



Greetings Families,

I hope that you and your children are well. I wanted to start off by acknowledging that we here at Lafayette Academy know what you are going through with the gaps in certainty regarding this upcoming school year. Believe me, we know and we are working around the clock during the summer to plan out everything so your children can get the best education possible. There is still some information we do not know, but that doesn't mean we haven't been planning regardless. We created an entire school schedule based on what we know and what is best for the kids, and new information might come out that forces me to scrap hours and hours of work. It's okay; we'd rather be prepared and then change things as opposed to just waiting around doing nothing.

I am aware that many of you are waiting to receive your child's cohort and schedule for the upcoming year; we will do our best to get the information distributed by today, tomorrow at the latest. Before we distribute any tentative schedules we want to ensure that we have the most up to date information regarding Special Education, ENL, and remote learning services. We apologize for the delay; however, I believe it is best to get you the most accurate information in due time, rather than make any assumptions.

I'm going to be hosting another Parent Meeting on Wednesday, September 2nd at 5pm. During this meeting, I will further explain the updates outlined below, add any new information, and of course answer questions.

Below is the link:

<https://meet.google.com/ztk-ejco-esz>
(US) +1 570-427-3285 PIN: 448 200 619#

As I have always said, my approach to education, leadership, and community building has always been focused around one word: transparency. In the spirit of transparency, below are topics that my team and I have been working on, and continue to work on.

Here's what we know, in no specific order of importance:

Class Organization and Scheduling

Class/Cohort – First, every student will be placed into a CLASS. This year we have 7 class sections (601, 602, 603, 701, 702, 801, 802). Everyone in the same class will have the same teachers and instructional materials regardless of being remote, in-person, or at home on an “off” day. Each student will be assigned a specific COHORT, or pod, which determines the day they come in and who they'll be in class with. This will come to you early next week. A student in A62 will be a student that comes in on the “A” days, the 6th indicates the grade, and the 2 indicates the cohort number they'll be in.

Class Setup – There will be 6 cohorts in the building at a time and it will be a mix of 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students. This means that there will be 6 classrooms designated to hold students, as the students will not be travelling to different classes during the day. Within the classroom, 8 students will be seated at least 6 feet



away from each other, wearing facial protection. Throughout the day your student will see the same two teachers who will be splitting their time being in and out of the room, who also will be wearing PPE and maintaining social distance guidelines as applicable. The students will be using laptops throughout the day to receive instruction. Your children will be receiving synchronous(live) instruction, but it will not be a teacher standing at the front of the room.

Schedules - Every student, whether they are full remote, blended-in school, or blended-at home will receive the same 5 period schedule as the rest of the students in their class. If you are in 701, despite where you are, you will have ELA class at the same time as all the other 701 students. Each class will be 55 minutes, continuing our successful tradition at Lafayette Academy of having longer classroom periods. This allows the students more time to dive into the exciting curricula that our teachers are creating. If a student in class 603 starts math class at 11:00am, they will start by going to their “math classroom” on Google Classroom and opening the powerpoint/slide show/video that will be uploaded every day by the teachers at 8:30am and participate with beginning part of the lesson. Again, this can be done at 11:00am regardless of what your child’s location is. Once that portion is done, the students will jump on a LIVE google meeting where they will be with their teachers and participate in additional activities and discussions. The class will end at 11:55am and additional work may need to be completed as homework. At 11:55am a new class will start. This model brings you live instruction daily whether you chose the remote or blended-learning model. Teachers will still have office hours for additional assistance and will be provided time to answer student questions/concerns either live or via email. If your child is unable to follow the schedule as the times are, accommodations will be made.

Yearly Schedule - There is a TENTATIVE schedule attached to this letter outlining which cohorts will come on which days. I say tentative because the DOE has not yet released a full school year schedule. There may be professional development days or different holidays being observed by the DOE that may move the assigned days. If that is the case, I will edit the document and send you out a new one. I wanted to get this out to you to get an idea of what your child’s yearly schedule will be like.

Attendance - The DOE still needs to take attendance everyday for both city and state purposes. This means that whether you are in the building or not, each morning you will need to go into the “Attendance Classroom” on Google Classroom and “sign in”. (Your student will explicitly be shown how to do this once the school year begins) This will allow us to track attendance and then upload the correct information into the central DOE system. If a student forgets to do this, there will be an “Attendance Correction Form” at our website lafayetteacademynyc.com

SPED/ENL Services - Our Special Education Coordinator and our ENL Coordinator have been working hard this summer thinking out of the box as we continue to wait for specific guidance from the state on these topics. As soon as more information comes out, we will be providing you with it.

