



July 23, 2020

Dear RCA Family,

We hope you all are well and having a wonderful summer. We wanted to provide an update on our reopening school plan. As stated in the letter to families on June 12 ([available on our website here](#)), **we will begin school in-person & on-campus on Friday, August 7**. All plans from the June 12 communication are still in place; below is more information we have learned and additional details that will hopefully answer any questions you may have about the re-opening of school.

- **RCA Administrators were on a call on Friday, July 17, hosted by LeBonheur Children's Hospital / UT Health Sciences Center: Task Force for Safe School Re-openings.** The call was led by Le Bonheur President Michael Wiggins, Pediatrician-in-Chief and pandemic expert Jon McCullers, MD, and other pediatric experts. **Below are the key take-aways that are helpful for us to know as we return to school.**
 - COVID does not transmit between kids as often as it does between adults. The flu is much more contagious among children than COVID.
 - Health officials have not seen large outbreaks of COVID in daycares; even if a couple of children get the virus, it usually does not lead to a big outbreak.
 - If someone is "asymptomatic" (which means they contain a very low amount of the virus in their system), the likelihood of them transmitting the virus is minimal.
 - What constitutes an illness that would recommend COVID testing? One symptom alone, such as runny nose OR fever, is **not** cause for testing. Focus should be on respiratory symptoms such as cough or chest pain or a combination of symptoms. Testing should be "symptom-based" rather than "exposure-based."
 - There is not an agreed upon/recommended protocol that school's should follow if a student/staff member tests positive. In determining if/when to close a classroom/building/campus, it is more important to consider the **rate** of spread rather than only the **number** of cases.
 - Masks—**not** face shields—are recommended. More about how RCA will handle masking is below.
- **To accommodate our students whose parents wish for them to school at home due to COVID concerns (personal medical diagnosis, high-risk family member, etc.) or if a student because sick and has to be out for an extended period of time, teachers will be recording their live classroom lessons every day, and these will be made available to students to watch at home. Teachers will hold regular virtual "office hours" to assist students with any questions they may have about their work.**
 - We are still determining the best platform through which to offer the video lessons. We will update you with more details as soon as we confirm them.
 - Students will be required to "opt in" to this format for a four week session at a time. This is **not** a *come as you want* or *several days on and off* option.
 - **If you desire for your child to use this school at home option, please email Mrs. Burnett as soon as possible so we can plan accordingly.**

- **WAIVERS:** Despite all precautions and good-faith efforts, there are still potential risks in returning to school, and **all parents wishing to send their children to school on campus, as well as all employees, will be required to sign a waiver** stating they understand these risks and agree to hold RCA and its employees harmless. However, this waiver does not release or hold harmless RCA from any claims arising from intentional misconduct or gross negligence related to COVID-19.
 - The waiver will be provided to you next week.
- **MASKS:** Since health officials are strongly recommending, and in some areas mandating, masks, **we will recommend—but not require—face masks for students in grades 3-12. Employees may or may not choose to wear a mask, but will practice appropriate social distancing as feasible and proper classroom sanitation and hand hygiene.**
- **We are still working out details for larger gatherings of students such as chapel, lunch, and class change.** To create more space for social distancing, possible options include the following:
 - Jr. K-2nd grade and 3rd-6th have separate chapel times.
 - 7th-8th and 9th-12th split in two locations for chapel; one group in gym and one in cafetorium; Zoom utilized to stream service on screen for group in gym.
 - Middle/High School Lunch: a couple of classes may eat in their classrooms on a rotating basis.
 - Staggering class dismissal by a couple of minutes to allow more distance in hallways.

We know teaching and learning happen best in community, and our goal is for everyone, students and staff, to be able to teach and learn in the least restrictive and most joyful environment, while taking necessary precautions to mitigate the spread of the virus.

A few general reminders:

- You can find school supply lists and summer reading on our website [here](#).
- School Uniforms through French Toast are [on sale for 50% off through July 26th](#)
- Middle/High School student class schedules will be issued by August 1.
- Parent Orientations: More details about orientation will be sent soon.
 - Elementary: August 5 from 5:00-5:45 p.m.
 - Middle & High School: August 13 at 5:30 p.m.

We can't wait to see our students on August 7!

Sincerely,



Chip Blanchard & Rachael Burnett

RCA Administration