

Dear ACS Family,

July, 2020



Thank you for your patience and support as we have been hard at work planning for our reopening this Fall. **We look forward to having our ACS Family back on campus on August 14! We are very excited to be together again soon.**

I also want to thank you for your responses to our Back to School Survey, as your responses played a significant role in our planning. In addition, I want to publicly thank Dr. Hockema, Mr. Kempf, Mrs. Casola, Mr. Jones, Mrs. Beacham, and Mrs. Etheridge for doing hours of research, reviewing multiple reopening plans, and ultimately, preparing our own Reopening Plan. Our Reopening Plan considered School Reopening Task Force recommendations, [Georgia Department of Education and Georgia Department of Public Health guidance](#), [CDC guidance](#), [American Academy of Pediatrics guidance](#), and a wealth of information and recommendations from the Association of Christian Schools International.

**Please know that, even with all of our work, we anticipate ongoing and evolving challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. For that reason, flexibility is key as we move forward with the school year ahead. Although our desire is to be together, we understand that there are some families who will not be able to be on campus initially. For that reason, our Reopening Plan includes accommodations for those who will not be able to attend School beginning in August. We believe that our Reopening Plan will serve ALL of our ACS families as we move through this TOGETHER.**

Let me share a summary of our strategy and planning efforts for School reopening, and we will provide more detailed information below.

**As noted above, our desire is to be together in August - SAFELY.** As a result, the entirety of our Reopening Plan is focused on keeping our students and faculty safe and keeping our campus clean and sanitized. We have researched contemporary best practices and accepted standards, as well as the technologies, products, and cleaning materials that we believe will help us accomplish this goal. ACS will be prepared to move forward with our safety protocols in August.

A successful reopening and sustaining of school activities during this time is our top priority, and I am designating a Coordinator of School Reopening who will be accountable to me for success. This position recognizes the importance of meeting the challenges before us and the necessary effectiveness of our Plan for shared success; this individual will function to ensure the efficient and effective coordination and cooperation of all ACS staff, parents, and students toward this end. An important responsibility of the Coordinator will be to provide timely, meaningful communication with parents, students, and the ACS community concerning the status of ACS operations and conditions, identify any modifications made to this Plan, and address inaccurate or misleading information.

Our Reopening Plan is based on certain current understandings about COVID-19 and our desire to maintain a positive learning environment for all students. As a result, we will adapt our Plan as more information about this disease becomes available and/or government mandates are modified. The main mode of COVID-19 spread is from person to person, primarily via droplet transmission. For this reason, our strategies for infection prevention and control will center around this form of spread, and will emphasize physical distancing, optional face coverings as appropriate, minimization of high touch surfaces, disinfection, and hand hygiene.

Finally, this Plan will be implemented in collaboration with the larger community, the advice of health care experts, best practice recommendations, and government requirements and mandates. ACS will cooperate fully with appropriate health officials conducting contact disease tracing and related studies.

**PRIORITY NOTE: Any student who has a fever or who is showing COVID-19 symptoms should not come to the School and should be taken to a qualified medical professional for evaluation immediately. This single factor is KEY to stopping the spread of the virus on our campus.**

### **PLAN A: FULL RETURN TO CAMPUS ON AUGUST 14**

Even with a Full Return to Campus on August 14, certain things will be different in 2020-21. With this in mind, here is what you can expect with a Full Return to Campus. As noted above, some of these specific guidelines could change at any time, depending on State or local mandates.

#### **Student and Faculty Health and Safety Guidelines**

- We will be performing temperature checks for all students and faculty each day.
- **Students with temperatures of 100.4 F or above, or who show other active symptoms of COVID-19, will be immediately quarantined and their parents notified that they are to be picked up as soon as possible. Any student with a temperature of 100.4 F will be required to be fever-free for 24 hours before returning to School. Any student with a temperature of 100.4 F, who also shows another active symptom of COVID-19, may not return to School until, (1) obtaining a negative COVID-19 test, or (2) having self-quarantined for 14 days following the cessation of symptoms.**
- Face coverings will be optional, unless mandated on private property by governmental authorities.
- If you or someone in your household has been exposed to an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19, for the safety of others at ACS, we are requesting that your student stay at home until your student receives a negative COVID-19 test, or has self-quarantined for 14 days following the cessation of any symptoms. Please notify ACS immediately of this exposure and your student's status.
- The School has purchased 20 free-standing hand-sanitizer stations that will be placed throughout the campus. All students and faculty will have ready access to these stations and will be encouraged to use them regularly.

