

Dear Quest Community,

We hope you are all doing well and finding time to enjoy the warm summer months with your children.

The Quest team is working diligently to determine plans for reopening school in August. I am in frequent meetings with other heads of independent schools as well as all Quest faculty, administrators, and staff. At this point, we anticipate that the governor will move the state to the next Restore Illinois phase by the end of June. Therefore, the plan presented here incorporates the mandates detailed in Phase 4 as we physically return to campus.

If current Phase 4 mandates do not change between now and August, students in grades 1-8 will attend in the main building. They will be grouped in cohorts and remain together all day when indoors. We will incorporate CDC guidelines for sanitization, daily temperature screening of staff and students, social distancing, masks when indoors, and other precautions outlined in Phase 4. These grades will take full advantage of our outdoor spaces when possible. <https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/s/restore-illinois-introduction>

Additionally, for grades 1-8 we offer an online option for those of you who wish for your child to remain home. This program will be referred to as Virtual Attendance in order to distinguish it from the Distance Learning Program. In Distance Learning, teachers use an online platform to address the entire class in their homes. With Virtual Attendance, the child who is at home will join the school group via the computer. This option brings the classroom to the student at home.

The Preschool, Junior Kindergarten, and Kindergarten teachers are planning many creative lessons and activities for this special age group of learners that will make extensive use of our outdoor spaces, particularly our West Campus. When a cooling-off period is needed from the August heat, the classes will move indoors to the Otter room, Lemur room, and My Museum. They will be self-contained in these rooms, each with its own restroom. Health and safety guidelines for outdoors and indoors will apply, such as no masking while outside, sanitization according to the guidelines, and social distancing as practicable. Teachers are excited about the possibilities for learning opportunities that Mother Nature provides! I love the thought of math manipulatives being blades of grass and pebbles!

We are not presently instituting a hybrid plan of Virtual Attendance for PS and JK; however, your thoughts are always welcome. We are in the process of determining how to add a virtual component to the Kindergarten level.

In the event that COVID numbers escalate and the governor mandates Distance Learning again, we are preparing for that option as well. Distance Learning will be implemented only if it is state mandated for all Illinois schools.

We welcome your comments and suggestions while reminding you that we are complying with the governor's orders. It is important to note that the state mandates can be changed by executive order and we are hopeful that the requirements will be less restrictive by the beginning of school. We continue to thoroughly explore every avenue and option within our control in order to be completely prepared for a joyous reopening of school at Quest Academy!

My best,
Jacquelyn Negus
Head of School

