

Dear Middle School Parents,

I have enjoyed seeing some of our students (albeit from a distance or masked) here in the mornings for summer workouts. It provides a semblance of normalcy in an otherwise different environment. While we continue to plan for different scenarios, and the below information is all subject to change, I am endeavoring to provide our typical mid-summer reminders, realizing that this will be a decidedly atypical start to a school year. With that in mind, please read the below and prepare for more specific communications from Dr. Perkinson, the School, your child's advisor, and me in the weeks ahead.

It is our goal and intention to hold in-person school with our original start date of Wednesday, August 19. With the plans to begin school in person, we have developed two very important sets of plans to provide families flexibility and to maximize the safety of students and faculty on campus.

First, if you look at the Hybrid Learning Objectives on our [Returning to Campus page](#), you will see the outline of our plans to accommodate students and staff who need to remain home while we are conducting in-person classes. Please reach out if you would like more details or complete [this form](#) if you are interested in this option. There is no deadline to indicate your preference to us, and we will maintain a great deal of flexibility as we get closer to school and move into the semester.

Second, we are developing comprehensive health and safety protocols and policies to mitigate the risks associated with a return to school. In the coming weeks, Dr. Perkinson will share details of those plans beginning next Friday. Among other policies and protocols, they will include our mask requirements, physical distancing strategies, and cohort isolation plans.

One of the things that I can let you know is that if Episcopal Collegiate finds it necessary to move completely to E-Learning, as we did last spring, then all classes will be offered. Last spring, we allowed middle school students the opportunity to "opt out" of non-core academic classes, and this year we will not be doing that. We believe that our fine and performing arts offerings are integral to our mission of developing the whole child. Additionally, the arts may be one of the primary stress mitigators in a child's day. Consequently, it makes sense for us to continue to offer these outstanding and enriching courses whether at school or at home.

Parents should soon (this afternoon) be able to log onto Veracross to see their child's schedule. Please note that middle school advisory groupings are still in process, so these will be added to the schedules next week, and we will notify you when this happens.

- To find your child's schedule, go to your parent portal, and the link displays to the right of pictures/report card links and is called current class schedules.
- **Parents of students new to Episcopal will receive email information about logging into Veracross on Tuesday, July 14. This email expires after 24 hours.** Should you miss this window, please contact Mr. Don Stalls, Director of Technology and Innovation, dstalls@episcopalcollegiate.org.
- Please note that Follett, the company with whom Episcopal Collegiate contracts to help provide **requisite books/resources**, will be offering free shipping through July 15. The web address for purchasing through Follett is <https://www.bkstr.com/episcopalcollegiatestore/home>.

Please address scheduling questions to Mrs. Fitz, jfitz@Episcopalcollegiate.org, or 501-372-1194, ext. 2461. The School does not make class/schedule/advisor changes based on requests for a particular teacher.

Locker Set-Up

Students must make an appointment with Middle School Office Manager, Mrs. Jan Britt, jbritt@Episcopalcollegiate.org, to set up their lockers before the start of school. The first date students may start setting them up is Monday, August 4. We ask that only the student and one parent or guardian come to set up lockers, that individuals enter the middle school building through the middle school carpool line entrance only, and that students/parents wear masks and check in at the middle school office prior to going to their child's locker. Students/parents should not congregate in the locker bays.

PE Uniforms

To begin the year, our access to the locker room will be limited due to the health and safety precautions we are taking. Students will not be able to use the locker rooms to store their PE uniforms. Therefore, students will not be required to change into their PE uniforms as long as these precautions are in place. Students may opt to do so.

Virtual Middle School Back-to-School Night, Thursday, August 20

As of this writing, we are planning to host a Virtual Back to School Night on Thursday, August 20, from approximately 6:45-8:45pm. Parents/guardians will receive more detailed information on this event one week in advance.

Please note that the below orientation programs are for families new to Episcopal Collegiate Middle School. Returning seventh and eighth grade students/families have no orientation responsibilities, though stay tuned for a possible start-of-school kick off event sponsored by grade-level parent representatives.

New Student/Parent Orientation

New seventh grade and eighth grade students and their parents - Monday, August 17

- New seventh and eighth grade students and their parents should plan to attend a welcome program in the Middle School's Erwin Library on Monday, August 17, from 1:30-3:00 pm. We ask that just the student and their parents attend and that all attendees wear masks.

Virtual sixth grade parent orientation (No students, please.) Monday, August 17 - 11:15-12:00

- (Optional Haiku training session with Mrs. Katie Robinson, Director of Academic Technology) (Google Meet link TBD)
- 12:00-1:30 Orientation program (Google Meet link TBD)

In-person sixth grade student orientation (No parents, please.) - Tuesday, August 18 - 9:00 - 12:30

- Sixth graders should arrive at the middle school via the middle school carpool line entrance between 8:30 and 9:00. Students with last names starting with M-Z should arrive at 8:30, and those whose last names end in A-L should arrive at 8:45.

Faculty will be standing by to do temperature checks, so students should remain in their cars to have their temperatures taken. Students should bring a snack, water bottle, and a mask. Dress for this event is casual appropriate - t-shirts with school appropriate logos, shorts that do not rise more than three inches above the knee, and tennis shoes are fine. The student orientation program will run until 12:30pm and will not include lunch.

Back to School Information

While I have highlighted new family orientations, please check the Episcopal Collegiate School website for comprehensive [back-to-school information](#), including notes on classroom supplies, uniforms, and book ordering instructions.

Sixth grade families only: Children will be provided planners by their teachers on the first day of school, and your FACTS account will be billed, so there is no need to purchase a planner ahead of time.

For your drop-off planning purposes:

Morning Arrival

Middle School Students will not be permitted entrance into any school building prior to 7:30am. Exceptions to this would include students whose teams have before-school sports practices or students having to serve a detention. Otherwise, faculty will begin taking student's temperatures in the middle school carpool line beginning at 7:30am. Once a student has been checked, they may enter the building provided they are wearing a mask. Students whose temperature registers 100.4 or greater will need to depart campus immediately with their parent/guardian. Once a student enters the building, he or she should report to their advisory location and/or go out to the quad until 7:55am, at which point all students proceed to their advisory locations.

New Faculty

You'll find a list of faculty members joining us this year, as well as information about their background and experience, [at this link](#).

I hope that the above information is helpful and that everyone stays safe.

Please stay tuned to our [resources page on the Episcopal website for updates.](#)

Sincerely,

H. Charles “Chuck” McCormick, EdD
Head of Middle School