

# Trinity Christian Academy

## Return to School Plan

### 2020/21 School Year



*Updated 7/31/2020*

July 17, 2020

Dear TCA Family,

For many years, the mission of Trinity Christian Academy (TCA) has been to develop excellence in education, character, and servant-leadership through a Christ-centered, biblical perspective. In these unprecedented times, our school leaders have allowed these principles to inform and drive the creation of plans we believe will allow our students and staff to return to school in the midst of the current pandemic safely and in ways that allow effective fulfillment of that mission.

While communities immediately around our school have not yet seen rates of positive cases, hospitalizations, and deaths like other parts of our state, country, and world, we recognize the potential for severe outcomes COVID-19 has for some populations, many of which exist among our students, staff, parents, grandparents, and campus guests. We believe “servant-leadership” can be reflected in a Return to School Plan that helps keep these people safe. Some elements of this plan may feel unusual or inconvenient, but these temporary measures are important ways we can honor the inherent dignity of others (Mark 12:31) while reflecting the humility of Christ by placing their interests ahead of our own (Philippians 2:1-10).

Current research suggests that while children can be infected by COVID-19 and experience severe symptoms, the rates at which they do so are lower than those of adults. Medical, mental health, and educational experts also recognize the very real need for kids to attend school in person. As such, TCA will keep in-person, on-campus school a priority.

TCA administration, faculty and staff are working hard to make 2020-21 a great school year. Much has been invested and many preparations have been made, but we all have parts to play! Students and parents have their own crucial roles in helping TCA remain open and operating smoothly this year. One way to do this is by being careful prior to returning to school and upon resuming school activities, to avoid situations that might put themselves (and by extension other members of the school family) at risk for COVID-19 infection/exposure.

While no school can eliminate all risk of COVID-19, there are steps schools and families can take to significantly reduce risks. The plan that follows is our attempt, based on current information, to continue our long tradition of excellence in Christian education through a variety of temporary adjustments to keep the TCA school family and our community safe.

In crafting this plan, it was important to maintain a familiar feel in school life for our students and staff. TCA needs to “feel” like TCA! Things may look and feel different at times, however, as we have implemented a number of measures to help safeguard our school family through physical distancing practices and expanded hygiene, cleaning, sanitization efforts, many of which are addressed in the plan that follows. Please know, however, that school leaders have considered many additional details and have protocols in place beyond those described here. Our desire is

that this guide be useful for families while allowing school staff margin for ongoing adjustments to unexpected scenarios over the course of a school year which is certain to require a degree of flexibility.

As with any new start, our school family will move forward with courage, faith, and gratitude. God is good, and He has good things in store for us in the months to come. May we love Him and one another well as we move into an exciting new year at Trinity Christian Academy!

As always, it is a privilege to partner with you to prepare young people to fulfill God's purposes in this world. Thanks again for carefully reading the information that follows. As always, families with additional questions are welcome to reach out to TCA school administrators.

Mike Skaggs  
TCA Head of School

# TCA RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN

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## PEOPLE

### Protecting the Health and Well-Being of our School Family

#### Screening / Sickness

- Anyone who is ill or showing signs of illness may not come onto the TCA campus.
- Students and staff will be asked to self-screen every day before coming to school for signs of illness, particularly for COVID-19 symptoms. All are reminded that this must happen every day and that anyone exhibiting signs of illness must stay home. Common symptoms of COVID-19 include: temperature of 100° or higher when taken by mouth, sore throat, new uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (or, for students with a chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline), diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain, or new onset of severe headache, especially with a fever.
- TCA will conduct daily temperature checks of staff and students upon arrival. Individuals with a fever of 100° or higher may not remain on campus.

#### Parents and Other Campus Visitors

- When possible, TCA will be closed to visitors. When visits do occur, guests must wear a face covering, sign in and out, and self-screen upon arrival using the checklist provided.
- As much as possible, conferences will be held via teleconferencing.
- At this time, guests may not come to school to eat lunch with their child, but parents are welcome to check their child out to enjoy lunch together off campus.
- Deliveries during the school day (including parents dropping off items for their child) should happen if possible outside of school buildings.

#### Hygiene and Sanitization

- Students will be instructed in personal hygiene to include handwashing, use of sanitizer, sneezing/coughing into one's elbow, etc.
- Students will be reminded to wash hands multiple times each day and given opportunities to do so on a regular basis.
- Sanitizing stations will be placed in all classrooms, in common areas, and at points of entry/exit. Students will use sanitizer when entering and leaving classrooms.
- Students and staff are asked to be mindful of personal cleanliness and hygiene practices beyond those addressed here. This involves following recommendations of health authorities outside of school or simple things like carefully cleaning items that might carry germs (clothing, toys, etc.) before bringing them to school.

