



Walsh, Jane <j.walsh@wissahickoncharter.org>

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## Weekly Wissahickon 07-24-2020

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**WCS-Fernhill** <a.oliphant@wissahickoncharter.org>  
Reply-To: WCS-Fernhill <a.oliphant@wissahickoncharter.org>  
To: j.walsh@wissahickoncharter.org

Fri, Jul 24, 2020 at 2:30 PM

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### Message from CEO

Dear Families,

I hope this finds you all well. I am writing to share the important news that Wissahickon will be in a fully remote model of instruction this fall. We will use the time we have remaining in the summer to plan for a stronger model than we were able to offer last spring.

While we believe in-person instruction is ultimately best for children, we cannot reopen our schools if it means compromising the safety of our community members. We also know that the hybrid model we have been developing was not actually a return to the typical in-school experience.

Over the past two weeks, we have seen many things that have led us to this decision including:

- [rising case numbers in our city and state](#)
- the absolute lack of clear public health metrics that would need to be met and maintained for schools to reopen safely (e.g. fewer than 50 cases for every 100,000 residents)
- [new research](#) showing that children ages ten and older spread the virus at the same rate as adults
- little definitively known of the [long term impacts](#) of the virus
- just as we feel the need to protect children, we also need to keep our staff safe and many have expressed concern over in-person models in this moment
- making this decision now leaves us with time to improve on the model we offered in the spring

I'm sure you have all seen the [plan that the district shared](#) last week at this point and many of you likely followed their Board meeting yesterday. After a long meeting where over a hundred parents, teachers, students, and administrators called for a fully remote model, the School Board of Philadelphia decided to delay their vote on a plan for a week. **We will be in a remote model regardless of their decision.**

A natural next question is when will we go back to some form of in-person instruction. We will look first to the health of our city to determine when we can return to school. Once our city's infection rate has

gone down (to a point that will hopefully be defined by public health experts), then we can look internally again at Wissahickon to measure our own ability to implement best safety practices and staffing. Because things are in flux with the district's decision making which is closely tied to what is possible with transportation, we do not know what kind of flexibility we will have around possible in-person start dates. It could be as early as sometime this fall. It could be January or later.

While we feel this is the right course of action for safety, it is not a decision that was made lightly. We know that this will present hardship for families, especially around the question of childcare and your need to get back to work. Unfortunately, this is not a moment where there is one solution that addresses all of the needs of our stakeholders concurrently. In moments such as these, safety comes first.

Families, please let [Ms. Rebecca](#) know about any extenuating hardships, and she will work with the team to determine any support the school may be able to provide.

All Fernhill families are also invited to come together for a meeting on Wednesday, July 29th from 4:00-5:00 where we will again talk through our rationale for this decision and invite you to share your questions and input. Zoom information for next week is below.

Peace,  
Kristi

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84174609852?pwd=VINRYVQ1R1pFdDB3dVpxOHd3c201dz09>

Meeting ID: 841 7460 9852

Passcode: fox

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## **\*NEW\* Updates**

### **Philadelphia Rental Assistance Has Been Updated**

Please click [here](#) for more information about the Covid-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program.

### **Follow Wissahickon Charter on Social Media**

Follow WCS on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) for important school updates and to see student learning and fun in action! And don't be shy- we love it when you like, comment, and share our posts!

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## **Important Reminders**

### **Summer Reading & Math**

Students can complete the paper packets by hand, and if you need access to them or any of the websites online, **you can find everything [HERE](#)**, including helpful videos that walk you & students through the work.

### **Summer iPad & Chromebook information and guidelines LINKED [HERE](#) <very important if you borrowed a WCS device>**

If any issues come up with your device, please email [helpis@wissahickoncharter.org](mailto:helpis@wissahickoncharter.org) ASAP. Don't wait till the end of summer.

### Additional resources

- Please check [here](#) for the City of Philadelphia's rental assistance program and eligibility requirements.
  - Check [here](#) for financial support and eligibility requirements through the PA Department of Human Services.
  - During the summer, feel free to reach out to [Ms. Rebecca](#) for any additional support as needed.
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