



Questions and Answers and Seeking Grace

July 31, 2020

The 2020-2021 school year will begin in three weeks. Let us all take a collective breath.

Aquin doesn't have a crystal ball – but we have shared a roadmap with you last week. We do know that the best direction that we can go is forward. I do appreciate that we will be side-by-side as we go together into a new journey of education and faith in the new school year.

This week's Return to Learn updates will come in the form of a question/answer.

I assure you, we have spent considerable time considering many topics and we are happy to share. Let's take one more breath – remember peace – and let's dive in together.

I've heard that COVID-19 isn't really that serious. This seems like a lot of work for something that has been blown out of proportion. Why is Aquin (and why are other schools) doing so much?

In just about every other situation, it is the responsibility of a school administrator to help prevent the spread of a global pandemic. Fortunately, at Aquin, we have an amazing team of teachers, community members, students, and staff members that have all had the opportunity to provide feedback, ideas, and thoughts as we continue to move towards the upcoming school year.

MASKS and FACE SHIELDS

Will the school supply face masks for students?

If a family does not have a face mask, we will help to supply face masks for students. Many children have preferences about what masks they like. Please, let us know before the school year begins so that we know if you need a mask.

My child wants to wear a face shield instead of a mask, is that OK?

Yes. Face masks and face shields are both protective PPE. Please make sure that, if a face shield is preferred and purchased for a child to wear, the shield comes down past the child's chin. Aquin will be supplying masks if a child needs one, but Aquin will not be supplying the face shields. *If you are looking to purchase a mask the following stores carry them: Target, Theisen's, Old Navy, Staples and Hy-Vee as well as online options.

Are there restrictions on the masks that a student may wear to school?

Sure... but nothing you wouldn't expect from our school. Masks should not have tobacco, drug, or alcohol related messages or designs, should be free of hate symbols or speech and should not have words or phrases that would be inappropriate for school. Aquin reserves the right to make determinations on the appropriateness of a particular mask, but if a student is requested to remove their mask due to a concern, a replacement mask will be provided to the student.

AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Will the Jr. High sports still go on as planned?

At this time the junior high seasons are scheduled to operate as planned, but please recognize that this could change for various reasons at any time.

SCHOOL SCHEDULE AND ABSENCES

What is the difference between Homeschooling and Aquin's Hybrid option?

If you choose Aquin's Hybrid model, Aquin teachers will work with you and your child on their educational program. Your child would be considered an Aquin student.

Homeschooling where you enroll in other online programs means you are responsible for your child's educational needs, not Aquin and your child would not be considered an Aquin student.

Since WD/Aquin are not having class on Fridays, do students have to make these days up? No, these days will not need to be made up.

What will my child be expected to do on Fridays?

Teachers will be providing their students with additional work they can work on on Friday. Please see the Time Allotment chart on the Return to Learn Plan.

Will the middle school students still have all the teachers teaching their subject areas or will this look different?

At this time, each Middle School teacher will be responsible for teaching her own content as usual.

Will students travel from room to room?

Depending on grade and subject area teachers may move to different classrooms and/or students may move. Students will be wearing masks during passing time in the hallway to get to the other rooms. Teachers will be expected to wipe down tables and work areas between classes if students move from room to room.

What is the protocol for Aquin students if my child has a class at CHS?

Students will be expected to follow the WD Return to Learn guidelines. Currently students will be expected to wear masks if they attend any class (PE, Algebra, Band) at the high school.

How long will these plans be in effect?

We will continue to work with Dubuque County's Health Department and the Western Dubuque Community School District to make determinations for our best steps moving forward. Of course, we would like to resume our 'normal' school days as soon as possible but that may mean waiting until a vaccine is widely available, until treatments become more understood, or until enough individuals develop antibodies to the virus and are not as easily spread. We will continue to monitor the situation and adapt as necessary to the realities of the world around us. **Note: WD will be reevaluating the No School option for the following trimester.

DAILY ROUTINES AT AQUIN

What will lunch look like at Aquin?

Students will be expected to wash hands before lunch.

Students will sit with their class in the lunchroom. Tables will be arranged to allow space between classrooms.

Plates are pre-plated.

A sneeze guard will be installed at the lunch counter.

Lunch staff will be cleaning and sanitizing tables before and after lunch

What will breakfast look like at Aquin?

