



# Fall 2020 Welcome Letter

August 17th 2020

Dear Families,

Well here we are mid-August and still on this rollercoaster ride of COVID-19. This week is our official registration week for the 2020-2021 school year and we have a plan for how we would like to start the semester. Before I get to that plan I would like to share some background that informed this decision.

The first week of August we began our teacher inservice with a two-day training session. At this point we were planning on starting school September 1st for five full days a week. We had talked about temperature taking, outdoor classrooms, 6ft distancing and mask wearing when social distancing was not possible. We knew all the rules, some of us were on the COVID committee who came up with the rules. But on that first day of training, we sat next to each other, milled around to get food, clustered together, and left our masks on our chins. On day two we tightened up, kept our mask on, and were more vigilant about the social distancing. At the end of the two day I reminded all the teachers to get tested for COVID-19 as it was one of the recommendations of the COVID response team, and seemed the most responsible thing to do. On the following Tuesday morning the call came in that one of the teachers had tested positive for COVID. Thankfully for this teacher, they were asymptomatic and now almost to the end their quarantine, but the consequences soon became evident. Everyone they had contact with was exposed was also required to quarantine, this was all of our teachers and some staff. I am relieved to report that all of the people exposed quarantined and got tested at least five days after exposure, and all tests have come back negative.

I wanted to share this story with you because for me it was a wake-up call as to how hard what we are about to do is. In order for this to work, in order for our small community to stay safe and at school we all need to follow the guidelines or we will be benched. Our community is too small and our teachers too close, if one goes down we all go down.

## Opening plans

We are planning to start school on **September 14th**, with 3 half days a week on campus Monday-Wednesday, and two days online, Thursday-Friday. This will be 8:30am -12pm. Teachers will be available for virtual learning during normal school hours (8:30am -3:30pm). PP will be on a 3 half day schedule, Charla will be contacting you with details. If you are not ready to come to school yet we will connect you virtually with the class, all students 1st-10th grade have access to their own individual iPads or chromebooks that will be theirs for the semester. Your child's teacher will be contacting you this week to schedule an individual meeting in the second week of September (8th-11th) to collect your technology and discuss what schooling option is best for you to start the school



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year. We have also decided to extend the school year to **July 2nd**, giving us a little bit of a cushion at the end of the year.

## Classroom information:

- All of our classes are capped at 12 students, there are some students who will be learning virtually in every class, so most classes will have 6-10 on campus. Classrooms will be set up to maintain social distance and when that is not at least 6ft students will be required to wear masks
- Everyone will have their own sets of classroom supplies, no sharing or trading
- Classes will be kept as pods with minimal interaction with other classes.
- Windows will be kept open as often as possible to allow for the flow of fresh air.
- Snacks will be eaten in the classroom or outside in classroom pods
- Playground times will be staggered with each class having separate playground items- balls, badminton, etc.
- Temperature checks and questions daily will be conducted on arrival to school
- Each classroom will have a holding area for possible COVID-19 contaminated items to be stored for a twenty four hour period
- Classrooms will be cleaned and sanitized throughout the day

## Drop-off and pick-up changes:

- Upon arrival students are to have their temperature check-in
- Students arriving late need to call the office for check-in procedures
- No parents or visitors on campus
- At the end of the day students will wait to leave class until their parents arrive and will go directly to the waiting car
- Students who walk are to leave immediately

## Campus changes:

- Outdoor classroom spaces have been updated
- We will have a designated waiting area for students who show symptoms to wait until a parent can collect them from school
- Sanitizer stations outside each classroom have been installed
- No group travel in vans until cases in the county decline

## In the event of a positive case:

If a student or staff member has COVID-19 (has either tested positive or has symptoms and has been exposed) we will ask them to stay home until all household members are symptom free for 14 days or all have tested negative for COVID-19



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## Family Expectations:

If you plan to send your child to on-campus school:

- Practice social distancing and mask wearing out in public
- Notify the school of possible exposure or confirmed positive test results
- Be willing to quarantine and get tested for COVID-19 if there is an outbreak in our school community, specifically your child's pod (and follow Health Department recommendations)
- Understand that different families have different needs and circumstances and that we will not participate in naming and shaming, but in compassion, collaboration, kindness and forgiveness
- We are all in this together

When will this end? Our COVID response team has decided to follow the CDC guidelines for reopening. This means we are watching the statistics for Carroll County and will consider returning to a normal 5 day school week when the positivity rate of COVID-19 test results drop to below 5% for 14 days in a row.

You can follow along with the data on this link:

[https://covidactnow.org/us/ar/county/carroll\\_county?s=888174](https://covidactnow.org/us/ar/county/carroll_county?s=888174)

We will continue to respond to the situation with thoughtfulness and compassion, and we understand that each family must make decisions that fit their particular circumstances. Never have our 5Cs of communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity and character been of such importance.

I hope you are well and that you reach out to us with your concerns, needs and ideas.

Jessica FitzPatrick  
Head of school

*Together, all at Clear Spring School promote a lifelong love of learning through a hands-on and hearts-engaged educational environment.*

\*All this is subject to change as new information comes out