

July 15, 2020

Wardlaw Students and Parents,

As we get closer to the start of school on August 11th, we are ready this week to release our initial plan for re-opening Wardlaw Academy. Our administrative team has been working hard since the end of May to come up with a plan that balances the safety of our students and faculty with the normalcy that makes Wardlaw a special place. While the situation with Covid-19 is very fluid and we have to be ready to adjust our plans with short notice, we feel confident at this time that we can open our doors full-time next month. Please realize that none of this is set in stone and as the issues with Covid-19 changes, our plan will adjust.

In a situation like this, correct and timely communication is vitally important, and dealing with rumors makes it even harder for school leadership to do our jobs. Let me assure you that we will do our best to get out pertinent information in a timely manner. If there are questions that you have about anything we are doing, please do not hesitate to email either of the Co-Heads of School (Mr. Hulsey or Mr. Martin) or the Area Principals (Mrs. Smith or Dr. Buck). We will do our best to answer any questions that you may have. Please help us by not listening to or passing on rumors as facts.

As we make the decision to open up school for live instruction, several things are in our favor.

First, we are a small school of around 200 students situated in an area that has been well below the state averages during this outbreak. Second, we don't transport any of our students by bus, so we don't have transportation issues with which to contend. Third, our average class sizes are much smaller than most schools, so we can space our students adequately. Finally, since almost all schools have decided to re-open in the coming weeks, the issue isn't so much re-opening, it's the plan to re-open. Because we have all the previous factors going for us, our plan can be closer to normal than other area schools.

We do appreciate all of the trust that our parents have given our administrators and staff in handling this situation. To be honest, even with over 100 years of education experience with our top four administrators, these are unprecedented times, and there are no similar experiences to draw from in making our decisions. A lot of effort and prayer has gone into this plan, and we feel very comfortable in safely opening up Wardlaw Academy next month.

Administrative Team

Wardlaw Academy

Wardlaw Academy

School Re-opening Plan

July 15, 2020

Our plan to re-open includes multiple adjustments in our everyday procedures. These new procedures, which come from the considerations issued by the CDC, have been adjusted by our administrators to meet the needs of Wardlaw Academy and include multiple layers of prevention.

- **Training During Pre-Planning and the First Two Weeks of School**

- Train staff on all safety protocols.
- Train staff to recognize signs and symptoms.
- Educate parents and student to know and follow all new procedures.

- **Staff and Students Staying Home when Appropriate**

- Employees or students who have recently had close contact with a person

with COVID-19 are to stay home. Employees or students who have to stay at home but are asymptomatic can still be actively involved with school through our virtual learning options.

- Staff and students should stay home if they have tested positive for or are showing COVID-19 symptoms such as:
 - Fever (100.1 degrees or higher without medication) or chills
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Fatigue
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Headache
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Sore throat
 - Congestion or runny nose
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Diarrhea
- Staff and students who are required to stay home cannot return to school until cleared by school administration.
- Parents need to check for these symptoms each day before bringing their child to school.

• Promoting Behaviors that Reduce Spread

- We will check the temperature of each student upon arrival to school.
- We will be teaching and reinforcing hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and increase monitoring to ensure adherence among students and staff. In addition, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol will be used (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer).
- Our water fountains will be shut off with students needing to bring their own water bottles or buy water from the canteen.
- Water dispensers will be available in each hall to refill bottles.
- We will encourage staff and students to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue. Used tissues should be thrown in the trash and hands washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or the use of hand sanitizer.
- We will clean and disinfect frequently-touched surfaces (e.g., playground equipment, door handles, sink handles) within the school at least daily or between use as much as possible. Use of shared objects will be limited when possible or cleaned between use.
- A schedule has been developed for increased routine cleaning and disinfection.
- In the upper school, classrooms will be disinfected after every class. In the lower school, classrooms will be disinfected multiple times throughout the day. Hallways, bathrooms, and common areas will be disinfected throughout the day.

- Lockers will not be used by the older elementary students, and the upper school students will stagger use so students aren't in such close proximity. Exteriors of lockers will be sanitized after use.
- We have purchased additional laptops for all of our 3rd – 12th grade students to have access to their own device and not need to share. We have also purchased additional devices for younger grades that will be shared but sanitized between uses.
- We are hiring additional help with our custodial staff and have invested in additional equipment and supplies to adequately disinfect our buildings.
- Our maximum class sizes have been re-evaluated, and we are doing our best to maintain appropriate social distancing in the school. We will not add new students to grades that are already at capacity.

