

NORTHLAKE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

THINK CRITICALLY • LEAD COURAGEOUSLY • SERVE FAITHFULLY

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June 1, 2020

Dear NCS Parents, Students, and Colleagues,

This afternoon's briefing by Governor John Bel Edwards, with the announcement that Louisiana would be moving to Phase 2 of the state's reopening plan on June 5, was **a welcome step towards the return to work, worship, and school that we have long anticipated.**

The Northlake Campus has been slowly coming to life, and it has been a joy to see Early Learning Center students return last week. Alumni who serve as counselors at Camp Northlake have been on campus training for new processes and procedures to ensure a safe, fun environment. Wolverine athletics coaches have been meeting to plan for sports camps and summer training beginning June 8. **The NCS administrative team has spent countless hours preparing for how we can begin summer activities now and for how we can welcome students and faculty back to campus in August!**

As I've said a number of times, we are convinced an in-person on-campus experience is the best model for mentoring, inspiring, and educating young people to **Think Critically, Lead Courageously, Serve Faithfully** - all from a biblical perspective. We increasingly believe we can provide a safe campus environment within reasonable guidelines. From Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Louisiana Department of Health, the Louisiana Department of Education, the LHSAA, and even the American Camp Association, NCS has gleaned information to inform decisions about policies, procedures, and plans for reopening.

Throughout the process, it has become increasingly clear **Northlake will need to make wise decisions guided by principles appropriate for an independent Christian school, rather than being bound by what other organizations may have to do.** As part of our research, we recently read a wonderful article ([Read Here](#)) by the President of the University of Notre Dame which addresses risk, courage, and wisdom in deciding to reopen a campus community.

Barring a significant change in the facts, we intend to open the 20-21 school year in August in as normal a manner as possible, **seeking a balance between throwing caution to the wind and cowering in fear.** While each member of the NCS community will have an opinion on what should or should not be done, I would ask that we individually and prayerfully come together for unity as we move forward. Open lines of communication and reasonable discussion will benefit us all, while gossip and speculation will divide and undermine that which we all seek: **a safe, thriving campus for our students.**

You can expect more detailed information periodically as we move closer to August. Indeed, our administrative team is currently working to determine which pieces of information must be decided in the near future, over the coming months, or in the days before the school year begins. **However, I am including a short list of questions and answers that are on everyone's mind these days.** I pray that it will give everyone an idea of the plans we are making and the approach we are taking - even as they continue to develop.

As at all times, I ask that you join us in praying for wisdom and clarity while at the same time asking for your support. We commit our plans to God as we move forward with confidence!

Yours for Christian education,

Glenn T. Martin
Head of School

Questions & Answers

Will Northlake welcome students for on-campus classes in the Fall?

Yes! Barring drastic changes in COVID-19 infection or death rates, NCS is committed to “on-campus in-person” education. There will be processes and policies in place for individuals who may need to take greater care to stay home for a period of time to do so and still participate remotely with on-campus classes.

Can parents and students expect a “normal” school day?

Yes! While you may have heard of other organizations making plans for half-day or alternating-day approaches, NCS recognizes the difficulties such plans would present for parents. NCS’ small class size, technological proficiency, and independent flexibility allow us to respond differently, tailoring an approach that works for our community.

Will students, teachers, staff, and guests need to wear masks?

The big question! NCS will monitor that which is required of employers and employees versus that which is suggested and make decisions. If we were to open tomorrow, faculty and staff would likely wear masks when interacting with students and guests where appropriate and where feasible, while students and guests would be given the option of wearing masks.

What steps will be taken to accomplish a safe campus?

While this is constantly evolving, some of the plans we are making involve temperature checks and symptom checking upon arrival for employees and students if mandated, frequent hand washing and sanitizing, scheduled cleansing and sanitizing of surfaces and common areas, adjusted schedules and seating arrangements, intentionally smaller class sections where appropriate, and investment in more thorough cleaning. Two specific steps we have already taken: we have had the campus professionally sanitized, and we are recruiting a full time nurse for NCS.

What will games, practices, and events look like?

Those who follow athletics know that the Saints, the Pelicans, LSU, and so many others are considering this question. The LHSAA will likely lay out guidelines all member schools must follow related to practices and games. Our partners at LCMC Children’s Hospital will be in close contact to help guide and advise. We cannot say exactly what athletics and events will look like at this time, but we cannot imagine school without the cauldron of competition and the training athletics provide.

Will students be able to utilize playgrounds, the cafeteria, buses, and other facilities?

Similarly, this is an evolving topic. Buses may be limited in capacity in ways we have not seen before, as may facilities. However, playing outside, fresh healthy cafeteria options, chapels & assemblies, and so much more are integral to the overall educational experience, and NCS is committed to maintaining as much normalcy as possible.