



OAK MOUNTAIN

A C A D E M Y

Oak Mountain Academy provides a challenging college-preparatory education in a safe family environment. The school nurtures the ethical, spiritual, and physical development of students as they become confident leaders inspired to serve.

July 2021

Dear Oak Mountain Academy Community,

I hope this message finds you all enjoying these summer months. As we prepare for the 2021-2022 academic year, we look forward to the first day of school on Friday, August 6th. While we cannot predict the impact of new COVID-19 virus variants or the rate of community spread in the fall, we are extremely optimistic about the school year ahead for many reasons:

- Last year we had a total of 8 documented COVID positive cases on campus during the academic year. This was due largely to the consistent adherence of our safety protocols by our families.
- The vast body of knowledge we now have about prevention of community transmission thanks to 18 months of work by researchers, epidemiologists, and physicians working with the virus.
- The increasing rates of vaccination across the region and country and the success of the vaccines in preventing spread and serious illness.
- The high rate of vaccination in our staff and 100% vaccination of our staff in highest risk categories.
- The decreasing rates of community spread in local counties.
- The relaxed recommendations and increased flexibility by the CDC regarding school safety measures, which allow for the removal of a layer of measures if local conditions are favorable.
- The absence of any COVID-19 cases during the three weeks of summer camps we hosted on campus during the month of June.

None of the above-mentioned conditions existed this past July. It is because of these new conditions that we have modified our risk reduction measures for the 2021-2022 academic year.

Updated Campus-Wide Procedures

The following measures are in effect for the start of 2021-2022 academic year. However, changes may be made to the protocols and procedures listed below as needed.

- ***Protective Face Coverings*** – The CDC recommends that any individual who is not fully vaccinated wear a protective face covering indoors and when physical distancing is not possible. Protective face coverings will be optional for all individuals on campus. However, we do recommend that any individual who is not fully vaccinated wear a protective face covering as recommended by the CDC. It should be noted that protective face coverings may be required in certain situations at the discretion of the teacher and Division Dean. Therefore, we are asking that all students to bring a protective face covering with them daily.
- ***Physical Distancing*** – Once we finalize the enrollment class schedule and know the numbers enrolled in each class/grade, we will make necessary adjustments to the physical arrangements of our classrooms to allow for as much physical distancing as possible.
- ***Cleaning practices*** – We will continue to wipe down door handles, light switches, and desks in between each class change throughout the day with a disinfectant product. We will also continue to utilize the dry foggers each evening to assist with daily disinfecting of the facility.
- ***Student and Staff temperature readings*** – We will no longer be conducting temperature scans of students and staff members as they enter the building. However, we do ask that all students and staff members take their own temperatures prior to entering the building on a daily basis. Page 12 of the Student Handbook states, “Parents should not send a child to school with a temperature of 100 degrees

or greater, or with nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, a productive cough, or excessive nasal secretions. If a child develops any of these symptoms while at school, parents, guardians, or emergency contacts will be notified to pick up the child. Students should not return to school until they are free of fever and/or vomiting and diarrhea for no less than twenty-four (24) hours. If a student becomes ill while at school, he or she should notify the teacher of the illness. When leaving, the students, parents, and guardians should follow the sign in/sign out procedure.” Checking the temperatures of all individuals prior to arriving on campus will help us minimize the exposure of any potential illness within our community.

- **Fieldtrips** – We will begin to add back fieldtrips into our schedule beginning this fall, but these will be optional depending on the family’s comfort-level given the situation.
- **Vaccinations** – We encourage any eligible member within our community to consider receiving vaccines for approved age groups as they have similar symptoms, and to prevent community spread, prevent widespread absences, and keep vulnerable community members safe. The Influenza (flu) vaccine is recommended for consideration because this highly infectious respiratory virus traditionally has the largest negative impact on school attendance each year. The COVID-19 virus is more contagious and potentially more dangerous to vulnerable groups, so we also *encourage* you to consider getting your child vaccinated against COVID-19 this summer if they are in an approved age category. The FDA approved the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for ages 16 and up in December 2020 and 12-15 year-olds in May 2021. We recognize that many families may have questions about this vaccine, so we respect the right of any parent to defer vaccination until those questions are answered. *Please consult your child’s primary care physician with any questions regarding the vaccine and your child(ren)’s health before making any decisions.* The CDC COVID-19 Vaccine Note: “COVID-19 vaccines are effective at keeping you from getting COVID-19, especially severe illness and death. COVID-19 vaccines reduce the risk of people spreading the virus that causes COVID-19.”
- **Symptomatic Student or Diagnosis of COVID-19 Procedures** – This is defined as any OMA student who has received an official diagnosis of COVID-19 or has any symptoms as outlined by the CDC that could be associated with a diagnosis of COVID-19. In the event that a student is symptomatic or diagnosed with COVID-19, the legal guardian should follow the following protocols.
 - Contact the Division Level Dean and Head of School in writing as soon as possible.
 - The student should remain in a home quarantined environment for a minimum of three days symptom free and return to school with a physician’s note stating the student is able to return to school or the person receives a negative COVID-19 test result.
 - If the student is sent home with a fever from school and the legal guardian suspects COVID-19, the student should remain in a home quarantined environment for a minimum of three days symptom free and return to school with a physician’s note stating the student is able to return to school.
 - If the student has a fever for more than one 24-hour period, the student should seek medical assistance from a physician.
 - In the event that a student is diagnosed with COVID-19, the Head of School will notify the community and parents will have the option to transition to remote learning at that time, if desired. When a parent selects the remote learning option for their student, the plan will be re-evaluated each Friday for the coming week unless special circumstances present. This will be necessary for the teachers to adequately prepare and supply the students with the necessary resources in advance of the instructional periods. However, if a student becomes ill during the week, the remote learning plan will be as long as needed and evaluated every Friday.
- **Primary Exposure (Direct Contact within 3 days) Procedures** – This is defined as any OMA student who comes in direct contact or has had direct contact with someone outside of OMA who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 within a three-day period of that direct contact. In the event a student has primary exposure, the legal guardian should follow the following protocols.

