

COVID-19 General Updates-3.27.20

Dear Cardinal Families,

I hope that this email finds everyone healthy and safe. Like many of you, I am amazed at our current predicament, and it has posed some of the most challenging questions that I have faced as a school administrator. I am sure that many of you are confronting challenges as parents and families that you have never previously imagined. While it has been a while since you have heard from me, we have been working diligently behind the scenes to create a plan of action for the variety of issues that have cropped up. I want to reassure you that the school is committed to coming together as a community in order to make the best of this situation. As part of a community, we recognize that the uniqueness of this situation is going to result in our school making some mistakes along the way, and our families facing challenges that we are going to have to find creative ways to support.

As you are all aware at this point, our school building will be closed to student instruction until May 18th. This circumstance, in addition to the travel and movement restrictions in the county and the state, have posed a number of questions for our school. This email is intended as an introduction to some of those issues we are currently developing methods to address. Because it is going to take a large volume of communication in order to address each and every item, I felt it was best to use this space as an introduction to what we are working through. I will then send additional communications regarding specific items, and will do my best to make sure that those items which are being addressed are identified in the email subject line. In addition to email, we will be posting these communications on our school webpage and sending them out via our school facebook page.

Before I get to the specific topics to cover, I felt it important to review our guiding principles we are using when discussing potential solutions.

- We acknowledge that this process won't be easy for anyone, and we want to make sure that communication is as transparent as possible throughout.
- We understand there are multiple family situations that we need to be conscious of within our community. Flexibility and understanding is going to be key.
- Because of the uniqueness of this circumstance, we are not going to rush into solutions with false clarity. We will take our time to develop solutions that are reasonable for our students, parents, and staff.
- We also understand that the educational challenges are not going to be solved in the short term regardless of what a distance learning program may look like. We are committed to seeing our students through this situation well into the future.

With that being said, below is a laundry list of items that we are currently thinking through, and some general timelines for when to expect some communications regarding the items.

Distance Learning Program - We are currently working on this, and believe that we have developed a reasonable approach. We will communicate details regarding it on Sunday. Our first date for distance learning will be April 6th.

12th Graders - We are adamant that no 12th grader will be cost graduation because of COVID-19. We will work with each and every student to ensure that they have the opportunity to graduate on time. They will be held harmless from the factors that exist outside of their control. Those communications will be ongoing and will come primarily from Mr. Pugh.

Graduation Ceremony - We are committed to having a graduation ceremony for our students. Our greatest hope is to hold that on the date that we set with everyone present who wants to be there. We recognize that this is a long shot, and even if we are able to hold a ceremony on that date, it may not be the best for all involved. It is likely that this event will be dictated as events unfold; however, we want everyone to know that it is among the items that are at the forefront of our minds.

Senior Events - We are working through them as they come up. At this time, we feel it is unreasonable to expect that Prom will occur on the date that we set for it. You can consider that particular event cancelled. However, we also feel that we want our seniors to have as good of an experience as we can possibly have. We will continue to explore ways to honor our seniors, and provide them ways to celebrate their senior year. Prom is not the only senior event, and there will likely be additional impact from COVID-19. Mr. Pugh will be the designated communicator regarding those issues.

Field Trips - This has been on the stickiest situations to work through right now. As sad as it is to say, I am going to have to cancel all field trips for the duration of the year. For the trips that have already been impacted by the virus, we have staff members that are working on refunds. Some money that has been paid out can be refunded, and some may not. Because of the magnitude of the work involved with processing refunds, etc... it is likely that we will not have communication regarding field trips until after April 6th.

Grades - One of the biggest challenges will be how to manage grades for the year. We are exploring several different options and trying to determine what will be fair going forward. We believe that grading in the traditional sense does not necessarily make sense, but if we are going to provide work for students, we want to make sure that we are able to hold students accountable for engaging in it. We do not have a specific timeline for information regarding grading, but I anticipate it to come either next week, or right around April 6th.

There are a myriad of other concerns that we are tackling individually. These includes students who may not have internet access, special education students, and Advanced Placement courses. Much of the communication regarding these issues may come from individual teachers as we work to address individual needs.

Thank you for taking the time to read through all of this! My next communication will be Sunday with details regarding our Distance Learning program. I hope that each of you are able to stay safe throughout the coming days.

Sincerely,

Joe Caraher

Director

Cornerstone Charter Academy