

Dear Westminster Family,

For the last few months our Leadership Team has been actively preparing for August 12, 2020 and the incredible opportunity to return to campus for on-campus instruction. Our faculty and staff desperately miss our students and are excited about the opportunity to invest in our students in a face-to-face setting. Thank you for your patience as we have sought to develop a plan that allows us to safely return to campus. I appreciate all of your prayers and encouraging notes and emails. Even through difficult times, I have been reminded of God's faithfulness and the uniqueness of the Westminster community.

Contained in this document, you will find our Return to Campus Plan which contains our Levels of Operation and Frequently Asked Questions regarding our plan. The development of this plan has focused on two priorities.

1. We are committed to providing a safe environment for our students, faculty and families.
2. We are committed to doing **whatever it takes** for us to safely offer **on-campus** instruction without interruption.

I believe that these goals align directly with our mission of "existing to glorify God, by partnering with Christian families; equipping students with the knowledge and skills to fulfill God's unique purpose for their lives." We believe deeply in the value of face-to-face instruction that occurs on campus and allows for the spiritual, academic, social and emotional development of all of our students. Unfortunately, Distance Learning is limited in the opportunities that it can provide for our students and the feedback that we have consistently heard from our families is that you desire for your students to safely return to campus and participate in the on-campus Westminster experience.

Accomplishing the above goals will take great effort from all members of the Westminster community including students, parents and our faculty and staff. Although we have put great effort into this plan, I am aware that we will not have answered every possible question and that we must be ready to pivot as new information becomes available. We plan to issue weekly updates to our plan to account for any necessary adjustments. I am thankful to be a part of a school community who is willing to serve and love another and who is committed to the mission of WCA. Thank you in advance for your support of this plan. Together we can keep our students safe and provide an incredible learning environment for them. Our prayer is that Christ would be glorified as our school community dwells in unity. (Psalm 133:1)

Please join me in praying for our school community and for the 2020-2021 school year!

In Christ,

Jared T. Clark
Head of School

Operational Level Structure

Level One	TRADITIONAL ON-CAMPUS (LOW TO MINIMAL SPREAD) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All students on campus with minimal mitigation strategies needed.
Level Two	ALL STUDENTS ON CAMPUS WITH ENHANCED MITIGATION STRATEGIES NEEDED (MINIMAL TO MODERATE SPREAD) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mitigation strategies include enhanced social distancing strategies along with enhanced cleaning and sanitization process.
Level Three	ALL STUDENTS ON CAMPUS WITH ENHANCED MITIGATION STRATEGIES NEEDED (MODERATE TO SUBSTANTIAL SPREAD) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mitigation strategies include enhanced social distancing strategies, enhanced cleaning and sanitization practices and the use of face coverings as deemed necessary when social distancing is not possible.
Level Four	DISTANCE LEARNING (SUBSTANTIAL SPREAD) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All students will engage in Distance Learning.



Frequently Asked Questions

Returning to Campus/Distance Learning

Are we bound by what schools and school systems around us are doing in relation to school closing and distance learning?

- WCA is not bound by what other schools or school systems are doing. As an independent school, we will make decisions upon what is best for our school community.
- Due to our size, we are able to pivot much more quickly than the schools around us. Additionally, our size allows us more flexibility and eliminates some of the complexities of larger schools.
- All of that said, we do maintain regular contact with the Oconee County School system and the other private schools in our community and share information and resources. Additionally, we collaborate with other private Christian schools like WCA located throughout our state, region and the United States.

What possible scenarios are you planning for during the 20-21 school year?

- Our Leadership Team has created a Return to Campus Plan that contains four different scenarios for school operations. **These plans will continue to be refined throughout the remainder of the summer as new information becomes available.**
- These scenarios include:
 - Normal on-campus instruction with precautions. (Level One -**Green**)
 - On- Campus instruction with advanced precautions. (Level Two -**Yellow**)
 - Modified On-campus operations with advanced mitigation and social distancing strategies. (Level Three – **Orange**)
 - Distance Learning (Level Four – **Red**)
- **Parents will receive regular notifications regarding which operational level we are operating under and will be notified when there is a change between levels.**
- **Our Operational Level for August 12 (First Day of School) will be determined and communicated by August 5.**
- **Our current level of operation will be noted on the front page of the website at all times.**

What resources were used in the development of this plan?

