

2021-22

ONWARD!

MODIFIED OPERATING PLAN FOR TORRINGTON
CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

FOREWORD

It has been over a year now that our nation has attempted to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic that continues to impact our everyday lives. It is common to hear people question if things will ever return to the “normal” we once knew.

One area where the impact of the pandemic has certainly been felt is the way in which the education of children is approached and performed. While desiring to continue serving the educational needs of students, schools have been forced to explore new ways to accomplish that mission. Most have opted for online distance learning and the results have been less than desirable. Here at TCA, we were committed to an in-person, on-campus learning environment we felt would be in the best interest of our students.

Many hours of research, conversation, and hard work went into planning for the 2020-21 school year. There were many questions to be answered:

Would remote learning have to continue? Would we be able to return to classes on campus? If we did return, what would that look like? As we waited on announcements from the governor’s office and worked to prepare, we did so with prayerful hearts, asking God to provide wisdom for the task at hand. And He did! We have been able to provide as normal and anxiety-free an education environment as possible for our students this year. However, as is the case with education, one year’s finish is merely a doorway to the next year’s preparation.

This document is the product of hours of prayer and planning. It is intended to provide many, but not all, answers to what the year ahead at TCA will “look like.” We understand even as we present our plan to you that it is a fluid plan, subject to changing as the days ahead unfold. We will do our best to update the plan as needed and will communicate any changes to you as quickly as possible. For now, we present this to you as a guide for what to expect as the school year begins.

In this document you will find details regarding the following:

- The principles and priorities that guided our decision making
- Facility use guidelines and procedures
- Daily operations guidelines and procedures
- Health practices and protocols
- Information regarding P.E. classes, art & music, and extracurricular activities
- Technology and communication support

We are excited to be continuing with classes on campus, but also remain committed to keeping TCA as safe and effective a learning environment as possible for your child. We ask that you please take the time to read through this document in its entirety so you will have a clear understanding of what to expect from us and what we will expect from you.

The waiver on the final page of this document must be signed before your child will be able to attend school.

We look forward to partnering with you in the year ahead in the education of your child. We could not do what we do without your prayers and support. We do not take either for granted!

Sincerely,
Rev. Clark Hausman, Head of School
Mrs. Dorothy Cernero, Assistant Principal



INTRODUCTION

In planning for the 2021-22 school year at TCA these were the important principles and priorities that guided our decision-making.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Our students deserve the opportunity for an in-person classroom learning experience
- Our students deserve a learning environment that is healthy not only for their body, but for their mind and spirit as well
- Our parents/guardians deserve a clearly communicated plan that addresses their questions and concerns regarding their child returning to school on-campus
- Our students and staff deserve expectations and procedures that are realistic and that serve to minimize anxiety

PRIORITIES

- Plan for academic instruction to be in-person, while also preparing for the possibility of remote learning
- Be sensitive to the various levels of comfort or concern regarding the COVID-19 pandemic
- Establish health and safety policies and procedures for inside and outside the classroom
- Establish self-contained classroom groups that function independently of one another, thereby minimizing interactions with other classes and maximizing health safety
- Review facility usage, making adjustments as needed (classroom assignments & layouts, pick up and drop off locations, movement in building during the day, etc.)
- Develop monitoring and containment policies for symptoms or diagnosis of COVID-19, as well as plans for any necessary quarantine or cancellation action and return-to-school policies should either occur
- Develop a system for quickly and clearly communicating new information, changes to policies or procedures, health alerts, etc.
- Create structure that will allow us to be flexible and adapt as restrictions from COVID-19 are eased or added



FACILITIES

The following guidelines and procedures will be followed with respect to the facilities of TCA.

