



The ACADEMY of Classical Christian Studies

May 12, 2020

Dear parents,

We pray that you are safe and well as we continue to adapt to the daily fluctuations, uncertainties, and anxieties wrought by this extraordinary pandemic. While we hold firm to the Lord's promises to sustain and protect His people, we know how personally challenging this experience has been for each of you. Our prayers and petitions to the Lord are unceasing, and we call to mind often the words of Philippians 4, that "the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

As we have prayerfully and carefully considered the most prudent next steps down a very unfamiliar path, two questions guide our thinking and planning: "What is best for our students?" and "How do we carry forward our school's mission of partnership and education?" We have grappled with these questions daily, and with the often complex ramifications emanating from these questions. We acknowledge that many facets of the coming year will only come into focus when we are nearer the day. Yet in the midst of endless hours of brainstorming and contingency planning, we have sought to embrace and model three values that inform our approach to the coming academic year. These values, along with an outline of their ramifications, are as follows:

1. **Courage that stands its ground.** We could not be more proud of the love The Academy community has demonstrated in these past weeks. Together, we know we can continue to walk into the unknowns of the future, holding firm to our shared commitment in Christ, and modeling for our students the heroic and fearless faith we are so quick to laud in the very curriculum we teach. It's also why we plan to welcome students back to our campuses this fall, doing so with wise, data-driven protocols that will ensure a healthy and safe PK3 – 12th grade learning environment.

To assist us in reviewing and turning into action items the plethora of guidance on re-opening schools and other institutions, we are forming an Academy Physician Advisory Group, formed from medical professionals within our school's community. Not only are they personally invested in The Academy community, they are also in tune with real-time expectations for Oklahoma City and the surrounding communities. Informed by the very latest medical research and data (including from other K-12 schools near and far), this group will help us navigate many of the questions that loom, including topics like:

- The efficacy and value of significant preventative measures to protect our students and teachers, including Covid-19 related testing, temperature checks, face masks, handwashing, and more.
- The appropriate and measured procedures that would follow a positive test in our immediate community, informed and updated by guidance received throughout the summer
- Rigorous standards for deep cleaning and daily disinfection protocols

The specifics and details are still unknowable—new details about the coronavirus come almost daily—but you can be certain of this: We are committed to implementing the best ways to keep our community healthy *and* to deliver the personalized, embodied learning our students have come to expect at The Academy.



The ACADEMY of Classical Christian Studies

- Hope that persists and grows.** The pandemic offers the opportunity to share the hope of Christ far and wide and to set an example through how we demonstrate concern for others. Toward that end, we will be applying the wisdom of public health and government leaders, local school districts, and our own Academy Physician Advisory Group in the fight to mitigate Covid-19. To be clear, we find it unlikely we will be faced with any long-term return to *GriffinsLive!*. However, we may need to find ways to decrease the density of our campuses while maintaining all of the relational strengths we prize. From all-school events to daily interactions during drop-off, pick-up, passing periods, matins, evensong, and lunch, it is possible we will need to change how we gather as a community. Our creativity in this regard is boundless, but to speculate on the details at this point is still precipitous.
- Generosity that costs us something.** As serious as are the health implications of Covid-19, the economic impacts of the pandemic may last even longer. It is no surprise that many in our community will face new and substantial financial pressures in the coming year. For this reason, we prioritized our largest ever financial aid budget for the 2020-21 school year. In addition to these need-based scholarships, we are also committed to providing additional tuition forgiveness for any number of scenarios.

At the same time, we are committed to sustaining and even improving the quality of education you've come to expect, and in order to do so we must continue to support our teachers, cover our non-teaching expenses, and invest in ever more creative approaches to maintaining a festive school, come what may. So, rather than announcing automated triggers with limited capacity to predict the nuances of governmental orders (let alone the ingenuity and creativity we will be bringing to bear in overcoming any renewal of stringent social distancing), we expect to provide substantial aid in the corners it is needed most.

As with our regular financial aid, we expect such discounts will take each and every need as its own story. We are eager to serve as a blessing to each member of The Academy community, and we stand ready to assist those who face newfound obstacles. From job loss to medical bills to other unknowable circumstances, we are ready. Even this year, made possible in part by your generosity during our one-day #GriffinsGive fundraiser, we have been able to forgive tuition dollars for a number of families in the midst of unprecedented circumstances. Next year we are preparing for far more robust measures of financial assistance, the details of which will be tailored to the contours and specific circumstances of the uncharted territory ahead. This approach ensures the viability of our teacher contracts through the thick and thin of the 'whatever might come our way' of next school year, even as our teachers in particular have shown their unswerving support both in and out of our homes and the lives of our children's academic and spiritual development.

Through it all, we are so grateful for your trust and support as we partner together. We feel keenly the tangible signs of faithful support we experience each day, which we know will sustain The Academy's mission into the coming year and beyond.

With blessings to you and your family for a healthy and safe summer,

Nate and Stephen