

July 2020

Greetings North Hills Families,

Following Governor Cooper's announcement this week concerning requirements for public schools, I wanted to remind and communicate further details about our plans as we prepare for the start of in-person instruction on Wednesday, August 12th.

I'm sure all of you realize this is a very complicated and fluid situation. There are many thoughts on the appropriate response to COVID-19, and we as school administrators are trying to find the appropriate balance as we plan for the upcoming year. As we make those plans, our guiding principles are the health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff. We are committed to safely reopening our school this fall. As we have considered our students mental, social, and spiritual health during this time, we have concluded it is best to offer an in-person classroom setting for our students five days a week. Our students deserve the best educational environment we can give them while also holistically considering their health and well-being.

Finally, in all that we do, we want to honor Christ. In Matthew 22:37-39, Jesus says the greatest commandment is to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind." But he immediately tells us the second greatest commandment is to "love your neighbor as yourself." In Philippians 2:3, Paul tells us to "do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others." As school administrators, we think these guiding principles and Bible verses give clear direction on how we approach the school year.

We have also wanted to be sensitive to the concerns of you, our families. Many of you participated in our survey, and the results have helped guide and shape our decisions on how to safely prepare for the opening of school.

The following further details our plans and requirements for safe operation as we begin the school year. In the developing of this plan we have considered CDC guidelines and state mandates. We have also based the plan on phase 2 guidelines.

We will be requiring families to sign a form that acknowledges your responsibility to notify us and keep your student(s) home if your student exhibits any of the symptoms of COVID-19.

We will be doing daily temperature checks with touchless infrared thermometers before students or staff are allowed in the building.

We will be limiting visitors to our campus. Visitors will also be temperature checked and asked applicable COVID-19 health questions.

We will have a quarantine room where we can immediately isolate anyone exhibiting symptoms until they can be picked up.

As previously announced, there will be no field trips or mass gatherings until it is safe to do so. We will continue to have chapel on a regular basis with smaller gatherings.

We will be sanitizing every classroom and office on a nightly basis. We will place emphasis on sanitizing high touch areas and surfaces. We will also be sanitizing classrooms when a class change occurs.

Hand sanitizers will be in every classroom and office and will be used upon entry and exit from classrooms.

Face coverings will be required on campus based on CDC recommendations when social distancing cannot be observed. In order to prevent staggering start and release times even further across our campus, we are requiring face coverings when entering and exiting our buildings as well as when students are transitioning to other classrooms. We will NOT be requiring face coverings once students enter the classroom, because we will be able to better practice social distancing in this environment.

We will be limiting class changes as much as possible across our campus. We are still working through scheduling impacts as a result of the need to limit classroom changes. This will require us to serve lunch in the classrooms. We are working to have microwaves in each classroom to accommodate this change.

Again, I'm sure all of you understand and sympathize with the complexity of trying to adapt to this new environment. We are trying our best to balance education with the health and safety of all concerned, as well as respecting the differing needs of our families. We realize that there will be some families that will possibly have circumstances that may require a modified approach. Please don't hesitate to reach out to your respective principal. We want to keep the lines of communication open and help you in any way we can.

Blessings,

Maria Lowder

NHCS Executive Director