



July 24, 2020

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.

All Awbury families are invited to come together for a meeting on Wednesday, July 29th from 5:30-6:30 where we will again talk through our rationale for this decision and invite you to share your questions and input. Zoom information is below.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89744193436?pwd=VGZJQWdTdnh0K2lpSEFPaHZjZHVkZz09>

Meeting ID: 897 4419 3436

Passcode: tree

Peace,
Kristi