



# **Immanuel Christian Academy**

## **STANDING OUT IN FAITH**

*for Christ, the community, and one another*

July 24, 2020,

Dear Parent,

Greetings again! I know that as we get closer to the starting date for the 2020-2021 school year many of you are anxious with respect to what the school year will look like exactly. I do apologize for any delays and for any stress you may have as you anticipate a finalized plan. I continue to review documents and protocols and have participated in several meetings.

As much as we plan and prepare for this upcoming school year we must all understand that because of the continued fluidity of the situation, revisions and adjustments will continue to be made. As we witnessed last school year, however we start may not be how we finish. Plans, procedures, policies and protocols may be adjusted should the need arise.

Thank you to those who responded to the survey. Your answers were greatly appreciated and have been most helpful in allowing us to know what your concerns are and how we may best address them. I have reviewed your answers and will be sharing them with our school board when we meet next Wednesday.

There are a few concerns that I would like to address at this time. Further details regarding these concerns and others will be addressed in our final "Return to Learn" document. The Illinois State Board and Illinois Department of Public Health has mandated that face masks are to be worn at all times by students, faculty, and staff while in the building. Students in PK - 8 must wear face masks. They may be removed to eat lunch.

There were concerns about our ability to be able to social distance. Students will not be moving from classroom to classroom as they have in the past for computer, music, etc. If there is any departmentalizing done, it will be kept to a minimum and only the teacher will transition. All excess furniture such as extra desks, tables, and chairs are being removed from classrooms in order to allow for greater distancing. I mentioned in a previous update that class sizes have been limited as well.

One of the more pressing concerns was parents sending ill students to school. We have had issues in the past where parents have sent students to school knowing that their child is not feeling well. This cannot happen. Students will have their temperatures checked and go through a symptom screening process prior to entering the school building. Students who do not meet

the criteria set forth by the ISBE and IDPH will not be allowed to enter the building and will be sent back home.

The above mandate will require a high degree of due diligence, responsibility, and accountability on the part of the parent. Again, we must all be on the same page as we work together.

There were a few technology concerns as well. We will have chrome books available for home usage, should that be an issue. We have also developed a remote learning document that will be distributed to the parents should there be a need for the plan.

A final concern that I will address is the cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing of the building as well as maintaining it. We will be using a cleaning service, instead of a custodian, for the foreseeable future. The building is currently going through a summer cleaning and maintenance procedure. Prior to the start of any in-person instruction the building will go through an additional cleaning process as well as a disinfecting and sanitizing process.

We are also seeking to upgrade the fixtures in the bathroom so that the sinks and toilets can be made touchless. We are adding hand sanitizer stations throughout the building, as well as making other improvements. Information will be updated as changes and upgrades take place.

I may not have addressed every concern, but I do want you to know that we have continued to diligently work to move forward into a new school year. The Day School Commission will be meeting on Wednesday to finalize our Return to Learn plan. You will be apprised of the plan once it has been finalized.

At a recent seminar a principal from another state shared something that may be helpful to consider as we move forward. Some of you may remember “the three Rs” school of thought. It was suggested that you needed to know Reading, Writing and ‘Rithmetic, in order to be able to succeed. This year we will need to focus on a different set of three Rs.

**RESPECT** – Based on several conversations, as well as several responses on the surveys, people have different opinions regarding this virus, its severity, and how things have been handled. But no matter where we stand on this issue we must remember that as Christians, as a family, and as people who love our children, we must be respectful and considerate of how we all feel concerning this issue and what we ultimately do regarding a reopening.

**RESPONSIBLE** – We all have a responsibility to ensure the safety and welfare of our children, not just at this time, but at all times. We also have a responsibility to each other. We must continue to strive to come together as an Immanuel family.

**REASONABLE** – Please know that whatever practices, procedures, and protocols we put into place are being done so based on our particular setting, our particular circumstances and based

on our particular resources. We ask that you be reasonable in your responses and in your efforts as we all work together.

I do want to let you know that I have continued to be in contact with our faculty and staff and have also requested responses from them as well. They have all expressed how much they love and miss the children and so want to be back in the classroom. They know how important that face to face interaction is to their ministry as educators. I ask that you continue to think of them and keep them in prayer.

I thank you again, for your patience. I appreciate those of you who have reached out to me and expressed thanks and offered encouragement as we continue to go through this daunting process.

As I was writing this letter, I was reminded of a Psalm that I would like to share with you in closing. May you be strengthened, uplifted, encouraged, and find peace.

Psalm 121

I lift up my eyes to the mountains---where does my help come from?  
My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.  
He will not let your foot slip—He who watches over you will not slumber;  
Indeed, He who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.  
The Lord watches over you—the Lord is your shade at your right hand;  
The sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night.  
The Lord will keep you from all harm—He will watch over your life;  
The Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.

Continued blessings,

Valerie Winston  
Principal