



### **Country Day ConnectED 20-21**

As we bring the current school year to a close, we want to inform you that next year Cincinnati Country Day School will open the 2020-2021 school year with as full a student body on campus as possible within a safe learning environment. We are fortunate to have 62-acres, 116,000 square feet of learning space, 180 dedicated faculty and staff members, and a supportive parent body. The best learning happens when teachers and students are together, in-person, and we will endeavor to deliver this model of education, albeit in a different form, in the year ahead.

As we look toward the new academic year, Country Day's board of trustees, administration, and leaders on the faculty and staff have been working to plan Country Day ConnectED 20-21. We have based our work on three key assumptions. First, schools in Ohio will open for the 2020-2021 school year, with the likelihood that state and local mandates could result in further disruption to operations. Second, the practice of social distancing will be a reality until a Covid-19 vaccine and/or treatment is available. Third, disrupted operations will have an impact on how we use the campus, academic programming, daily and annual schedules, safety and security practices, and social behavior.

In the face of that reality, Country Day ConnectED 20-21 will provide a flexible plan for school operations for the next school year. As an independent school we are a small and committed community, one known for its adaptability. Now more than ever, our independent status gives us the freedom and fluidity needed to adjust quickly to an evolving environment.

This communication details some of the Country Day ConnectED 20-21 planning to help parents understand what to expect when school opens for the next academic year. As the plan is further developed, we will continue to communicate, but parents can expect updates on whole-school operations no later than July 1 and August 1.

### **Guiding Principles**

The following principles have guided our planning:

1. **Safety first.** With the threat of illness from the Covid-19, Country Day will offer an educational program that prioritizes the health of our students, their families, and our teachers and staff members. We will follow guidance from federal, state, and local authorities and partner with other independent schools to plan the learning environment. When on-campus learning is possible, sustaining a healthy campus will require us all to work together in cooperation and with the assumption of positive intent.
2. **"Whole Child" education.** Country Day's goal is to optimize student learning for each child. In an environment that may require modified access to campus and/or an extension of remote learning, we will work to deliver a robust academic program, recognizing that students' learning needs change in different environments. We will offer a "whole child" program that includes athletics, arts, clubs, and enrichment opportunities.

3. **Social and emotional well-being.** We recognize the challenges we face at this time, and we must identify ways to support the emotional and social needs of our students, their families, teachers, and staff members.
4. **A commitment to “know and nurture” our students.** We will keep the teacher-student relationship at the foundation of our planning, to ensure we sustain our commitment to know and nurture our students and guide their learning to reach their potential.
5. **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.** The school will maintain its commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion, sustaining efforts to ensure all our community members feel included and part of the larger collective, and that education is provided equitably to all students.
6. **Familiar, consistent, reliable, and secure technology architecture.** Technology used to support remote learning will be based on existing and well-established platforms and approaches, consistent with our students’ longer-term educational needs and grounded in sound pedagogy. We learned much during our sudden shift to remote learning, and we want to make sure the successes and failures, of both student and teacher experiences, inform our further decisions.
7. **Program design and resource allocation directed to learner need.** As an institution with students aged 18 months to 18 years, Country Day will build programs that align with the relative abilities of students to learn and engage independently. Educationally, our youngest learners require a level of in-person support and supervision beyond that of our older students, and our program delivery and resource allocation will reflect this consideration.
8. **Flexible program delivery.** As we monitor progress of the Covid-19 situation, we will establish clear protocols to address when and how we may shift between modes of program delivery, including on-campus instruction, remote learning, or a blend of the two.
9. **Strong and frequent communication.** Communication is key to establishing open and productive partnerships with parents and students to support learning and provide appropriate feedback on progress. We will provide frequent opportunities for communication between parents and teachers, or students and teachers, as developmentally appropriate.
10. **Balanced use of school resources.** We will balance investment to ensure the delivery of a robust educational experience in the current environment with the investment for the longer-term health and stability of the school.

### **Scenario Planning**

Given the inherent uncertainty in our assumptions, Country Day ConnectED 20-21 must be adaptable to multiple scenarios for the 2020-21 academic year. Three core scenarios are being considered:

#### **a. School opens with full, on-campus operations**

We have opened school in this fashion for more than 90 years, and the rhythms are well known to faculty, staff, and families. While this scenario is most preferable, it appears highly unlikely that progress to combat the risks of Covid-19 will be made with sufficient speed to allow this scenario to permit opening in mid-August.