#### Food and Drink

- Lunch Out programs will continue with vendors meeting high standards of cleanliness in food preparation and delivery.
- For a time, fundraising lunches and the secondary salad bar will not be available.
- Students may bring food items to school for sharing (such as for parties) only if commercially prepackaged (no homemade items please).

- Water fountains will be used only to fill water bottles--not for drinking from directly. Students are to bring a labeled, reusable water bottle for personal use at school.

### **Face Coverings**

- Face coverings are required at this time for students in grades 4-12 in keeping with Governor Abbott's Executive Order. Exceptions will be made for medical reasons, disabilities, while eating/drinking, and during some school activities. Younger students may be required to wear a face covering when passing through common areas or at times when physical distancing is not feasible.
- As face coverings have been shown to effectively guard against the spread of COVID-19 (especially when combined with physical distancing), TCA will continue to require them when directed by government mandates and at other times as deemed necessary by school leaders to enhance the health and well-being of our students, families, and staff. This may include face covering requirements in common areas and at times when physical distancing is not feasible. At times when face coverings are required, exceptions will be given for medical reasons, disabilities, while eating/drinking, and during some school activities.
- Face coverings are required of all campus visitors (parents, vendors, etc.) during the school day. Visitors who cannot wear a face covering may be asked to adjust the time or location of their visit to reduce exposure to students and staff.
- Individuals testing negative for COVID-19 but exhibiting similar symptoms may be asked to wear a face covering until symptom free.
- A "face covering" is defined as any device (mask, face shields, etc.) covering the mouth and nose. Face coverings should be blank or limited to words/graphics that are positive and non-divisive. TCA administration reserves the right to ask a student, staff member, or guest to trade their personal mask for a blank one.
- Anyone is welcome to wear a face covering at times when not required to do so!

### **Physical Distancing**

- As possible, seating in classrooms and other learning spaces will be structured to allow space between students.
- Elementary students will remain with their classmates throughout the day with limited interaction with other classes of students (cohorting). Elementary classes will rotate between eating lunch in their classrooms and in the lunch area in Eagle Gym.
- Secondary schedules will be adjusted slightly to allow staggered passing periods in order to reduce the number of students in hallways.
- To allow greater spacing, secondary lunch will be held in the cafeteria and Barber Gym. When possible, students may be allowed to eat outside. Off campus lunch will continue to be offered as a privilege for seniors.
- Elementary chapel will be held as usual with spacing between classes while separate chapels will be conducted for middle school and high school students. Other assemblies

and large gatherings will be addressed on a case-by-case basis with information communicated to families beforehand.

### **Compliance with School Expectations**

- All members of the TCA community are expected to faithfully comply with school rules and expectations regarding hygiene, physical distancing, face coverings, etc. Failure to do so may result in being asked to leave campus. For students, this may include disciplinary consequences.

## **PLACES**

### **Keeping Our Campus Clean**

#### **Common Areas (hallways, lobbies, restrooms, playground, stairwells, cafeteria, etc.)**

- Daily application of a disinfectant mist approved by the EPA for school use using electrostatic sprayers which produce a static electric charge causing disinfectant droplets to cling to surfaces, maximizing their effect.
- Multiple times daily, facilities staff will disinfect commonly touched surfaces such as door handles, sinks, stair rails, etc.
- Where possible, adjustments will be made to eliminate commonly touched surfaces. For example, doors may be left propped open where practical.
- In addition to the disinfectant spray, commonly touched surfaces on playgrounds (handrails, etc.) will be wiped clean as classes leave the area.
- TCA has installed over a dozen free-standing sanitizer stations as well as plexi-glass barriers for offices and some learning spaces.

#### **Classrooms and other Learning Areas**

- Teachers (with student help as age appropriate) will wipe down desks and commonly touched surfaces in their classroom multiple times per day. In secondary classes, this will happen each class period when a new class enters a room.
- In most situations, students will not share classroom supplies. Regular disinfecting will be required in situations where sharing must happen.
- TCA has invested in a Zono(R) Sanitizing and Disinfecting Cabinet on the elementary campus to allow cleaning and disinfecting of toys, books, crayons, nap mats, electronics, and other learning materials that are not easily “wiped down.”

#### **Transportation**

- Activities (field trips, etc.) requiring off-campus transportation will be limited or modified.
- Student athletes will be encouraged to travel to games with their family. Buses may still be available to transport athletes when needed.
- While traveling in TCA buses, a variety of hygiene measures will be required (face coverings, windows left open when practical, physical distancing, sanitizer use upon entering the bus, etc.), and buses will be cleaned after all trips.

