

September 18, 2020

Dear Families:

Now that we've been open for a few days I am pleased to report that so far school reopening has been a success! It feels great to be back in school, even though school is very different this year.

First, we need to celebrate our students. With everything being so different this year our students are doing a great job adjusting to the new expectations. From wearing face masks, keeping six feet distance from others, washing hands, and staying home when sick, I have needed to give only a few reminders about our new [health and safety precautions](#). When I visit classrooms I see students attentive to their learning, too. The habits we're developing these few weeks are going to help us get through the next 40 weeks of the school year. **Students, we need you to remember to bring your fully-charged Chromebooks and chargers back to school every day.** Also, if you need help with face masks then please let your teachers know. We have plenty of reusable and disposable face masks if you forget yours or are unable to wash it every day. Way to go Paul Cuffee kids! You've really stepped up.

Next, we need to celebrate our parents. As a group, this pandemic has hit parents and caregivers especially hard. As parents we have two jobs and the job of raising our children is especially difficult right now. Parents in distance learning: thank you for serving as at-home learning coach. It's a tough job and I know that personally. My alarm is set five times a day to remind me to call my 12-year old son and remind him about his Google Classroom meets. I know many of you are doing the same. Thank you for everything you're doing at home to make sure that distance learning is working for your child. For parents of students in-person learning, thank you, too. I appreciate your patience and flexibility as we've been working out problems with the bus, arrival, and pick up. An important reminder for parents: I am still seeing a number of students for whom we must ask the COVID-19 questionnaire at the school doors. This is a process that is supposed to be completed at home. **Every day, before your child leaves for school, parents and caregivers need to complete the COVID-19 questionnaire.** Parents, if you ever need to get a COVID-19 test because your child has symptoms then you may call the [Rhode Island COVID-19 Hotline for Schools](#) at (844) 857-1814, seven days a week from 7:30 AM to 9:30 PM.

The easiest and most convenient way to do this is to download the [PikMyKid application](#) on your smartphone. Just download the app, register with your cell phone number and you'll be able to do a check-in for your child each day. To do that, click "check-in", click "student" and then click the check mark next to your child's name. The questions will appear for you to answer. If you are having difficulty with the app, please call Helen Orellana at 401-453-2626 for the lower school or Kim Jimenez at 401-453-2711 for the middle school. At the upper school, students are doing their own COVID-19 questionnaire, and the PikMyKid app for upper school students will begin Sept. 29. You may also access this form [here](#), and you can send it in with your child until you're using the app.

Finally, and most importantly in terms of operating school every day, I want to thank our dedicated teachers and support staff. Schooling is completely different today, and our teachers are taking on so many new roles in a job that was difficult to begin with. Meeting the safety procedures for in-person learning during COVID-19, building a distance learning program, and fostering a joyful learning environment under such tight restrictions has been difficult and exhausting. I am humbled and so grateful for how well everyone has risen to the challenge.

A reminder: next Monday is a distance learning day for all students. Week one is in the books. We should all feel proud of transitioning into a school year unlike anything we've ever experienced. As head of school, I'm really proud of the Cuffee community right now.

Yours truly,  
Chris Haskins