#### **b. School opens with modified use of campus**

In this scenario, stringent safety and health protocols, including the practice of social distancing, would require re-purposing of classrooms and other learning spaces to safely accommodate students on campus. Physical space constraints and the size of our teaching staff would prevent all students being on campus at the same time. Accordingly, this plan would feature a hybrid version of on-campus and remote learning with consideration given to the age of the student and his or her ability to learn remotely.

**c. School opens with full, remote learning**

In this scenario, Country Day ConnectED 20-21 continues with a remote program when school opens for the 2020-21 school year. Program development over the summer months will allow us to fortify elements that were successful in the spring and address areas of instructional delivery that need improvement. Your survey feedback will be a key piece to this process. We recognize this scenario presents the biggest challenge to our youngest learners and their parents.

It is possible that transmission of the virus and localized surges could necessitate periods of time when the school shifts among scenarios. A key principle of our program planning is to build flexibility, allowing programs to shift from on-campus to remote learning with the least disruption possible to our students and their families.

As of this writing, we believe scenario (b)—school opens with modified use of campus—will be the most likely scenario, and we encourage parents to consider what this means for our program in the coming year. In this scenario, we, the Country Day community, must adopt a shared sense of duty to our children and understand we have a common cause. The school year may be very different from a year when campus is available for unrestricted use.

It is our sincere hope that we can fully return to in-person instruction, reuniting all of our students on campus. Since mandates or other considerations may not allow us to return in the manner in which we are accustomed, we are planning for the possibility of a phased return of our students by grade level and/or division. If a gradual return is required, we would prioritize the return of our youngest students since their learning requires the greatest degree of in-person support. This approach would incorporate strategies to de-densify our classrooms and rethink underused spaces to help facilitate a safe return. Some policies and practices for lower school students being considered include:

- Routine student and faculty health checks
- Keeping smaller groups of children together during the day to minimize the mixing of students
- Smaller student-to-teacher ratios per grade to meet social distancing requirements
- More dedicated time for outdoor learning and time spent outside with construction and use of temporary outdoor classrooms
- In-classroom lunches provided by the school
- Accessibility to technology devices and common platforms for learning and teaching
- Modified or staggered drop-off and pick-up times
- Delivery of specials programs (art, music, physical education, etc.) either synchronously or semi-synchronously
- Virtual/remote experiences (such as field trips) that enhance classroom learning when traveling and in-person connections may not be possible
- Limited and scheduled use of common spaces
- Differentiated pricing for preprimary students during periods of remote programming

**Plan Development**

We are in the process of developing a comprehensive web presence to update families on plans as these are further developed through June and July. The information will include:

- Community and visitor guidelines
- On-campus health and safety protocols
- Faculty/staff roles and responsibilities and ongoing professional development

- Student roles and responsibilities
- Parent roles and responsibilities
- Schedules, by division (and grade, as appropriate)
- Advisory guidelines
- Attendance
- Assessment considerations and time expectations
- Technology support (platforms, device rentals/purchases for EC-grade 4, and infrastructure enhancements)
- Student support services guidelines
- Library resources
- CCDS communications regarding Covid-19

### **On-Campus Summer Activities**

This summer, we will implement and refine comprehensive health and safety protocols, ahead of the upcoming academic year and in accordance with evolving guidelines. These measures will heighten our preparedness for opening the 2020-21 school year.

### **Athletics**

OHSAA has issued initial guidelines for the commencement of participation in upper school athletics over the summer. Dennis Coyle, Athletic Director, will be updating upper school families on these details in a separate communication. As one of the first programs to re-open on campus, access will be limited at first and will proceed in a phased and gradual manner, ensuring the highest levels of safety for athletes and their coaches.

### **Summer Camps**

While June summer programs were canceled, we pivoted to offer more than 30 remote opportunities. In addition, we have over 200 students registered for on-campus programs beginning July 6, participating in small group activities, carefully structured to ensure adherence to health and safety protocols. Both the remote and on-campus programs allow us to create new and exciting opportunities for students and to also establish best practices for the new school year. These include the development of policies and procedures for pick-up and drop-off, visitors, health checks, lunch, accessibility, and special programs.

We recognize our families want clarity on the structure and delivery of the educational experience for the 2020-21 academic year, yet the nature of the virus demands fluidity and adaptability as we continue to adjust to evolving guidance from public health officials and agencies. We will continue to communicate with you regularly this summer via direct emails. These emails will include links to the Country Day ConnectED 20-21 webpages to keep you informed of updates and/or additional measures. Additionally, as stated earlier, parents can also expect major updates no later than July 1 and August 1.

Thank you for your support as we work to provide a safe learning environment that continues to build on Country Day's rich history of academic excellence.

Sincerely,



Anthony T. T. Jaccaci  
Head of School