

WCA COVID-19 Operational Guidelines

WCA Community,

I hope this message finds you and your family safe and well. It's been a different summer than our family has planned, but we are appreciating the time together.

I'm writing today to inform everyone of WCA's current plan and response to COVID19. I know this is an important topic that requires careful consideration to make sure we ensure the safety of our WCA students, families, and community.

As you prepare to read this document, I encourage you to consider the following important items:

- 1.** First, flexibility is critical during this season. The Board of Directors, Teachers, and I have been prayerful and intentional in our planning for the logistics surrounding the 2020-2021 school year. We have prepared an approach that is comprehensive and in the best interest of our community. As we navigate this terrain, we ask for your patience and flexibility as we synthesize the latest health data, State education requirements, and perspectives of the WCA community.
- 2.** Secondly, we understand that everyone may have varying levels of risk tolerance when interacting with the community during this time—and that is okay. We are preparing plans for returning to school that center around the safety and well-being of the children. As you read our plans for the fall, if you find your personal beliefs and WCA's response do not perfectly align, I encourage you to recall the important ways in which we do align:
 - **Christian worldview:** *Proverbs 30:5 – Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in Him.*
 - **Classical methodology:** *Jeremiah 6:16 – Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls.*
 - **Family centered:** *Deuteronomy 5:16 – Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the Lord your God is giving you.*
- 3.** Finally, please consider that the WCA operates solely from tuition, and we ask for your commitment for the entire 2020-2021 school year. We understand the uncertainty ahead and the desire to be flexible as needs between in-person and virtual learning occur. If your family is not comfortable making this commitment, please notify me no later than August 6, 2020.

WCA is a unique community God has brought together to offer something new to the children and families in our area. I believe the fabric of our community is stronger than the unknowns that lie ahead this school year, and I know the God guiding us to be

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faithful and good. When the world seems to be divisive on the topic, I pray we can find unity in our mission and perseverance for the year ahead.

If you have additional questions about the documents included in this communication, please let me know. I hope to see each of you in August!

In Christ,

Anna

WATERMARK CLASSICAL ACADEMY

*May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. **Romans 15:5-6***

Overview of COVID-19 Operational Guidelines

At Watermark Classical Academy, we want to examine every part of our lives and our school through the lens of our Christian faith, including our response to COVID-19. As we implement procedures and guidelines for this upcoming year, we are reminded that “perfect love casts out fear.” (1 John 4:18) We want to love students and families by taking precautions that ensure their well-being without causing fear and anxiety. Our hope is that students can work together and learn the proper steps to prevent the spread of the virus, while ultimately putting their trust in God to keep them safe.

We have reviewed the recommendations by the CDC and the Pennsylvania Department of Health for reopening; according to the CDC guidelines, schools can determine “whether and how to implement these considerations while adjusting to meet the unique needs and circumstances.” Accordingly, we have created an initial response to COVID-19 that respects those in authority, but it also accommodates the unique needs of a classical university-model school. We all recognize that the outlined return-to-school operations may change depending on circumstances over the coming weeks.

To ensure our procedures are regularly examined and up-to-date, we have a COVID-19 Task Force reviewing the latest data, information, and state regulations to help us make the most informed and safe decisions possible. This group meets regularly to make important decisions and includes a diverse group of board members, teachers, and parents that bring medical, legal, and education experience to ensure we have all perspectives covered. We will communicate any changes or updates to the entire WCA community as soon as possible to make sure we’re all on the same page and comfortable on how to execute operations that promote the safety and well-being of all.

The following sections include a breakdown of operations by topic area. Please review the detailed operations as they currently stand.

Facilities

We will be taking intentional and appropriate measures to keep our facility cleaned and sanitized. The following procedures will be followed:

- Weekly cleaning of the entire facility
- Open windows regularly as weather permits
- Hand sanitizing stations available at all entrances and in classrooms
- Students will complete all work in their assigned classroom space or the front lawn as needed.
- Chapel will be held monthly with all WCA students, but classes will sit together and remain distant from other grade levels
- All teachers and substitutes will be trained in cleaning procedures

Academy Procedures

The following WCA logistics will be put into place:

- Class size will be limited to 16 students in adherence with our classical model and to limit exposure.
- Drop-off and pick-up procedures will take place outside of the building to assist with social distancing and to limit the number of people in the building.
- If your child arrives after 8:30 a.m. for class, please park in the alley behind St. Andrews church and call the designated phone number. A teacher will meet you by the back door to welcome your child to class.
- If your child needs to leave class prior to 12:45 p.m., please send a note to your child's teacher stating the specific time you will be picking them up. Park in the alley behind St. Andrews Church at the designated time and a teacher will bring your child to the car.
- Parent volunteers will not be allowed in the classroom until further notice.
- There will be no after school classes until further notice.

