



November 1, 2020

Dear Ivymount Families,

In line with our criteria for on-site programs and the current rise in COVID-19-related public health data and trends, **we are regretfully canceling our Phase One Return Plan scheduled to begin on November 9.** Students who were scheduled to return the week of November 9 for the on-site option of their program will not return at this time. Together, with our Board of Directors and medical advisors, we will begin to look at alternatives to our plans and report back to you regularly.

After successfully resuming some on-site programming for our Early Childhood Clinic in July and the Maddux School in mid-October, we were optimistic that we would begin a gradual return for our initial group of Ivymount School students next week. Although only 64 students were scheduled to participate in this initial phase (56% of the invited students), it represented the first step toward our eventual return to campus. While we have all been concerned with flu season and colder months, the COVID-19 numbers have risen faster than we anticipated.

Unfortunately, the significant increase in new COVID-19 cases and community transmission nationally and locally have required us to re-evaluate our plans. Last week, the number of cases in Maryland was as high as it was the week of July 25. This past Thursday and Friday, Maryland saw more than 900 new cases, which has not previously occurred, except once, in August. Additionally, Montgomery County had its highest cases per 100K since mid-June. **Please see the chart below for more information on the change in numbers.**

Since we announced Phase 1 on October 12, staff have been working diligently to provide our remote program while also preparing for the return to campus. Directors, Operations, Technology, and Program Staff have focused on ensuring a carefully planned and organized return. **I want to thank our staff for their contributions and dedication to bringing students back for in-person learning.**

The building and classrooms are almost ready for students; with signs posted for each cohort zone, technology for concurrent instruction, desks marked and spaced apart with plexiglass barriers, and a large tent that was to be installed this week to cover the blacktop for lunches. This Tuesday, staff were scheduled to be on-site for additional training, to practice with

technology, and finalize room set up. We will continue with the planned Nov. 3 professional day.

We will also continue to host the Montgomery County Health Department's Rockville testing site in the Ivymount parking lot on Tuesday. **Students previously scheduled to return on November 9 no longer need to be tested.** However, families who may still want to have their child tested to prepare and practice for the required testing before our eventual return are welcome to do so at Ivymount this Tuesday from 10 am to 5 pm. We will plan testing again prior to our next scheduled return.

As partners, we have worked together to ensure the health of the Ivymount Community. Governor Hogan [renewed the state of emergency](#) on Thursday stating, *"While Maryland's positivity and case rates remain lower than most states in America, we are closely monitoring increases in some of our key health metrics as well as rising numbers in states across the country. This crisis is far from over, and this virus does not recognize state borders. I want to remind Marylanders that the only way to keep our state open for business is to avoid traveling to hotspots and continue following the public health guidelines. We cannot let our guard down, and we must remain vigilant."*

The [COVID-19 Guidance for Maryland Schools](#) calls for on-site programs to be reassessed when the new case rate per 100K increases by 2 per 100K or test positivity rate increases by 1.5% within 2 weeks. Three weeks ago, new case rates increased by 2, then remained high but stable, and this week's case rates increased again by 2 or more across Maryland State, Montgomery County, and our blended figure.

See the chart below, which includes figures and guidance from:

- [Maryland Department of Health Matrix for School Reopening](#)
- [CDC Indicators for Dynamic School Reopening](#)
- [COVID-19-Guidance-Maryland-Schools](#)

<b>Guidance</b>	<b>As of Oct 12, 2020</b> Board Approval of Phase 1 Return to Campus Plan	<b>As of Oct 31, 2020</b> Notification of delay in Phase 1 Return to Campus Plan
<p><u><a href="#">Maryland Department of Health Matrix for School Reopening</a></u> p.3</p>	<p><b>Cases per 100K (average per 7 days)</b> MD = 9 MC = 8 PG = 11.5 DC = 7.5 FFX = 5.8</p> <p><b>Test Positivity</b> &lt; 5 across counties</p> <p><b>Instructional Model</b> Data supported an instructional model considering a hybrid or partially in-person programs</p>	<p><b>Cases per 100K (average per 6-7 days)</b> MD = 13.7 MC = 13 PG = 14.6 DC = 10.8 FFX = 10</p> <p><b>Test Positivity</b> &lt; 5 across counties</p> <p><b>Instructional Model</b> <u>Data supports only limited in-person programs. Risk of increasing to 15, which does not support on-site programming.</u></p>
<p><u><a href="#">CDC Indicators for Dynamic School Reopening</a></u></p>	<p><b>Cumulative new cases over 14 preceding days</b> All 4 counties (MC, DC, PG, and Fairfax) were in the "higher risk" category (second-highest of a 5 category scale).</p> <p><b>Trends</b> There were no significant trends.</p>	<p><b>Cumulative new cases over 14 preceding days</b> All 4 counties (MC, DC, PG, and Fairfax) continue to fall in the "higher risk" category (second-highest of a 5 category scale).</p> <p><b>Trends</b> <u>Weekly increases now place us in the "highest risk" of transmission in schools</u> MC = 156 cases (increase of 21.8%) PG = 185 cases (increase of 31.3%) Fairfax = 120 cases (increase of 39.2%) DC = 119 (increase of 29.7%)</p>
<p>"Schools are expected to follow applicable guidelines from the Maryland Department of Health, the local health department, and the CDC for the safe reopening of in-person instruction. Each local school system and nonpublic school, in consultation with the local health department, should review the school reopening metrics to make reopening decisions and to adjust in-person educational offerings, as necessary when the metrics indicate an increased level of risk. -" <a href="#">COVID-19-Guidance-Maryland-Schools</a></p>		

This delay in our on-site reopening plans is a disappointment for all. Thank you for your ongoing partnership during this challenging time. We will continue to invest in our remote programs and work toward a gradual return to campus when numbers have stabilized and are no longer increasing to this degree.

Sincerely,

Susan Holt  
Executive Director