

July 25, 2020

Salmonberry Late July Update

Dear Salmonberry Families,

Here is another update on Salmonberry's re-opening plans, which I wanted to get to you ahead of our **August 1 re-enrollment deadline**. Much of what follows is re-affirming what was stated in the July 12 update, just a few clarifying details and points of emphasis. *To view all re-opening communications and plans please visit Salmonberry's dedicated Pathway to Re-opening web page HERE: <https://salmonberryschool.org/covid-19-response/>*

First, a huge shout out to Laura Black, our Programs Administrator and Summer Camp Director who continues to extend huge amounts of time, energy and love in helping us move forward safely with clarity and heart. Many other heroes are emerging as well who deserve our collective gratitude. This summer's work has definitely been a team effort!

Our planning process: July has witnessed a groundswell of community support for Salmonberry's efforts to realize in-person instruction. A staff team has participated in a careful walk-through of our re-opening plans with the guidance of our SJC Health liaisons. *All our current and future plans are moving forward under the close personal supervision of the relevant health authorities with kids' safety as our highest priority.* We are being conservative and cautious about all protocols and practices.

We have now had four successful weeks of summer camp offerings, with a few more to come. We have learned a lot about mask-wearing, hand-washing and the opportunities and challenges of outdoor learning with different ages and at different sites. For most kids, teachers and parents, these have been overwhelmingly positive experiences. The feedback has been fantastic, and the experience has helped to inform our re-opening plans.

We have been having frequent staff meetings where we are refining schedules, curriculum, practices and protocols, and our teachers are on fire to get back to the work we love.

We have been convened our finance committee to work on planning with all the uncertainties and challenges of budgeting in a pandemic. And, for the most part, the numbers are adding up.

The Salmonberry Board of Trustees met and offered tremendous support and outstanding leadership regarding strategic and long-term planning for sustainability, growth and health.

The Parent Advisory Group had a second very productive and positive session. This group is optimistic, creative, collaborative and offered a plethora of both ideas and practical support for our re-opening plans.

A subset of the PAG met with staff on campus yesterday and is helping to realize our vision for a socially distanced in-person campus with enhanced outdoor instructional and play spaces, and carefully designed inside spaces, with safety, efficacy and beauty in mind.

Several of us continue to attend weekly SJC Partner meetings and pore over guidelines and docs as we review and refine all of our policies and protocols.

And...as a result of all this work...here is...

The Plan for Fall

SELF QUARRANTINE BEGINS AUGUST 19: We are taking the health of the kids, the families and the staff very seriously. We strongly urge everyone to complete summer travel, and visits by off-island family and friends by August 19 and to begin a two-week period of carefully limiting exposure. During the school year we also encourage everyone, families and staff, to be very conscious about out-of-county exposure. If you or your child do travel, we ask you to consider staying home for two weeks after returning home. I would be happy to consult with you individually regarding the nature of your travel and assessing the risk and possible need for mitigation measures such as quarantine.

OPENING WEEK and staggered starts: Campus opens for school on Wednesday, September 2. We will very likely begin the Salmon and Cedars classes with reduced enrollment. We will divide each of these classes into two cohorts and have a couple of days with these smaller groups as we teach, model and reinforce all the practices that will be in place at school thereafter. Your classroom teacher will communicate with you about any adjustments to be aware of in regards to the first week's schedule. Also note, there will be no school on Monday, September 7 in observance of the Labor Day Holiday. Also be aware that your classroom teacher will be in touch with you about the specific time windows for arrival for your child. We will be staggering arrival times by a few minutes to lessen any possible congestion at arrival.

CLASS PROTOCOLS: Please refer to my previous update for a number of details related to class and campus procedures. The big picture is *we plan to open full-time and in-person*.

There will be temperature checks and verbal health screenings for all at arrival.

Parents will be asked to stay outside of the classrooms and not congregate near school entrances or parking lots.

We will all be wearing face coverings at drop-off and pick-up, for all inside activities, and for all outside activities when six foot spacing cannot be guaranteed. *Your child will need to wear a well-fitting cloth facemask*, and have a back-up mask with them as well.

