



# ALEXANDRIA COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL

August 6, 2020

Dear ACDS Families,

I hope this finds you well and enjoying the summer months. I am writing to provide additional information about how our reopening plans are developing.

As it stands today, we believe our small size combined with our ability to adapt our facilities and programs to mitigate infection exposure, puts us in a good position to open with onsite instruction in a way that is safe for students, faculty, and staff. Having said that, the circumstances around us are changing rapidly. We have seen significant spikes in infections around the country, including in southern parts of Virginia; summer camps and schools that have opened early have had mixed experiences with infection mitigation; and of course Major League Baseball's efforts to start up have not gone so well.

What we do know for certain is that any decision made today will likely need to be revisited in the coming weeks. Notably, other schools that stated confidently that they would open fully are acknowledging that that may not be possible, and some independent schools in the DC area have announced that they will be starting the year remotely. That is why we have opted to be fully prepared for each possible scenario. Even if we are able to open fully on September 9th, there is a strong likelihood that we will need to move to a remote or hybrid format for a period of time at some point. Consequently, we are prepared with strong hybrid and remote contingency plans in the event that a more conservative approach is warranted due to worsening community conditions, directives from state and local officials, or the occurrence of infections within our own community. Barring an order from the state, however, we will make our own independent decision that reflects our ability to respond to the circumstances we face. In all cases, our decisions will be informed by the best available science, the advice of epidemiological experts, and an abundant concern for the well-being of all members of our community. **I will announce an opening plan on August 14th, with the caveat that it could change as circumstances demand.**

As described in my last letter, ACDS is prepared to move to a hybrid or remote model with limited disruption to learning and a student's daily schedule. Should circumstances change such that we no longer believe we are able to provide a safe environment for our teachers, staff, or students, despite the substantial safety factors described below, we will switch to our remote or hybrid plan. Please prepare for each of these contingencies, as it is impossible to be sure that changing conditions will not require adaptation. If we are in our 5-day onsite or hybrid model, students whose parents elect for them to not attend in-person classes and those students who need to be at home for a quarantine period will participate in onsite classes via video conference.

I understand how difficult it is to function with such uncertainty. Believe me, I feel it acutely! From now until school starts, I will send a weekly communication providing updates on our assessment of current conditions and the relative likelihood of opening in an onsite, hybrid, or remote structure.

In the meantime, I hope that the following information will help illustrate our planning and assist you in preparing for the year ahead. I encourage you to read it all carefully as it contains sample schedules for all three scenarios, information about masks and travel, and other key items. We will also host online town hall meetings in the coming weeks in order to answer your questions.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours,



Scott Baytosh  
Head of School



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## Safety Factors

- **Social Distancing-** With classroom adaptations, use of outdoor spaces, and creative planning for student and staff movement, we are able to provide adequate space for social distancing. No more than 12 students will occupy lower school classrooms, and middle school will have no more than 15 using larger spaces. These spaces allow students and teachers to maintain a six-foot physical distance.
- **Cohorts** - All students will be assigned to cohorts and cohorts will not intermingle. To the degree possible, staff providing supervision will be assigned to a limited number of cohorts. This approach is designed to reduce the number of students and staff who might be exposed should there be a case within the community.
- **Contingency Plans** - We have designed and fully planned hybrid and remote options with schedules that align with onsite instruction, so we are able to switch to these solutions in the event of an outbreak or if we need to isolate an individual or group of students.
- **Technology** - We are equipped with abundant technology resources that enable us to provide remote instruction and support instruction while distancing onsite.
- **Ventilation** - All regular classroom spaces have numerous windows to the outdoors that can remain open during the school day to increase circulation of outdoor air (aided by fans if necessary), and modern HVAC systems, equipped with HEPA filters will help protect indoor air quality. Alternative spaces that will be used for classes, including the gymnasium, library, and PAC, are large airy spaces with appropriately scaled HVAC systems and doors or windows that allow access to fresh air. Additionally, we are able to provide outdoor spaces to reduce the load on the building, create safer classroom spaces for teachers who circulate across cohorts, and provide variety for students who will otherwise be restricted to one classroom space.
- **Face Coverings** - All students and staff will wear face coverings when inside the

building or when appropriate distancing is not realistic (e.g. during some outdoor play). Our size allows us to monitor and enforce mask use effectively.