- The School will be sanitized on a regular basis. The sanitizing products will be dispensed appropriately. The School will increase its current cleaning staff to assist with frequent sanitization efforts, some of which will be done after the end of, or prior to the beginning of, the school day.
- High touch surfaces such as door handles will be minimized as much as feasible. For example, classroom doors will be left open and the use of lockers may be modified.
- We are also evaluating our air exchange systems to make sure they are working properly.
- Signage across the Campus will encourage proper health and hygiene practices, including, among other things, regular hand-washing or use of hand sanitizer, covering any coughs or sneezes with a forearm, and refraining from touching your face. Teachers will also remind and encourage students to regularly practice these mitigation measures.
- All families will be requested to sign a Waiver and Release at the beginning of School, agreeing to the following: (1) you understand the risks associated with COVID-19; (2) you understand that, in spite of the School's best efforts to keep everyone safe, the School cannot guarantee that no one will contract COVID-19; (3) you agree not to hold the School, or anyone associated with the School, liable if your child happens to contract COVID-19; and (4) you will immediately notify ACS of any family or student exposure to others demonstrating COVID-19 symptoms or positive test results.

### **Classroom Mitigation**

- As practical as possible, requirements and protocols will be in place for physical distancing in terms of desk placement, teacher interaction, and other measures; minimization of high touch surfaces; and regular cleaning/disinfecting of classrooms and common areas adjacent to classrooms.
- Tissues and hand sanitizers will be available near or in all classrooms, and students will be regularly encouraged to sanitize their hands.
- Windows will be kept open where feasible to increase air circulation.

### **After School Care**

- All After School Care activities will follow the applicable guidelines and protocols that will be followed throughout the school day.

### **Outside Visitors**

- Visitors to the School will be screened for symptoms of COVID-19.

## Large Group Gatherings

- We will continue to monitor State and local guidelines for large group gatherings. Under current guidelines, only groups of 50 or less can gather in a single space, if physical distancing cannot be implemented.
- The Middle School and High School Spiritual Retreats scheduled for August will be single day events. We are not planning for overnight Retreats in August this year.
- We will continue to have Chapel each week, but Chapel may be live-streamed from the Drama Center into the individual classrooms. We have included our normal Lower School, Middle School, and High School large group programs on our School Calendar, but certain protocols, such as limited crowd sizes, may be put into place for these events, or they could be cancelled.
- Most of our Class Trips do not take place until the Spring. As a result, we have included our Class Trips on our School Calendar, and we will make final decisions on whether we are able to take these trips as the school year progresses. **Any payment that has been made for a trip that is later cancelled will be refunded in full.**

## Lunch

- We were able to complete a needed renovation of our Main Lunchroom this summer, which will make it easier to clean and disinfect the Main Lunchroom daily.
- We are continuing to finalize our lunch schedule and protocols for the coming school year. We plan to offer four separate lunch options each day that will be individually bagged or boxed. The salad bar will not be available at the beginning of the school year, however, one of the four lunch choices will be a boxed salad option.
- To maintain the cleanliness of classrooms, students will not eat lunch in their classrooms.
- We are currently planning to use four separate spaces for lunch each day so that we can maintain more distance between students during their lunch periods. The four spaces include the Main Lunchroom, Lunchroom B, the Middle School Commons Room, and the back half of the Drama Center. Lunch tables will be set up in the back half of the Drama Center daily to accommodate increased distancing between students.
- These spaces and seating arrangements will be marked to identify physical distancing requirements.

## **Bus**

- Each family that uses ACS Bus Transportation will be given a written protocol that will inform you how we will load and unload the buses each day, and how students will be seated while in the bus.
- For students riding a bus in the mornings, drivers will perform temperature checks on students before boarding. Any student who has a temperature of 100.4 F or greater, or who is showing other symptoms of illness, will not be allowed to board the bus.

## **Athletics**

- All High School athletic teams, practices, and competitions will be governed by the Georgia High School Association. ACS will comply with all guidelines and requirements that are issued by the GHSA.
- All Middle School athletics will largely follow the guidelines and requirements issued by the GHSA, although some variations may be implemented if the School Administration believes that such variations are safe for our middle school student athletes.
- Lower School athletics will follow all local and State governmental guidelines, as well as those that may be established by an individual league.

