July 17, 2020

Dear Academy Families,

We want to assure you that we are working diligently on our COVID-19 Reentry and Response and designing a comprehensive plan for opening school safely in September. We continually assess the influx of information and look to the research, state and CDC guidelines, and our medical consultants at Atlantic Health as part of this arduous process. **Our current plan is to reopen school in the fall offering full-time, in-person teaching with a focus on academic engagement and socialization while responsibly reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission and infection utilizing recommended, evidence-based public health measures.** At this juncture, **we will not run a hybrid program or a shortened school day.** Our numbers allow us the flexibility to have all students on campus each day. Of course, students with underlying medical conditions, students in quarantine, or students who are ill will have the option to attend classes virtually.

With the health and safety of the Academy community as our top priority, today our purpose is to share our vision for the fall and begin to outline the steps taken thus far. Updates throughout the summer will bring further detail to our reopening plan.

We want you to be aware of the following pertinent information as it relates to the state of the Academy and begin to outline the work being done in support of community, continuity, academics, health and wellbeing:

- A graduation and celebration of the Class of 2020 will take place on the front lawn Saturday, August 1st, at 10:00 am. At this point in time, we will still include flower girls as part of the ceremony. Other than guests of senior families and flower girls, the event will be closed to the public.

- Unfortunately, we have cancelled our presentation of *Mary Poppins* on Friday, July 31st.

- We have formed an Academy Reentry and Response Team whose work is focused on a systematic, safe approach to reentry and meeting all guidelines and protocols in support of a healthy school environment. A consultant from Atlantic Health is a member of our team and keeps us apprised of health protocols as the information becomes available. Based in the most current research and state guidelines, we have taken the following actions:
  
  - All students will be provided with one Academy cloth face mask. We have been advised that even in a socially distant setting, *masks will need to be worn by teachers and students at all times in the classroom.* Of course, you may bring in any PPE of your choice and wear what is most comfortable for you.
Classrooms have been redesigned using the Rosner Method to ensure proper distancing with desks 6 ft. apart and an 8-12 ft. “safe zone” for teachers at the front of the room. In addition, there will be disinfectant wipes at each student’s desk to be used at the end of every period.

PPE such as touchless hand sanitizer units, anti-microbial tape for common/frequently used surfaces, disinfectant wipes, masks, face shields, signage, among other tangible items necessary for safety have been purchased.

Additional faculty have been hired to keep class sizes at an average of 12 students per class.

Our daily schedule has been modified to a 5-day rotating drop schedule. The details are still being finalized, but 5 classes will meet each day, 3x/week, for approximately 65 min. Homeroom will be slightly extended to accommodate a staggered entry into the building. The school day will still begin around 8:10 am. Dismissal will begin around 2:50 pm, but will also be staggered so all students aren’t in the hallways and locker rooms at the same time. We will still have a communal lunch period; however, students and faculty will be eating in different locations throughout the building. Picnic tables have been purchased to allow for outdoor dining as one of the new locations for lunch next year. This new schedule will allow us to easily pivot to online instruction in the event we need to move to our continuous learning plan. All 5 classes will still meet synchronously via Google Meet for 45 min. each day. We will share this new schedule once it is finalized.

The Nurses’ Office is being renovated and redesigned with the health needs of our students in mind. This new space will include an isolated COVID room for anyone showing symptoms of the virus.

Our fitness and wellness program will include a more extensive health component next year focused on the social and emotional wellbeing of our students. We also plan to address the social and emotional needs of our entire student body through our Counseling department and special programming throughout the year.

We continue to be humbled by your support, and our work is inspired by your commitment to us. As you can see, we have made a substantial financial commitment to our COVID response. In turn, we ask that you understand that tuition and fees, essentially, are our sole source of income and we are fully dependent on that revenue to provide the very best for your daughters. Please know that what is best for the young women at the Academy of Saint Elizabeth is the driving force behind the work we do each and every day. We are deeply grateful for your confidence and trust in us.

Please reach out should you have any questions or concerns.

Brightest blessings and stay safe,

Lynn Burek and Lauren Corvo