SIGNAGE

- Signs providing clear direction and instruction will be posted throughout the facilities and classrooms
- Signage will be updated as necessary to reflect any changes in procedures or policies

CLASSROOM LAYOUT

- Student desks/seating will be arranged to allow for maximum distancing (minimum of six feet whenever possible)
- Desks will face in the same direction and/or students will sit on only one side of tables
- Maintain safe distance between teacher and students during instruction

MINIMAL TOUCH PRACTICES

- Whenever possible, doors will be propped open
- Only trashcans without lids will be used
- Each classroom/cluster will have their own soap dispensers, hand sanitizers, and paper towels, to be handled by school staff only

BATHROOM USAGE

- Each class will be assigned a designated bathroom and will use only the one assigned to them (except, of course, in cases of emergency)
- Where possible, classes will bring their own hand soap and paper towels to the bathroom. These will be dispensed to students by the classroom teacher.
- Students will enter bathrooms only when directed to do so by the teacher. This will help to promote proper distancing inside bathrooms.
- Bathroom breaks will be scheduled to avoid interaction with other classes.

CLEANING / SANITIZING

- Hard surfaces in each classroom will be sanitized daily
- Public areas (i.e. halls, restrooms), hard surfaces, and multi-touch surfaces will be sanitized daily

ISOLATION ROOM

- An isolation room will be designated to accommodate any student who displays symptoms consistent with COVID-19 until a parent/guardian can pick them up.
- Following a confirmed COVID-19 case, the isolation room will be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized.



DAILY OPERATIONS

The following guidelines and procedures will characterize the daily operations of TCA.

PICK UP / DROP OFF

- Students riding the bus to and/or from school will be required to wear a mask the entire time they are on the bus.
- Students in grades K through 3rd should be dropped off (or arrive by bus) and enter the building at the door marked “Kiddie College.” Students in grades 4-12 should be dropped off (or arrive by bus) and enter the building at the door marked “Torrington Christian Academy.”
- Only parents of students in our preschool or K/1 classes will be permitted to accompany their child into the building. A mask is required for both parent and student when doing so. Please use the entrance marked “Kiddie College.”
- Students must wear a mask when entering the building and while at their lockers. They will not be permitted to socialize or “hang out” in the halls but are to report to their assigned classroom as quickly as possible.
- A staff member will be assigned to open & close doors at arrival and dismissal times.
- At dismissal, students must wear a mask when exiting their classroom to go to their bus or to await pick up by a parent/guardian.
- A staff member will be assigned to escort bus students from the classroom to their appropriate bus at dismissal time.
- Students in Kindergarten through 5th grade will be picked up at the entrance marked “Kiddie College.” Parent (or person picking up) will need to park their car and come to the door to pick up their child. A mask is required to be worn when doing so.
- Students in grades 6-12 will be released at dismissal time to go directly to their parent’s car (or person picking up).

CLUSTERS

- Each elementary class will operate as a self-contained cluster that stays together during the school day and operates independent of other classes. Middle school students (grades 6-8) will be grouped together as a cluster and high school students (grades 9-12) will together form another cluster.
- The use of clusters will serve to minimize the risk of exposure or transmission of COVID symptoms should someone be infected with the virus or be exposed to someone who is infected. It will also allow for a small portion of the school to be sent home for a period of quarantine in the event of a positive COVID diagnosis or exposure.
- Steps will be taken to ensure that clusters do not interact during the school day (such as scheduled bathroom breaks, limited access to facility areas, eating lunch in classrooms, staggered recess times, etc.)



- Whenever possible, teachers will rotate to different classrooms rather than students doing so.

LUNCH / FOOD & DRINK

- Lunchrooms will not be used until further notice. Instead, each cluster will eat lunch in their classroom or assigned location.
- Students are not permitted to bring food to share with classmates. Parties, hot lunches, or prepared food for classes must be pre-approved by TCA Administration.
- Water fountains will be off limits, so students should bring a filled water bottle for use in the classroom each day. Water bottles will not be permitted to be refilled during the day, so, if necessary, a student may bring more than one water bottle.

RECESS / PLAYGROUND USE

- To prevent interaction between clusters, recess times will be staggered for elementary classes
- Playground equipment use will be restricted to certain days and will be assigned to elementary classes on a rotating basis.
- Recess will be held outside, weather permitting.
- In the event of bad weather students not scheduled for gym time that day will have “indoor recess” in their classroom.

