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# LANCASTER COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL

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September 2, 2020

Dear LCDS Families,

At this time of year, you usually receive a large, heavy envelope with a letter from me updating you on summer's activities plus all of our back to school forms and information. The events of this year mean you have heard from me frequently over the summer; they have also prompted us to go virtual with this "mailing." You will see icons below directing you to information and forms, with additional information and links in the rest of my letter. Essential items to complete **before the start of school on September 8:**

- **Return to School COVID-19 Agreement**
- **Health forms**
- **Remote learning consent**

Last school year ended during a time of unprecedented challenges and adaptations, a distinction that the beginning of the 2020-21 term will share. If I were considering only the outstanding efforts and achievements of our students, parents, and faculty last spring, I would have unwavering confidence in the success of the coming year. As it happens, my optimism rests on an even firmer foundation. Last spring was a period of observation, practical adjustments, and learning. This summer, we have devoted considerable resources to take what we've learned and make Lancaster Country Day a more safe, flexible, and nimble school.

## **Reopening Plan and Return to School COVID-19 Agreement**

You have no doubt seen the [Health and Safety Reopening Plan](#) and understand the protocols in place are many. I believe in our plan and think it shows that we value nothing above the safety and quality of your child's education. These may be unprecedented times, but, as we look to the start of our 113th year, that commitment remains an assuring constant.

An important part of our shared responsibility in keeping the school safe is the [Return to School COVID-19 Agreement](#). We need all caregivers to review and sign this agreement - we would like you to acknowledge and understand that there is inherent risk in the enterprise of reopening school despite all our best efforts. This is not a waiver, but rather an acknowledgement of the present circumstances. Additionally, we will continue to address the overall safety needs of our students by continuing with our standard safety drills, done this year with COVID-19 protocols in mind. For more information about the drills and instructions for signing up for Connect5, our automated emergency notification system, please see [this letter](#) from Assistant Head of School Todd Trout.

## **Zoom Consent**

Please note that our move to hybrid classrooms involves cameras in each classroom to connect remote students with those sitting in the classroom. Practices will vary across the divisions, so we ask that you complete the appropriate consent forms for your child to use remote learning technologies. If you have children in LS and either MS or US, please complete both forms.

[Middle School and Upper School Remote Learning Authorization Form](#)

[Lower School Virtual Online Form](#)

## **Opening Of School**

On our first day, students will go through an early morning COVID-19 symptom screening at home through an app called GO Pass. On arrival at school, they will have their temperatures rechecked. Detailed instructions on the GO Pass system will follow later this week.

The first weeks of every new school year are filled with events to welcome new families and introduce them to the Country Day community. The school's online calendar lists all events and is updated as needed, but here are some particularly significant events from the first few weeks:

- Wednesday, 9/2: Upper School New Parent Orientation — 6-7 p.m. This will be a virtual event for parents of all 9th graders as well as parents in other grades whose students are new to the school. [Zoom Link](#)
- Thursday, 9/3: Lower School New Student Orientation — 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. This event is in person. [Zoom Link](#)
- Thursday, 9/3: Middle School New Student and Parent Orientation — 9-10:30 a.m. This event will take place in person.
- Thursday, 9/3: Upper School New Student Orientation — 9-11 a.m. This event will be in person for all new students.
- Thursday, 9/3: Mandatory back-to-school virtual assembly for all Middle School students — 2 p.m. [Zoom Link](#)
- Thursday, 9/3: mandatory Upper School virtual meeting for all students on Thursday — 3 p.m. Link has been emailed to students.
- Thursday, 9/3: Lower School Back to School Virtual Parent Meeting — 6-7 p.m. This is for back to school questions for parents. [Zoom link.](#)
- Tuesday, 9/8: First Day Of School
- Friday, 9/11: Lower School First Full Day
- Monday, 9/14: Picture Day for A-K
- Wednesday, 9/16: Picture Day for L-Z
- Tuesday, 9/15: Lower School Virtual Parents' Night 6:30-7:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, 9/16: Upper School Virtual Parents' Night 6:30-9 p.m.
- Thursday, 9/17: Middle School Virtual Parents' Night 6-9 p.m.