## **Other Extracurricular Activities**

- All other extracurricular activities at ACS will follow the applicable guidelines and protocols that will be followed throughout the school day.
- Individual coaches, directors, or supervisors may implement additional safety guidelines that will apply to their particular group of students.

## **Confirmed COVID-19 Cases on Campus: Return to School**

- The School is continuing to finalize its plan for cases on campus. This plan will be distributed to all families before the beginning of school. Under the plan we are considering, certain portions of the school may be shut down for short periods of time if a student or faculty member tests positive for COVID-19 or presents significant symptoms of the virus. If multiple students or faculty members test positive, then the shut-down could be broader across campus, and for a longer period of time. We are closely monitoring other school and district plans concerning shut downs for confirmed cases of COVID-19 on campus.
- If such a shutdown is necessary, we will temporarily switch students to on-line learning, and we have the necessary surge capacity to do so.

## Additional Educational Options Available for the 2020-21 School Year

- We recognize that some families will need the flexibility to keep their children at home for periods of time even while the School remains open. As a result, the following educational options will be available to our ACS families under Plan A.
- Families may select online learning through Google Classroom, more specifically through Google Meet. **Students will log in to their classes live each day for instruction.** The following are parameters associated with voluntary online learning:
  - A Quarter long (nine week) commitment is required; this can be re-evaluated each Quarter
  - The deadline to commit to live online learning for Quarter One is August 1st
  - Online students may choose to participate in extracurricular activities
  - Normal tuition and fees will be paid by those choosing the online option
  - Online learning will require significant parental involvement to achieve student success

### PLAN B: MODIFIED RETURN TO CAMPUS

Local and/or State requirements may prohibit us from implementing a full return to campus on August 14, or, may cause us to adopt a modified approach at some point during the school year. In that case, we will adhere to the following Plan for a limited return to campus. **Please note that, for all students who will be on campus under Plan B, all safety protocols listed above under Plan A will apply, unless changed to insure added safety for our students and faculty.**

#### Alternative Class Schedule for Students

##### Middle School/ High School Return Plan: Moderate Spread

\*High School specific details will be **bold**.

\*Middle School specific details will be Underlined.

School Arrival:

- Take temperatures for all students upon arrival to campus. Students will then proceed to a designated area to provide increased physical distancing.
- Students will be dismissed to classes on a staggered schedule to limit interaction in the hallways.
- Students will follow appropriate directions and signage to follow one-way travel.
- Students will move directly to class and avoid congregating in common areas.
- Faculty will be in the hallways to assist in moving students.

#### Classrooms:

- If possible, students will be assigned to classes to stay in groups throughout the day. Because of scheduling, this is not always possible, especially in the upper levels, so physical distancing will be practiced. Middle School students will remain with their grade throughout the day whenever possible.
- Class sizes will be assigned to maximize physical distancing as much as is reasonably possible.
- Classes with larger class size will be relocated to a larger area to allow for appropriate physical distancing.
- Desks will be wiped down between classes and throughout the day.

#### Between classes:

- Classes will be dismissed on a staggered schedule to minimize interaction in the hallways.
- Faculty will be in the hallways to keep students moving.
- Students will not congregate in common areas.
- Teachers will be encouraged to allow bathroom usage during class (with a pass, and on a one-at-a-time basis) to reduce usage during class breaks.
- Hallways will be equipped with directional arrows to encourage one-way traffic.

#### Chapel:

- In-person chapel will be on a rotational basis. The remainder of the student body will view chapel in their Bible classes by video or live stream.

#### Lunch:

- Students will be dismissed for lunch on a staggered schedule to allow for physical distancing in the lunch line.
- Students will eat in multiple locations: **Grade 9: Drama Center; Grade 10: Commons Room; Grades 11 and 12: Main Cafeteria.** 6th Grade: Commons; 7th Grade: Main Cafeteria; 8th Grade: Drama Center. This will be done to maintain physical distancing.

#### Electives:

- Certain electives may be cancelled if they could cause an increased spread of the virus.
- Middle School electives may be restructured to keep students with classmates from their grade.

## Class Schedule:

- A modified class schedule will be put into place to allow for staggered class dismissal times and effective movement between classes.

## Dismissal:

- Bus riders will be dismissed first and allowed to make their way to the buses.
- Car riders will be dismissed next. These car riders will need to go to an assigned location and be dismissed by families.
- Student drivers will be dismissed next.
- If athletic practices are still permitted by GHSA, athletes will be dismissed to practices.

## Outside Visitors

- Visitors to the School will be limited to essential circumstances.

