

July 29, 2021



Dear ASA Families,

The new school year is quickly approaching, and the ASA Team is back at work preparing for a celebratory first day of school **on August 17th!**

You should have already received information about registration sent out on July 26th. This letter contains some important information about returning to on-campus learning amid rising COVID-19 cases and breaking news. First and most importantly – **Yes, we will be returning to 100% on-campus instruction!** ASA will not provide hybrid or remote learning as we did last year.

The health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff on campus will continue to be our focus, and we will implement **several layers of mitigation** that follow recommendations from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) and the Maricopa County Department of Public Health along with our ASA Health and Wellness Council.

First, we strongly recommend that everyone gets vaccinated when eligible. This is the most important and reliable protective measure you can take. I am happy to report that of our vaccine eligible students, over 73% have at least 1 dose and 67% have both doses. Over 80% of our faculty and staff are also fully vaccinated. However, our students who are 12 or under do not have that option yet and we want to keep all of our students as safe as possible. **The second most effective layer of protection is consistent and correct mask use.** In accordance with the latest guidance for schools from the CDC, ADHS and MCDPH, we strongly recommend mask wearing by all students, faculty, staff, and visitors, even those who are vaccinated. Our [revised mask policy](#) is on the website. We will implement additional layers of protection including **social distancing as much as possible** and we will continue **deep cleaning and sanitization protocols** implemented last year. Weather permitting, we will have lunch outdoors, and we will provide indoor lunch options for those most impacted by heat and during heat advisory days. More detail regarding **indoor band classes** will be coming out shortly.

Although we will not be doing on campus health checks any longer, **students, teachers, and staff who have flu-like or COVID-19 symptoms should stay home and contact their healthcare provider for testing and care.** Staying home when sick with COVID-19 is essential to keep COVID-19 infections out of school and prevent spread to others. ADHS is providing schools with free pooled testing (with parent permission). **We will be implementing a targeted approach for weekly testing for classes posing the most risk such as choir and band and for younger grades of students not yet eligible for vaccination.** More information and permission slips will be sent prior to the start of school.

Consistent quarantining for those exposed to or testing positive for COVID-19 is an additional and vital layer of protection. Students, faculty, and staff who test positive for COVID-19 will quarantine following the Maricopa County Department of Public Health guidelines. County Health will be in contact regarding quarantine protocols as needed.

Together and with these important and consistent layers of mitigation in place, we can keep our community as safe as possible. While not the conditions we had hoped for, we are thrilled to be able to welcome our students back to campus for in person learning and can't wait to see you all in August!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Leah' in a cursive, flowing script.

Leah Fregulia
Head of School/CEO