- Numerous school re-opening resources were used in the development of this plan including:
 - [American Pediatric Association Guidelines](#)
 - [Centers for Disease Control School Reopening Guidance](#)
 - [State of GA School Reopening Guidelines](#)
- Additionally, WCA collaborates regularly with the Georgia Independent School Association, the Southern Association of Independent Schools, and the Council for Educational Standards and Accountability.

What factors will determine our Operational Level?

- We receive daily updates regarding the level of spread from the GA Department of Public Health and are in regular communication with other local agencies and healthcare professionals.
- **The level of spread in our local community and in our school community will determine our Operational level.**

Safety

What precautions will WCA be taking to protect our students and staff?

- The degree of precaution taken will depend on which mode of operation we are operating under but will include:
 - Increased daily cleaning of regularly touched surfaces including toys, PE equipment, etc.
 - Increased deep cleaning and sanitization of all facilities.
 - Availability of hand sanitizer in classrooms and common areas.
 - Increased ventilation and circulation of fresh air in all classrooms and common spaces.
 - By coming to school, all staff and students are agreeing that they do not have a fever over 100.3 and do not have symptoms of illness.
 - Temperature checks may be utilized at advanced stages of spread.
 - **Face coverings are encouraged in all stages of operation for all grade levels and will be required in some scenarios for grades 6-12.**
 - Should we operate in Level Three (**Orange**) face coverings will be required when social distancing is not possible. Examples include:
 - When transitioning between classes **inside** the building.
 - When working one on one with a teacher.
 - Times when social distancing is not possible. (group work, etc.)
 - Every effort will be made to minimize the time that students must wear face coverings.
 - Faculty and staff will be required to wear face coverings when social distancing is not possible. For example:
 - When working one on one with a student.

- The school has purchased two cloth masks for each student and will have disposable masks available for emergency usage.
 - Exceptions will be allowed with approval for those students who have medical conditions that would prohibit them from being able to wear a face covering.
- Enhanced social distancing as possible and practical.
 - Non-essential items will be removed from classrooms to allow for maximum social distancing of desks.
 - Larger classes (Upper School) will meet in larger rooms, smaller classes in smaller rooms to allow for maximum social distancing.
 - Upper School students will be grouped into cohorts where feasible in order to reduce the number of student groupings.
 - Access to the campus for visitors will be limited to essential visits only and all visitors will be screened appropriately. During the school day, visitors to campus (including parents) will be required to wear a face covering **inside** the buildings.
 - Usage of the water fountains with the exception of the bottle fillers, will be suspended.

How will the school ensure social distancing?

- Our teachers have been hard at work arranging classrooms to include essential items only. This has allowed us to space all desk according to the CDC guidelines.
- Morning and afternoon routines have also been altered to allow for less gathering time for students.
- Due to our spacious gymnasium, events like chapel can continue as planned as we are able to space out seating to meet the CDC guidelines.
- We kindly requests that parents discuss the importance of physical distancing with their children.
- Our small class sizes are a great asset in ensuring that students maintain appropriate social distancing.

What is the rational for Upper School students needing to wear face coverings in Level 3?

- Our ultimate goal is to provide a safe environment for students to learn in a traditional on-campus environment and avoid having to move to Level 4 which requires us to go to Distance Learning.
- Since there are times when social distancing may be difficult, we want to ensure that we are not unnecessarily exposing students and staff to the virus.
- **We believe that wearing face coverings during class changes that occur inside the building and in group work, lab work, etc. will allow us a higher probability of continuing on-campus instruction and limiting potential exposure to students, staff and families.**

- Again, our goal is to provide the Westminster experience that our families desire without interruption and we believe that utilizing face coverings in this manner is a necessary step towards meeting that goal.

What will happen if a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19?

