

Dear Linden Waldorf School Community,

What a year the past eight weeks have been. We are barreling towards the last day of 2019-2020 at what feels like lightning speed and I want to pause and check-in with you.

Before I go on, I have to tell you how much I've enjoyed seeing many of you and your children in various Zoom calls, including our assemblies. Our inaugural online May Faire was the highlight of the week at the Drake/Moses house, for sure. One silver lining was that my college-age alumni children are home right now and joined in making flower crowns with their siblings that morning. Some habits are hard to break in a Waldorf household!

I am writing to provide an update on our plans for the 2020-2021 school year and share some context for how we are assimilating information and making decisions. Linden Waldorf School has established a re-entry task force, composed of board members, faculty, and administrative staff, that is working in consultation with health officials to develop a safe, comprehensive plan for our return to campus. There remain too many unknowns to state exactly what the school experience will be like in August, but please rest assured that we are striving for flexibility and transparency in our process, as well as in the reopening plans we develop.

We are focusing on three major areas in our planning: the health and safety of our community, the educational experience of our students, and the financial health of the school. As part of this endeavor, we are considering ways to enhance the experience of our Early Childhood parents and students. We will continue to seek your valuable feedback to help inform our decisions.

Our Commitments

Please know that we recognize the uncertainty you may be facing as you make plans for next year and we are doing our best to address the questions and concerns we are all facing as a school. I've said this elsewhere, but I want to reiterate our commitments to you:

- We are committed to preserving each family as part of our school community through these very challenging times.
- We are committed to providing a rich Waldorf educational experience for our students.
- We will continue to communicate plans and decisions as they develop.

Our Place in Nashville

Earlier this month, Mayor Cooper unveiled the [Roadmap for Reopening Nashville](#) that lays out how Nashville's economy will open in four phases. As of today, May 11, we have entered Phase 1. The plan indicates that we will move to the next phase only if there is positive improvement/stability in the metrics for 14 consecutive days and that we could see a reversion to an earlier phase at any time. **Schools are set to open in Phase 3, meaning we would need to be in Phase 1 or beyond no later than July 6 and continually meet the metrics for us to open on our scheduled date of Monday, August 17.**

Our Assumptions

We are continually monitoring all facets of this dynamic situation and we recognize that this requires adaptive planning that will evolve as the science and circumstances do. Despite the uncertainty, we are developing plans based on the following assumptions informed by the most current guidance from public health officials:

- School campuses will reopen in the 2020–2021 academic year with the probability that Nashville will experience continued outbreaks of COVID-19 that will force us to revert to earlier phases of the plan. We must prepare for the potential of localized, rolling closures for 14–28 days triggered by additional waves of infections.*
- Every aspect of our school, including our physical campus, our academic calendar, daily schedules, programming, and social habits, will require modifications based on guidance from national, state, and local health officials, which could include physical distancing, wellness checks, masks, frequent disinfecting of classrooms, as well as intermittent transitions to distance learning.
- We will not be returning to a pre-COVID “normal” for some time and social distancing is here for the foreseeable future. According to the Roadmap, persons 65 years and older and those with chronic health conditions are encouraged to stay at home whenever possible. The risk of a surge in cases that would require a return to safer-at-home or to a statewide shelter-at-home order is very real.*

*Source: [Roadmap for Reopening Nashville](#)

Returning to School: Three Plans

We are developing three plans for a return to campus. Specific decisions and additional plans regarding on-campus modifications will be finalized over the next few months and shared as promptly as practicable.

Plan A

Plan A will be to welcome all students and staff back to our beautiful campus on the first day of school, August 17. The community will follow specific health precautions which will be in accordance with our local, state, and federal requirements and will include, at a minimum, the following:

- Adults must attest to being symptom-free each day.
- Adults will be wearing masks.
- Maintenance staff will disinfect shared surfaces and equipment between uses.
- We are reducing or, in some cases, eliminating shared materials.
- We are reimagining classes, festivals, and community gatherings.

Plan B: Blended Learning

We recognize that there may be scenarios where campus would be open, but some families or staff may not be comfortable returning at that time, or families or staff may be in quarantine/isolation due to circumstances related to COVID-19. Our goal is to provide a seamless transition between these scenarios and make instruction available to all students during these periods.

Blended learning, where some students are receiving instruction via our Beyond the Classroom distance learning platform and some are receiving instruction on campus, does not change our mission or our commitment to providing a rich Waldorf educational experience. Linden's blended learning model combines synchronous (live) instruction with asynchronous (accessible anytime) instruction in a schedule intentionally designed to provide a healthy school/life balance.

Plan C: Campus Closure

Following the recommendations from local public health officials, we are preparing for a series of interruptions to on-campus learning. In the event our local community experiences a spike in COVID-19 cases and an interruption of physical operations occurs, we will promptly shift to campus-wide distance learning via our Beyond the Classroom platform.

Regardless of the mode we may find ourselves in at any given time, we will continue to educate the whole child through the head, hands, and heart. We will continue to build the capacities of confidence and resilience, encourage the pursuit of individual passions, promote life balance, encourage play and movement as a foundation of learning, and provide multisensory learning experiences. And most importantly, we will be leaning into the challenges of this new landscape together as a community of caring individuals, committed to raising the children in our care.

In closing, I want to reiterate how amazing you are. Every one of us is doing the impossible right now, personally and professionally, and you've granted us grace at every turn. For that, I thank you.

With gratitude,



Tricia Drake, Head of School

Linden Waldorf School
Serving Children in Early Childhood through Eighth Grade
3201 Hillsboro Pike • Nashville, TN 37215 • 615.354-0270 ext. 26 • lindenwaldorf.org

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