



STEPHEN  
GAYNOR  
SCHOOL

# **REOPENING PLAN FOR 2020-2021**

Issued July 31, 2020

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## Introduction

*A pioneer in special education, Stephen Gaynor School is an independent Pre-K, Lower, and Middle School for bright students with learning differences. Founded in 1962, Stephen Gaynor School provides a highly individualized educational program in a rich, rigorous, and nurturing environment in which students gain the skills and confidence necessary to learn, grow, and reach their full potential.*

— Stephen Gaynor School Mission

Stephen Gaynor School is a day school housed in two interconnected buildings located on 89th and 90th Streets between Amsterdam and Columbus Avenues on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. The guiding principle of Stephen Gaynor School is to provide a nurturing environment in which children with a range of learning differences, from Attention Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) to speech, language, and reading delays such as dyslexia, can grow academically, socially, and emotionally. Gaynor students have a strong cognitive profile but often have difficulty with the acquisition of reading and writing skills. In close partnership with families, our highly trained and dedicated teachers, specialists, and administrators create a climate of caring where students feel comfortable taking academic risks, secure in the knowledge that their educational journey is accompanied by success.

The hallmark of Stephen Gaynor School is our individualized approach to special education. Our plan for September is to open our doors to onground learning; our commitment is to be ready for all options. We know, and [research shows](#), that our students learn best when they are in a classroom with their teachers. Gaynor is in a unique position due to the size of our state-of-the-art facility and student to teacher ratio to achieve a fully realized onground plan. Our goal is to provide onground instruction with an online option. We are confident in our ability to provide a robust, individualized, multisensory education regardless of the platform.

The safety of our students, staff, and guests is of the utmost priority. We have taken every precaution to implement a strategy that encompasses the latest available local and national COVID-19 guidelines and recommendations. Our management and Crisis Response Team (CRT) have also remained in close contact with our peers, allowing our teams to obtain valuable knowledge, strategies, and resources. Our ultimate goal is to provide a safe and clean environment for our community as they return to our facilities.

Our Pod Model described below will adhere to the latest social distancing guidelines. Our classrooms, offices, cafeterias, gym, and field house will be reconfigured in a manner that will allow occupants to maintain a six foot (6') distance between one other. We have retrofitted our spaces with protection screens, adding hand washing stations, and are modifying all of our policies as we adjust to a new way of operating. Every avenue for a seamless plan will be continuously explored and we will remain agile and flexible throughout the ever changing landscape.

We are focused on making the best decisions possible with the most up-to-date information and research-based protocols. Here are some key details we do know for certain:

- Our students learn best in an in-person learning environment
- The health, safety, academic, and social-emotional needs of our students and employees are our primary concern
- Our physical plant and small class sizes allow for the most rigorous social distancing recommendations
- Informed by our success with VirtualGaynor in the spring, we are fully prepared for in-person, distance, or a combination of both

In-person After School and interscholastic athletics are on hold for the fall. We are looking into virtual After School options and will provide details as we know more.

### **Communicating Our Plan to Our Community**

We have been communicating regularly with our faculty, staff, and families throughout the summer. Head of School Dr. Scott Gaynor has held remote Town Halls in May and July for our entire community to update them on our plans for the fall. Each Town Hall has been followed by a detailed summary emailed to all constituents including returning families, incoming families, faculty and staff, and trustees. We have conducted a reopening survey for parents, and have communicated with faculty and staff to determine any possible hindrances to onground reopening in the fall.

At the time of the survey in mid July, 83% of our families indicated that they are somewhat to extremely comfortable about coming to school in September. We share their concerns about the importance of strong safety precautions, and we have factored a host of policy and physical safety procedures into our planning.

In early August we will send out a survey to parents explaining in detail the remote option, including the level of flexibility parents will have in determining when children will be onground vs. remote, and an evaluation of our families' technology needs should we move to distance learning.

We have created a Back-to-School Resources page on our Parent Portal (see screenshot below), which will be updated as information becomes available.

## Back-to-School Resources

Getting ready for the start of school in September!

