



March 5, 2021

Dear Summit Academy Parents and Caregivers,

March is upon us and with it the recognition that one year has passed since the Covid-19 pandemic began, causing so many changes to our daily lives. The good news is that the infection rate in our area is decreasing and we are turning a corner in terms of vaccine availability. These two critical data points are among several important considerations as we plan for a return to five days per week of in-person instruction.

As I indicated last week, we continue to phase in more of our related service providers – speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists, and physical therapists – to provide in-person services in our buildings. And, on a highly positive note, our half-day preschool self-contained program has returned to five days per week of in-person instruction. Beginning March 8, all our preschool full-day self-contained classrooms will move to four days per week. We're currently awaiting NYSED approval for the use of additional space in our building which will allow us to move all our integrated preschool classrooms to five days per week. We will continue this grade level by grade level phased approach as we plan our return to five days per week of in-person instruction for all students.

Please keep in mind, that as we make progress toward this “new normal” some classrooms may be closed on short notice due to staffing issues; Covid-19 will be a concern until everyone is vaccinated. When we return to in-person instruction, an “all-virtual” option will still be available for those who prefer it. I will be meeting with my team to work out the details and will keep you informed as we move forward.

As I mentioned last week, the overall safety of our students and staff – including social distancing requirements from NYS – continue to guide our decision-making. Space is a significant consideration – and at a premium - as we look to bring more students back into the building. We are considering all options to maximize space – including use of private offices, conference rooms, etc. - for instruction/therapy both at Summit Central and at Creekside.

At this week's faculty meeting, several of our staff shared success stories about students who are making progress with self-help and social skills via virtual instruction. During a series of parent webinars, we'd like to share some of these successes, along with tips for helping your child succeed with virtual instruction. Our first Parent Webinar will be held on Thursday, March 25, 2021, titled “Virtual Instruction? Tips and Celebrations!” An invite will be coming soon with additional information.

As a reminder, Wednesday, March 10, and Wednesday, March 24, are half days. Please mark your calendars. Also, please remember that it is Summit's policy that *all students who are sent home sick must have a doctor's note to return to school*. If a doctor's note is not received, the student will be required to quarantine for ten days before returning. If a student returns without a note, they will be sent to the isolation room and a parent will be contacted for pick-up. Summit also reserves the right to suspend bus service until a doctor's note is received. Thank you for your cooperation in adhering to this policy which helps protect everyone's health.

As always, thank you very much for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Susan

Susan Whittaker, Ed.D, SBL
Summit Academy Principal