

Dear Parents,

As the new school year approaches, we are working diligently to provide the safest avenue for our students to return to campus for the first quarter of school. The CDC has recently published numerous reasons to support an on-campus learning environment, and we intend to do all that we can to provide that for our students. We know that students find the dynamic, in-person instruction and camaraderie, liveliness, and teamwork of the classroom to be integral to their success and happiness in school.

We have adjusted the start of the 2020 - 2021 school term to August 26 for upper elementary (grades 4 - 8) and August 31 for lower elementary (pre-k - grade 3). The first three school days will allow the upper-elementary students to get into the new routine with temperature checks and routines on campus and enable the older students to assist younger siblings or carpool members who join them beginning on the 31st. By delaying the start until August 26, we will be able to adjust some of the individual holiday dates and Easter break and end the year for summer on May 31 while still having our entire academic year on campus.

Although there are many difficulties and constant changes in starting any school this fall, there are many advantages that we naturally have. We have reduced the number of students in the school; all of our students remain in their static groups throughout the day; the vast majority of classrooms can be accessed directly from outside without having to go through a common hallway; each classroom has its own air conditioning units; and students do not ride to school in groups on buses. With consistent cooperation from everyone in the Lake Castle family - staff, students, and parents - we will make the best of this challenging situation.

The dates for Meet and Greet and Drop-off Days will be moved to the week of August 17. You will get details about those events from your child's homeroom teacher and from updates on our website as the dates approach. Also, please continue to visit the school website, lakecastleneworleans.com, for reopening guidelines. We review the CDC and LDH guidelines frequently, so any changes there will be reflected in our guidelines as well.

As stated in the reopening guidelines, we are still planning to offer limited after-care availability; however, until further notice, we will not be able to offer before-care in the morning. Although I understand this can be difficult, there is no plan for before-care that I am fully comfortable with. We have plans for every part of the day for students to remain solely with their classmates and not interact unnecessarily with other students. In after care, we would have a limited number of students from different classes together but in separate groups and with social distancing while no other students are on campus. Before care brings too many students from all classes together and then heading to different parts of campus while all the arriving students are crossing paths with them. Because of this reason, we simply cannot offer it at this time. We will notify you in the event that this changes in the future.

We are implementing Canvas Learning Management System this year, so you will be receiving information in the next week to log in to that account. When we send that information out, we will detail the system further. Canvas will keep you informed about assignments, important due dates, and grades for your child.

Each student's Canvas account must be set up with an email address that is unique to that student (**each student must have a different email address**). We are phoning families with multiple children at Lake Castle to confirm these addresses, or you may wish to email the school at lcnoadmin@lakecastleneworleans.com to confirm individual email addresses for each of your children. If you have a student in lower elementary, you may choose to use your email address on file for the student account. Upper-elementary students may want to use their own email address as their login, and a Gmail address would be advantageous since students may upload directly from Google Drive into Canvas. Once your student accounts are created, you may enter additional email addresses and phone numbers to sign up for and customize notifications for announcements, grades, assignments, etc. Remember that the account creation email address will be the address that the student or parent will use to login to the student account.

By now all returning students should have logged back into their Lake Castle IXL accounts. All new students will have received their log-in information by next week. If you have any trouble logging in, please contact Mrs. Jonica Calamusa in the office for assistance. Please encourage your child to work on the Continuous Diagnostic in IXL to generate personalized skill recommendations to prepare for the new year. One of the best things about IXL is that I get a great report of the students' work, so I look forward to seeing what they are doing! I enjoyed getting reports during the summer of students who were doing some extra reading comprehension or math practice; and with the live classroom feature, I can even see students who are online practicing at that very minute. Please take advantage of this awesome resource.

Enjoy the rest of summer and know that we are doing absolutely everything we can to provide your children a wonderful, productive, and safe year on campus.

Sincerely in education,

Jane McGovern