The WCA requests the following from teachers and staff:

- Teach and reinforce handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and increase monitoring to ensure adherence among students and staff.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily, including door handles and desks.
- Minimize the amount and use of shared supplies and objects.
- Coordinate restroom breaks to limit the number of students in the restroom and in close proximity to one another while waiting.

The WCA requests the following from students:

- All students must bring their own water bottle.
- There will be no sharing of food or snacks.
- Students will sanitize hands and/or wash hands upon entering the building and classrooms.
- Students are discouraged from sharing personal supplies with other students.

Face Coverings

- All students and teachers will be required to wear a face covering at all times while on the school premises in accordance with the [Pennsylvania Order Requiring Universal Face Coverings](#).
- Weather-dependent, we will spend 20 minutes a day outside where students will not have to wear their face coverings.
- We recommend all students wear face shields for a less-constricting covering and to allow for optimal communication with teachers and other students. (Note: This is the face covering option WCA teachers will wear.)

Illness Policy

- No child presenting symptoms that include: eye discharge, rash, fever, vomiting, diarrhea, regular coughing, or sore throat should attend class
- Children should not return to class after being sick until they are fever free for 3 days and it is confirmed the fever was not from COVID-19 but another infection.
- WCA will not administer any medicine to children for any reason unless the situation is life threatening and requires use of an epi-pen or Benadryl
- Should a student or WCA family be knowingly exposed to COVID-19, we expect parents to closely monitor children and communicate openly with teachers and administration
- The Board of Directors and administrators will determine the need to implement at home learning should there be a state or county mandated closure in PA or Allegheny County due to COVID-19

Absence Policy for Students with COVID-19 Exposure

- If a student tests positive for COVID-19, we ask that your child not return to class until 3 days with no fever (100.4), no respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath), and 10 days since symptoms onset. WCA administration will notify the families in that classroom of the potential exposure.
- If a family member of a student has tested positive, the student should remain home for 14 days from the first exposure, which would be the first day the family member had any symptoms, not the day they test positive. This applies only to family members living in the same household.
- If a teacher tests positive, they will not return until 3 days with no fever, no respiratory symptoms, and 10 days since symptom onset. A trained substitute will teach during that time.
- If a family member of a teacher has tested positive, the teacher will be at home for 14 days from the first exposure, which would be the first day the family member had any symptoms, not the day they test positive.
- If two or more teachers are to be quarantined, we will have a mandatory closure of the school and move to remote learning procedures, as outlined later in this document.

Extended Absences

If a student is absent for more than a week due to any circumstances, including, but not limited to family trips or self-quarantine, parents are expected to lead at-home lessons to make sure the student is keeping up academically. If your family/student has an extended absence, follow these steps:

1. Inform the teachers/administration as soon as possible of any extended absence; teachers will then have 48 hours to create a take-home packet of lessons, activities, and expectations for the student.
2. Coordinate pick-up of the packet with teachers, and monitor your child's completion of the assigned work.
3. Submit the completed assignments no later than the day your child will return to class.

Mandatory Closure

We will make every effort to safely hold classes for the planned 144 days. In the case of mandatory closure, WCA students will continue progress through curriculum in the following ways:

- Google Classroom
 - Students would take home all needed workbooks and classroom materials
 - We will be using Google Classrooms and we will provide instructions for accessing the classes.
 - We will require all families to have a Gmail email account if the parents do not already have a Google account.
 - There will be two Google Classrooms for each student, a grade-specific class and the WCA Classroom which will be used by all students for chapel and general announcements.
 - Within the grade-specific Google Classroom there will be daily recorded lessons for students, as well as a daily schedule and weekly assignments.
 - Students will video-conference with their teachers at least three times a week through Google Meet.
 - The academy will require a 24-hour period to transition to online teaching. (ie, if the last day on-campus is on a Tuesday, online learning begins on Thursday.)
- We will schedule regular times for families to pick-up supplies and materials at the school for upcoming lessons for tactile learning and to limit students' screen time.
- To maintain enrollment, tuition payments cannot be deferred due to implementation of at home learning as mandated by the state of PA
- If a parent chooses to keep a student home for an extended time for any reason including, but not limited to: illness, COVID-19, vacation, family visiting, etc. while classes are being held in person, please understand the following:
 - Tuition payments are required to maintain enrollment

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- Students are welcome to take home workbooks and other classroom resources
- Teachers will provide a general overview of the pace with which to complete work, but will not provide daily lesson plans or online meetings. Online learning platforms will only be fully operational when the entire WCA community is learning from home.
- Any days missed become the responsibility of the parent to make-up in order to meet the PA requirement for 180 days of instruction