



COMMONWEALTH ACADEMY

Monday, August 10, 2020

Dear Parents,

These past few months have been quite unusual and have had an impact on each and every one of us, in many ways. We all have been missing school and being together. I personally miss seeing and connecting with you and your children, and I miss my interactions with our wonderful instructional team. Sadly, what our country and region have been facing since March has been stressful and has put pressures on parents in immeasurable ways.

This summer, our team spent significant time analyzing data and developing both virtual and hybrid instructional plans that ensure a robust continued learning experience, along with enhanced opportunities for community and relationship building and social connection. We also have been keeping a close eye on the health trends in the region (our students, faculty, and staff come to us from the City of Alexandria, the District of Columbia, and from seven surrounding counties). At this time, the data and science presented by local health experts and departments do not support safe in-person reopening. In that light, and true to our commitment to always prioritize the health, safety, and care of all in our community, we have, with a heavy heart, **made the decision to open school virtually on August 26th**.

While we are all saddened by the fact that we will not be able to see one another in person right away, please know that it continues to be our greatest wish and that we did not make this decision lightly. We have created a taskforce of experts who will continue to meet regularly to evaluate the situation in the weeks ahead. Thanks to the robustness of the plans in place, **we are confident that we have everything we need to allow us to pivot to our hybrid plan quickly when it is safe to do so**. We will share regular updates with you and **will notify you two weeks in advance of any change**.

We recognize the whole-child harmony needed for complete student success. We are committed to focusing on a healthy and balanced student life, enriched academics, and core elective offerings. In order to enhance this aspect of the student experience in a world that has been predominantly virtual these past few months, **we are developing a schedule for students to, in very small cohorts, come to campus from time to time for safe, outdoor, socially-distant activities aimed at bolstering community building and social connection**.

Our virtual program has also been enhanced to include:

- New digital delivery of our Executive Functioning tools (daily planner, grade report sheets, student self-evaluations, teacher evaluations) accessible to all students, teachers, and parents
- Revised Student Action Plans to include clearer goals for each child
- Enhanced Executive Function scale that includes more nuance and actionable outcomes
- Increased opportunities for social connection to take place during lunch and other parts of the day, regardless of operating format (lunch groups, clubs)

- Strengthening of our advisory program: new daily advisory meetings in MS and HS; skills teaching and learning; and portfolio development
- New and reimagined student leadership opportunities in a virtual setting, including but not limited to our “Bigs and Littles” program, student council, spirit committees, and student ambassador program
- Live/synchronous instruction/support five days a week in all divisions (MS and HS will hold electives and additional academic support on Wednesdays)
- Access to additional electives (student choice)
- Student access to academic support periods four days per week
- PE/counseling sessions, as well as tools and support instruction/videos for students on the following topics: physical activity exercises; healthy habits; sleeping habits; and more
- Creation of parent support workshops during and after school hours and a parent support resources website

I would like for us to, ahead of the start of the school year, have the opportunity to connect more directly. In that spirit, I would like to invite you to join me and the Academic Team for conversation. During that time, we will be happy to answer any questions you may have. Please look for a note from me tomorrow containing invitations to join two virtual meetings: one will be scheduled for later this week, and one next week. (These will be in addition to the divisional orientation meetings you have been invited to already.)

I look forward to speaking with you. Your child’s education, health, and safety are of the utmost importance to us and we are honored and privileged to be working with you. Thank you for your support and for entrusting your children to us.

Be well, stay safe, and take good care of yourselves and of one another.

In partnership,



Anabelle C. Morgan
Head of School