and every classroom for easy access.

## ***Maintaining a Healthy Environment***

- Appropriate infection prevention supplies and equipment are available in every classroom at Finch to prevent the spread of the virus.
- High touch common areas will be wiped down and disinfected twice daily
- Fogging machines for commercial grade cleaning and sanitizing will be utilized daily.
- Deep cleaning of facilities will occur when students and staff are not present in buildings (Tuesday night, Wednesday, Friday-Sunday).
- Teachers will schedule time within the instructional day for routine cleaning and disinfection breaks twice daily.
- Sharing of students' materials and supplies will be prohibited whenever possible.
- Students will minimize the amount of items brought to school each day.
- Equipment and supplies that must be shared will be disinfected between uses.
- Signage in common areas such as classrooms, hallways and entrances promoting good hygiene measures are posted throughout the campus as a reminder.
- Students' personal belongings will be separated from others' and in individually labeled containers, cubbies, or areas.
- Student devices must be brought to and from school daily.

### **What are the expectations for students who are returning in-person?**

Each day, students must bring:

1. Facial Mask
2. Student Device (chromebook / iPad)
3. Headphones (available upon request)
4. Water bottle/thermos
5. Beach towel/yoga mat for outdoor instruction or meals
6. Home prepared lunch (optional)

Most significant in-school guidelines for students:

- All students will have their temperature taken and submit to a verbal health screening each day upon arrival. If a student has an elevated temperature, he/she will be sent home immediately.
- Students must wear an appropriate mask/face covering correctly while inside the building at all times. If a student arrives at school without a mask, a mask will be provided.
- Restrooms will be limited to scheduled breaks, unless there is an emergency.
- All students must engage in frequent hand hygiene, including upon arrival, before and after meals, after bathroom use, after coughing or sneezing, and before dismissal. Ample hand-hygiene supplies will be available in each bathroom and hand sanitizing stations will be provided throughout the school as an extra safety measure.
- Students will not share classroom supplies, including pencils, pens, scissors, electronic devices, etc.
- Water fountains have been disabled. Students must bring their own water bottle from home, filled before school each day, and marked with their name. A bottle-filling station is available.

### **What meals will be provided during the school day?**

- All students reporting to the school site for instruction will be required to eat breakfast and lunch in the classroom. Meals will be available through classroom delivery.
- Before and after eating, masks/face coverings are required.
- Before and after eating, hand washing or use of district-approved hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol (for staff and children 6 and older) will be required.

- Each meal served in the classroom will include prepackaged cutlery.
- Each classroom teacher is required to use gloves when distributing student meals.
- Additionally, each in-person student will receive a take-home meal kit on the last day of in-person instruction for the week. These meal kits will support the student's nutritional needs during non-instructional days and the weekend.

### **Will parents be permitted inside the campus to visit classrooms?**

No. Parents will not be permitted to walk students to their classrooms in the morning. Classroom visitation request will not be honored at this time. However, parents are welcome in our building for essential business only. All parents/visitors must adhere to the following guidelines:

- When possible, please call the school first prior to your visit to address your need or concern.
- If your need or concern must be addressed in-person, you will need to make an appointment prior to arrival.
- Please do not bring nonessential individuals with you to conduct your business with the school. Groups of more than two adults together will not be permitted to enter the campus.
- For the health and safety of others, all visitors and staff are required to wear face mask or coverings while on campus or they will not be permitted to enter the campus.
- All visitors will have their temperature taken and submit to a verbal health screening upon entry. If a visitor has an elevated temperature, he/she must leave the campus immediately.
- All visitors are required to adhere to social distancing practice and remain a minimum of 6 feet apart at all times.
- All visitors must follow the safety guidelines and practices as directed by the school district, local administration and/or the front office staff.