### Upcoming Events

Tuesday <b>Sep 8</b>	ALL-SCHOOL EVENT <b>EC/Lower School Student Visits (by appointment)</b>
Wednesday <b>Sep 9</b>	ALL-SCHOOL EVENT <b>Virtual Mandatory Placement Mtg. for Parents of Graduating Class of 2021</b>
Wednesday <b>Sep 9</b>	ALL-SCHOOL EVENT <b>VIRTUAL Parent Welcome/Classroom Visits</b> 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

 Virtual Gaynor PA: Support & Ideas for Staying Connected

### Action Steps

-  Update Family Information
-  Update Magnus Health
-  Transport/Outside Help/Distance Learn. Forms

## Plan for Reopening



Town Hall with Dr. Gaynor:  
July 21, 2020  
Click to view the July 21 presentation  
STEPHEN GAYNOR SCHOOL

## COVID-19/Coronavirus Resources

-  Centers for Disease Control COVID-19 Page
-  CDC Reopening Guidelines
-  NY Forward: Reopening New York
-  New York State Travel Advisories
-  NY State Dept. of Health Novel Coronavirus Page
-  NYC Dept. of Health COVID-19 Page
-  Gaynor Guidelines for Preventing the Spread of Colds/Viruses

Informed by our success with VirtualGaynor in the spring, faculty and administrators have been working over the summer to improve our distance learning program should we need to move to distance learning at any time. Key changes will be an increase in live teaching, more social interaction, and better access to teachers and any asynchronous offerings.

## New York State Guidelines

Our Crisis Response Team (see pg 14) has met weekly over the summer to plan for all contingencies. Every morning, the Head of School reviews the New York State [statistics](#) and [early warning](#) dashboards to remain informed on the current status of infection rates and other indicators in New York City. State guidelines currently indicate that a region must be in Phase 4 of reopening (NYC moved to Phase 4 on July 20), and have an infection rate of less than 5 percent over a 14-day rolling average. Schools, after a restart, will have to move to distance learning if the seven-day infection rate hits 9 percent.

We have reviewed the [state guidelines](#) for in-person instruction at pre-K to Grade 12 schools, and meet or exceed every mandatory and recommended best practice.

## I. Reopening of Facilities for In-Person Instruction

Gaynor is in a unique position due to the size of our state-of-the-art facility and student to teacher ratio to achieve a fully realized onground plan. Our goal is to provide onground instruction with an online option. We are confident in our ability to provide a robust, individualized, multisensory education regardless of the platform. For students who require such accommodations, a remote learning (hybrid) option will be available.

All students and staff will be taught and trained on COVID-19 safety protocols regarding hand hygiene, proper face covering wearing, social distancing, and proper respiratory hygiene. Other training will be provided as needed and associated signage for safety protocols and proper PPE procedures will be posted throughout the facility.

## **Social Distancing/Face Coverings**

In order to follow the most stringent guidelines with regard to social distancing and face coverings, we have implemented the following procedures:

- Staggered arrival/dismissal times
- Reconfigured spaces for social distancing
- Elevator usage is restricted to one person at a time
- Training of all faculty, staff, and students on PPE care and use
- We will provide a face covering to each faculty, staff, and student (we request employees and families purchase or make additional face coverings to allow for washing of masks between use)
- We are asking everyone to use three-layer fabric masks, if possible. At this time, there is no specific mask requirement, nor are we specifically recommending any brand of masks.
- Students must wear a face covering during their commute to school, and during the school day (with approved breaks). We are still evaluating the best research on when masks are needed during the school day, and we will provide additional details on mask protocols in the coming weeks.
- Families, faculty and staff are asked to adhere to all social distancing and mask requirements when engaging in activities outside of school
- Sharing of materials, food, and beverages is prohibited

## **Arrival and Dismissal Procedures**

Students will be explicitly taught about social distancing protocols, and visual aids are added throughout the school as reminders (6 ft distance). Hand sanitizing stations will be located at both entrances. Students will be supervised in washing hands on a consistent schedule, and masks will be required for teachers and students as advisable. Key steps in the arrival/dismissal process:

1. Complete daily symptom checker BEFORE leaving home. Students, faculty, and staff will be screened for illness prior to their arrival to campus via the symptom checker app. Protocols for those deemed ineligible to attend will be enforced.
2. Arrive to school at the student's scheduled arrival time and join the socially-distanced queue at the specified entrance (North or South Building). Siblings will be allowed to go to a socially-distanced holding area until it is their time to arrive.
3. Staff will confirm symptom checker status for students and employees.
4. Students and employees will wash hands at handwashing stations before entering.
5. No visitors to the buildings. Only faculty, staff, and students will be permitted to enter the buildings. Extenuating circumstances that warrant non staff on campus will follow school protocols for health clearance and building navigation.

- Dismissal at scheduled time in specified pickup zone. Safety at dismissal is a priority. We will ask all parents and caregivers to adhere to specific procedures.

