

# Columbus Academy

July 27, 2020

Good Afternoon Middle School Families,

Even as I write to you, the conditions regarding COVID are changing. I will continue to provide details in the coming days and weeks as they become finalized and/or change completely.

As outlined in our head of school's [letter](#) last Friday, Columbus Academy is prepared to begin school (health conditions permitting) in three ways on August 24, two of which are specific to grades 6-8 and include an in-person aspect. Our start in the Middle School will be designed to teach students how to operate and manage themselves in spaces modified to accommodate their learning under a "COVID routine." This writing is to provide you with some initial details to help your family plan for that transition.

During the first two weeks of school, from August 24 through September 4, students will participate in activities typical to Middle School, such as getting to know their advisors and learning their new schedules while meeting new teachers – all to be done in different ways. Students will be brought to campus in groupings (to be determined) and assigned to a "Maroon" or "Gray" group. By September 4, we hope to have all students acclimated to our "hybrid" model, in which they participate in classes both online and in-person. The hybrid model dictates that a lower number of students will be in the school building each day. To that end, classrooms have been set up to accommodate less students with the appropriate amount of physical distance between them. Hallways will be marked in the same manner to guide students when they are required to move around the middle school building, and entrances will be limited to specific grade levels. Those are just a few of the changes to expect once school opens.

## **Lunch**

Lunch will be organized in multiple sessions to allow a portion of our students to enter and select their meals. Students will have many of the same options from last year, without serving themselves. The dining hall staff will safely serve students according to new protocols. There will be limited individual, physically distanced seating allowed in the dining room. Exact times, transitions and traffic patterns will be explained once students have their schedules.

## **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>.

### **New to Columbus Academy Student Orientation and Rising 6th Grade Orientation**

*Orientation for students who are **NEW** to Columbus Academy* will take place on the morning of August 13.

*Orientation for rising sixth-graders who are **RETURNING** to Columbus Academy* will take place on the morning of August 14.

A separate email will be sent to families in both of the above groups with details about each event's schedule.

### **Supply Lists, Dress Code and Masks**

Updated supply lists and updates to the dress code will be made available on Monday, August 3. In the meantime, know that sneakers and hiking boots are both permitted and encouraged. Students should plan to be in classes outside more often as weather permits.

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.

### **Summer Reading**

All middle-schoolers are assigned to read *Rhyme Schemer* by K.A. Holt and one book by author Nathan Hale. Nathan Hale's books are graphic novels. Please let me know if you need a copy of either book because we have some extras. We will simply charge your school account at the appropriate time.

If your family situation requires that your middle-schooler will not be attending school in person, please contact me. I would be happy to discuss how to best accommodate your child.

Thank you for your time and patience. Please be well.

Shaka Arnold  
Head of Middle School