• **Masks or Face Shields**

- At this time, we will not be requiring students or staff to wear masks or face shields for the entire day. The plan at the moment is for staff to wear them when they get within six feet of the students. Also, upper school students will wear masks at all times in the hallways because of the closeness. Students or staff members who feel more comfortable wearing masks or face shields are encouraged to wear them.
- All upper school students are required to have a mask or face shield with them daily for hallway use and small-group work in classes.
- The school's position on the use of masks or face shields is probably the most likely procedure that could be adjusted depending on many internal and external factors.

• **Adequate Supplies/Equipment to Disinfect the School**

- We will support healthy hygiene behaviors by providing adequate supplies, including soap, hand sanitizer, paper towels, tissues, disinfectant wipes, and disinfectant spray.
- As students move from place to place during the day, new procedures will assure that areas, supplies, and equipment will be sanitized before new students use them.

• **Adequate Signs and Messages**

- We will have highly visible signage that promotes everyday protective measures and describes how to stop the spread of germs.
- We will regularly share messages internally and externally on how to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

• **Shared Objects**

- We will discourage sharing of items that are difficult to clean or disinfect.
- We will keep each child's belongings separated from others and in individually labeled containers, cubbies, or areas.
- We will ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high touch materials to the extent possible (e.g., assigning each student their own art supplies, equipment) or limit use of supplies and equipment by one group of children at a time and clean and disinfect between use.
- We will avoid sharing instructional materials as much as possible or sanitize

between uses.

• **Ventilation**

- We will ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, for example by opening windows and doors.
- We are exploring changes in our air filtering system that would further reduce exposure to germs.

• **Modified Layouts**

- We will space seating/desks as far apart as possible in our classrooms.
- Bathroom use will be limited to only a few students at a time to promote social distancing.
- All lines in halls and at lunch will include adequate spacing.
- An additional doorway is being cut in the K4 classroom to allow internal access to the former art room space for the K4 class to have more space. An additional doorway is being cut to give external access to the current science lab so upper school students will not have to travel through the lower school. An additional door is being cut in the canteen to allow external access to additional picnic tables in the gravel area between the library annex and the canteen.

• **Food Service**

- We will initially offer a hot-meal option and pre-packaged snack options for our students to purchase for lunch and break. Those passing out food will be required to wear a mask or face shield as well as gloves.
- Students can bring their own lunch and/or snacks, and microwaves will still be available for use.
- To promote social distancing, we will remove every other seat in the canteen as well as have outside seating available by the library annex.
- There may be a time that we discontinue our usual lunch offerings and require students to bring their own lunch. If needed, we may shut down the canteen and have students eat in their classrooms.

• **Virtual Options for Students**

- Parents may request of the area principal the option of virtual learning if there is a concern with having their child in class. Virtual learning is very time consuming on the teacher's part to prepare for and cannot be used by families for a few days here or there. It is for a preset period designated and approved by the area principal.
- Obviously, if a student opted for virtually learning to limit exposure to other students, they could not participate in Wardlaw's afterschool activities, which would involve similar exposure.
- Wardlaw Academy is willing to provide this virtual option, but parents and students need to realize and understand it is difficult to make it as beneficial as live teaching.

• **Gatherings, Visitors, and Field Trips**

- To begin with we will hold virtual group events, gatherings, or meetings if possible. In the future when events are held, we will promote social

distancing of at least 6 feet between people and will limit group size to the extent possible.

- We will limit any non-essential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations as possible.
- Unfortunately, for the time being, we will have to ask parents not to enter the building except to come to the main office. There are doorbells for the main office and for our afterschool program. A staff member will meet you and assist you from the door.
- If a parent has to enter the building, they will have to wear a mask or face shield.
- Unless we can have a gathering with appropriate spacing, we will substitute virtual activities and events in lieu of field trips, student assemblies, special performances, school-wide parent meetings, and spirit nights, as possible.
- We are working with SCISA to pursue options to convene sporting events and participation in sports activities in ways that minimizes the risk of transmission of COVID-19 to players, families, coaches, and communities.

• **Communication Systems**

- Wardlaw Academy will follow applicable law and privacy policies in relation to information received from staff and families who self-report to the school if they or their student have symptoms of COVID-19, have a positive test for COVID-19, or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 within the last 14 days.
- We will notify staff, families, and the public of school closures and any restrictions in place to limit COVID-19 exposure.
- We will communicate return-to-school policies after a Covid-19 illness.

• **When Someone Gets Sick**

- We will immediately separate staff or students with COVID-19 symptoms (such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath) at school. Individuals who are sick will go home or to a healthcare facility.
- The response to a sick staff member or student from the school will be dependent on multiple factors such as exposure of others at school and test results.
- Sick staff members/students shouldn't return until they have met CDC's criteria to end home isolation and approval by the school.