



Dear Parents/Guardians,

July 2020

It is with great anticipation and enthusiasm that I welcome you back for what we hope to be another incredible school year at Horizon Academy. Before the first day of class, we expect all students to return on **Thursday, August 13, 2020** for **placement testing**, to learn about new safety protocol to protect against COVID, and to pick up assigned Chromebooks. We will not be hosting a Back-to-School Orientation as previously announced.

If you are a returning student who was unable to complete **SLP or OT** assessments at the end of the 2019-20 school year due to COVID, you will be contacted the week of August 3 by our therapists to schedule this testing. If your student had received services in their previous placement, and you believe they are eligible for SLP or OT services, feel free to contact the office, and we will direct you to our therapists.

The **first official** day of school will be **Tuesday, August 18, 2020**. This is a change from our original start date.

We enter the school year after a turbulent and challenging spring and summer. Not only have we been challenged by a pandemic and the loss of in-person connection with our school community as a result, but most recently by the hurt of racism. We recognize that we are all in this together and for that reason, we will be addressing these challenges as a community.

As we continue to be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic with no real end in sight, the leadership at Horizon Academy continues to modify our plan for a re-entry as well as for maintenance. This plan was shared with you earlier this summer, has been revised several times, and is attached to this email. One of the most important things we considered as we developed our policy and plan is the need for flexibility, nimbleness, and the ability to pivot quickly depending on the level of any potential viral transmission in the school and/or throughout the Kansas City community. We coupled this with the ever-changing demands of local health officials and the CDC. We feel our plan meets the prescribed criteria. ***However, families play an important role in our ability to remain open during these unpredictable times. Please monitor your family's health by taking daily temperatures and observing changes in your or your child's health (cough, headache, fever, chills, etc.). Please adhere to proper hand-washing and wear face masks while out in public. Fill out the daily health screening before coming to school. Keep your child home if they are sick. And remember, if you have traveled or are planning to travel to a COVID hotspot, you will have to quarantine for 14 days prior to returning to Horizon Academy.***

<https://www.coronavirus.kdheks.gov/175/Travel-Exposure-Related-Isolation-Quaran>

Horizon Academy's goal is to be open for on-campus learning unless we are mandated by a governing body or to close or a student or staff member becomes ill with COVID-19. We will follow all CDC recommendations.

While our distance learning plan initiated in the spring was robust, we do recognize the importance of in-person learning. There is now well-documented evidence of the negative impacts of school closures on children in Spring 2020 especially for our students who learn differently,. Extended time away from school and associated interruption of supportive services resulted in social isolation with the long-term effects still unknown. We have some catching up to do, but our teachers and therapists are armed and ready. ***If we are mandated to close, we have also expanded our distance learning plan to more closely mirror our full-day program.***

COVID Contact

Julie Altman, Principal, is your contact person for any COVID absence questions. Confidentiality will be maintained.

Recent Events

As a community, it is important to address the reasons behind the current protests happening locally and on a national level with our students. Horizon Academy is built on the diversity of our community members. We condemn racism and discrimination of any kind. Each of our students, their families, and our community members are unique, valued, and important to us, and we recognize that there are many members of our school community who are concerned about themselves and those close to them. We care deeply about equity and justice and will be making **this** work a priority within our school community (staff, students, etc.) this year. We honor and respect the differences that make us individuals, so we have created a task force to advance multiculturalism and equity within our school community. In preparation for the school year, we are reviewing our curriculum and are gathering resources to share with our teachers to help them discuss with our students current events and raise awareness about racial injustice and inequity, as well as cultural, political, and social issues in relevant and developmentally appropriate ways. We view this as an opportunity for growth.

Though each year Horizon Academy rallies behind a theme, our mission to empower students with specific learning disabilities to become effective learners and confident self-advocates remains the same. With all that is happening in the world around us, however, we thought it would be appropriate for this year's theme to be...**BE**. This can be interpreted in many ways. Though there are so many things we cannot choose to be, we can become more self-aware. We can explore our differences, and most importantly how we are alike. In doing so, we will discover that there is a choice to **BE: kind, accepting, unique, empathetic, passionate, and positive. We all have the opportunity to BE the difference!**

Our mascot, the hawk, plays significant importance this year. Throughout history, literature, and Native American cultures, the hawk has represented courage, opportunity, and optimism. It symbolizes freeing ourselves from the thoughts and beliefs that limit our ability to **SOAR**. In the long run, it is this ability to rise high above our personal challenges to find our strengths so that we have the wings to **SOAR**

(**S**elf-awareness/Advocacy; **O**ptimism; **A**cceptance; **R**esilience).

In closing, the Horizon Academy faculty and staff continues to work tirelessly to make our school a place where your child wants to come each and every day to take academic risks, to socialize, and to achieve all that they can achieve as learners! We care deeply about the success of our children. We are lucky to have such a dedicated and caring faculty and staff whose focus and priorities are all in the right places – building positive relationships with each and every student and implementing evidence-based strategies and approaches that get results. I am so proud to be the Head of School at Horizon Academy and will work diligently to make sure this strong spirit continues to thrive. We are all so very proud to be **Horizon Academy Hawks!**

I look forward to another great year. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me with questions, comments, or concerns at vasher@horizon-academy.com / (913) 789-9443. See you all soon! **GO HAWKS. SOAR!**

Sincerely,



Vicki Asher
Head of School

Please take a moment to review each of the enclosures.

Enclosures: 2020-21 Calendar
2020-21 General Information
2020-2021 Horizon Academy Return to Campus Plan
Faculty and Staff List
After School Clubs Brochure