

# Columbus Academy

July 27, 2020

Dear Lower School Families,

I hope this finds your family doing well and remaining healthy. As Mrs. Soderberg wrote in her most [recent letter](#) to you, these are very complex and challenging times both in Columbus and as we prepare for possibly opening school next month. As you know, the situation surrounding COVID and schools remains very fluid. Below is information that is specific for our Lower School (Explorers-Grade 5). I will continue to share information with you as we get closer to the start of school.

## ***Important Information Needed from Parents/Guardians***

We recognize there may be some students that will be challenged or unable to attend school on campus due to their own health condition or a family member's condition. It is important for us to know if this applies to your child to help us in our planning for on-campus *and* online learning opportunities as we begin next month. Please complete this [form](#) if your child is unable to attend on campus when we start to help us in our planning. Students who start the year with online learning are welcome and encouraged to return to school whenever you feel it is right given the circumstances at the time. The deadline to submit this form is this upcoming Friday, July 31, and only needs to be completed by families with conditions that will not allow their child to return to school on campus.

## ***New Parent Portal***

Columbus Academy is transitioning our parent portal from My Backpack to Blackbaud's mySchoolApp for the upcoming school year. Parents and guardians will use mySchoolApp to access directory information, attendance, academic records, schedules and much more. To ease the transition, our technology team will maintain access to some components of the current My Backpack portal through October. This will include access to the directory and grade card information from the 2019-20 school year. Parents and guardians can now set up their mySchoolApp accounts by going to <https://columbusacademy.myschoolapp.com> and clicking the "Forgot login or First time logging in?" [link](#). For more information about mySchoolApp, go to <https://sites.google.com/columbusacademy.org/myschoolapp>.

## ***Revised Student Supply List***

We have made some revisions to our Lower School Supply List. In order to ensure proper safety, many items that we used communally for students are now going to be individual. We have ordered clear plastic boxes (about the size of a shoe box) for every lower school student, and supplies inside will be used only by that student. We have eliminated the request to bring in disinfectant wipes as these are very hard to find in stores, and we can supply them through our distributor to ensure we have plenty. Please review [this list](#) for changes that were made and items your child is expected to bring.

## ***Masks***

All students (and faculty) will be required to bring a mask to school and wear it at all designated times. Logos on masks are acceptable, but beyond the logo masks must be free

of slogans, graphics and writings. To help make sure each mask's owner is easily identifiable, we will be writing the child's name on them to ensure proper hygiene and that no one accidentally wears another person's mask. With this in mind, we would appreciate masks that are light in color so we can put names on them. Students who forget to bring a mask will be provided a disposable mask by the school for the day.

### ***Classrooms and Class Sizes***

Since school ended in May, we have been working to develop a reopening plan that prioritizes student and faculty safety. This involved decreasing the class sizes and increasing the number of homeroom classes. For example, in a normal year, we would have 28 homeroom classes in the Lower School. We will start this year with 47 classrooms. Class sizes in our Explorers and PreK are dictated by the State of Ohio (maximums of 6 and 9, respectively). In Kindergarten through Grade 5 the class sizes range from 10-13 with an average class size of 11. We have taken great care to make our rooms as spacious as possible to provide maximum learning and social distancing space. In addition, we will be spending more time learning and being outside. Please always make sure your child has clothes appropriate for being outside.

### ***Opening of School: August 25 to September 4***

In Lower School, our first few weeks are typically organized to focus on learning routines, procedures and developing a sense of community inside and outside the homeroom class. Under our current set of circumstances, we plan to tackle much of the same, only we will do so by inviting back a grade level or two at a time per day to also get oriented on the new protocols and safety measures needed to navigate the Lower School. The slow phasing in of grades will allow us the time and space to get reacquainted with doing school and being together. By the end of the first week of school, the goal will be for all lower school students to have experienced school in person. The second week will involve slowly bringing the Lower School up to having all students on campus at the same time. We have many new routines to learn: one-way (directional) hallways and new procedures for using the restroom, washing hands and outdoor play. It will be most effective to teach these new procedures by limiting the number of students in the Lower School at one time. A detailed daily schedule of which grades will be on campus during the first two weeks will be sent at the end of next week.

### ***Lunch and Snack***

All students will eat their snacks and lunch inside the classroom with their teachers. Lunches and snacks will be delivered to all classrooms each day.

### ***Ice Cream Social***

Unfortunately, we will be unable to host this meet-your-teacher event in its current format and past practice. However, we are working on a *Virtual Ice Cream Social* that will enable each child to have a Google Meet class meeting with their new teacher and new classmates while enjoying a bowl of ice cream at home! Details will be announced when finalized.

As mentioned, more information will be forthcoming as we get closer to the start of school. Thank you for your support, patience and understanding.

Be well,

Mark Hansen  
Head of Lower School