



August 28, 2020

Dear Upper School Families,

Having started Fall sports and welcomed new students and faculty, campus is coming alive. To prepare for the start of school, this letter will provide important information and details. Please read the entire letter and check the linked documents. Also, next week, I will send another letter explaining the first day of school and how we plan on ensuring an equitable experience. I also want to remind you that the [PDS Reopens](#) web content contains a great deal of helpful information about the start of the school year, and the [PDS Parent Portal](#) contains extensive links to back-to-school forms and resources.

[Panther Pledge and Additional Health and Safety Expectations](#)

The [Panther Pledge](#) acknowledges that our individual actions profoundly impact the health and safety of the larger community. As Panthers, we are committed to caring for each other and keeping our community strong. **Anyone entering campus is expected to follow the health and safety guidelines at all times.** Over Labor Day Weekend, Head of School Paul Stellato will detail specific community expectations for those participating in on-campus learning.

To underscore the importance of this Panther Pledge, be advised that **anyone who repeatedly violates these expectations, whether on or off campus, will be required to participate remotely until they agree to follow community norms.** This expectation is not meant to be punitive,

but acknowledges our collective commitment to the health and safety of all.

Remote Experience

Faculty have spent a great deal of time this summer preparing for a synchronous hybrid school experience. **Students participating in remote learning must be available during school hours to participate.** If you have any concerns, please contact Chris Rhodes as soon as possible at crhodes@pds.org.

PDS is committed to ensuring that the experience is an excellent one for all students. Faculty will continue to learn and develop best practices to engage all students, remote and in person. **Be on the lookout for the Remote Learning policy and remote student support in the next email.**

Updated Student Schedules in Parent Portal

More detailed student schedules, including periods and locations, will be available at 5pm TODAY on the [PDS Parent Portal](#) in the "My Children" area of the home screen (click on "Classes and Reports" or "Student Files"). If you have questions about accessing the Parent Portal or your child's schedule, please email help@pds.org. Upper School students will also be able to view their schedules via the new US Student Portal on Veracross beginning at 5pm today. **Instructions for logging in will be posted to the US Announcements and grade level groups on Schoology.** Please note that some changes are still being made, so please review your schedule periodically.

MAGNUS Mobile App

Please practice using the MAGNUS mobile app to access the required daily health screening prior to the first day of school, September 9, 2020. If you encounter a problem, first, make sure that the app has been updated and properly installed. If you experience any issues with creating your user

name and password, you must reach out to MAGNUS, not to PDS. **Students will need to show proof that they completed their health screening every day before they are allowed to enter the building. If you are unable to complete the MAGNUS online daily health screening, a paper form will be available at arrival and must be completed satisfactorily before entry is permitted. Step-by-step instructions were emailed to families and also appear in the PDS Reopens [Health & Safety Guidelines](#).**

Arrival and Dismissal

To best facilitate social distancing on campus, our drop-off and pick-up patterns have changed.

As always, be safe, drive slowly and please be courteous to your fellow drivers and all PDS Panthers.

The school doors will not open to students until 7:45am, and all students are expected to leave by 3:30pm or be registered in advance for After-School Supervision.

Arrival

Upper School students will park in their assigned spots or be dropped off at the Athletic Center. US students will not be dropped off in the main circle unless they are arriving with a sibling attending the Lower or Middle Schools.

- Upper School Students dropped off at the Athletic Center will enter the building through the **Lower Gym entrance**.
- US Students dropped off with a sibling in the circle will enter through the **Upper Gym entrance**.
- Students will **show their completed MAGNUS health screening** icon to a teacher as they enter.

- Students will then **report directly to their first period class or one of the designated common areas** (outdoor tents, Shepherd Commons, Library, or Theater Lobby), where attendance will be taken.
- Students will not report to their advisors for attendance.

Students who drive to school and who still need to register for a parking spot can access the form [HERE](#).

Dismissal

Upper School Students will be dismissed each day at 3:20 and should be picked up on the main circle at the following locations:

- **9th Grade** will exit in front of **LS Amphitheater**
- **10th Grade** will exit in front of **Snack Bar door**
- **11th Grade** will exit by the **Sunrise/Sunset doors** near the Theater Lobby
- **12th Grade** will exit by the **Main entrance**
- Please note that 11th and 12th Grade students may sign out during C&C period (the last period of the day) if they have no further school commitments. They must sign out with the receptionist and may not return to campus once they leave.

After-School Supervision

After-school supervision will be available until 6:00pm, with limited capacity, on a reservation only basis. For the first session, ending on October 2, no fee will be charged. We reserve the right to reevaluate this decision and charge a fee for the second session, starting on October 5.

Click on [THIS FORM](#) to register for specific times and days by September 3.

Computer Specifications

To fully participate in their classes, it is more important than ever that all personal devices meet our [**Upper School Device Specifications**](#). Email Director of Academic Technology Lauren Ledley at lledley@pds.org if you have any questions.

Upper School Handbook

As a reminder, please review the updated [**Upper School Handbook**](#), located in the Parent Portal, prior to the start of school.

Additional School Supplies

This year, to provide flexibility and minimize the sharing of supplies, students are expected to come to school every day with their own set of **headphones and white board markers**. Finally, **each US student should always have a supply of three (3) masks at school**.

Lockers

To minimize traffic and congestion in the halls, we will begin the year without lockers. We will reevaluate this decision after the third week of classes.

PE and Health Requirements

To ensure the safety of all, we are not offering PE and Health classes at this time. We understand that this will impact students' ability to fulfill their graduation requirements. We are developing solutions to this issue and will communicate them later in the Fall.

Photos for Student IDs

Please submit a photo for your student's ID. We've included guidelines for this photo. You will need to use your PDS student email to **submit your US student ID photo** [**HERE**](#). The form includes the photo specifications.

We look forward to communicating further details about the start of School next week!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Rhodes', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chris Rhodes

Acting Head of Upper School