Students will be able to grab a pre-plated tray and sit in designated areas. Lunch staff will be cleaning and sanitizing tables before and after breakfast.

What will recess look like at Aquin?

Students will be required to wash their hands upon re-entering the building. Our large playground will allow us to social distance ourselves easier. Classrooms will be staggered and grades will be using their own equipment.

What will it look like in Music? PE? Technology class? Library? Band?

Music-chairs will be set up to allow social distance-the gym will be used if needed. Chairs facing forward. Teacher will wear a face shield or mask. Instruments will be wiped down after each classroom use. Classes are scheduled so there is a time allowed between classes to clean. There will be hand sanitizer in the classroom.

Technology- Classes are scheduled so there is a time allowed between classes to clean. Students will be assigned seating and spread out for social distancing. Students will wear masks when unable to social distance. Teacher will wear a face shield or mask. There will be hand sanitizer in the classroom.

PE will be held outside as much as possible, weather permitting. Shared equipment will be cleaned between classes. Students will wash their hands following class. Teacher will wear a face shield or mask. Students may wear masks depending on the activity.

Library-Classrooms will be able to use the library. The librarian will wear a mask or face shield.. Books will be wiped down upon return.

Band-We are currently working with our band instructors on protocol.

Will students be able to attend Mass together each week?

Father Mark has graciously scheduled two Masses a week to allow for students to attend Mass on different days, which will allow for better social distancing among classrooms. A schedule will be found on our website in mid-August.

When will students be expected to wear their masks (2-8 required, Pk-1 optional)?

Students will wear masks in the classrooms, hallways, bathroom, passing time, if they ride the bus, mass and when social distancing is not possible.

When will students NOT have to wear their masks?

Recess, lunch, when students can social distance, and scheduled mask breaks

What will it look like in the classroom?

Classrooms will be arranged to allow for as much distance as possible.

Teachers will build in mask breaks. Students will wear masks when social distancing isn't feasible. Teachers will wipe down classroom surfaces twice a day

Each child will be provided with their own personal hand sanitizer bottle. (PreK-K teachers will help dispense this.)

There will be hand sanitizers by the door

What will morning drop off look like?

Students are expected to wear their masks upon entering the building (2-8 required and PreK-1 optional) Students will be allowed to enter the classrooms by 7:50. Classes will begin at 8:10.

What will end-of-the-day pick up look like?

Car pick up:

Students will be separated by the alphabet by family in the entryway and Title I room and chapel to allow students to be socially distant. Parents or guardians will use the circle drive. Staff on duty will call students by the order of the vehicle. Students will be expected to wear masks in the entryway of school while they wait.

Bus:

Students will be escorted to the bus door. Students will be expected to wear masks while waiting for the bus. .

What if my child has an appointment. What are your requirements?

Parents or guardians are asked to wait in the front entrance area of the school (between the outside and inside doors) Buzz the office and Vicki Knepper will ring the classroom and sign out your child. Emails or calls in the morning to notify the office ahead of time is appreciated.

What if I need to drop something off for my child at school?

Call the office 10 minutes before coming to the building

Enter at the main entrance.

Buzz in the office to notify you have arrived and leave items in the entryway for office staff to pick up.

What if my child rides the bus?

Students in grades 2-8 who ride the WD busses will be required to wear masks. Masks on the bus for students in grades PreK-1 will be optional. (per WDCSD Return to Learn Plan)

Students will be expected to sit with family members on the bus. There will be assigned seats.

Busses will be cleaned before and after routes each day.

What about large assemblies, field trips?

Aquin will suspend large assemblies and field trips through Trimester 1. We will reevaluate this mid October.

What about bringing snacks to school or birthday treats? We ask that all class treats and/or snacks provided by students and/or staff be prepackaged. Nothing homemade at this time.

My child attends the Aquin's Little Angels Latchkey program. Are there guidelines in regards to health and safety there? We are reaching out to DHS and other supports to get additional guidance in regards to school age children. We will update this when we have that information.

Closing Thoughts

Thank you for recognizing the difficulties in planning for a year – but also, thank you for recognizing the efforts that have gone into making the very best decisions we can.

May God bless you and your family as summer comes closer to an end. May God bless our schools and our community as we come closer to a new beginning. May God bless our country and our world and may He continue to guide us.

Vicki Palmer