- In the event that a student or staff member test positive for COVID-19, they will not be allowed to return to school until they have had a negative test and have met all public health guidelines for quarantine. Other family members (siblings) will have the same requirements.
- The school is committed to working with students who miss live instruction to ensure that they stay on track with their academic coursework.
- **We will have an obligation to notify our local health authorities and the families in that particular class or families of students who have had close contact with the infected individual. Students who may have been exposed to an infected individual will follow the protocols established by the CDC, APA and local public health officials. (Please note that the CDC, APA and public health guidelines change regularly. WCA will use the most current information from these organizations to guide families in how to respond to potential exposure.) The GA Dept of Health Return to School Guidance is listed below.**
- **GA DPH Return to School or Childcare Strategy**
- DPH recommends a time-based return to school or childcare strategy that is determined based on a person’s health status. Decisions about “return to school” or “return to childcare” for persons with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 should be made in the context of local circumstances (community transmission, resource needs, etc.).
- **Symptomatic** persons with confirmed COVID-19 or suspected COVID-19
 - Who had *mild or moderate illness** and are not severely immunocompromised[†] can return to school or childcare after:
 - At least 10 days have passed since *symptoms first appeared* and
 - At least 24 hours have passed since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and
 - Symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) have improved
 - Who had *severe to critical illness (if they were hospitalized for shortness of breath, pneumonia, low oxygen levels, respiratory failure, septic shock, and/or multiple organ failure) ** or who are severely immunocompromised[†] can return to school or childcare after:
 - At least 20 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared*
 - At least 24 hours have passed *since last* fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and
 - Symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) have improved
- **Asymptomatic** persons with confirmed COVID-19:
 - Who are *not severely immunocompromised[†]* can return to school or childcare after:
 - At least 10 days have passed since the positive laboratory test and the person

- remains asymptomatic
 - Who are *severely immunocompromised*[†] can return to school or childcare after:
 - At least 10 days have passed since the positive laboratory test and the person
- remains asymptomatic
 - Note, asymptomatic persons who test positive and later develop symptoms should follow the guidance for symptomatic persons above.
- Asymptomatic persons who have a known exposure to a person with COVID-19 without appropriate PPE can return to school or childcare after:
 - They have completed all requirements in the DPH guidance for persons exposed to COVID-19 found at <https://dph.georgia.gov/contact>
 - Of note, if this person is tested for COVID-19 during the 14-day quarantine period, a negative test result would not change or decrease the time a person is quarantined.

Academics

Will students still have recess and special area classes such as art, physical education and music?

- Students in grades PreK-5th grade will continue to have daily recess as we believe this is an important part of a student's day. The number of students allowed on the playground at any one time will be limited.
- All enrichment classes will continue with appropriate modifications as needed to provide a safe classroom environment. For example, physical education classes will meet outdoors when possible and music classes may be limited to instrumental music and music theory during advanced stages of spread.
- Upper School students will continue to enjoy enrichment classes and electives with necessary modifications to allow for a safe classroom environment.

Does the school plan to utilize Distance Learning?

- **Distance learning will only be utilized when it is determined that we are unable to safely meet on campus.**
- **Under our plan, PreK-5th grade students will meet on campus unless we are mandated by the state government to cease operations or it becomes unsafe to do so.** We understand the need for working parents to have a safe and consistent place for their students to learn and grow each day.
- Additionally, we are working on a way to accommodate all PreK-8th grade students on campus unless mandated by the state government.
- It is possible that high school students could begin Distance Learning earlier than other grade levels to allow for additional social distancing options for the Lower School and Middle School.

Is there a plan in place to address the lack of technology devices available to students in grades PreK-8th grade should Distance Learning become necessary?

- We are pleased to announce that the school has purchased devices for each student in kindergarten through fifth grade. If Distance Learning were to become necessary, these devices would then be deployed to each student for usage at home.
- If Distance learning were to take place, middle school students will have the option to checkout a school-issued laptop for usage at home.
- All of our teachers will now be able to utilize forms of “live” instruction in the event that Distance Learning becomes necessary.

If we were to move to Distance Learning, would it look the same as it did in the Spring of 2020?

- Due to the fact that all students would have an iPad, Chromebook or laptop for use, our plans include live instruction for all grade levels. We believe that this change would ease the burden for parents of Lower and Middle school students and allow for more engagement between the student and teacher.
- Students in middle and high school will now utilize Google Classroom for both on-campus instruction and Distance Learning. This will allow students to be familiar and comfortable with this platform.
- From the beginning of the year, clear expectations will be provided to students regarding Distance Learning to ensure a smooth transition should Distance Learning become necessary.

What will happen with large group gatherings such as chapel and lunch?

- We are working to prepare multiple options that will allow us to continue to host these events.
- Chapel will continue with increased social distancing between all students. Fortunately, we can utilize the entire gym to provide a safe environment for chapels.
- Lower school students will eat lunch either in their classrooms or outside.
- Upper school students will continue to eat outside as permitted by the weather. Additional outdoor seating areas are being created to safely accommodate places to eat.

Athletics/Extracurricular/Field Trips

Will there be athletics in the fall?

- Right now, all fall athletic teams are actively preparing for the upcoming season while working under the protocols established by the Georgia Association of Private and Parochial Schools.
- We are hopeful that our teams will be able to conduct their seasons as planned.

