

July 2, 2020

Dear Seven Hills Families,

I hope that, by this point, you have settled into a summer routine and have been able to decompress a little after what has been a very demanding spring.

I know that many of you have been eager to hear about Seven Hills' plans for reopening school in August. I apologize for the delay. We have been waiting for final guidelines from the State of Ohio, which had been promised for June 1, but were just published yesterday.

In the meantime, using guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the American Academy for Pediatrics (AAP) as well as guidance from school leaders in Europe and Asia, we have been working with our COVID Advisory Team, infectious diseases specialists who are also school parents, to develop our own reopening plans. Now, having reviewed the state's published guidelines, we are ready to share those plans with you.

General Principles

Because the public health situation has been evolving so rapidly and because our families have so many different needs, we wanted to build as much flexibility into our plan as possible. We have been planning for three contingencies:

- A return to on-campus learning for all students, faculty and staff, with robust safety precautions in place.
- A remote learning option for students whose own health or that of a family member may delay a return to school.
- A remote learning program for all students in case there is a surge in local cases or a new school closing order from the Governor.

Here are the major elements of the plan:

Unless things change dramatically, we plan to resume on-campus learning for all students on Tuesday, Aug. 18. Because of our small class sizes and spacious facilities, we are in the fortunate position of being able to implement the CDC and Ohio Department of Health (ODH) guidelines for health screening and social distancing with relatively few disruptions to the regular rhythms of school life.

To accommodate those students whose own health or that of a family member may delay a return to school, we have equipped each classroom with Swivl Camera technology, which enables teachers to live stream classes to students who are quarantined at home.

To make in-person schooling as safe as possible, we made a substantial investment in upgrades to our air conditioning filters and safety equipment for classrooms and common spaces. We have also made significant changes to food service and school assemblies. The safety protocols we have put in place include daily temperature taking; new procedures for cleaning, disinfection, and hand washing; required social distancing and face masks and/or shields; and the widespread use of more than 1,800 plexiglass dividers in classrooms and common areas to create an additional layer of protection.

Some of these protocols may cause some inconvenience or possibly, as in the case of mask wearing, some discomfort. However, following the advice of our team of experts, in developing this plan, we have erred on the side of caution. As always, we remain committed to providing the safest possible learning environment for everyone in our community.

As the start of school approaches, we would ask your help in preparing your children to understand and abide by these protocols, in spite of the inconvenience they may cause. It will be our collective responsibility—students, families, faculty and staff—to work together to keep ourselves and others as safe as possible.

A Note on Bus/Van Transportation

One additional challenge for the upcoming school year will be transportation to and from school. Some of the local school districts have signaled their intention to eliminate the bus transportation they are legally obligated to provide to private school students (although I heard just today that the Mason district, which buses the largest cohort of our students, will continue service in 2020-21). In addition, one of the local companies that had previously provided private van service has discontinued operations. To assist those of you who may be impacted by these changes, I have listed two resources. The first is a summary of your legal right to contest the suspension of bus transportation and

the procedure for doing so. The second is a link to a current list of Seven Hills families, sorted by zip code, which we thought might help you to arrange carpools with families in your area. This .pdf is searchable if the user downloads it and uses any type of pdf tool (Preview, Adobe, etc) to view the file.

[Bus Transportation Rights
Students and Families Sorted by Zip Code](#)

Thank you for your patience as we have worked through these protocols. Obviously, there are still some details to work out, and I will certainly keep you in the loop as new ideas surface. As always, we will seek to learn from experience, and we are prepared to adjust our approach as circumstances warrant.

Next week, we will host a couple of town hall meetings on ZOOM to answer any questions you may have. The meeting for Lower School parents will be on July 9, from 8–9 p.m. The meeting for Middle and Upper School parents will be on July 13, from 8-9 p.m. Look for an invitation early next week. If you can't attend, no problem. We will record them and make the recording available to you.

I appreciate your understanding and support as we seek to provide the safest and the most robust learning experience we can under these challenging conditions.

Enjoy the rest of the summer!

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Garten". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly informal style.

Christopher P. Garten
Head of School