- **Hygiene** - We are able to monitor and enforce appropriate hand-washing and hygiene practices. Additionally, hand sanitizer dispensers will be provided at every classroom and office space.
- **Cleaning and Sanitizing** - We are able to clean and sanitize our facility each morning before students and staff arrive and throughout each day. Cleaning, teaching, and administrative staff will be trained in the appropriate use of disinfecting cleaners.
- **Screening** - Our size makes conducting appropriate health screening each day feasible. Families and all employees will complete online health screening questionnaires via an app each day affirming that they have not experienced COVID-19 symptoms or been in contact with someone who has been exposed. Anyone who does not meet specified criteria will not be allowed on campus.
- **Local Rate of Infection** - Currently, our local rate of infection is relatively low and the 7-day moving average of cases is stable or declining. We monitor rates of infection in Alexandria, Fairfax, Washington, DC, and PG County.

## Sample Schedules for 5-Days, Hybrid, and All Remote

You can review sample schedules for remote, hybrid, and onsite scenarios here: [K-2nd](#), [3rd & 4th](#), and [5th-8th](#). We are currently finalizing our plans for arrival and dismissal and will have more to share at a later date. We do anticipate some staggering of arrival and dismissal times should we be fully onsite in order to manage traffic flow.

## Family Preparations for Onsite

### Face Coverings

All students and staff will be required to wear a cloth face covering while indoors or unable to maintain sufficient distance from others while outside. The Association of Parents will be providing each family with two ACDS logo masks. Families will be required to provide masks for their children that meet the following requirements:

- Students should have at least two masks at school each day in case one is lost or soiled.
- Masks should be made of at least two layers of cloth. Additional layers or filter inserts are acceptable. Masks with valves are not permitted.
- Masks must be of the ear loop or around-the-head variety. Neck gaiters, bandanas, or other alternative face coverings will not be allowed. Students should not use masks that must be tied behind the head unless they are capable of tying them independently.
- Masks should fit well around the face and cover both the mouth and nose without gaps between the mask and face.
- Masks must be school-appropriate and may not include slogans or other written statements.
- Face shields may be used in addition to face coverings, but may not be used as an alternative to face coverings.
- Face coverings should be clearly labeled with the student's name. Face coverings will never be shared.

For more information, please see this [guide](#). The CDC also provides helpful guidance on masks and their use [here](#). [This article](#) from CNN provides some helpful advice to parents on helping children wear face coverings successfully.

There will be no exceptions to wearing a mask while at school. Students who are unable to wear a mask will be required to stay home and participate in school remotely.

### **Daily Health Screening**

All families and staff will be required to complete a daily health screening using the ACDS app. This health screening will affirm that people coming to school have not experienced symptoms of COVID-19 or been exposed to those diagnosed with COVID-19. Those who are unable to affirm their health status will be required to participate in school remotely until appropriate conditions have been met. Additionally, we will check the temperature of each student and staff member at arrival each day. Those with a temperature of 100.4 or higher will be required to work or study remotely.

### **Impact of Travel**

Students who have traveled to high-risk areas or by plane, bus, or train just prior to returning to school, or at any time after school begins, will be asked to self-quarantine for 14 days prior to returning to campus. These students will be able to participate remotely during this time. We are finalizing our policy on what constitutes a "high-risk area" and will share specific details with you soon.

### **Uniforms**

Uniforms are a central part of ACDS's culture and set a tone for how our students engage in learning. Consequently, students will be expected to wear their uniforms whether onsite or engaging in synchronous online instruction. We believe that showing up in uniform and presenting oneself in an appropriate scholarly fashion when online will reinforce the expectations for engagement whether onsite or online.

### **School Supplies**

ACDS will provide students with the majority of their onsite school supplies in individual kits to limit the sharing of materials. As in prior years, we are asking parents to purchase the few supplies listed [here](#).