

Dear Grace Community,

I have often thought to myself this last month that the weather has been a true gift to us amidst all of the ongoing uncertainty and challenge. It has been magical to see students gather back on campus on our outdoor learning days. Of course, it is tinged with some disappointment that we can't all be together each day in the ways we have always loved as a full community.

Our leadership team and task forces have continued studying metrics and considering how we can imagine in-person learning in the near future. We note both the increase in cases in our region and the relatively flat test positivity rate. We are concerned about holiday gatherings and travel and the return of college-aged students to the area. After intensive deliberation, we have decided on the following next steps in our reopening plan.

- Kindergarten-Grade 5 will continue meeting on outdoor learning days (weather permitting) until November 19.
- Preschool and Prekindergarten will add one additional outdoor morning -- Tuesday -- to the existing Wednesday gathering beginning next Tuesday, November 3 until November 19.
- Our program will revert back to Connected Remote Learning without any outdoor days from November 30 - December 18 and for the first two weeks of 2021. At that point, we will review all relevant metrics and decision points with the hope of moving to a hybrid or fully in-person model in the school building. We will communicate our decision to Grace families on January 15.
- We will keep our outdoor learning block times in place on the schedule after Thanksgiving, and allow our teaching teams to use this time to collaborate and prepare classrooms and indoor spaces for students returning. We will also use this time to consider how we will deliver content "bimodally" -- that is, remotely and in-person. Students will continue to have these open ended mornings for catching up, reading, or getting outside on their own.
- We will have multiple Tuesdays in January when instruction ends at 2:00 pm for students, so that we can gather as a faculty to plan and prep from 2:00-4:30 pm. Dates to be announced.
- At the end of this letter are a series of articles that capture the emerging story about schools and risk. There is good news to review.

It goes without saying that we are eager to initiate in-person instruction for our students. At the same time, we are seeing the inherent value in connected remote learning. Since we will likely be toggling between these modes during this school year, we will strive to strengthen them both over time. We have learned from other schools in our region and nationally that delivering instruction to students at home and at school concurrently is extremely challenging. We are

committed to doing this well, and so this extra planning time will be key in our ability to provide an equitable, strong program to all of our students.

As we prepare to come back together in person, we are urging but not requiring all families to get a flu vaccine for their Grace students. It is more critical that we all seek out this protection with Covid in our midst. More information about getting a vaccine is [here](#). As a way of assessing coverage, we would also ask that you let Noelle McHugh know when your child has received the vaccine.

I am sending my gratitude to all of you for your continued support of your students at home, for your wonderful feedback and confidence in our teaching and decision making, and for your participation in and contribution to our community. I have shared this before -- our willingness to care for each other and stay connected is what will see us to the other side of this crisis. I hope you know how much we love your children and how much we are dreaming of having them back together on campus. We are eager to continue our planning and preparation to make that a reality.

All my best,

Jen Danish

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/22/health/coronavirus-schools-children.html>

<https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/early/2020/10/16/peds.2020-031971.full.pdf>

<https://policylab.chop.edu/sites/default/files/pdf/publications/PolicyLab-Executive-Summary-Evidence-Guidance-In-Person-Schooling-During-COVID-19.pdf>