## **THE FUN STUFF!**

### **Extracurricular Activities and Enrichment Classes**

#### **Athletics**

- Trinity Christian Academy participates in athletic activities governed by TAPPS and CSAF. League policies will direct these activities.
- In circumstances not addressed by TAPPS and CSAF policy, TCA's Athletic Department will seek guidance from a variety of public health authorities to create a safe environment for our student athletes.
- At times, TCA rents facilities from schools, municipalities, and other organizations. In these situations, our athletes and fans will be subject to the rules set by that group.

#### **PE and Recess**

- Elementary recess will be held with one class at a time on the playground. The addition of a new early childhood playground will help with scheduling.
- PE classes will meet outside when possible.
- In most cases, face coverings will be recommended, but not required in PE and during Recess. Structured play will be designed to include physical distancing when possible.

#### **Enrichment and Creative Arts Classes**

- Elementary students will still have enrichment classes. The only change students may notice is that enrichment teachers will come to classrooms rather than having all classes travel to that enrichment classroom.
- High School and Middle School choir students will wear face shields while singing.
- Secondary Art students will be asked to purchase a set of art supplies for their personal use rather than sharing supplies.

## **STARTING AND FINISHING**

### **Schedules and Before/After School Programs**

#### **Schedules**

- Elementary and Secondary school day schedules will not change other than Middle School students being released from class 5 minutes early at the end of the day to relieve hallway congestion.
- Nearer to the start of school, information regarding assigned drop-off locations and points of entry will be communicated to families.

#### **Elementary Procedures and Programs**

- Early Bird Care will still be provided for elementary students beginning at 7:15am.
- Eagles Nest will still be provided after the school day ends until 6:00pm.
- Early Bird and Eagles' Nest require children to be in multi-grade, multi-class groupings. As such, face coverings and temperature checks will be required for these programs.

## Secondary Procedures

- Secondary students may enter the cafeteria at 7:15am. Face coverings will be required.
- After school is dismissed, secondary students will be asked to wait outside rather than in the hallways or the lobby (weather permitting). While on campus after school waiting to be picked up, secondary students will be required to wear a face covering.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF...?

### COVID-19 Protocols

#### Positive Test

- Anyone testing positive for COVID-19 must notify TCA, remain at home in isolation for ten days, and not return to school until the period elapses (even if asymptomatic). After ten days, they may return to school with a doctor's release and negative test results.
- The local health department will be notified as required by the state of Texas.
- Affected areas of the TCA campus will be thoroughly cleaned/disinfected. In some cases, this may include temporary closures to allow cleaning.
- Teachers, staff, and families will be notified. If the COVID-positive individual was within close contact of a student or staff member, they and their families will be contacted with additional information and instructions. "Close Contact" is defined as (a) direct exposure to infectious secretions (e.g., being sneezed on) or (b) being within 6 feet for 15 minutes (uninterrupted and sustained contact). Individuals are presumed infectious at least two days prior to symptom onset, or with asymptomatic individuals test-confirmed with COVID-19, two days prior to the confirming test.

#### COVID Symptoms (With or Without a Positive Test)

The individual will be isolated. If a student, parents will be contacted. COVID testing will be made available through TCA's T-Care service. The individual will be asked to leave campus and may return to school upon meeting these re-entry criteria:

- (a) fever-free for 24 hours (without use of fever-reducing medications), and
- (b) symptoms have improved, and
- (c) 10 days have passed since onset of symptoms

OR a negative COVID test is provided

OR a doctor's note is provided indicating an alternative diagnosis.

- As mentioned above, if the individual tested positive for COVID-19, a negative test is required for re-entry.

If an individual with COVID-19 symptoms has family members who are TCA students or staff members, those family members will also be asked to leave campus but may return upon meeting the above criteria for re-entry.

### **A Household Member of a TCA Student or Staff Member Tests Positive or is in Process of Being Tested**

- The student or staff member should quarantine and may return after 14 days unless they become symptomatic with COVID-19 symptoms. See the above requirements in the COVID Positive Test criteria.
- If the household member's test comes back negative, the student or staff member may return to school.

### **Guidelines for Mandatory Quarantine**

- Quarantine is a process intended to prevent symptomatic or test-confirmed individuals from spreading COVID-19. Quarantined individuals may not attend school and are asked to stay home and stay isolated.
- If a student tests positive, his or her classmates who were in close contact may be required to quarantine.
- If a faculty member tests positive, students in their class(es) only need to quarantine if they have been in close contact with that teacher.
- Even when not required by TCA, parents have the option to keep students home for the 14-day quarantine.
- Quarantine days are not counted as absences in most situations.

