

July 22, 2020

Blessings Hephatha parents and guardians,

As you are likely aware, last Friday, July 17th, California released new [guidance regarding the reopening of public and private schools](#). The guidance indicated that the implementation of these reopening guidelines depends on local health conditions for each county. Specifically, whether or not our country is on the monitoring list, which Orange County currently is.

Hephatha continues to prioritize in-person opportunities, as we believe community is of the utmost importance to the social and emotional well-being of our students.

I thank you for your patience over the past days as additional communication was planned to be shared (guidelines for opening and a sign up for **OPTIONAL** distance learning). The announcement on Friday caused a pause in sharing this information, as we wanted to collect as much detailed information as possible relating to the guidance. Topics of this magnitude can provide misinformation and confusion as to what the implications are for school sites such as Hephatha.

Specifically mentioned in the guidance issued last Friday, was the opportunity to apply for a waiver through county health officials to resume operations in the traditional classroom setting. Earlier this week, Hephatha submitted a 9-page waiver request document outlining plans to successfully educate our students face-to-face, while also doing our part in mitigating the spread of COVID-19, to acting county health director, Dr. Clayton Chau. Additionally, documentation of the school guidelines for opening the campus was shared with Dr. Chau.

Topics focused on, but not limited to, in the documentation included:

- Student cohorts
- Increased hand sanitizing practices, training, and scheduling
- All classroom desks being equipped with Plexiglass trifold barriers to mitigate possible spread
- Screening Practices
- Drop Off and Pick Up Policy
- Environmental Cleaning Policy
- Ventilation practices
- Contingency Plans
- Social Distancing Policy and Protocol

All documentation associated with campus health and safety plans, as well as the waiver application presented to county health officials is within compliance with CDC, CDPH, and OCHD guidelines for face-to-face instruction. Given these factors, Hephatha will continue to remain in positive thought that the academic year will begin face-to-face for the Hephatha families wanting to return to campus.

Over the upcoming weeks, we will continue to closely monitor conditions and pursue every effort within our control to open the school year with our two options of on-ground learning, and **optional** distance learning. Additionally, we will continue to dedicate all of our time and energy in prepping and planning for all kinds of outcomes presented, and continue to provide a top-notch Christ-centered education that meets our core values of preparing students for high school and beyond.

Based on the communication from the county health officials this week, we can anticipate follow up and feedback in approximately two weeks regarding waiver processing. During the first full week of August, it is our intent to provide further clarity regarding how we will implement the beginning of the academic year.

I acknowledge and understand that families may be anxious in the desire for further clarity. We do kindly ask for your patience as we will continue to diligently work through every possible channel to ensure our students are on campus in the community environment we have as the Hephatha family. God is in control here! His will and plan will come to light!

Since the beginning of March, the phrase *"ever-evolving and quickly changing"* has been in our daily dialogues. God is not ever-evolving and quickly changing. He is our rock, our constant, our reassurance, and our sense of hope through Christ's sacrifice. Whatever may happen in this world, we have faith that God will see us through.

"Take Heart, Be Courageous in Christ!" (2020-2021 Campus Theme)
"Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who wait for the Lord!" Psalm 31:24

In Christ,



Eric Deyke
Principal
Hephatha Lutheran Church and School