



Heritage Christian School

"United in One Faith. One Hope. One Heritage"

6340 Autumn Dr., Hudsonville, MI 49426

Phone: 616-669-1773 Fax: 616-669-4257

September 15, 2020

Dear Heritage Christian School parents,

School has now been in session for nearly 3 weeks. It is a *privilege* to be able to educate your children. It is a *blessing* to be able to do so in person. The first weeks have not been without some difficulty. We have experienced some positive tests in staff and students. This is not unexpected. However, it does bring about the opportunity to remind each of us to be extra careful out of love for the brother. It is a good time for a reminder regarding *hygiene* - careful handwashing and use of hand sanitizer. It is a good time to remind ALL families to use the *screening procedures* put in place by the Health Department (OCDPH) and communicated to families early this school year. It is also a very good time to celebrate God's hand in leading us and caring for us thus far.

We have a few updates, and a few things we desire to communicate better.

Quarantine and isolation: Close contacts are determined to be those who spend a cumulative 15 minutes in one day within 6 feet of a person who tests positive or has the virus. We cannot space every room out ensuring 6 feet spacing. Occasionally staff members or students will cause a student to be a close contact simply because of proximity in the classroom. Know this - our rooms are spaced as best we can without splitting the student body into 2 groups and bringing in half of the students every other day.

When the office has to call you regarding your child being a close contact, please understand they are simply doing their job. Thank you for treating them kindly. As an organization, we can only exclude from school. The OCDPH will be making quarantine and isolation decisions. On occasion, they will ask us to communicate this to you. If the conversation we have with you leaves any open questions, do not hesitate to call us back. As a reminder, all of the OCDPH guidelines are posted on the school website under the COVID tab. Quarantine will always be 14 days PAST the last contact with a known case. Living in the same home will *always* be considered contact - thus some people will be faced with 10 days of sickness plus 14 days of quarantine.

Bands and choirs: We continue to explore ways to have choir and band be more effective. At present, band class **MUST** be outside. At present, choirs **MUST** be only cohorts with masks when inside OR be outside. All of these restrictions make choir and band really tough on directors. It should be noted that in current circumstances, their public performances will not be allowed, so they will be looking for other ways to feature some of their music. Our directors and accompanists are doing amazing things in tough circumstances, and if you have the opportunity, thank them. Also a big thank you to Clear Heights Construction (Terry Kaptein) who will soon be donating a tent for our band classes.

OCDPH School Dashboard:

In the next few weeks, the OCDPH will be releasing a public reporting of school cases - active positive cases, total cases, active contacts, and total contacts SINCE August 1. The Education Committee discussed allowing the use of HCS data in reporting to the public for quite some time. In the end, we

chose to allow the release of our data to the public. However, we also committed to sharing data with our own population every other week with some explanation or context. A chart of numbers does not always tell an accurate story.

If the dashboard was released today, it would contain data that was up to 10 days old. Our *current* data is 4 known positive cases since August 1, and about 20 people who are excluded from school for various reasons. Half of those are close contacts from our classrooms, and the other half are close contacts to cases that are not school related. We also want to alert you to the terminology being used by Health Departments - this one coming down from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. You will be hearing and seeing about school *outbreaks*. The definition of outbreak has a very low criteria and seems quite serious. We caution all of you to not be alarmed when you hear this terminology.

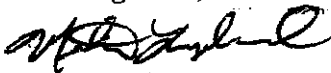
Discrepancies: Some of you are looking for differences between schools - and bringing them to our attention. Please continue to ask questions when and if you have them. Please also know there will be some differences, as we have indicated all along. That is because of many factors. We have considered those factors and know that all of the decisions we have made are for the health of our staff and students.

Overall, it is important that we recognize that things are going very well. Our protocols are put in place to ensure the safety of staff and students as best we can. That is our commitment to all parents. This will be the goal we continue to hold before us - as we meet regularly to evaluate how things are going.

We place our trust in the Lord, remembering the words of Psalm 33:20-22, "Our soul waiteth for the Lord: he is our help and our shield. For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name. Let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, according as we hope in thee."

For the COVID Committee,

Mike Langeland, Chairman



Brian Kuiper, Administrator