School Building Protocols for In-Person Learning

Entrance Procedures –The official school hours for students this year are 8:30 am - 2:00 pm. In order to stagger entrance times and help prevent groups gathering together, students/families will be notified of when their child should line up to enter the building on their scheduled day. Entrance times will be staggered as such: 8:30 am, 8:40 am, 8:50 am, or 9:00 am. Students will be given either an 8:30 am slot, 8:40am, 8:50am, and 9:00am slot. We will be coming in on 92nd street using the entrance on the **WEST** side of the street closer to Amsterdam. There will be markings separated by 6 feet and the students are expected to stand by those markers as they line up to come. Staff will be outside to help maintain social distancing and to move

students who come early to a designated spot to prevent gatherings. When the students enter the building, they will have their temperatures checked.

Lateness – We strongly encourage children not to be late to school. If a child must come late the staff member at the 92nd street entrance will be at that door until 9:20am. If your child is coming after 9:20am, they will need to go through the 93rd street front entrance, where they will have to wait until a member of the Lafayette Academy staff can come greet them and take their temperature.

Dismissal – In order to allow for social distancing, dismissal times will be staggered from 1:45pm until 2:00pm. We will be using the same doors for dismissal as we did for entering the building. If the student was given the earliest entrance time, they will be given the earliest dismissal time as well.

Directional Hallways – We will be using one directional hallways during all times of the day except for entrance and dismissal. The first floor hallway will be going SOUTH and the second floor hallway will be going NORTH. There will be instances where a student on the first floor will need to go up the staircase at the south end of the hallway, walk down the second floor hallway, then down the stairs to get to the bathroom. It may be an inconvenience but it is to prevent students from being within 6 feet of each other, and it will be a good opportunity to walk around after being in the same room for the whole day.

Lunch/Breakfast – Both lunch and breakfast will be in bags as the students come in. They will be on a cart as they enter the first floor, or a cart as they head to class on the second floor. If you would like to send your child with breakfast and/or lunch it is encouraged but please know that students will not have access to a refrigerator or a microwave. To prevent students all taking their masks off at the same time, breakfast and lunch will be staggered for each child. The DOE states that we can feed students lunch between the hours of 10am and 2pm. We will be having one student eat in the room at a time to only allow for 1 mask to be off in the room. A student may get a 10:30am lunch time on one day, the next time at 12:10pm, one time might not be until 1:4pm. It will switch every time the student is in the building. The same will go for breakfast. We encourage kids to eat breakfast before they come to school. Students will be notified of their eating schedule as they come in. As per DOE guidance, lunch time is also instructional time. To the best of your child's ability, they should try to engage in a "working lunch" mentality. For elementary students there is a designated lunch period, but no so for the middle/high schools.

Bathroom – There is a boys and girls bathroom on the first floor as well as a gender neutral bathroom on the basement level (which would require the use of a key). Only one student is allowed in the bathroom at a time, and there will be a vacancy sign on the door that the students will turn as they enter/leave the bathroom, and markers on the ground to allow for a line to form. There will be separate markers for each gender and each marker will be 6 feet away from each other. Additional handwashing signage will be put up in each bathroom.

Water Fountain – We have a water fountain on each floor. Both water fountains have the capability to fill up bottles. We strongly recommend kids bring bottles that can be filled as opposed to drinking straight from the fountain itself. We are awaiting guidance as to see if drinking straight from water fountains will even be allowed.

Technology – Prior to March we had a 1 to 1 student to laptop ratio, but we needed to provide a number of our students with laptops to take and use in their homes for remote learning. Therefore, we may not have a designated laptop in school for each individual student (we did get a \$50,000 technology grant from Gale Brewer and are hoping to purchase a laptop for each student to use in class as soon as these funds become available). In the meantime, students in school may need to use a laptop shared with two other students from different days. We will be coming up with cleaning protocol for both before and after laptop use. I might

recommend that you try to get a laptop keyboard cover that can be placed over the keys for protection. To prevent any potential dangerous situations, I would not recommend students carry laptops to and from school.

