

Dear Parents,

For nearly 22 years, Horizon Academy's mission has been to empower students with dyslexia and other specific learning disabilities to be strategic learners and confident self-advocates. Our commitment to that mission has not changed. Today, we are delivering it through Zoom and Google Classroom. While the delivery has shifted away from a bricks and mortar setting, the core instruction and unyielding commitment to our students remain the same. The world is an uncertain place right now, but please know we are certain that your child is continuing to learn and grow and will end this year prepared for the next step in their educational journey.

Thank you to our students, parents, faculty, and staff for their partnership and support during these challenging and uncharted times in which we find ourselves. You continue to amaze and inspire me every day!

Frequently Asked Questions

Can my child get what he or she needs through distance learning?

Yes, distance learning is different from our traditional model but continues to meet the needs of our students who learn differently. We are still delivering the key elements of the Orton-Gillingham Approach, specialized math instruction, and written expression on a daily basis. Our counselors are here to provide social and emotional learning and support, and our therapists, SLP and OT, are virtually providing the therapies that our students need. Lessons are also being provided for weekly art, music and Makerspaces classes, as well as daily P.E. activities. Thankfully, your child had 27 weeks with their support team of teachers and therapists as well as their classmates prior to starting distance learning. During that time, they developed relationships, trust, and confidence that they continue to benefit from and build upon in our Distance Learning environment.

Shouldn't I receive a discount since my student isn't physically attending Horizon Academy?

As a non-profit, independent school, we are funded by tuition. In order for our school to continue to thrive as an institution as it has for nearly 22 years and to continue to compensate our faculty and staff and meet our operational expenses, it is vital that families honor their tuition agreements and continue to pay tuition during this time. Our faculty and staff have been working diligently to develop and implement distance learning and provide family/child support that aligns with our whole child philosophy and the pedagogy that provides a multisensory, diagnostic, prescriptive, and engaging learning experience for our students who learn differently. Your child is continuing to

receive the key elements of our specialized reading, writing, math instruction as well as support from our therapists, counselors, SLP and OT. This is a challenging time for us all, but we will continue to adapt to the needs of our community as we navigate these times together.

Will my child have to stay at Horizon Academy longer because he or she is not in their physical classroom?

No. Your child is continuing to receive the key elements of our specialized reading, writing, and math instruction as well as SL and OT therapies. The students will continue to grow, and their teachers will continue to monitor their progress and adjust their instruction as appropriate. Our students are resilient, and in this uncertain time, we are adapting and transitioning collectively, and in doing so, our students are building the confidence they will need to face future transitions in life.

My child is transitioning at the end of this year. Will they still be ready?

Your child will be ready to transition at the end of this year. Remember that your child's cheerleading squad - teachers, counselor, principal, and specialists partnered with you months ago to celebrate your child's progress and outline the course of action for you and your student to take. Your child continues to receive reinforcement in all of our learning approaches, and though unexpected, they are also experiencing the unique opportunity to practice additional independence, executive functioning skills, and self-advocacy in a safe and familiar environment where their self-confidence and skill development will continue to grow through the conclusion of the school year.

I am worried my child will fall behind his or her peers. What can I do?

First, rest assured that your child is not falling behind. The unprecedented situation caused by COVID-19 is disrupting the entire United States and the vast majority of the globe. Every child's educational experience is being impacted. Fortunately, our small class size, two-teacher model and highly-focused educational mission lend themselves to distance learning. While I wish all students everywhere were receiving the educational support they need, the level of engagement and individual support your child is experiencing is actually quite unique, and they are adapting and thriving.

Will you be doing end of year assessments?

With the extraordinary actions taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19, Horizon Academy will not be conducting our end of year assessments. In light of the current situation, we feel that our students and faculty are just beginning to establish a sense of stability and normalcy. Interrupting this by scheduling assessments would be a disruption to our new normal. We will continue to concentrate on delivering instruction during this unprecedented disruption of our typical service delivery.

What about Annual Reviews? How will they be conducted?

Yes. Annual Reviews are our opportunity to highlight your student's success and growth as well as the areas that we continue to develop. While we will not have comparative data to inform our goal setting, your child's teachers' and therapists' diagnostic and prescriptive approach allow them to assess student growth on a daily basis. Your child's Annual Review will take place in May via Zoom Conferencing. Maureen Elder will be scheduling these in the next few weeks.

What about the end of school? My child is graduating from 8th grade or 12th grade. What can we do to provide a celebration?

We are working now to make plans for how we will celebrate the hard work and accomplishments of all of our students and honor those who will be SOARing on to new schools or those who are graduating. It is our goal that every student has the opportunity to return to Horizon Academy to celebrate before the beginning of the next school year. More detailed information will follow as we develop our plan.

What should I do this summer to prepare my child for next year?

As is always the case, your child's teacher will make recommendations to you about how to best support your child's academic progress over the summer. This primarily will include consistent opportunities to read and write.

What if my child is enrolled in Summer School or Summer Tutoring at Horizon Academy?

At this time we continue to plan for summer, and our Enrollment Manager, Laura Mombello, is conducting virtual tours and screenings for summer as well as for the 2020-21 school year. Families enrolled in any of these activities should expect more detailed communication soon. If you are interested in our summer programming and have not yet signed up, please reach out to Laura Mombello at lmombello@horizon-academy.com (Summer School) or Judy Cowin at jcowin@horizon-academy.com (Summer Tutoring).

I am uncertain about my economic future, should I still fill out the enrollment forms for next year?

We understand that there is a degree of financial uncertainty in the days ahead for each family due to the Covid-19 crisis. We strongly encourage all families who have the intent of coming back to complete their student's enrollment packet. As we are currently accepting and enrolling new students for both the Summer School and School Year programs, our goal is to do our best to first secure arrangements for our current families who are hoping to return. We are committed to your family and want to be able to plan ahead for your student's inclusion. Showing intent to return through the enrollment packet submission will provide us what we need at this time. The initial deposit of \$1,500 is due by May 1 to reserve your student's place. We are extending the deadline for the second deposit of \$4,000 to July 1. As always, we encourage you to reach out

and communicate your concerns and mitigating factors as we seek ways to provide guidance to our families.

Financial assistance?

Should you need financial assistance, we strongly encourage you to proceed through the process as funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Our Development Office continues to seek scholarship donations to support our students who qualify for need-based support. Please be aware that we are currently accepting and enrolling new students for next school year who may also be seeking need-based financial assistance. Below is the link to that process, for your convenience. As always, we encourage open communication regarding your concerns and all matters remain confidential as we navigate this process together. <https://horizon-academy.org/scholarships-financial-assistance/>

How can I help support the Horizon Academy community?

In this time of uncertainty, it's comforting to know that Horizon Academy has a supportive and generous community. For those who have reached out and asked how you can help, please consider a gift to our Annual Fund which supports student need-based scholarships. Contact Trish Arnold at tarnold@horizon-academy.com or click on the link:

[Horizon Academy Scholarship Fund](#)

Support for families

We are thinking of each of you. If you are experiencing undue hardship of any kind during this time, please reach out to us; we can set up a call to discuss. We are 100% committed to having all Horizon Academy families feel connected and supported.

With gratitude,

Vicki Asher

Horizon Academy Head of School