



“Home of Scholars and Champions”

Healthy Families and Staff Newsletter (Update #11)

June 11, 2020

It is my hope and prayer that you and your family are safe and well; it has been a wild ride over the past couple of months. The Lowell Joint Family has risen to the challenge and it has been one of our “finest hours”. The disruption to all of our lives caused by the COVID-19 health crisis has been significant and profound. Thank you for constantly stopping to take a breath with us. It is during these challenging times that we so desperately want to get back to “normal” which means our families are seeking clarity regarding the re-opening of our 2020/2021 school year. With that in mind, we are writing to update you regarding our plans for the Fall of 2020.

First and most importantly: We are planning to reopen our schools as normal in the fall for students and staff who can safely return. We will do this in full compliance with the directives we receive from the State of California and the County Public Health Department. Below, we outline an adaptable plan that will enable Lowell Joint to respond to the health scenarios without compromising the education of our students. Please keep in mind that we still have two months before school is scheduled to reopen in August and the ever changing landscape will change at least 3-4 times before we get to August 12, 2020.

The County Public Health recommendations, guidelines, and directives are being incrementally relaxed and adjusted about every 3-4 days. We continue to monitor both Orange County and LA County Public Health restrictions as these vary between counties. Lowell Joint’s academic model for Fall 2020 outlined below utilizes the lessons learned and structures now in place for distance-learning or hybrid learning models should they ever be necessary again for daily instruction, as well as our plan to return to school as normal.

Adaptable Plan

Because there is no way to definitely predict how the pandemic will impact each member of our school community, our Adaptable Plan seeks to accommodate the needs of individual students and scale the need for distance-learning up or down as we react to the conditions. The plan below aligns with the Governor’s Phase for re-opening California and how they will impact our ability to return to school and learn at each phase:

Full Program: Student return to school in a traditional manner with wellness practices firmly reinforced while a continued full-time distance-learning option will be available for families. (Aligned with State Phase 3). School opens August 12, 2020 in a traditional format with all of the Public Health precautions addressed. (7th Grade is half day on August 11, 2020).

The following safe guards will be in place:

- Return to in-class instruction with all students.
- Enhanced cleaning protocols will be implemented daily on each campus along with all of the outdoor play equipment being pressure washed and cleaned each evening.
- All classrooms will be cleaned and sanitized each evening with additional custodial support to provide enhanced daily sanitizing for each campus.
- All Special Education supports return according to IEP’s.
- Lunch and break/recess return to normal with slightly staggered schedules as needed to encourage appropriate social distance spacing.

- Additional entrances will be opened on campus to help facilitate coming to and leaving school each day.
- Co-curricular activities return as appropriate.
- Additional handwashing stations installed on campus along with hand sanitizing stations in all classrooms and offices.
- Enhanced wellness protocols implemented in the health offices along with installation of infrared temperature sensors/detectors installed in each front office. Students returning from an illness must complete a Health/Wellness survey in the office before returning to class.
- Health/Wellness check at home before school each day by parents/guardians along with daily Health/Wellness check for all staff.
- Students/staff strongly asked to remain home if sick.
- Postponing all field trips and large group events for at least Aug.-Sept. or until California reaches Phase 4.
- Limit all visitors to campus for school business only and only with completed Health/Wellness pre-screening.
- Limit all volunteers to campus to the office area and only with completed Health/Wellness pre-screening.
- Full-time independent study through our **LOWELL JOINT VIRTUAL ACADEMY** for those families who many not feel comfortable and/or need to continue with full-time distance learning at home will be available.

Although we are hoping and planning for school to open as usual, we are also preparing for any unexpected changes such as return to State directed Phase 1 or 2. If we are still in Phase 2 the need for a more restrictive learning environment is possible. Although we hope this is not necessary, we are preparing for a scenario where students participate in a:

Hybrid Instructional Program: Student return to school in blended program with a portion of their week in-person and a portion through distance-learning in order to maintain the social-distancing requirements. A continued full-time distance-learning option would be available for families. (Aligned with the State Stage 2).

- Students assigned to a teacher(s) as normal.
- Classes divided into Cohorts A or B.
- Cohorts attend in-class on Mon.-Tues. or Wed.-Thur. Cohorts not in class will participate in online distance-learning with a very structured schedule and learning management system to keep instruction moving forward. The whole class will participate through on-line distance-learning on Friday.
- **All** enhanced cleaning and health/wellness protocols, listed above, will be implemented as well.
- Full-time independent study through our **LOWELL JOINT VIRTUAL ACADEMY** for those families who may not feel comfortable and/or need to continue with full-time distance learning at home.

If we were to return to the State Phase 1, then we would return to a **Fulltime Distance-Learning Program, shelter in place - nothing on campus. (Aligned with State Stage 1).**

- Full online distance-learning curriculum would be implemented at all grade levels.
- Schools would remain closed and all one-on-one/small group instruction would be done virtually.
- Grading would continue and student attendance would be monitored.

As we shared, we do anticipate some families will not be comfortable returning to school during any of the above phases and will choose to continue full-time distance-learning. We will be able to facilitate this full-time independent study through our **LOWELL JOINT VIRTUAL ACADEMY**, which is a much more structured, academically challenging, and accountable distance-learning/independent study program. Families will be asked to officially notify us through your normal "Data Confirmation" process, which occurs during the first part of August. You will receive the data confirmation letters and information in the middle of July.

The Lowell Joint Family Really Is In This Together...

Our commitment to each other as members of the Lowell Joint Family is so important. Students, parents, and staff will continue to develop our best and safest way to serve together. One way is our joint commitment to safety and shared

responsibility, which is a part of your annual data confirmation process. This enhanced signed commitment will outline the required health/wellness protocols and behavioral expectations for all including a corresponding waiver.

Preserving our long standing Tradition of Excellence and Traditional Values...

Though our immediate concern is the safety of our students, staff, and community, we continue to be committed to our Core Values and educational programs that make Lowell Joint the *Home of Scholars and Champions*. With this plan we are seeking to build a safe learning environment to do what we do best: serve and learn together, on our school campuses, or through hybrid, or the **LOWELL JOINT VIRTUAL ACADEMY**. We have been so blessed by our wonderful families and incredible staff; therefore, we want to mindfully focus on maintaining our traditions.

Keeping the Lowell Joint Family Informed and Connected...

As you are aware we recently sent out a preliminary survey to get a sense of how families and staff felt regarding our return for the 2020/2021 school year; which was a cursory survey, for our Strategic Planning Team to use to help us as we plan and prepare. This is our eleventh Healthy Families/Staff newsletter and we will continue to send out an updated newsletter on July 19th and July 23rd. We have held Zoom meetings with our PTA council about every two weeks and will continue this throughout the summer. We have also scheduled two Lowell Joint Town Hall Information Zoom Meetings for June 16th and July 15th at 5:30-6:30pm; all families will receive an e-mail invite ahead of time if you wish to attend. We want to continue to stay connected as we continue to adjust our Adaptable Plan based on the ever changing guidance and directives from the State of California and the Public Health Department. We will continue to share new information as we get closer to the fall. The strength, compassion, and resilience shown today is an incredible testimony to the shared dedication and commitment of our students, staff, parents, and community; **THANK YOU – WE ARE BLESSED!** Please make sure to find time this summer to truly rest and refresh as we plan to return this fall to teaching and learning as is our tradition.