



Lawrence Academy

Opening of School Model: 2020-2021 Academic Year

To All Lawrence Academy Families:

With sincere gratitude for our partnership through these complex times and with eager anticipation of being together and working together in the fall, we are offering the following outline of our plans for the 2020-2021 academic year. Here are two essential governing frameworks to understand, followed by an outline of the six key areas this summary will cover:

Frameworks

1. The following plans have been carefully formed, but are necessarily provisional: health guidelines are still emerging both generally for Massachusetts educational institutions and more specifically for schools with residential populations. Our goal and exercise, ongoing and dynamically, will be to balance the fullest extension of our educational experience with a scrupulous application of health and safety precautions and exercises as they develop—all while maintaining mission focus
2. Because these plans will be subject to further regulation and change, likely both over the course of the summer and over the course of the year, we will remain actively connected with our families, providing timely response, update, guidance and communication: for ongoing reference, current plans will soon be collected on www.lacademy.edu

Areas of focus (elaborated below):

1. Maintaining and Managing Community Health
2. Educational Program
3. Campus and Residential Experience
4. Changes to Schedule and Routine
5. Continuity of Community Experience: Extracurricular Programs and Campus Life
6. Tuition Model

1. Maintaining and Managing Community Health: Individual and Community Habits

Preserving community health—not only within our student community, but with our faculty and staff, their families, local families and the local community—will be a priority in all we do. Before we return to school in September, we will publish a full set of guidelines that will establish practices and standards, creating clear expectations around controls and habits protecting community health. In addition to social distance guidelines and carefully designed patterns for campus flow, all community members should anticipate mandatory use of face coverings. Hand-washing and sanitizing will be standard, frequently reinforced behaviors, and facility cleaning and sanitation will continue to be intensified. In addition to efforts, described more fully below, to de-densify our dormitories, residential spaces will be managed as smaller, cohort-based units, with interactions within dorms controlled to limit exposure. As

further described below, “social time” will be supervised and structured so that our communal patterns outside of our normal schedule and routine reinforce the standards established within that routine. In sum, maintaining health will be a full-time, full-force activity we will unequivocally commit to as a full community.

Therefore, reinforcing accountability and practice designed to maintain community health will be an essential prerequisite for participating in school activities. We will depend on each other to stay healthy so that we may continue to function as fully as possible, and we will rely on professional health and governmental guidance to provide the parameters for our programs and operations.

For return to school in the fall, we will be responsible to whatever out-of-state quarantine guidelines are in effect for Massachusetts, and we will be sure that families understand and navigate those guidelines, providing guidance and assistance as those expectations and practices are established later in the summer. As a regular part of campus entry and departure once the school year begins, all community members will engage in a health screening process of daily symptom checks. Protocols will be put in place for any community member showing symptoms of illness, and in the case of a positive COVID-19 test, either with an individual or with members of an individual’s immediate family, a quarantine period will be required. We will also require, whenever possible and as a condition for reentry, that such quarantine be managed off-campus, but we will also have on-campus resources available for immediate health response and for students who are unable to immediately quarantine with family, a guardian, or caretaker.

As a general guideline, we will apply health guidance and best practices as recommended by local, state, and national medical authorities, and we will be a resource to families for following such guidance and for accessing health services. Regarding COVID-19 testing, we will closely track guidelines, standards in the medical community, and both established and developing best practices as we approach the school year, implementing systems and standards accordingly.

2. Educational Program: In-Person with Parallel Remote Programming

We will begin the year with classes and activities on campus for boarding and day students who are able to attend in person. For those students who are not able to attend in person, for either travel or health-related reasons, we will offer a parallel system of remote education. This system will be employed as needed throughout the year as conditions evolve. Distinct from our remote-only teaching and learning system of this past spring, the system we will start with in the fall will be an extension and complement to in-class instruction—with some or all students taking a given class in person and other students connecting online as necessary at the same time and in the same class.

Overall class sizes will remain broadly the same with in-person attendance controlled by specific class and space allotment to comply with social distance restrictions and the need to accommodate attendance of students participating remotely. Individual student daily schedules will be programmed in such a way as to provide sufficient activity and supervision during non-class time to limit contact and exposure. For international students studying remotely, class schedules will be coordinated so that time zone conflicts will be minimized, and additional opportunities for engagement will be provided to students who are unable to attend classes live and in person. Course content and progression will remain generally consistent with our regular selections and standards. Lastly, we will be returning to our conventional grading system, rather than a Pass/Fail system.