Generally speaking, each class will have school on campus 4 days/wk. We have adequate square footage, facilities and supplies inside each classroom to meet social distancing guidelines and handwashing and disinfecting protocols for everyone to be inside at once. However, there is definitely reduced risk of aerosol exposure when we decrease the density and length of time inside the rooms. We are therefore making some significant enhancements to the campus that will allow small groups from each class to be outside and covered. (THANK YOU PARENT VOLUNTEERS!) Expect that your child will have 1/3-2/3 of their on campus time outside. The campus outside spaces are also being divided so that each class will occupy a designated part of

the yard to minimize overlapping cross-age contact. In addition each class will meet off campus for at least one full day each week. We are exploring partnerships with Coffelt Farm, Mt Baker Farm, The Glenwood Springs Hatchery, Camp Orkila and The Helsell Farm as some of our off-site educational field stations.

Inside class time will include frequent handwashing, disinfecting shared surfaces, limiting shared materials, and hourly mask-free breath-breaks for all.

We will be eliminating cross-age “buddy classes” and also Specialist instruction for the beginning of the year. We will be seeking guidance on safely expanding numbers of contacts as we move through the fall.

Snacks will not be prepared at school, nor provided or shared communally. Everyone will simply bring their own food to eat.

We are anticipating more absence than usual due to the stricter attendance guidelines that Covid protocols require. Teachers will accommodate students who are learning at home at any given time through the preparation of curriculum-tied activity packets that will be available to anyone who is absent, as well as possible online support for parents and kids in the event of extended absence.

There will be email communications from your child’s teacher in August as details on all of the above become increasingly clear.

Re-enrollment reminder: The vast majority of students are all re-enrolled for September. There is growing enthusiasm and optimism for in-person learning using social distancing throughout the school community. A few of you, understandably have concerns. For those who have needed more time to consider enrollment, we have extended the re-enrollment deadline for previously enrolled families to August 1. If you choose to withdraw your child before that date, you may do so without penalty. After August 1 you will be held to the amended withdrawal policy outlined below. We currently have a waitlist for some of the classes. *It is imperative* that you contact Laura Black or myself prior to August 1 if you plan to withdraw your child for 2020-21.

Amended Withdrawal Policy for 2020-21: Our normal withdrawal policy can be found in the parent handbook available through TADS and also found under the community portal tab on the school website. If you are logged in, you can find the Handbook [HERE](https://salmonberryschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Handbook-2019-20.pdf): <https://salmonberryschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Handbook-2019-20.pdf> The relevant policy is on page 16. It articulates essentially a trimester system of financial commitment governing mid-year withdrawals from school. This year, in response to the unlikely possibility that Salmonberry is mandated to cease in-person learning, we wanted to mitigate the anxiety for families that may not be able to, or may not choose to participate in a fully remote program. Therefore:

In the event of a discontinuance of in-person learning, a family may choose to withdraw their child. They will be expected to pay their child’s tuition for the current month of withdrawal, as

*well as **one additional calendar month**. They will be exempt from our usual withdrawal policy's dates of obligation. If the school subsequently resumes in-person instruction, the withdrawn family will be expected to resume the normal terms of their agreement or the usual withdrawal policy terms will apply.*

Risk Tolerance: Please know that teachers will be making every effort to follow all safety protocols recommended by our local health officers, who are informed by the most current scientific data. And, in-person school will never be a 100% risk-free experience in terms of viral exposure. If you believe you have a very low tolerance for risk, then please talk to me so we can collaboratively determine if Salmonberry will be an appropriate placement for your child at this time.

I continue to host my Tuesday morning office hours on Zoom. Please feel free to stop by Tuesdays at 9:00 (*Paul's Zoom room: PMI: 754-024-9652 Password (if requested): 151489*). The Parent Advisory Group will meet next on August 15, at 10:00 and you are welcome to join us, even if you couldn't make to the June or July meetings. (See my Zoom Room login info above).

That's all for now. Thanks as always for your support and patience. I know this continues to be a stressful time for many families. Your teachers are so eager to get back to in-person learning at Salmonberry School. We will adjust to all these changes with positivity, determination and good humor. We miss you and love you very much.

Sincerely,

Paul