## **2020 New Hires**

I'm very pleased to introduce to you the many impressive individuals who are the newest members of the LCDS community. Please join me in welcoming them.

**Sandy Auker** (IU13 Reading Specialist/Math Instructor) — Sandy is looking forward to returning to work with the students at Country Day as a reading specialist/math instructor for Lancaster-Lebanon IU13. She worked at LCDS from 2011-2014 and has taught many grades from K-12 in the Ephrata, Cocalico, and Elizabethtown school districts.

**L.J. Bloom** (COVID-19 Coordinator) — L.J. has worn many hats at LCDS, including student, alumni representative, trustee, parent of Louise '21 and Freddie '23, and now COVID-19 Coordinator. In this current role, she brings her experience as a public healthcare advocate to LCDS and will work with local health officials and our school community to determine best practices. L.J. just completed the Johns Hopkins Contact Tracing Certification Program and will be serving LCDS in this capacity as well.

**Ali Charles '13** (Long-Term Lower School Substitute) — We are delighted to welcome Ali back to LCDS. Ali graduated from Country Day in 2013 and went on to earn a Bachelor of Science degree from Penn State University (University Park) in childhood and early adolescent education. Ali has also served as a kindergarten student teacher in the Clearfield Area School District and as a reading assistant at Martin Meylin Middle School in the Lampeter-Strasburg School District. She is covering for Alexis Rineer.

**Gretchen Clark** (Gardner Theatre Manager) — Gretchen has more than two decades of experience producing media, entertainment, and events as well as creating educational experiences for kids. As a partner, president, and booking manager of the Chameleon Club in downtown Lancaster, Gretchen has managed hundreds of concerts and events with national touring artists in a venue with two stages and a capacity of 800. Gretchen is also a Country Day parent; her son, Demitri, will be a freshman this year.

**Erika Faulkner '16** (Latin - Classroom Proctor) — Erika graduated from Dickinson College in May and will be coming back to her alma mater as Mr. Bostock's long-term proctor. While earning degrees in both political science and environmental studies, Erika also organized an annual lecture series at Dickinson and interned at the U.S. Army War College, where she explored women's experiences in war.

**Cheryl Gingrich** (Lower School Music Teacher T1) — Cheryl has a degree in music education from Messiah College and recently earned a masters in music education from Lebanon Valley College. She has experience teaching music in schools, gives private lessons and has directed church choir. Cheryl enjoys reading, cooking, gardening, watching Nadal play tennis and going to the beach. She is looking forward to starting the school year at LCDS.

**Angela Gordon** (Director of Equity and Inclusion) — Angela comes to Country Day from the West Chester Area School District, where she has worked as a teacher and counselor for 15 years. She has taught Spanish, English as a second language, and mathematics at the high school and college levels, and is excited to join Country Day, where she will harness her passion for diversity to create an ever-more equitable and inclusive learning environment for all of the school's students and their families.

**Nora Graham-Smith** (Private Lessons - Voice Instructor) — Nora has spent more than two decades performing opera and musical theater professionally, including in the title role of “Carmen” at The Hollywood Bowl, Castleton Festival, and the Teatro Petruzzelli in Italy. An enthusiastic teacher of children 8-18, Nora has taught with The Harlem School of the Arts and the National Children’s chorus, and her students have performed at Carnegie Hall, The Metropolitan Opera, The Fulton, on Broadway, as well as in television and film.

**Dany Huanira** (Lower School Faculty - Second Grade) — Dany is a recent graduate of Millersville University, where he obtained his Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education. He spent his college years teaching in the York and Lancaster city school districts, as well as Elizabethtown and Hempfield. He can’t wait to begin teaching his new second graders and to join the bright and helpful teachers of Lancaster Country Day. Dany is a first-generation American whose family comes from Peru. He and his sister, however, come from the home of the American version of “The Office,” Scranton, Pa.