Here are the scheduled arrival and dismissal times by Cluster:

	<b>ARRIVAL</b>	<b>DISMISSAL</b>
 EC (Purple)	8:25 am	2:45 pm
 Pink	8:05 am	3:00 pm
 Red	7:45 am	2:45 pm
 Orange	8:25 am	3:20 pm
 Yellow	8:05 am	3:00 pm
 Silver	8:45 am	3:40 pm
 Green	8: 25 am	3:20 pm
 Blue	7:45 am	2:30 pm

## Key Aspects of the Pod Model

We have planned for six feet of social distancing in classrooms/hallways, with limited movement outside the classroom, and with mask protocols. Each pod will be composed of 11-12 students and three instructors, either in one room or spread between two classrooms. All of our spaces have been reconfigured to allow for these new protocols. Literacy skills will be the primary focus for grouping students within pods. Instruction will remain individualized within the pod and through the use of remote instruction during the day.

### *Early Childhood through Intermediate Division*

- Literacy skills are prioritized in grouping students
- Speech-Language and Occupational Therapists will support students either in-person (if they are assigned to the same pod) or remotely with the assistance of an assistant teacher
- Six-foot social distancing in all classrooms
- Pod consists of 11-12 students and three instructors
- One Pod can be split amongst two rooms to allow for appropriate social distancing
- Limited movement outside the classroom
- Utilize all co-curricular spaces to meet social distance guidelines
- Maintains our small group and individual/dyad instruction

### *Upper Division*

Similar setup to the other clusters. In the Pod Model, the Blue Cluster students will each be assigned a group with 3 teachers. Some of the groups, depending on the size of their assigned space, will be in one space together. Other pods will be split into two smaller groups during instructional times.

The three Pod teachers will be teaching reading, writing, math, history, and science.

Given the highly individualized nature of our curriculum, much of our summer is dedicated to classroom placement. The same is true this summer. Pod placement will not be finalized until sometime in mid to late August.

*Traveling within the school:* Every effort is being made to promote social distancing while at the school. This includes traveling within our campus. A combination of strategies will be implemented that include but are not limited to the following:

- Dedicated one way corridors. (Floor markings and arrows will be installed throughout).
- Dedicated stairwells for travel between floors, including emergency stairwells.
- Elevator usage is restricted to one occupant at a time.
- Certain areas and spaces may be closed.
- Staggered travel rules and times may be implemented.

## Attendance

Attendance and assignments are closely monitored by teachers and families and documented in the student information system.

## Transportation

Stephen Gaynor School does not provide private contracted busing service. Much is still unknown with regard to DOE's Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT) busing, but we ask if a child may need a MetroCard or is authorized for public busing, that parents fill out the transportation section of the Parent Portal as soon as possible. OPT will be making an announcement on August 1 with their plans.

We understand that carpooling and ridesharing are a reality of commuting, and ask that everyone who is carpooling wear masks and take appropriate safety measures before and during travel to and from school. If families are in search of a carpool or might need help finding families who live in their area, please contact our Director of Advancement.

## Calendar for Opening of School

At this time, we expect to follow our stated calendar, with school in session five days a week, and no plans to move to remote learning after Thanksgiving. Should we make any adjustments to our fall calendar, we will communicate those details with families and employees immediately.

## Emergency Drills

We will be conducting all mandatory emergency fire and lock down drills in accordance with New York Fire Code Section 405. We will plan for these drills to be conducted in a manner that maintains social distancing at exits and gathering points outside the buildings, while still preparing students to respond in emergencies.

## Building Updates

In consultation with various industry professionals, consultants, and contracted vendors, we have implemented various changes to the way we operate our facilities. Our cleaning program has been enhanced and we increased our staff and cleaning frequency during the day and after school hours. We have incorporated the use of electrostatic disinfectants and have dedicated cleaning personnel to the constant disinfection of all high traffic area touchpoints and surfaces throughout the facility. We have procured handwashing stations, designated an area to be used as a second nurses' station, spaced furniture in classrooms, and updated our HVAC system with the most updated MERV-13 filters. Our HVAC system will also be programmed to use 100% fresh air where possible; we will also allow the use of operable windows throughout the school to facilitate additional fresh airflow as needed. Signage dedicated to social distancing procedures, safety protocols, and proper PPE procedures will be posted throughout the school buildings and at all entrances. All building changes are being made in compliance with the 2020 New York State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code. The function, position and operation of all of our fire doors will remain unchanged, keeping us in compliance with fire code.

## Food Service

Stephen Gaynor School does not offer any provided food service. Students and staff will be eating lunch and snacks at predetermined times throughout the day at their desks, maintaining social distancing. Students and staff will sanitize their desks before and after each contact with food. Facilities staff will sanitize each classroom at the end of every day. School nurses will monitor food allergy plans respective to students in classrooms and will provide all necessary training. Students and staff will perform hand hygiene before and after eating; food and beverages may not be shared.