### **Lower School/Kindergarten: Modified Plan**

- Arrival:
  - Temperatures taken in car line by teachers and before loading buses.
  - Masks are encouraged, but not required.
  - A student who has a temperature above 100.4 degrees F will be required to be fever-free for 24 hours before returning to School. Any student with a temperature of 100.4 F, who also shows another active symptom of COVID-19, may not return to School until, (1) obtaining a negative COVID-19 test, or (2) having self-quarantined for 14 days following the cessation of symptoms.
  - Students will be sent directly to their classrooms to be greeted by their teachers after 7:25 am. Early morning group assembly will be from 7:15-7:25 am with proper physical distancing.
  - AM Fitness will continue from 7:25am to 7:45am.
- Class Schedules:
  - Students will remain with their homerooms throughout the school day.
  - Restroom breaks will be one homeroom at a time with regular sanitization.
  - If individuals need to use the restroom outside of scheduled restroom breaks, they will go one at a time with regular sanitization.
  - PE classes will continue outside and in our indoor play area with proper physical distancing.
  - Recess will remain indoors/outdoors depending on the weather with designated areas for each homeroom to play.



- Snack and Lunchroom Procedures:
  - Portable hand sanitizer stations will be set up outside our lunchroom door for each teacher/student to use upon entering the lunchroom.
  - Lower school snack times and locations will continue with proper physical distancing.
  - Kindergarten snack times and locations will continue as follows:
    - K3 and K4 classes will continue eating alone with their homerooms at their scheduled snack times.
    - K5 classes will continue having scheduled snack time in their homerooms.
  - Lunch times will remain the same, but homerooms will be split into different locations as needed:
    - Lower school: spread out between lunchroom and drama center as needed.
    - K5: lunchroom and outside tables of the lunchroom in play area.
    - K4: outside tables of the lunchroom in play area.
    - K3: lunchroom.
  - Lunchroom tables will be properly sanitized in between each use (standard procedure with traditional start as well).
  - Lunchroom floors will be mopped after all lunches are complete (standard procedure with traditional start as well).
  
- Field Trips and Assemblies:
  - No off-campus field trips allowed under Plan B.
  - Any outside guests wanting to enter campus, via parent conference, class parties, etc., must have their temperature taken and cleared with a temperature under 100.4 F.
  - If an on-campus educational visit is still permitted (fire truck, farm animals, etc.), they must be cleared through our temperature check. No one with a temperature over 100.4 F will be permitted on campus. If temperature checks are cleared, displays may set up outside and/or in our large indoor assembly area where homerooms may enter and exit one at a time. Necessary sanitization will take place in between homeroom visits.
  - Class parties will not permit any outside guests unless temperatures are taken and cleared.
  - Only store-bought, packaged goods will be allowed at class parties. No homemade food items allowed.
  - Lower school chapel will rotate grade levels into the Drama Center and live stream into the homerooms.
  - K5 chapel will be moved to our large indoor play area or outside playground with proper spacing in between homerooms.

- K-building assemblies (K3, K4, & K5) will take place in our large indoor play area with proper physical distancing. No interactions or exchanges will occur between homerooms.
- Dismissal:
  - Buses: Bus riders will be dismissed one homeroom at a time by the office staff and safely escorted to their proper buses.
  - Car Riders: Half-day and Full day car riders will remain in their homerooms until called from the K-office to be escorted to their vehicles one at a time.
- Enrichment, extra-curricular activities, and extended care:
  - Lower school enrichment activities will continue in their designated locations where possible. This includes music, library, computer, art, and PE.
  - No on-campus extra-curricular activities will take place for Lower School and Kindergarten families (ballet and baton).
  - Extended care students will still be permitted after 4:00 pm with proper physical distancing.

**\* Optional at-home learning available for high-risk Covid students. Students will log into their Google classroom each morning and listen *live* via Google meet. There will be a scheduled pick-up and drop off time for seatwork and necessary assessments each week.**

**We are here to help!** Please let us know if there is anything we can do for you, or, if we can answer any questions. As difficult as this situation has been for so many, I am convinced that God is working, moving, and speaking to us during the pandemic. As you know, we will continue to monitor State and local guidelines, and may make changes to our Plan based on the spread of the virus. Our goal is to provide a safe and healthy campus for our ACS Family. Please know that we are praying for all of you. Please keep us in your prayers as well.

Grace and peace,

Steve Cummings, Head of School

*"The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad." Psalms 126:3*