VISITORS

- Only essential volunteers and visitors will be permitted during the school day.
- All volunteers and visitors will be required to wear a mask throughout their visit.

HEALTH PRACTICES & PROTOCOLS

The following guidelines and procedures will be utilized to ensure the health and safety of those in our TCA community.

STAYING HOME

- Students and staff are encouraged to perform a self-evaluation at home prior to coming to school each day. A student or staff member experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms (fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat) should stay home and should notify the school.
- Any student or staff member who has been exposed to someone with a COVID-19 diagnosis or symptoms should stay home and should notify the school.
- Any student or staff member displaying any COVID-19 symptoms at school will be sent home until cleared to return.
- Any student, staff member, or cluster sent home to quarantine due to COVID-19 symptoms, exposure, or diagnosis will be required to stay home until cleared to return to TCA. Instructions and criteria for return will be provided.
- Provision will be made for a student's learning and work to continue in the event they are required to stay home for a period of time.
- Perfect attendance awards will not be given this school year, as we do not want to incentivize any student coming to school sick.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Whenever possible, a distance of six feet will be maintained between individuals in halls or public areas
- Maximum distancing between student desks/seating will be implemented in classrooms
- Teachers will maintain safe distance between themselves and students when giving instruction

SHARING OF MATERIALS

- The sharing of materials in the classroom will be avoided whenever possible.
- In the event materials need to be shared, the materials will be appropriately disinfected before being used again

FACE COVERINGS

- All students, except those in preschool, are required to have a mask with them each day. In the event a student forgets to bring a mask, one will be provided for them.
- Students will be required to wear masks in the following situations:
 - When riding the bus to or from school
 - When entering the building at arrival time and exiting the building at dismissal time
 - Any time they are in the building outside their classroom



- Students will not be required to wear masks in the following situations:
 - While in their assigned classroom, whether seated at their desk/table or interacting with classmates during snack/lunch or for the purpose of group projects or activities. Students are not prohibited from wearing a mask in the classroom however, if that is what they prefer to do, or what their parent wishes them to do.
 - While outside at recess or while in P.E.
- Teachers will be required to wear masks in the following situations:
 - When having a conversation or meeting with a parent inside or outside the classroom
 - When in the building outside their classroom
 - When working with a student not in their assigned class
- Teachers will not be required to wear masks in the following situations:
 - While instructing students in their assigned classroom
 - When outside with students at recess or P.E.
 - When outside the building

CONTAINMENT & RESPONSE

- In the event a confirmed incident of COVID-19 occurs, TCA administration will take the following steps to the best of our ability:
 - Determine the source and identify all those affected
 - Notify parents of affected students immediately
 - Send affected cluster(s) and/or staff home for a period of quarantine and provide instructions and criteria for returning to TCA
 - Initiate necessary cleaning & sanitizing of affected areas
- Provision will be made for students' learning and work to continue in the event they are affected by an imposed quarantine

CANCELLATION / REOPENING

- In the event it becomes necessary for TCA to suspend in-school classes for the entire school, instruction will be given regarding a move to remote learning
- When and if it is deemed safe to reopen, notification will be sent to all TCA families outlining the details of reopening

P.E. / ARTS / EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The following guidelines and procedures will be followed for Physical Education classes, Fine Arts classes, and extracurricular activities.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASSES (P.E.)

- Students will participate in P.E. classes with their cluster only.
- Whenever possible P.E. classes will be held outdoors. Students should be sure to bring a sweatshirt or jacket or coat to school when needed, as they will go outside for recess and/or gym provided it is not raining and the temperature is 30 degrees or higher.
- Students in all grades are expected to wear their P.E. clothes to school on their assigned P.E. day, as locker rooms will not be utilized. For details regarding P.E. uniform attire see the Family Handbook.
- Each cluster will be supplied with their own gym equipment (balls, hula hoops, jump ropes, etc.) which will be sanitized after each use.
- The use of the gym will be limited, so on bad weather days or extremely cold days, students may have P.E. in their classroom in the form of games or activities not requiring large amounts of space (i.e. aerobic exercises, fitness & strength building activities, etc.)
- Students are advised to bring an extra water bottle on P.E. days to help them stay hydrated, as water fountains will be off limits. The sharing of water bottles is not permitted.