## II. Monitoring of Health Conditions

### Daily Mandatory Symptom Checker

We will be using the [Ruvna app](#) as our daily symptom checker for all students and employees. Employees and students must fill out the symptom checker, including checking temperature, **before leaving home** each morning. This should take less than 5 minutes to complete, and needs to be performed for each individual student (however, some of the questions will relate to other family members). If the child or the employee fails the symptom checker, they may not leave home. They will not be allowed to enter the school. New York State guidelines state "students may not attend school if they have had a temperature of greater than 100.0°F at any time in the past 14 days, even if a fever reducing medication was administered and the student no longer has a fever." (see page 5 of the [guidelines](#))

Families with Asthma Action Plans submitted through Magnus Health will be hearing from the school nurse (nurse@stephengaynor.org) in order to discuss how we can provide optimal support in this new

environment. If families have not yet submitted an Asthma Action Plan for 2020-2021 please do so via the link to Magnus Health in the Parent Portal.

Families and employees should remain aware of any [travel restrictions](#) and **plan ahead** for any possible quarantine requirements for restricted states and areas. NY state guidance states, “all travelers coming from states with significant rates of transmission of COVID-19 (hereinafter “designated states”) to quarantine for a 14-day period from the time of their last contact within such designated state(s).

## Screening

All students and staff will be required to complete the Ruvna screening application online before arriving to campus. Answers will be monitored by the school nurse. Any affirmative symptom responses will be required to stay home. Anyone who does not complete the screening form online prior to entering the building will not be allowed in. No parents will be allowed inside buildings and will be discouraged from congregating at/near school entrances. No visitors will be allowed inside the buildings during school hours. Vendors will be scheduled outside of school hours whenever possible and will be required to complete screening upon arrival and wear PPE on premises.

## Testing Protocols

Following recommendations by the CDC, Gaynor currently does not require routine mandatory COVID-19 testing or antibody testing of students, faculty or staff as a screening tool. The decision to test an individual should be determined only by a healthcare professional or the local DOH.

Any student or staff member who fulfills any of the criteria below will be referred for COVID-19 testing via their primary care physician or via Urgent Care Centers with testing ability (closest facility located at **Mount Sinai Doctors**, 638 Columbus Avenue, New York, NY 10024, 212-828-3250):

- Has symptoms of COVID-19 as per CDC Guidelines
- Has had close contact with COVID-19 suspected or confirmed individuals
- Has had recent international travel or travel within a state with widespread transmission based on the New York State [Travel Advisory](#)

These individuals will require official doctor’s clearance before being allowed to return to the school building. Whether to test for COVID-19 is at the discretion of the treating doctor who is providing clearance.

## III. Containment of Potential Transmission

### School Health Office

Faculty will notify the school nurse via text, telephone or email if any student has signs or symptoms of COVID-19. The nurse will don PPE and assess the student for COVID-19. If the student is presumed under investigation, the student will be placed in an isolation room. If any staff member is symptomatic they will alert their supervisor and HR, and vacate the premises.

### Isolation

An isolation space will be available to a symptomatic student who is considered presumed under investigation (PUI) during the school day and will be supervised at all times. A PUI staff member who is unable to self vacate will be placed in an isolation room with a face mask. Parents, guardians and/or emergency contact will be notified immediately and instructed to pick up the student as soon as possible. Staff and faculty will leave campus if medically stable and if not, emergency contact for the staff member or emergency services will be called.

### Collection

Parents should collect students that are presumed positive within the hour. Instructions will be given to parent, guardian and/or emergency contact that the student must be seen by their health care provider.

### Infected Individuals

Individuals that have tested positive will remain home for 10 days from positive test result, from when symptoms started and until asymptomatic and afebrile for 72 hours without fever reducing medications. Discharge from isolation and return to school will be conducted in coordination with the NYC DOHMH.

### Exposed Individuals

Individuals who were in close contact with someone with presumed or diagnosed COVID-19 virus must complete a 14 day quarantine. They may return to in-person learning once asymptomatic and in completion of the quarantine. Discharge from isolation and return to school will be conducted in coordination with the NYC DOHMH.

### Hygiene, Cleaning, and Disinfection

Cleaning and disinfection will be conducted in accordance with NYC DOHMH standards. All affected spaces in the building will be thoroughly disinfected.

## Contact Tracing

We have convened a dedicated Tracking and Tracing Team who are responsible for creating decision trees and protocols, and will be responsible for communicating any potential exposures and required action steps to those impacted. We will communicate these protocols in the coming weeks. Our Pod Model is specifically designed to limit the level of any exposure to a small group of individuals. The Tracking and Tracing team will meet regularly leading up to and during the school year.

