

August 9, 2021

Dear Cristo Rey Brooklyn Families:

“While we desperately want to be done with this pandemic, COVID-19 is clearly not done with us, and so our battle must last a little longer. . . . This is hard. This is heavy. But we are in this together.”

-Dr. Rochelle P. Walensky, Director of the CDC, quoted in The New York Times, 8/3/21

“But we are in this together” is a great way to begin. We write to share several very important details as we prepare for the 2021-22 school year. This is a critical year for us. All of us, but most of all our students, are emerging from an extraordinary period of separation, isolation and uncertainty during this past year and a half of the pandemic. Everything we value and work hard to provide for our students - parents and educators together - has been affected: how they learn, how they develop a sense of confidence in themselves, how they connect with others and make life-long friendships, how they express their physical, artistic and other creative talents through sports and activities, how they experience and respond to the love of God through prayer, worship and service in community with others. **All** of this has been affected, changed and in many ways diminished because of this awful coronavirus. So, it is with great urgency and in holy boldness that we plan to be back better, all of us, together. We have been reminded that in the work with and for adolescents, the most powerful method and the most necessary way is to be in the presence of one another. We need time for our students to heal, to learn what they haven’t yet, to restore and build up the bonds of community, and then, with confidence and strength and in hope, to spring forth like Panthers do and show the wider world just how capable our young women and men truly are.

So here’s what we ask and expect, keeping in mind “We are in this together.”

1. All in-person. All members of the CRB community will return to our traditional schedule of 4 days of in-person learning and 1 day of in-person Corporate Work Study Program participation starting in September. *We will no longer offer the option of remote learning.*

2. Health & Safety Protocols. We will continue to abide by the required public health guidance set by the NY State and NYC Departments of Health. At this time, as we see the number of new COVID-19 infections and hospitalizations in New York City significantly increasing because of the highly contagious Delta variant, we will take these steps to assure the health and safety of everyone in our community. We will require universal mask wearing indoors for all teachers, staff, students and visitors **regardless of vaccination status**. We will continue to wash and sanitize hands often, observe safe social distancing and complete a daily health screening questionnaire and temperature check upon entering school.

3. Vaccination! Our Summer Training Program for incoming students, and our Summer Institute for returning students, are underway in person. The positive energy created by students, faculty, and staff in the building together is uplifting! To sustain this powerful learning environment, it is critical that every eligible student, teacher, and staff member be vaccinated against COVID-19. We have made some progress toward this goal but for the sake of protecting everyone in the strongest way possible, **we need to do better**. We strongly encourage those who are not yet vaccinated to begin the process today, so we are all protected against COVID-19 before school resumes. (Please note: CRBHS understands that some individuals have medical conditions preventing vaccination.) To achieve our goal of full vaccination, we

will help one another. *CRBHS is developing plans with Life of Hope to sponsor a series of vaccination clinics at school later this month. We will send more information when the details are set.*

Being vaccinated has many benefits:

- Protecting you and your loved ones: COVID-19 is a serious illness which can have long-term effects. Currently, virtually all hospitalizations and deaths from COVID-19 occur in people who have not been vaccinated. Being vaccinated can prevent these bad outcomes.
- Corporate Work Study Program (CWSP) eligibility: CWSP is a defining feature of a Cristo Rey education and participating in CWSP is a requirement. We expect most of our CWSP partners to require their employees (and CRBHS student workers) to be fully vaccinated to enter the office. Being vaccinated allows students to meet that workplace requirement.
- Athletics & Extracurricular activity eligibility: Some activities (e.g., singing, drama, team sports) carry a greater risk of exposure to COVID-19 and may require students to be vaccinated to participate.
- Avoiding quarantine: Fully vaccinated students will not be required to quarantine (and miss two weeks of school) if they are exposed to the virus but remain symptom-free.

4. COVID-19 Testing. *Unvaccinated students, faculty and staff will be required to be tested weekly using our school-based COVID-19 testing service.* The testing is free of charge. Families will have to register their information and provide a permission slip for your son or daughter to participate. More information to follow.

Please complete the vaccination survey in the enclosed link. We need this information to plan for CWSP placements, student scheduling and to inform the testing service how many members of our student, faculty and staff community are still not vaccinated and therefore will be required to participate in weekly COVID-19 testing. **Be sure to complete the survey by this Wednesday, August 11, 2021.**

We are in this together. Thank you for your understanding and continued generous response to our plans and expectations for this new year. Together we will keep the CRBHS community healthy and strong. As we get closer to the start of classes in September, we will hold a ZOOM meeting for parents and students to share more information about our plans and protocols that will be in place at school.

We close with a different source for our same theme of “we are in this together.” St. Paul writes to us, through his consoling message to the believers in the community of Corinth, “We are all members one of another in the mystical body of Christ...an injury to one is an injury to all...and it is by little and by little that we are saved.”

Blessings and thanks be to each and all of you,



Mr. William Ford
President



Ms. Deanna Philippe
Principal