COVID-Isolation room - Room 204 has been designated by Lafayette Academy as the Isolation Room. An Isolation room is for any student who becomes symptomatic during the day. The student will be accompanied to the room by a staff member where they will await the nurse. Based on the nurse's evaluation, that child will either be returned to the classroom, be allowed to leave the building, or await a parent to come pick them up. No student will be allowed to leave the building WITHOUT parental consent.

Dismissal Permission Slip - The DOE is allowing middle school families to sign a "Dismissal Permission Slip," which will enable your child to go home on their own if they need to leave the building once they've entered. With this slip signed, any student who is symptomatic but can make it back to their home alone will be allowed to do so. If the slip is not signed, any student who is symptomatic will wait in the Isolation room under supervision of a staff member until a parent or guardian picks them up.

Non-Instructional Room - The DOE has required schools to create a non-instructional room for students who come to the building on the wrong day. The DOE is trying to prevent more students being in the building than is safely possible. If your child comes on the wrong day they will either be able to leave because of the Dismissal Permission Slip, or will sit in the non-instructional room without access to a laptop or their classes, waiting for a parent to pick them up .

COVID Related Discipline - The DOE has yet to provide new specific guidance around discipline for COVID related situations. I believe they are working on this now as there will need to be a protocol detailing actions for students who do not abide by the DOE mandated safety precautions. Once guidance is provided to me, I will send it to you.

Outdoor Space - Unfortunately, because of ongoing construction, the amount of outdoor space on school grounds is very small. As a building, we have applied to get access to additional outdoor space and are awaiting a response. We have not yet planned how we would utilize the space, but we will let you know if our request is approved.

Lockers/Bookbags - Lockers will NOT be available for students this year for safety purposes. Bookbags are encouraged for bringing supplies you might want with you, books you're reading, and carrying lunch, but for the most part work will be done on the laptop and saved in Google Classroom.

Uniforms - Indefinitely uniforms at Lafayette Academy will be suspended. Considering the students will be in the classroom at the same desk for an extended period of time, we want our students to be as comfortable as possible. Student outfits still need to be appropriate for a school environment (no shorts that are too short, spaghetti strap tops, tank tops, sleeveless shirts, or clothing depicting something inappropriate).

Cell Phones - Students will be allowed to keep their cell phones on them, on silent/vibrate mode. Students are not to use their cell phones during class. After an initial warning there will be disciplinary action for students using cell phones during class. Students WILL be allowed to use their cell phones in non-classroom locations to allow them to speak with their parents. Phones in the office will not be available for students as there is no current guidance on cleaning phones after each use. If a child does not have a cell phone, we will create a policy and location where they can use a shared phone.

Online Learning and Grading Platforms

Jupiter Ed - Jupiter Ed is our online grading program that we use where you will be able to monitor your child's grades and completion of assignments. Teachers at Lafayette are really good with keeping the grade book updated so that you have the most "real-time" understanding of how your child is progressing. Each student and parent should have already gotten a username/password to access their accounts. If this has not already happened, it will shortly. Jupiter Ed is also the BEST way of communicating with teachers. The Lafayette Academy staff is very diligent with responding to email as well.

Google Classroom - Lafayette Academy will continue to use Google Classroom as our online learning platform. Students should have already received their new 256 email address that will allow them to access their school email accounts as well as Google Classroom.. In Google classroom, students will find teacher created classroom for each subject. The lessons, materials, and live instruction links will be posted in each classroom daily.

Grading Policy - We are currently working on modifying the grading policy we created in March and will get that out to you as soon as possible. The DOE still has not released guidance as to whether students will be receiving letter grades this school year, but we will let you know as soon as we can.

Communicating with Teachers and Staff

Parent Meetings - Because we are trying to limit the number of people coming into the building, as per DOE, most meetings will take place virtually. There will be a link at our school website (lafayetteacademynyc.com) where you can request a meeting with either a teacher, parent coordinator, or myself. We will find an agreed upon time and send out a link to you that will allow for us to meet. In rare cases there may be a need to meet in person and if/when that happens individuals will be 6 feet and wearing masks throughout the meeting.

There is still much more to discuss such as Advisory, social emotional learning, use of guidance counselors, and more. Once my team and I come closer to finalizing exactly what these things will look like, you will be receiving a similar letter. We are building the new handbook as we go. Thank you all for your patience, understanding, and flexibility during these unprecedented times.

I hope to see you all this Wednesday!!!!

Best,

Brian Zager
Principal, Lafayette Academy