

June 15, 2020

Blessings Hephatha Family,

I hope and pray that the month of June has provided an opportunity to pause and reflect on the academic year, particularly the circumstances that led to approximately a third of the year being held remotely.

A common routine for all of us over the past three months was actively listening to health officials communicating almost daily about the "ever-evolving" situation and guidelines that need to be adhered to. This remains true today. Below we are providing an updated process for starting the academic year in August. It is our every intention to continue to move forward with this process. There may be some form of change between now and August 19th, as a result of health officials' guidelines.

With that being said, Hephatha Lutheran School, Early Childhood through 8th grade, will be opening for on-campus classes as currently scheduled on August 18th and 19th (depending on your enrolled program). Our large classrooms and limited enrollment ratios will allow for ample physical distancing during the academic day.

Additionally, schedule modifications will be made to our recess and lunch schedules. Students will still be able to enjoy their breaks outside with most changes coming from a scheduling perspective. These modifications will allow for students to have their traditional breaks while also practicing social distancing guidelines.

Staff and faculty will be required to wear masks or face shields during the most essential times in the day, and when physical distancing is not possible. This guideline comes specifically from the CDC's most recent update in guidance moving forward. At this time, in similar compliance with our current summer camp policies which *encourage* the wearing of masks. It will be each family's decision as to the wearing of masks or face shields for their children during the school day. Hephatha respects each family's personal decision in choosing whether or not to have their child wear a mask or face shield.

Hephatha has enhanced the cleaning and disinfecting of the campus, and will continue to follow these new guidelines throughout the academic year. Additionally, portable hand washing stations and hand sanitizer stations will be placed throughout the campus. All soap dispensers have been replaced and antibacterial soap will be used in those dispensers; furthermore, high contact areas and objects will be cleaned and disinfected multiple times daily at set, specific times during the day.

Each child will have their temperature taken, with a touchless thermometer, daily in the morning at drop off. All staff and faculty will also have their temperatures taken upon arriving on campus. Practices will be put into place to ensure that each student is properly washing their hands throughout the day. Students will also be educated on best practices in reducing the spread of germs.

During the school day we will be limiting the presence of non-essential visitors, volunteers, and activities that involve external groups. Families will still be able to physically come onto campus to pick up and drop off but will be *required* to wear a mask or face shield.

Together, through our partnership with each other, we can provide a traditional learning environment for each of our students. Your child's safety and well-being is the utmost priority for each of us here at Hephatha. We will continue to diligently work in preparing our campus to serve our students. Below are some Frequently Asked Questions. If you have further questions, please reach out to the administration office.

How will you achieve social distancing in the classroom?

All unnecessary furniture will be removed from the classroom. Desks will be spread out to meet the guidelines established for social distancing. Markers on the ground will be in place to help support students socially distancing. Student learning manipulatives will be provided for each individual student, as compared to sharing the manipulatives in groups.

What about field trips?

The unfortunate reality of the current situation is that fall field trips will likely not be taking place. Many of these trips are a part of the tradition that is the Hephatha experience. If this policy remains in place, Hephatha will actively make it a point to provide many of these learning opportunities in the spring of 2021.

What if there is a person that is symptomatic or confirmed COVID-19 from the Hephatha family?

Hephatha has created a situational operation report that will be activated if either of these scenarios occurs. In both cases, there would be a *temporary* closure of the facility to mitigate any possible spread of the virus.

Will there be any change in policy for Parent Volunteer Hours?

Given the current circumstances, Volunteer Hours, commonly called PVH, will be reduced by half for each family. In a traditional year, families are asked to contribute 50 hours of volunteer service opportunities. During the 2020-2021 academic year, families will be asked to contribute a total of 25 hours of volunteer service opportunities.

Will the traditional sports seasons be held?

Any decision to proceed with athletics will be based on CIF recommendations for restarting the athletic season. Hephatha administration and athletic director will monitor and evaluate all information shared by CIF prior to making a decision to resume athletic competition.

"Fear not for I am with you, do not be dismayed for I am your God" Isaiah 41:10

In Christ,



Eric Deyke
Principal

Hephatha Lutheran Church and School