**Shari Kendall** (Middle School History - Classroom Proctor, Mock Trial) — Shari (the “a” in Shari is pronounced like the “a” in “apple”) is the daughter of two teachers, and comes to Country Day after practicing law in the public sector in the Arlington, Va. prosecutor’s office, and in the private sector doing civil litigation in Lancaster. In addition to opening her own bridal boutique downtown, Shari has also volunteered at her daughter’s school and given student tours at Wheatland. She is looking forward to joining LCDS as a long-term proctor and teacher of Mock Trial.

**Gabby Kuster** (Kindergarten Aide) — Gabby is a recent graduate of Millersville University, where she earned a degree in environmental geography with a minor concentration in biology. A Lancaster native, Gabby graduated from Penn Manor High School in 2015. She got her first taste of the classroom while at Penn Manor, helping in the special education class. That experience had a profound effect on Gabby, and she felt a calling to help students and give them a positive experience in school.

**Casey Lear** (Middle School Science - Classroom Proctor) — Casey is a 2020 graduate of Ursinus College where he earned a degree in Biology. Casey is a graduate of Hempfield High School, and during college was able to return there to shadow teachers who inspired him. Casey was also a member of the men’s swim team at Ursinus, and enjoys music and playing guitar. He is looking forward to working with all the teachers and students at LCDS.

**Bill Neal** (Grade 6 English/AP Human Geography) — Bill has studied English Literature and earned a Master’s in anthropology with a focus on underwater archaeology, a rich background that promises to infuse his Middle School English classes with a view of other worlds and an appreciation for engaging narrative. His previous teaching experience includes AP classes and he will return as our boys’ lacrosse coach in the spring.

**Patty Neiles** (Lower School Learning Specialist) — After retiring in 2011 from Conestoga Valley School District as an early childhood teacher, reading specialist, ESL teacher, and Federal program coordinator, Patty is thrilled to get back in the classroom with young kids.

**Benjamin Shipman** (Middle School History) — Ben Shipman recently earned his J.D. from Penn State's Dickinson Law School, but after speaking to family and other teachers in his life, he decided to transition into teaching. Before entering law school, Ben studied international politics and telecommunications at Penn State and coached the Penn State Quidditch team (yeah, like from Harry Potter). Ben loves making short films and creative writing, and he can play (with varying aptitude) more than 20 musical instruments. But most importantly, Ben is obsessed with history, geography, and politics, and he can't wait to share his enthusiasm for these subjects with eighth grade students at Country Day.

**Nancy Steedle** (MS Mathematics/US Economics) — A native of Lititz, Nancy Steedle is delighted to move back to Lancaster County after several decades away. She has taught math for five years after more than a decade in international development, specializing in governance, conflict, and socioeconomic development in sub-Saharan Africa. Nancy won't be alone in starting at Country Day; her two young daughters will be joining us as well.

**Jack Wege '14** (Middle School English - Classroom Proctor) — Jack is a graduate of Country Day and of Carleton College who will proctor for Meghan Kenny in English 7. Jack's current job in the Washington, D.C. area is on hold for the moment, so we're eager to bring him on board to work with our Middle School students and faculty.

Please review this email, remember to return the health forms, the COVID-19 Agreement and the Zoom consent form. Additional links to [lunch information](#), [uniform ordering](#) and [Canvas](#) are identified by icons. You can always reference LCDS communications and links for further information related to COVID-19 on [our website](#). Please reach out with any questions regarding the reopening plan to our school COVID-19 Coordinator, L.J. Bloom, at [bloomlj@lanastercountryday.org](mailto:bloomlj@lanastercountryday.org).

Please continue to reach out with questions to our division heads, [Jenny Gabriel](#), [Meg Reed](#), and [Caroline Badri](#), as well as Director of Global Programs [Heather Woodbridge](#).

Warmly,



**Steven D. Lisk, Head of School**