

1.11.2021

Dear Charter Arts Community,

We are reaching out to share important updates with you regarding remote learning, quarter 2 grading changes, school attendance, staying connected, and upcoming virtual events; and we hope this letter finds you safe and healthy! We are impressed and astounded by the level of resilience and commitment we have seen in our community during the first half of this year! Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your support and attendance at one or more of our virtual events this fall. We anticipate another excellent semester and look forward to all of the virtual performances to come in the months ahead!

COVID and Remote Learning Update

We acknowledge that our students and families are eager to know if and when we can return to in person learning this year. Last week, the Secretary of Health, Dr. Rachel Levine, and Acting Secretary of Education at PDE, Noe Ortega, updated their guidance regarding instructional models and recommended public schools in counties with substantial transmission consider returning elementary school students to in-person instruction while secondary school students remain fully remote. Further, they acknowledge that local school leaders are best positioned to make instructional decisions that account for the county level transmission metrics and additional local factors; this includes the size of the school entity, classroom size, school resources, the proportion of staff and students with special needs and underlying health conditions, and the ability to accommodate remote learning with equal access for all students.

The two counties which represent the majority of our student population are Northampton and Lehigh counties. The positivity rates continue to be at an all-time high of 18% and 19.5% respectively. Additionally, all of the other counties where our students reside are still in the substantial category of COVID-19 spread.

Additionally, the PA Department of Health released information on their [COVID-19 Vaccine Information](#) website to track vaccine phases, and education workers are positioned to get the vaccine in Phase 1B. PA is still in Phase 1A of vaccinations, and our local health networks have prioritized vaccination for school nurses and school-based therapists. At this time, only the Pfizer-BioNTech product is approved for those aged 16 and 17. All individuals not previously covered who are 16 and older and do not have a contraindication to the vaccine are scheduled, as outlined, in Phase 2.

Therefore, Charter Arts will continue with remote learning through at least the end of Quarter 3, March 26, 2021. Spring Break is still scheduled for March 29-April 5, 2021. We will resume in-person experiences as soon as Northampton County is in a moderate level of spread for at least two consecutive weeks. As always, we will continue to monitor the [COVID Early Warning Dashboard](#) provided by the PA Department of Health, and we will keep you up-to-date as we have new information to share.

Q2 grading updates

As we head into the final two weeks of Quarter 2, we have made some changes to our grading procedures for the remainder of the semester. As a school, we acknowledge the challenges that come with remote learning and the COVID pandemic for our students. The following changes are based on both anecdotal feedback and school-wide grade book data analysis:

Grades for missing work

- Teachers will enter a 45 as a placeholder instead of a zero (our usual practice) during Quarter 2. This is to encourage students to remain engaged in learning and stay motivated.
 - To clarify, the 45 is still a “placeholder” and the intention is for students to submit the work when they return from an absence or late if not submitted by the original due date.
 - This added buffer for students will stay in effect through the end of Q2 and will be re-evaluated for the 2nd semester.

Late policies

- While departmental late policies may still apply, teachers will update their policies to allow students to submit late work of high quality.
 - In other words, if a student completes a missing assignment by the end of the quarter and meets the assignment expectations, they will earn at least a passing grade if not higher.
 - Updated late policies will stay in effect through the end of the 20-21 school year.

We hope that these changes will allow students who have fallen behind to feel more capable of “catching up”. This is a difficult time for students, and our goal is to help students to see their growth and mastery and to enjoy learning, even if it is passed the deadline. As students process all that is going on in the world today, we do not want them to give up or feel without hope because they have fallen behind on schoolwork. Thank you in advance for any support you can provide to help students manage their workload. If your child is struggling due to COVID-19, or for any other reason, please contact their school counselor, our school nurse, or a member of the administration. We are here to support you and your family.

Monday calls

Students have let us know that one of the things they miss most about in-person learning is the connection with staff each day. To make a weekly connection with students, starting January 25th the Charter Arts administration will begin “Motivation Monday”, a weekly Monday morning call to students to start the week with a friendly Charter Arts voice.

Attendance reminder

Although we are in remote learning, all school days count toward compulsory school attendance. Therefore, students must be present for school Monday through Friday. Wednesday asynchronous days are still considered school days. Students must make every effort to be available for conferences with teachers and use this day to complete school work and projects independently or collaboratively with peers. If students have a job, it is important to make their employer aware that Wednesday is an official school day. If you need documentation from Charter Arts for your employer, please contact the Main Office; we are happy to provide you with a letter.

School pictures

We are happy to inform you that we have partnered with Christmas City Studios to offer our students 2020-21 school pictures at their studios in Bethlehem Township (just 6.2 miles from Charter Arts). This is being offered as a courtesy to families and is not required. You may use this photo for the 2021 yearbook. Seniors who had portraits taken do not need to get another photo but are welcome to sign up.

Pictures will take place on **Wed, February 3rd and Sun, Feb 7th** and you must sign up in advance. [Please use this sign up genius link](#) to choose a time slot and to see the Christmas City COVID guidelines and safety procedures.

Lehigh Valley Charter High School for the Arts Picture Days

Pictures will be held at Christmas City Studio
3200 Farmersville Rd, Bethlehem, PA 18020
February 3 & 7, 2021
9am - 2pm

You **MUST SIGN UP** and **MUST** be a student that attends this school in order to sign up

To prepay for your order go to:
ORDERS.CHRISTMASCITYSTUDIO.COM
and enter School Code:
LVCHSA20
(Prepay code expires 48 hours after picture day)

FROM OUR FAMILY TO YOURS

This season looks a lot different than any we can remember. We've made significant changes to our procedures and workflows to ensure the safety of our employees, customers and families. **One of the biggest changes we've made is the elimination of the classic School Picture Order Form.** This is a huge change for us, many of our customers prefer to use a traditional order form, but we felt eliminating the physical paper form was the safest move for our entire community. Please use the information listed above to access your Online Order Form and complete your school picture order Online.

Thank you for your order and we're proud to be here with our schools and our families through thick and thin.

Visit christmascitystudio.com/fallpictures for information on the rest of the safety precautions we've implemented.

CHRISTMAS CITY STUDIO
3200 Farmersville Rd, Bethlehem, PA 18020
christmascitystudio.com • 610.691.2109 • 888.962.7289

Thank you to all who attended our fall virtual performances! We appreciate your support more than you know. We have a variety of exciting free and ticketed virtual events planned for the spring season that we will announce soon. Until then, please see the below list of events for January. We hope to “see” you there.

Virtual performances for January
additional Spring events coming soon!
1/14 - 6PM - *Literary Arts* Virtual “Lodge” Reading
1/22 - 6PM - *Literary Arts* 9th Grade Virtual Poetry Showcase
1/22 - *Production Arts* - Costume Gallery Virtual Opening
1/22 -25 Theater - Episode 2 - The Mirror Warriors of Harmony Hills
Children’s Show
Check out the Charter Arts Website for future dates, times, & tickets!

Wishing you a happy and healthy start to 2021!

The Administrative Team

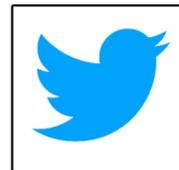
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