



August 28, 2020

Dear Middle School Families,

We were so pleased to see so many of you on the Meet and Greet earlier this week. What follows is some additional information about specific reopening plans for Middle School. Please read this entire letter and check the attached documents. For additional information, review the [PDS Reopens Plan](#) and also review the [PDS Parent Portal](#), which 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 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 have been medically cleared and 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.

### **[Equity in 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 Tara Quigley as soon as possible at [taraq@pds.org](mailto:taraq@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.

### **Student Schedules**

More detailed information regarding Middle School student schedules, including periods and locations, will be available in Veracross by **Wednesday, September 2.**

### **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**

**In order to best facilitate social distancing on campus, our drop-off and pick-up patterns have changed. Grade-level specific guidelines are below.**

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 Homework Club.**

### ***Arrival by Grade***

**Grades 5-7 should be dropped off on the main circle at the far end nearest the playground.** Students will show their completed MAGNUS health screening icon to a teacher on the main circle. **Students should then walk around to the MS Playground to their grade-specific entrance door.**

- **Grade 5:** the ping pong Patio door
- **Grade 6:** the door outside Rooms 112 and 113
- **Grade 7:** the door at the end of the corridor that faces the Lost and Found

**Grade 8 parents should drop students at the Lower Gym entrance** and show their MAGNUS health screening icon to the teacher at the door.

- **Grade 8:** the door by the dance studio. Students should walk from the Lower Gym circle along the service road until they reach the signs for the dance studio entrance.

**If you have students in multiple grades or divisions: Please drop off your youngest student first.** Please contact Channing McCullough at [cmccullough@pds.org](mailto:cmccullough@pds.org) if you have other concerns about multi-student drop off.

### ***Dismissal by Grade***

**Grade 5 students will be dismissed each day at 3:10 and should be picked up on the main circle, at the far end nearest the playground.**

**Grades 6-8 will be dismissed each day at 3:20 from the Athletic Center.** Please follow all traffic rules as you enter and exit.

- **Traffic at the Athletic Center should enter the parking lot closest to Behr House and exit near the baseball field to allow a smoother flow of traffic. Departing vehicles should exit the campus out the Stuart Road (baseball) gate.**

### **After-school Care: Homework Club**

Homework Club will be available, with limited capacity, on a reservation only basis. There are no drop ins permitted. Families are asked to indicate which days and for how long they would like to reserve Homework Club (commitment until October 2nd). **Click on [THIS FORM](#) to register for specific times and days by September 3.** The flat fee charges are indicated next to the options on the Google Form.

Homework Club will follow the safety protocols that have been outlined in the [PDS Reopens Plan](#). Please contact Nicole Mangino at [nmangino@pds.org](mailto:nmangino@pds.org) with any questions.

### **iPads and Technology Use**

It has likely been a few weeks since your student has used their PDS iPad. Please confirm together with your student that their iPad, charging block, and cable are accounted for and working properly. Email Jamie Atkeson at [jatkeson@pds.org](mailto:jatkeson@pds.org) if you discover a problem or have a question. **All new students will receive their iPad during orientation.**

Also, please review the technology use guidelines in the [Middle School Handbook](#) located in the parent portal.

### 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.

### Photos for Student IDs

Please submit a photo of your student for their student ID. We've included guidelines for this photo below. **You will need a PDS email or a gmail account in order to submit your photo digitally using the link below.** If your child does not yet have a PDS email, please email the photo to Tara Quigley at [taraq@pds.org](mailto:taraq@pds.org).

*Find the setting:*

- Find a blank, light-colored, wall at home
- Use natural light or a lighting kit if you already have one

*Take the photo:*

- When holding the physical iPhone or iPad, hold it horizontally
- Do not add filters or lighting effects other than natural light, or if you have proper lighting equipment at home
- Center the student in the photo

Use [THIS](#) link to upload your Middle School student ID photo.

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

Sincerely,

**Channing McCullough**, 5th Grade Dean

**Angharad Rebholz**, 6th Grade Dean

**Jonathan Martin**, 7th Grade Dean

**Nicole Mangino**, 8th Grade Dean

**Tara Quigley**, MS Humanities and Director of Miss Fine's Center