### **Learning Activities for Students Absent due to COVID-19**

- TCA students may need to miss school this year for reasons related to COVID-19 illness or exposure (diagnosed positive, awaiting test results, quarantined due to exposure or potential exposure, etc.). In these situations, our faculty will seek to partner with families, creatively providing students with learning experiences to keep them engaged, connected, and ready to return when circumstances allow.
- Families who keep their children at home when not required or recommended to do so by the school are reminded that while TCA is prepared to shift fully to remote learning if needed, there is no online version of TCA school programming when instruction is being offered on campus. Families considering this path must understand the unique challenges it is likely to present and that while our teachers will provide lessons and assess progress, the experience will not be the same as last spring's fully remote learning experience.

### **Confidentiality**

- As always, TCA will work to treat matters regarding student and staff health with respect, kindness, and confidentiality. Students and families are expected to do the same.

## WHAT ABOUT \_\_\_\_\_?

### Where to go with additional questions

If you have further questions regarding Trinity Christian Academy's Return to School or other aspects of school life, please contact the appropriate individual from the list below. We want to help!

- Elementary: [snewby@tcaeagles.org](mailto:snewby@tcaeagles.org)
- Secondary: [knobles@tcaeagles.org](mailto:knobles@tcaeagles.org)
- Athletics: [hamstra@tcaeagles.org](mailto:hamstra@tcaeagles.org)
- Business Office: [gsquyres@tcaeagles.org](mailto:gsquyres@tcaeagles.org)
- Admissions: [hmckenzie@tcaeagles.org](mailto:hmckenzie@tcaeagles.org)
- Supporting Our School: [henning@tcaeagles.org](mailto:henning@tcaeagles.org)
- COVID-19 protocols, T-Care, and TCA School Health: [kisiah@tcaeagles.org](mailto:kisiah@tcaeagles.org)

**The information above describes the plan Trinity Christian Academy currently anticipates for the 2020/21 school year. We realize that as circumstances change, adjustments may be required by government mandates or as seen necessary by TCA leadership. Families will be given as much advance notice as possible should major adjustments be required.**

**Knowing that unforeseen circumstances are likely to arise, administration will work with students and their families on a case-by-case basis in situations not addressed by this plan or TCA policy. At times, this will involve imposing limits or saying "no," but more often, it will involve a show of grace and leniency. In these challenging times, our school leaders appreciate your understanding and patience as well. Thank you also for extending extra measures of kindness and grace toward others in the TCA family. This is part of what makes TCA a special place.**

**We are praying for your family and for a great school year!**

## **Additional Considerations**

After reading this plan, some may wonder how TCA plans to respond to potential mandates regarding physical distancing (classroom capacity) or online learning. Good questions!

Should Texas implement requirements similar to those required of 2020 summer school programs, we believe TCA has the capacity to serve our students on campus five days a week by making use of all available spaces for learning. Along with a variety of adjustments and investments already made for the coming year (see below) including a new building to provide additional space, we believe we can safely remain open while more crowded schools must close or adopt blended learning models with some students on campus and others at home (some large schools already plan to begin with this model.) If requirements are imposed to a degree that TCA is forced to adopt a blended learning model, keeping our younger students on campus all week will be a priority with remote learning being more difficult for them and an understanding that their families have a greater need for the childcare component of school.

If fully remote learning is required, TCA is well prepared to transition to this model and provide it even more effectively than last spring for a variety of reasons.

- ★ *Our Students Are Ready.* TCA students worked hard in remote learning last spring, and our parents did a great job of helping their children in the process. Not only are our students ready for online learning if needed, they will return ready to learn at grade level with similarly prepared classmates. Upon returning to school, learning activities will be structured in new creative ways that can be more easily replicated in an online environment than previous instructional techniques. If a pivot to online learning is needed, this will make that shift even more effective and easier for kids and parents.
- ★ *Our Teachers Are Equipped.* TCA has invested significantly in resources to improve remote learning. These resources will also be helpful during on-campus learning.
  - Every teacher has received a new laptop equipped with a large screen and camera, better equipping them to teach online if needed
  - 216 new chromebooks for families with a need for online learning devices
  - Funds allocated for anticipated technology infrastructure needs
- ★ *Our Teachers Are Prepared.* In addition to professional development in remote learning, TCA teachers have regularly met formally and informally to discuss how to make online learning even more effective in 2020-21 if needed. Director of Curriculum and Faculty Development, Lyrcia Squyres, and Instructional Technologist, Jessica Sims, have worked tirelessly to prepare for remote instruction.
- ★ *Our School Family Is Prepared.* Most importantly, with class sizes smaller than those in area schools and a faculty filled with men and women who see their work as ministry, our learning environment is a deeply caring community. This sense of connection and caring is crucial in the success of an online learning experience.