



June 26, 2020

Dear Pacific Ridge School,

Happy Summer!

As I mentioned to you in my letter of May 29, we have been working diligently for some time now on operational plans for Pacific Ridge School in the 2020-2021 academic year.

While On Path Consulting was gathering helpful community input and researching reopening plans from around the country and world, we formed a Campus Reopening Task Force to guide us as we move from research to planning and implementation. The task force is broken into six subgroups: Health & Safety, Facilities, Curriculum & Co-Curriculum, Instructional Technology, Risk Management, and Communication. The twenty-two members of the task force include faculty, administrative staff, members of the Board of Trustees, and Pacific Ridge School parents with high-level, professional expertise relevant to the moment. As a result of the dedication of this group, Pacific Ridge is moving thoughtfully and carefully toward reopening our campus in the fall.

This letter, the first of several communications you will receive in the coming weeks, will address our **guiding principles** and brief updates from the **Health & Safety** and **Facilities** Committees. Next week we will provide information about the **daily/weekly schedule** and updates on **instructional technology**. We know many of you have questions; we will continue to provide you with as much information as we can so you will know what to expect and how to prepare.

### **Guiding Principles**

In all of our planning, we are prioritizing the health and welfare of our school community. Following that lead, the task force has established the following elements as our guiding principles.

- Our planning must reflect the mission of Pacific Ridge School.
- In-person education is the preference of our school community.
- Health and hygiene policies must be research-based and reflect the most recent city, county, and state guidelines.
- We must be able to pivot throughout the school year, as the reality of Covid-19 is likely to change.
- Our decisions and practices must reflect equity across our community as best as possible.

### **Health & Safety**

Our Health and Safety Committee includes multiple MD's; an epidemiologist; our school nurse, Renee Bertken; and members of the academic administration. We have been researching the most recent medical science; city, county, state regulations; and best practices being employed by schools as they reopen all over the country and the world. Here a few of the initial decisions we have made.

- *Self-Screening* – During the school year, families and staff will perform at-home self-checks for common Covid-19 symptoms using an app provided by the school. The app will allow you to fill out current health conditions and generate an “admission ticket” that will be reviewed by PRS staff when students arrive at school. Students who arrive on campus without self-screening results will need to be cleared by PRS staff before proceeding to class.
- *Masks* – Medical science is clear. Covid-19 spreads most readily via exposure to aerosol droplets that is best mitigated by wearing masks. When students and staff arrive at school and/or are walking freely around campus, they will be expected to wear masks. We are still researching best-practice protocols for mask wearing in the classroom.
- *Cleaning & Disinfecting* – We have determined a protocol for thoroughly cleaning and disinfecting the campus. The plan will include nightly electrostatic foggers, consistent cleaning throughout the day of high-traffic spaces and surfaces, and protocols for cleaning the surfaces in classrooms after each use.
- *Information to come* - Specific protocols for when someone in our community becomes sick with Covid-19, protocols for treating and releasing students on campus when they are ill but are not ill with Covid-19, specific protocols for bathroom use and cleaning, and more.

## Facilities

- *Classroom Capacity and Layout* – We have been discussing optimal layouts to accommodate six feet of separation between students in our classrooms. Typical classrooms should hold 9-12 students and a teacher, while most arts and science classrooms can handle more than 12. We may convert reading rooms and other non-academic spaces into classrooms, as some of those spaces can accommodate 15-18 students. We are also likely to erect tents that can serve as both outdoor classrooms and lunch spaces. In spite of our learning spaces looking a bit different, our commitment to the principles of Harkness learning and high levels of student engagement remains unchanged.



Two views of what our classrooms might look like in the Fall

- *Ventilation* – Thanks to the relative newness of our buildings and systems, we can provide the ventilation necessary for keeping our classrooms safe. Our HVAC systems can run all day, keeping fresh air coming into rooms without creating turbulent airflow. As a result, we will be able to keep windows open, doors closed, and run fans with MERV-13 filters (replaced multiple times throughout the school year) that are widely known as the standard for removing coronavirus particles from the air.
- *Information to come* - “Curb-side” check-in and screening procedures, one-way traffic flow routes and signage, placement of hand washing and hand sanitizing stations, and more.

### **A brief note about the daily schedule**

Health screening the community on a daily basis, maintaining social distance, and anticipating the possibility of a return to remote learning at any given point in the year means that our daily schedule this year will be shorter, slightly staggered, and look different from our pre-Covid schedule. My next letter will explain our approach in more detail.

Soon after next week’s letter about schedule and instructional technology, we will release a reopening plan, both in print and on the website. More information will be added to the website over the rest of the summer and into the fall. Much like the “Remote Learning” webpages set up this spring, this new website will serve as an ongoing resource for details about the 2020-2021 school year.

I can tell you that I am so pleased with the work our Task Force has accomplished. We are successfully planning for an adaptable, unique school year that will have small classes, co-curricular programming, and the flexibility for a mixture of on-campus and remote learning, as guided by health & safety needs of a caring community. We still have so much to do, but we are making excellent progress.

As always, if you have any questions, please let me know.



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