

12.16.2020

Dear Charter Arts Community,

As 2020 comes to a close, we want to THANK YOU for working with us this school year to support our students in this very unique remote learning environment and experience! It takes a village, and we are so happy that you are a part of our village! Additionally, winter break is fast approaching, and we wanted to share information with you prior to break. This communication contains A LOT of important information, so please read it through to the end carefully.

COVID-19 Update

At the end of November, all schools in Pennsylvania were required to submit an Attestation form to the Pennsylvania Department of Education. All of the counties in which our students reside continue to be in substantial COVID spread; therefore, PDE continues to recommend that we provide remote instruction as we have been doing all year.

As we previously communicated, Charter Arts will continue providing remote learning without in person experiences until at least the end of Q2 on January 22, 2021, and we will reassess COVID spread and county data, PDE and DOH recommendations, and CDC guidance after winter break in January. Further, per our Attestation form, we will be in remote learning until Northampton County, where our building is located, is in a moderate level of spread for at least two weeks. At this point, we are optimistic that a vaccine will be available soon and continue to hold out hope that we can be back together in person sooner rather than later! We will keep you informed and updated as we have additional information.

Inclement Weather Updates

This week's impending storm is supposed to be one of epic proportions, which is why we have closed school tomorrow, Thursday, December 17th. We anticipate possible power outages and want to allow our students to help at home in whatever capacity is needed without having to be worried about missing an instructional day. (Students should plan to help their family and neighbors shovel ... just remember to wear a mask if you are around people other than those that live in your home!)

Since we are in a remote learning environment, we will be able to continue to provide remote instruction per our regular bell schedule during other winter snow storms and will not close school or delay instruction unless there are power outages or technology outages (as we experienced on Monday this week with Google). Therefore, in the event of inclement weather this winter, students should plan to participate in school as regularly scheduled unless otherwise communicated. Just as with any other day, if a student is unable to participate in instruction, parents or guardians should call the Main Office at 610-868-2971 or email attendance@charterarts.org.

Winter Break

As a reminder to all students and families, Charter Arts will be **closed for the Winter holiday from Wednesday, December 23rd at 12pm through Friday, January 1st**. We hope that you are all able to rest, relax, and rejuvenate!

A special note about Wednesday 12/23:

- During this asynchronous learning day, students should work independently, and school will officially be over at 11am. *Students must remember to complete their [attendance form](#) for Wednesday so they are **present** for the school day.*
- Students should contact teachers for specific office hours.
- The main office will close at 12pm.

Classes will resume on Monday, January 4, 2021, which is a Day 1 in our daily cycle rotation. We want to wish all of our families a safe and healthy holiday and New Year!

Community Service Updates

Due to ongoing closures and safety concerns, we recognize that volunteer work may be more limited for students this year. Therefore, our Charter Arts School Board recently approved the following modifications to our Community Service/Internship hourly requirement:

- Waive the community service graduation requirement for our current seniors, the 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 the 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.

Keystone Exams

Based on recent legislation, our students who were not able to complete the Keystone Exams in 19-20 due to the Covid-19 closure will now be considered Proficient on the Keystone exam if they passed the course associated with the exam (Biology, Algebra I, Principles of Literary Analysis). We will not be administering the Keystone exams during the winter session, but we currently plan to participate in the May testing administration for all 20-21 testers and any 19-20 testers who opt to test to earn a specific numerical score or an Advanced rating. We will continue to monitor PDE updates regarding 20-21 Keystone requirements and will communicate as we know more.

Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Updates

We have recently concluded a series of four focus groups with members of the Charter Arts Community including students, families, faculty, staff, and administrators. We are so thankful for the participation from our community and for the insights and feedback we have received. We are currently reviewing this feedback and creating our EDI Strategic Planning Committee, which will begin meeting in January.

Ladder of Communication for Parent/Guardian Concerns

If you are experiencing challenges during remote learning or have a question, issue, or concern regarding a matter in the classroom:

- First point of contact: Teacher
- Second point of contact: Artistic Director or Core Department Chairperson
- Third point of contact: School Counselor and/or Case Manager (if applicable)
- Finally, if your email or call is not returned and/or if your issue persists, please contact the Restorative Practices Coordinator, the Director of Specialized Services, and/or the Assistant Principal.
- As a reminder, all faculty and staff email addresses are available under the Welcome tab on our school website, <https://charterarts.org>.

Upcoming Virtual Performances

We thank you all for attending our fall virtual performances, and hope that you have enjoyed seeing the students perform in new and unique ways! The final performances of the fall season will occur this week! The fourth **Virtual Music Festival** will be held on **Thursday 12/17** and the **Holiday Cafe** is on **Friday, 12/18**. Both shows are at 7PM. Tickets for the Music Festival are available through our website, and the Holiday Cafe is a free event. You can find information about both shows when you scroll to the bottom of the website under Events!

Please continue to visit the website and follow us on social media for updates on our Spring performances, and again, thank you so much for your continued support. As they say, "the show must go on!"

Stay safe and healthy out there!

Wishing you all the best this holiday season!

The Administrative Team

