

MODEL LABORATORY SCHOOLS

AT EASTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

August 27, 2021

Dear Model Families,

All of us at Model are excited to welcome students back to in-person school on **Monday, August 30!** As a reminder, this year's school day runs from **8:00 a.m. – 3:05 p.m.** To accommodate parents' working schedules, we have resumed drop-off beginning at 7:30 a.m.

As you likely know, all Kentucky schools must follow the Kentucky Board of Education Emergency Regulations regarding COVID-19. Specifically, this means that all students, faculty, staff, and visitors must cover their nose and mouth with a cloth mask/face covering while in the school building. Model will continue contact tracing this school year so, **should your child test positive prior to the first day of school, contact Kim Puckett (Kim.Puckett@eku.edu)** so that we may provide information about school assignments.

Some have inquired as to why Model is not replicating the virtual instruction format or option that was available in the 2020-21 school year. For the previous school year, the Kentucky General Assembly authorized the Kentucky Department of Education to provide unlimited nontraditional instruction days for Kentucky schools. This meant that schools like Model could implement virtual or hybrid options for a portion of the school day. **The Kentucky General Assembly and the Kentucky Department of Education have returned to the cap of 10 NTI days per school district per year.** School districts could apply to the Kentucky Department of Education to offer an alternative remote educational program that is separate and different from the in-person option; districts that are providing this option most frequently draw upon self-paced, computer program offerings or have a large enough population to create full sections offered virtually.

The state also requires that students who are isolated or quarantined due to COVID-19 are counted as absent (excused with a doctor's note or positive COVID-19 test results). Students could be counted present if they apply and qualify for homebound instruction based on medical conditions. The Kentucky Department of Education also permits a school to count a child present if provided 6 hours of daily virtual instruction, which Model does not have the capacity nor believes is an appropriate approach for student learning as Model's pedagogical approach emphasizes active, engaged learning and activities.

And as a reminder from our earlier communication, our goal is to promote a healthy school community that contributes to a healthy Madison County community and beyond. Some of the practices we have encouraged and will continue to encourage include:

- Frequent handwashing and sanitizing
- Physical distancing as much as possible
- Outdoor learning and dining opportunities (weather-permitting)
- Encouraging vaccinations for those who are eligible

Our primary goal is to keep school open in order to provide the kind of education that we understand is best. While it is likely that Model will be similar to many other schools across the country where students are out because of a positive test or contact tracing, we will be providing assignments through Google Classroom to minimize educational disruption. **It will be critical for parents to check with their children (or child's teacher) to ensure that they know how to access the courses' Google Classrooms.**

While earlier this summer we had hoped that we would not find ourselves where we presently are, we are responding in real-time to ever-changing community health situations. Please know that I am committed to communicating with you as I receive information. Despite this year's continuing challenges with COVID-19, all our teachers and staff have spent this past week planning what we intend to be an exciting and rewarding educational experience for all our students. We are looking forward to seeing our students back for another world-class school year. I sincerely appreciate our Model community, who have been so supportive and understanding of our school leaders, teachers, and staff.

Sincerely,



John Williamson
Superintendent, Model Laboratory Schools

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