

Columbus Academy

July 27, 2020

Dear Upper School Families,

To those of you with a graduate in the Class of 2020, congratulations! It felt wonderful to wish them all well this past weekend and finally bring closure to their senior year, albeit later than expected.

With that milestone met, our focus quickly returns to preparations for this coming school year. As Mrs. Soderberg alluded to in her [Friday letter](#), we've been busy making modifications to our physical spaces as well as considering all the ways we can adapt our schedule and student groupings in order to have flexibility around how we begin school. As I write this, we know that things around Covid-19 and school plans remain quite fluid. What follows are details specific to Upper School.

Opening of School: August 24 to September 4

In Upper School (US), our first several days of school are typically organized around grade-level meetings, advisory, Unity Day for our freshmen, summer reading groups and an opportunity for students to get a short introduction to new teachers and classes. 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 at a time to also get oriented on the new protocols and safety measures needed to navigate US. 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 US students to have experienced school in person but also to have engaged virtually. Week two's schedule will involve students fully engaged in their academic courses in a rotation of in-person and virtual access.

Post-Labor Day Weekend: Starting September 8

Depending on the conditions, Upper School will have the ability to have everyone back on campus or host a hybrid model that reduces the in-person population to half or possibly smaller.

Both models rely on the newly created US classroom spaces in parts of the dining hall and our regular classrooms now set up to hold 12 or fewer students (14+ in large science rooms) socially distanced. In the event all US students are back on campus, we'll implement our overflow model which entails, for example, a couple of students from sections with more than 12 students accessing their class virtually from another room on campus. This would happen on a rotating basis to be equitable.

In the hybrid model, the upper school population may be divided into "Maroon" and "Gray" groups, as an example, which would mean roughly half of each grade would be on campus three out of every six letter days in a rotation. Recognizing that some families have children in multiple divisions, we would coordinate that so the children from one family would be in the same group. When not on campus, those students in the alternate group would continue classes virtually.

Lunch

Lunch for upper-schoolers will be organized around three consecutive sessions that will allow a portion of the student body to enter and select their meal each session. It will offer some of the familiarity and choice we are used to, coupled with safety and careful serving. There will be limited individual, socially distanced seating allowed in the dining room while other students may take their meals outdoors or to a classroom which will maintain the distanced seating. Exact times, transitions and traffic patterns will be explained once students have their schedules.

Dress Code

Small changes are being made to allow for more suitable footwear given that students will be going outside more often. Upper-schoolers may now wear sneakers, hiking boots and other appropriate close-toed, low-heeled shoes for walking to other parts of campus.

Masks

All students in Upper School will be required to wear an appropriately fitting mask. It must be free of slogans or writing but can be any color or pattern. Students that forget to bring a mask will be provided a disposable mask by the school for the day.

New Student Orientation

New Student Orientation will be offered on three dates: August 7th, 13th, and 14th for students brand new to Columbus Academy. A survey will be sent out to new families this week to allow them to pick the days and times that work best with their schedules. A follow-up email will be sent to new families with details about the days and times they will be invited to campus to participate in the orientation. The size of the orientation groups will not exceed 10, and all activities will be conducted in a socially distant manner. For families that are not comfortable meeting in person, an online option will be offered on one of the days. New students will have the opportunity to interact with and learn from our student orientation leaders and their fellow classmates.

Freshman Orientation

For rising ninth-graders, there will be a morning and an afternoon session offered on Friday, August 21, for students to participate in a brief orientation which involves getting to find their classrooms and advisory locations before the actual first day of school. We will do our best to coordinate with athletics to work around conflicts for student-athletes. More detailed information will be shared by August 12.

Rising 10th Grade iPad Pickup and Dropoff *(not for new students to Academy)*

Rising 10th Grade iPad collection and handout will take place on Thursday, July 30. First cycle will take place from 10:00 a.m. until noon for last names A-M and then second cycle will be 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. for last names N-Z. From 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. on Friday, August 1, will be a catch-all time for those unable to come Thursday. Pickup and dropoff will be contactless. Exceptions will be made for travel or illness, and our technology team will work with families on a case-by-case basis.

Instructions:

Location: US/MSCarpool Circle outside the Upper School

Drop off of the old iPad: the process will start off with the collection of the old iPads. Drivers will place the iPads into bins that are set up on tables (there will be many bins

on the tables). A member of the technology team will be observing the whole operation in the event someone has questions.

Pick up of the new iPad: drivers will proceed to the next station, where there will be bins containing iPads that will be sorted alphabetically by last name. Students will receive an iPad in a bag with their name clearly labeled. Students may have to stop and get out of their cars to retrieve their iPads.

Students may not collect new iPads until they turn in their old ones.

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>.

Book ordering

On August 3, US families may log in to their new mySchoolApp, click on their child's name from a drop-down list and then click on "course requests." This should reveal your child's new class list, but teachers' names and exact class periods will be made available on August 24. Use this to order any required books through our [online bookstore](#).

Supply lists

Please know that US students do not receive a specific supply list as they are granted much more freedom to decide what sort of organizational and note-taking materials they prefer. In terms of calculators, math teachers will make clear during the first few days of class if a graphing calculator is necessary, and there will be time to purchase them individually or through the school before they will be needed in class.

As mentioned, more information will be provided in the coming weeks. Please email the US office (langej@columbusacademy.org) if you have any questions. Additionally, if you anticipate keeping your child(ren) at home in a virtual experience due to their own physical vulnerability or that of a family member who lives with them, please reach out directly to me at izokaitisc@columbusacademy.org.

In the meantime, thank you for your continued patience and support.

Be well,

Cory Izokaitis
Head of Upper School