The school nurse will support the NYC DOHMH in contact tracing efforts using the protocols, training and tools provided by the New York State Tracing Program. These contacts are subject to change.

- Assistant Commissioner, Roger Platt, MD. (718)-310-2434
- Assistant Director of School Health, Tracy Agerton, BSN, MPH (718)-310-2435

## Return to Campus of Infected Individuals

In compliance with all NYC and NYS guidelines, students and staff will be permitted to return to campus once they have fulfilled the isolation requirements stated above and forwarded a letter of clearance from a treating MD to the school nurse in advance of the return.

## IV. Closure of Facilities and In-Person Instruction (Move to Distance Learning)

During the coming year, there may be times when we are ordered to close the school by state or local authorities. New York State has established metrics that they will use to order a regional or state-wide lockdown, and the school will comply with these mandates.

However, there may be situations within our own borough, neighborhood, or school when community spread of COVID-19 needs to be addressed. We will use guidance from local government and public health authorities to make science-based, data-driven decisions for such situations.

Should we need to close and move to distance learning, we will be using the plan modeled below to provide instruction.

### VirtualGaynor Distance Learning Model

Stephen Gaynor School's distance learning program is a highly individualized educational program, in which students gain the skills and confidence necessary to learn, grow, and reach their full potential. Our remote instruction model, should we need to move to distance learning, is based on our experience in the spring of 2019 and provides special education and related services, and replicates a traditional in-school schedule. During this past summer the model was updated to incorporate best practices that were learned during the past spring semester. The school, students and families will access instruction through the online learning platforms, Google Meet and Google Classroom, using a choice of school-issued or personal devices (i.e., Chromebook, MacBook, desktop). Prior to the start of the

academic year, the school will survey families to determine any gaps in technology that need to be addressed prior to any move to distance learning.

Instruction will be delivered synchronously with two-way audio and video for both core academic and co-curricular subject areas in the Upper Division. In the Lower Division, synchronous lessons with two-way audio and video are provided in reading, writing, math, and social studies; whereas, both synchronous and asynchronous methods with one-way audio and video for co-curricular lessons, such as the performing and visual arts and physical education, provide flexible learning options that accommodate the diverse structural and scheduling needs of students and families in the Lower Division.

The remote learning schedule will replicate the same number and structure of classes as the in-school schedule. Each school day will include a synchronous morning meeting (Lower Division)/advisory class (Upper Division) focused on community connectivity, social emotional support, and executive function development (i.e., planning, study skills). Reading, writing, and math lessons are taught daily in small groups to support meaningful skill development and academic progress. Attendance and assignments for both synchronous and asynchronous lessons are closely monitored by teachers and families and documented in the student information system.

To support students' therapeutic needs, Stephen Gaynor School's remote instruction model includes the related services of speech and language therapy and occupational therapy. Through synchronous, two-way audio and video, students will receive both push-in and pull-out services to maintain and develop language and functional academic skills. Additionally, online parent workshops, student social groups, and after school enrichment provide the community-based support our students will need.

The guiding principle of Stephen Gaynor School is to provide a nurturing environment in which children with a range of learning differences, from Attention Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) to speech, language, and reading delays such as dyslexia, can grow academically, socially, and emotionally. Stephen Gaynor School students have a strong cognitive profile but often have difficulty with the acquisition of reading and writing skills. In close partnership with families, our highly trained and dedicated teachers, specialists, and administrators create a climate of caring where students feel comfortable taking academic risks, secure in the knowledge that their educational journey is accompanied by success.

## Conclusion

*Teamwork is essential. For any of these plans to be successful, we need our entire community to work together.*

Everyone will need to adhere to the daily symptom checker and other policies and procedures regarding social distancing and arrival and dismissal in order to keep our community safe. We are counting on one another to be informed and responsible. The landscape surrounding school reopening is ever changing. Like the rest of the world, we do not have all the answers, but we are ready to pivot depending on environmental factors and based on evolving scientific knowledge. We ask that families and employees join us in being flexible and patient as we move forward.

## Crisis Response Team, 2020-2021

Dr. Scott Gaynor, Head of School

Deanna Ferrante, Director of Communications

Jorge Jaquez, Director of Construction and Facilities

Ellen Lee, Chief Financial Officer

Matt LeWinter, Director of Technology and Operations

Donna Logue, Director of Lower Division

Jill Thompson, Assistant Head of School

Kaye Walls, Director of Human Resources & Talent Management

Emily Goodman, School Nurse (ad hoc member)