### **What are the arrival and dismissal plans for students?**

#### ***Arrival***

- Car Riders
  - Students will enter the gym doors at the front of the building adjacent to Avon Ave.
  - Students must remain in their vehicles upon arrival.
  - A maximum of six (6) students at a time will be permitted to depart from their vehicle in the designated car lane as directed by the assigned staff.
  - Students will stand on 6-ft. markers in a line adjacent to the building until directed to enter the campus for the screening and sanitization process.
- Walkers
  - Students will enter the doors adjacent to the front staff parking lot.
  - Students will stand on 6-ft. markers to form a line adjacent to the gymnasium until directed to enter the campus for the screening and sanitization process.
- Bus Riders
  - Students will enter the doors at the bus ramp adjacent to Lee Street.
  - A maximum of 3-5 students at a time will be permitted to depart from their bus as directed by the assigned staff member.
  - Students will stand on 6-ft. markers in a line on the bus ramp until directed to enter the campus for the screening and sanitization process.

Upon entry, students will follow social distancing markers and guidelines moving intentionally to their assigned destination.

Staff will be stationed throughout the building to ensure students walk in an orderly fashion directly to their designated classrooms while following appropriate social distancing guidelines.

### ***Dismissal***

A tiered dismissal plan will be implemented again this year beginning at 2:25 pm. Car rider students will be dismissed during the last tier to allow parents ample time to assemble in the car lane.

All parent pick-ups (walkers/car riders) should anticipate higher volumes of students during dismissal and are reminded to be patient during the dismissal process. Students designated as car riders will not be dismissed as walkers until an appropriate id can be verified for student release.

### **What are the safety guidelines for students riding the bus?**

- Students will be required to wear masks and maintain physical distance while on the bus. It is the students' responsibility to do their best to maintain social distancing when riding buses.
- Students' temperatures will not be checked prior to getting on the bus.
- Students should expect possible delays because of the need for morning screening and afternoon physically-distanced dismissal.
- Appropriate social distancing cannot be guaranteed on school buses and parents are encouraged to plan for alternate modes of transportation.
- Atlanta Public Schools will have bus routes posted on January 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **Will afterschool care be available for students?**

No. As a safety precaution, we are unable to provide these services at this time.

### **Other COVID Safety Rules:**

Students should remain home if they are exhibiting any of the following:

- Displaying signs or symptoms of a fever in the past 24 hours such as chills, sweats, or an elevated temperature of 100.4 F or greater
- Taken fever-reducing medication within the last 24 hours, or experienced symptoms such as a new cough, shortness of breath, chest tightness, sore throat, nasal congestion, body aches, runny nose, loss of taste and/or smell, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, or fever/chills/sweats
- Had any close contact in the last 14 days with someone with a diagnosis of COVID-19
- Has taken a COVID-19 test and are awaiting results based on potential exposure to a known case or other high risk exposure
- Has taken a COVID-19 test and are awaiting results based on mild symptoms or overall feeling unwell

If parents or their student are diagnosed with COVID-19, please notify your child's school and the school nurse (*The Georgia Department of Public Health (GDPH) requires isolation for individuals diagnosed with COVID-19*)

Students will NOT be able to attend school or school activities in-person until the recommended isolation period has been completed.

If a student has been exposed to someone who has been confirmed as having COVID-19, the student must follow quarantine guidance from public health officials.

DPH recommends a quarantine timeframe of 14 days for anyone who been in close contact with persons who have tested positive for COVID-19. During the quarantine period, the students will NOT be able to attend school or school activities in-person until the recommended quarantine period has been completed.

Information is shared with the district coordinator of comprehensive health services who will conduct contact tracing, communicate with families of potential exposure, and conduct an investigation to determine next steps which may include the following: partial closures, quarantine for select individuals, or temporary building-area closures

In consultation with the local public health department, the school district may also decide whether school closure is warranted, including the length of time closure may be necessary. If this happens, the school will switch to a school-wide virtual delivery model for all students.

We look forward to a strong start to the 3rd Term. If you have additional questions, please contact the school directly at 404-802-4000.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Forrestella Taylor", enclosed in a white rectangular box.

Forrestella Taylor  
*Principal*