

11.19.2020

Dear Charter Arts Community,

COVID-19 Update

Our decision to remain in a remote learning environment through the end of quarter two was a difficult one. Currently, our students come from 11 counties, and all but one of those counties are listed as being in a substantial level of community spread per the data released on the [COVID Early Warning Monitoring System Dashboard](#). At the end of last week, PDE notified Charter Arts that all schools in Northampton County are recommended to utilize a remote instructional model due to the rise in COVID cases in the county.

We continue to receive regular updates from our local IU and are in direct communication with our partners at St. Luke's. Further, we are regularly monitoring updated guidance from PDE and the Department of Health. Additionally, on Tuesday, the [PA Health Department shared updated orders requiring universal face coverings](#), which includes K-12 and charter schools, and [updated travel restrictions](#) due to the significant increase of cases in PA and around the country.

Updated Order Summary: Universal Face Coverings Updated

- Require that all people, including their employees, teachers, students, and visitors, wear a face covering and take reasonable steps to enforce the requirement both indoors and outdoors with people outside of their own household. This requirement is also required during indoor fitness activities where another person or persons who are not members of an individual's household are present in the same space, irrespective of physical distance.
- Mitigate or eliminate employee, teacher, student, visitor, and customer exposure to people who cannot wear or refuse to wear a face covering.
- Post prominent signage that is visible to all people stating that face coverings are required by the Order of the Secretary of Health.
- Provide reasonable accommodations to people, including their employees, teachers, students, customers, and visitors, who state they have a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that makes it unreasonable for the person to maintain a face covering. Accommodations could include alternatives to face coverings, such as the use of a face shield that covers the nose and mouth, extends below the chin and to the ears, and leaves no exposed gap between the forehead and the shield's head piece.

Updated Order Summary: Travel Restrictions

- Individuals traveling into and returning to Pennsylvania from any other State or Commonwealth or an international location, must produce evidence of a negative SARS-CoV2 (COVID-19) test from a specimen collected within 72 hours prior to entering the Commonwealth, or quarantine for 14 days upon entering, unless they qualify for one of the exemptions specified in Section 4.
- Travelers must arrange for testing at their own expense, and travelers who do not have their test results at the time of entry into the Commonwealth must remain at their travel destination without contact with others outside of the travelling party until they receive their test results. Travelers who test positive must remain in isolation, and travelers who test negative may resume their activities and plans.

At Charter Arts, we will be complying with these orders to ensure a safe environment for our entire community. If you are starting to feel sick or exhibit any symptoms, please contact your physician directly. Symptoms of COVID-19 may include fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea. Although we are in a remote instructional model, anyone coming to Charter Arts must self-screen using [THIS checklist](#) prior to leaving their home, which will help us mitigate this contagious disease which is rapidly spreading from person to person.

Therefore, we will continue to provide a consistent learning experience for our students during remote learning, as we have been doing all year, and we are suspending all **OPTIONAL** in person student experiences until further notice. In-person services for students with disabilities will continue to be made on an individualized basis by the student's IEP or Section 504 team. We know that our students want to attend school in person, and we want to have them here, too! However, we have to make sure that we can bring them in safely - all things considered. Our teachers and counseling department have been amazing in connecting with students for check-ins, and if there are other ways that we can support your child, please communicate directly with your child's teachers and/or school counselor.

Thanksgiving Break

As a reminder to all students and families, Charter Arts will be **closed for the Thanksgiving holiday from Wednesday, November 25th at 12pm through Monday, November 30th.**

A special note about Wednesday 11/25:

- During this asynchronous learning day, students should work independently and will be dismissed at 11am. *Please remember to complete your [attendance form](#) for Wednesday so that you are **present** for the school day.*
- Teachers will hold office hours from 10-11am.
- The main office will close at 12pm.

Classes will resume on Tuesday, December 1st, which is a Day 2 in our daily cycle rotation. We want to wish all of our families a safe and healthy Thanksgiving!

Digital Report Cards & Q2 Progress Reports

With the end of Quarter 1 on November 6th, **Q1 report cards will be available electronically by the end of this week.**

Additionally, we are increasing our progress report efforts during Q2:

- During Q2 and throughout the rest of this year, all families will receive an **electronic mid-quarter progress report** to help families stay up to date with student progress.
- In addition to direct teacher communication when students are struggling in class, we will begin sending **at-risk text messages approximately every 2 weeks when students have a below a 65% in any course.** This communication is intended to alert our families to check their PowerSchool Parent Portal.

We hope that these efforts, along with regular teacher communication and family access to the Parent Portal in PowerSchool, will help students stay on track and access support when needed. Please review your child's progress in the Parent Portal of PowerSchool at least once per week. We thank you in advance for your support with this.

Communication Barriers

As we all try to adjust to this "new normal" of virtual learning, we realize that previous methods of school/family communication, such as email and phone calls, have been impacted by our virtual setting. We are asking for your help to try to close the communication gap when we are reaching out with important information and/or to offer support services for your child. Without the option for face-to-face communication, email accounts have been flooded by Google Classroom posts, teacher emails, counselor emails, administrative emails, and more, so many important messages may be getting lost. Thank you in advance for any and all efforts to sift through emails for important messages from your child's teachers, counselors, and support staff.

Additionally, we have advised our teachers and employees to block their personal phone numbers when making calls home to families to protect their privacy. However, we are aware many of you do not answer blocked calls in anticipation that the call may be spam. **If we call from a blocked or unfamiliar number, and don't reach you on the first try, we will leave a message and call back in a few minutes. Thank you in advance for answering these calls when we try to reach you.** We also try to make calls from the building, so if you see a call from Charter Arts, please answer whenever possible.

Community Service Updates

Due to ongoing closures and safety concerns, we recognize that volunteer work may be more limited for students this year. Therefore, we will be making the following recommendations to our School Board in December regarding our Community Service/Internship hourly requirement:

- Waive the community service graduation requirement for our current seniors, Class of 2021. Students with 100+ hours of community service will continue to be honored at graduation.
- Reduce the community service requirement by 15 hours for graduating classes of 2022, 2023, and 2024. Traditionally, students are required to earn an average of 15 hours per year of their enrollment at Charter Arts.
 - Example: if this reduction is approved, members of the 2022 graduating class, with 4 years of enrollment at Charter Arts, will be required to earn at least 45 community service hours instead of 60.
 - Example: if this reduction is approved, members of the class of 2023 who started this school year would be responsible for 30 hours instead of 45 hours.
 - Students with 100+ hours of community service will continue to be honored at graduation.

Giving Tuesday

Tuesday, December 1, 2020 is the launch of our Giving Tuesday fundraiser. Scan the QR Code in the image to be taken right to the donation page. Donations of any size are appreciated.



Upcoming Virtual Performances

The artistic departments and students have been hard at work creating and getting ready to launch some exciting virtual performances. Tickets are now available for fall events - see our [Charter Arts Website](#) for more details on all events and scroll to the bottom of the page to the green "Buy Tickets" button to get your tickets! Can't wait to "see" you at a show!

As always, we are here to support you and your family as you navigate these challenging times. Stay safe and healthy.

The Administrative Team