ART & MUSIC

- The Art teacher will rotate to each classroom and will bring a cart with necessary supplies, to be distributed by the teacher only.
- The sharing of supplies will be avoided whenever possible. Materials that must be shared will be sanitized between each use.
- Music classes involving multiple clusters, if conducted, will be held in the church sanctuary which allows for safe, maximum distancing of students. In the event music classes are not taking place, teachers will be encouraged to incorporate elements of music into their classroom.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- After-school clubs and activities will be limited and will only be permitted upon approval by school administration. Those participating will be required to follow all guidelines and restrictions put in place by TCA administration.
- Team sports will be taking place for students in grade 6-12. Student athletes must cooperate with all guidelines and restrictions designed for the safety of all involved if they are to be permitted to participate.



FAMILY SUPPORT & COMMUNICATION

The following guidelines and procedures will be followed to provide support for TCA families and to foster clear communication.

TRAINING

- Training sessions will be provided for parents new to TCA on the use of our school management program, Sycamore School. This training may be offered in-person or online and will consist of such items as accessing your child's grades, ways to communicate with your child's teacher, tracking your child's attendance, etc.
- Training sessions will be provided for parents new to TCA upon request on the use of online video and learning platforms (i.e. Zoom meeting, Google Classroom, etc.). This training will be provided to students in the classroom.

COMMUNICATION

- Our goal is to provide clear and ongoing communication to TCA families. This will be done primarily through email and text communications.
- It is important that parents read all emails or texts from TCA as they may contain timely and critical information.
- To avoid missing important communications, be sure to notify us immediately if your email address or phone number changes.
- Good communication must flow two ways to be effective. We cannot address concerns or questions we do not know exist, so we welcome and encourage you to contact us with any concerns, questions, or feedback you have.



WAIVER OF LIABILITY PERTAINING: Coronavirus/COVID-19

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, a pandemic. COVID-19 is highly contagious and is believed to spread mainly from person-to-person contact. As a result, federal, state, and local governments and federal and state health agencies recommend social distancing and have, in many locations, prohibited the congregation of groups of people over the past several months.

Torrington Christian Academy (henceforth, TCA) has put precautions in place to reduce the spread of COVID-19; however, TCA **cannot guarantee** that you or your family, including your child(ren) will not become exposed to or infected with COVID-19. Further, because of the number of individuals involved in TCA's programs and activities, and the fact that many infected individuals appear to be asymptomatic, attending the programs or activities of TCA **could increase** your and your child(ren)'s risk of contracting COVID-19.

By signing this waiver, I acknowledge the contagious nature of COVID-19 and voluntarily assume the risk that my child(ren) and I may be exposed to or infected by COVID-19. I also acknowledge that by attending TCA's programs or activities, such exposure or infection may result in personal injury, illness, disability, and/or death. I understand that the risk of becoming exposed to or infected by COVID-19 at TCA may result from the actions, omissions, or negligence of myself and others, including, but not limited to, Ministry employees, volunteers, members, and participants and their families.

I voluntarily agree to assume all the foregoing risks and accept sole responsibility for any injury to my child(ren) or myself (including, but not limited to, personal injury, disability, and death), illness, damage, loss, claim, liability, or expense of any kind that I or my child(ren) may experience or incur in connection with my child(ren)'s attendance at TCA or participation in TCA programs or activities. On my behalf, and on behalf of my children, I hereby release, covenant not to sue, discharge, and hold harmless TCA, its employees, agents, and representatives, of and from the Claims, including all liabilities, claims, actions, damages, costs, or expenses of any kind arising out of or relating thereto. I understand and agree that this release includes any Claims based on the actions, omissions, or negligence of the Ministry, its employees, agents, and representatives, whether a COVID-19 infection occurs before, during, or after participation in any program or activity.

Print Name of Parent/Guardian

Name of Children (Participants)

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date