Will students still participate in field trips?

- If the venue is open and can safely accommodate our students, then field trips may occur. Parents would have the option to opt out of any trips, should they have concerns regarding their child’s safety.



**2020
LOWER SCHOOL
REOPENING PLAN**

Arrival:

- Beginning at 7:30 am, the lower school hall will be open.
- Students will enter through the front doors and proceed directly to their classroom.
- Adults will be on duty during carline to assist students as necessary.

Transitions:

- In order to minimize crowding in the hall, students will exit the building through the side door of their classroom whenever possible.
- Class bathroom times will be staggered to prevent crowding.

Dismissal:

- Students will dismiss school in a staggered manner and proceed directly to their car.
- Parents who wish to walk up to pick up their child should wait on the sidewalk for their child to be called. In order to maintain proper social distancing, please do not congregate on the porch.

Classrooms:

- Student work spaces will be socially distanced based on the most recent CDC guidelines, and bulky furniture has been removed to allow for optimal spacing.
- Students will have individual boxes of school supplies and manipulatives.
- Students in PreK, Kindergarten, and 1st grade may be asked to wear a provided face shield when working closely in centers/literacy groups.
- Frequent handwashing will be encouraged, and there will be hand sanitizing areas in each classroom.
- Staff will wear masks when social distancing is not possible.
- Desks will be cleaned frequently.
- Outdoor classroom experiences will be encouraged.
- Classroom visitors will be limited.

Lunch:

- Students will eat at their own desk or outside.
- To minimize spread, microwaves will no longer be used.

Activity Classes:

- Our usual activity classes will be offered this year: PE (held outside as much as possible), Music, Art, Library, Tech, and STEM. Offerings may differ slightly based on grade level.
- During Music class, singing will be replaced by an interactive music appreciation curriculum for at least the first quarter of school any time class is held indoors. Students may participate in singing/rhythm activities if they are outside.
- Depending on the level of spread, Music, Art, and STEM teachers may teach within the grade level classroom.
- Materials will not be shared.

Recess:

- The number of classes on the playground at one time will be limited.

Water Fountains:

- All water fountains will be turned off and replaced by a water bottle filling station.



**2020
UPPER SCHOOL
REOPENING PLAN**

Arrival:

- Students arriving on campus at 7:30am or after, will go to their first period classroom.
- Students arriving before 7:30am will have assigned areas to wait until classrooms open.
- Adults will be on duty to assist students, as necessary.

Transitions:

- Masks will be worn during all indoor class transitions.
- One-way stairways to and from the balcony will be in place.
- Limited locker access between classes.
- Use of water filling station only, water fountains are disabled.
- Limited access to restrooms in between classes and during class.

Water Fountains:

- All water fountains will be turned off, but the water bottle filling station will still be operational.

Dismissal:

- Staggered dismissal based on after school activities.
- Students exit the building as quickly as possible and proceed directly to their cars.
- We will have additional staff on duty after school to help facilitate a smooth dismissal.
- Upper School pick-up will begin at 2:45pm.
- In order to maintain a safe environment for our students and to exit campus quickly, PLEASE do not park your car in the traffic circle for any reason until after 3:10pm.

Classrooms:

- Additional class sections have been added to reduce class size.
- Student desks will be socially distanced based on the most recent CDC guidelines.
- Bulky furniture has been removed to allow for optimal spacing.
- As much as possible, students will be in cohorts (students that will be grouped together) during the day to minimize the spread of germs.
- Students will be asked to wear masks when social distancing is not possible.
- Staff will be wearing masks when social distancing is not possible.
- Frequent handwashing will be encouraged, and there will be hand sanitizing areas in each classroom.
- Desks will be cleaned frequently.
- Outdoor classroom experiences will be encouraged.
- Classroom visitors will be limited.

Lunch:

- Inside and outside lunch space will be utilized to increase student distance.
- To minimize spread, the kitchen area use will be limited to vending machines.
- Microwaves and refrigerators will no longer be used.
- Volunteers serving catered lunches will wear masks and gloves
- Additional staff will be on duty for lunch supervision.

Electives Classes:

- Physical Education/ Weight Training – class will be socially distanced as much as possible and all equipment, including the weight room, will be cleaned regularly.
- Music class - singing will be replaced by an interactive music appreciation curriculum for part of the year and any time class is held indoors.
- Students may participate in singing/rhythm activities if they are able to go outside.
- Art – curriculum and classroom protocols have been modified to promote a safe environment.