- Monitor the student for potential signs and symptoms. If the student or parent has a concern about the level of exposure, they are encouraged to actively participate in remote learning for a three-day period.
- If the student begins to present signs or symptoms the student should seek medical assistance from a physician and return to school with a physician's note stating the student is able to return to school.
- ***Secondary Exposure Procedures*** – This is defined as any OMA student who has had contact with a Primary Exposure as defined above. In the event a student has secondary exposure, the legal guardian should follow the following protocols.
 - Monitor the student for potential signs and symptoms of infection. If signs and symptoms begin to present the student should follow the protocol for primary exposure.
 - If the student begins to present signs or symptoms at any time, the student should seek medical assistance from a physician and return to school with a physician's note stating the student is able to return to school.
- ***Teacher/Staff Diagnosis Procedures*** – In the event a teacher/staff member is diagnosed with COVID-19, the school will follow the following protocols.
 - The Head of School or Division Dean will contact the families of the students who have been in direct contact with the teacher/staff member.
 - The teacher/staff member will remain in a home quarantined environment for a minimum of three days symptom free and return to school with a physician's note stating the teacher/staff member is able to return to school.
 - During this three-day symptom free quarantine period, the teacher/staff member will continue to perform teaching and other duties remotely, if feeling well enough to do so. In the event that the teacher/staff member is not well enough to perform his/her duties remotely, the school will implement the emergency instructional backup plan.
- ***Revised Remote Learning Plan*** – As we move into the 2021-2022 academic year, families will continue to deal with the impact of the current global pandemic. Therefore, we will continue offering a remote learning plan for the coming academic year. The intention behind offering a remote learning option for our families is driven by the realities of the global pandemic and will only be available as an option when COVID-19 related issues arise. In an effort to streamline this opportunity for our families we have identified additional division specific parameters outlined below for the coming academic year. The remote learning plan is a great option for continuing synchronous instruction in real-time when required quarantine times are necessary. However, it does not replace the overall experience of an OMA education.

All Division Parameters

- Cameras are to remain on at all times during the class period
- No virtual backgrounds will be permitted
- Students are to be visible on camera throughout the entire class period
- Students must be in a well-lit, appropriate location conducive to instruction
- Students are to have all supplies and resources with them at the start of class
- Student's first and last name are to appear on their login screen
- Students are expected to be in full uniform and/or follow dress code
- Drawing board, chat, and other zoom features should only be used when required by the teacher
- Students are expected to conduct themselves in alignment with all student handbook guidelines
- Sufficient internet service, device hardware, and all standard required school supplies must be provided
- Entering into remote learning *must be approved by the Division Dean in advance of the school day*

- Requests for students to enter remote learning may be made by the parent/legal guardian only
- Once students are approved for remote learning, they will remain for a minimum of 3 school days
- If students in remote learning need to checkout early, parents or legal guardians will follow the handbook policy by notifying the division receptionist in advance of the checkout.
- Certain assessments will not have a virtual option for completion. This will depend on the specific assessment and/or the reason the students enter remote learning for a temporary period of time.
- Participation in co-curricular programming may be limited depending on the activity and/or the reason students enter remote learning for a temporary period of time.

Additional Lower Division Parameters – The parameters listed above will also apply to the Lower Division. Below are some additional parameters specific to the Lower Division:

- A remote student in grades Pk-4 through 1st grade must have a responsible adult sitting with him/her during remote sessions. A remote student in 2nd or 3rd grade must have a responsible adult readily available to assist with material, organization, and login. A remote student in 4th and 5th grade should have a responsible adult available, if needed.
 - For a student beginning remote learning mid-week, instructional material may not be available until the following day given teacher’s varied planning schedule.
 - For a student beginning remote learning at the beginning of the week, instructional materials will be available the Friday before at 4:00 pm.
 - A hard copy of the work should be turned into the receptionist, or a high-quality scanned image may be sent electronically. Photographs of written work cannot be accepted. However, photos or videos of projects, presentations, and artwork may be acceptable if allowed by the teacher.
 - Hardcopy or scanned daily work must be completed and returned daily. All other assignments/projects must be completed and returned by the set due date.
 - Both synchronous and asynchronous sessions will be used for remote learners in the lower school. Additional staff personnel, including teaching assistants, may be utilized for the delivery of the asynchronous sessions.
 - Due to the nature of remote, online learning there may be circumstances when on-campus students will experience equally relevant, but different learning opportunities than remote learners.
- **Source Used To Establish Updated Campus-Wide Procedures:**
 - CDC: Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools
 - CDC: Science Brief: Transmission of SARS-COV-2 in K-12 Schools
 - CDC: Guidance for Operating Youth Camps
 - CDC: Key Things to Know about COVID-19 Vaccines
 - CDC: When You’ve Been Fully Vaccinated
 - CDC: Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People
 - Georgia Department of Education: Return to School Guidance

There are no easy decisions, only decisions that we believe will be made with the safety and health of our school community in mind. Thank you for putting your trust in the leadership, faculty, and staff of Oak Mountain Academy to continue to educate your children during these times. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this plan further, please feel free to reach out – my door is always open.

Sincerely,

Patrick J. Yuran

Patrick J. Yuran
Head of School