3. Campus and Residential Experience: Defining and Refining Capacity

Because travel and health guidance currently place limitations on our on-campus operations and residential capacity, we are planning on beginning the school year in a de-densified manner: in classrooms, public interior spaces, and dormitories. Students will be carefully spaced and housed to maintain social distance guidelines and to comply with emerging regulations. We anticipate that we will be able to structure manageable densities in our dormitories through the combination of utilizing some of the boarding capacity normally allocated to international students who initially will be unable to return to campus for the fall term. In addition, we will take efforts to temporarily convert some local boarding students to day status. Following this communication, a member of the Enrollment Team will be reaching out to each international family and each family of boarding students whose primary residence is fewer than 30 miles from school to discuss boarding plans for the fall term.

With regard to dining services, we are working with our food service provider, Sodexo, to create a system that will provide necessary social distance and health precautions while also providing flexible, appealing meal options for boarding and day students. As space in the dining hall will be limited by social distance guidelines, significant effort and alteration will go into the schedule, space capacities, and logistics around meals, lunch in particular.

4. Changes to Schedule and Routine: Creating a Balanced and Flexible Schedule

The overall school calendar will have roughly the same dimensions as in past years in terms of beginning and end dates and total days and weeks in school. We do anticipate several significant changes within that scheme. [Our revised Travel Calendar is linked HERE.](#) As a health and travel precaution, along with many other high schools and colleges with residential components, we are planning for a period of remote learning for all students between the November and December holiday breaks (December 1st-18th). We foresee this approach as the likeliest scenario to develop and thus the most advisable calendar to build and schedule around. While we will remain responsive to the exact health and travel conditions that present themselves as the year progresses through the fall, our current schedule indicates that all students, both boarding and day, will remain off campus during this period, extending from November 20th through January 10th.

In addition, given the unpredictability and complications around off-campus programming and travel in particular, we have decided that we will be unable to offer our regular Winterim program during its normal 2-week March period. We are constructing a "WINTerm" at the end of the Winter Term to replicate and retain the educational foundations served by Winterim. So that students may remain on campus over the ensuing break if needed, Spring Break will be reduced from two weeks to one week. We will carefully monitor and modulate our schedule, particularly over the spring term, both to adjust to any changes in guidelines and to sustain energy over the end of what will be a very differently-paced year. Finally, the end of year will remain on the same schedule as previous years, with graduation scheduled for the Friday after Memorial Day.

5. Continuity of Community Experience: Extracurricular Programs and Campus Life

From orientation to clubs and activities to athletics, we know that the experience built on campus is a crucial part of Lawrence Academy life. While we know that large gatherings will not be possible from

the start of the year, we will take care to preserve and recreate the spirit and vitality of the community in any and every way possible. Student groups and clubs, performances, assemblies—these are functions that will depend especially upon high-quality virtual alternatives. For gatherings by class, by program, by team—we will do our best to re-create an immediate sense of community and belonging through smaller and de-densified group meetings.

With regard to interscholastic athletics, no specific guidance or plan has been offered yet from either the MIAA, NEPSAC, or the ISL. While health and safety will determine the ultimate course of action, there is a spirit of cooperation within the region and the league that leads us to believe that we will be able to engage in whatever degree of competition is possible per state and local health dictates, consistent with our own practices and protocols. When and if health and safety guidelines permit competitive play between schools, Lawrence Academy is committed to engaging in interscholastic competition. In the absence of interscholastic competition, we will offer extensions of team-based training as well as programs of physical health and exercise for all. Though a particular course of action as a league has not been determined, the ISL has expressed a willingness to be flexible with seasons, with training, and with play to support the unique circumstances of each school within a league composed of both day and boarding schools and spread over multiple municipalities and two states.

With regard to transportation and ongoing travel to and from school, we have not established specific guidelines or capacity regarding school-arranged or family-arranged transportation, but we understand this is an important logistical and planning consideration for our families. School side, we anticipate that we will need to manage capacity on any school-provided transportation carefully (for activities or athletics, for example), conforming to established health standards. For day student buses, we are currently negotiating with our provider to determine capacity and cost for the fall, and it is highly likely that the structure of the program will change. We will do our best to serve and support our families in the process.

6. Tuition Model

We recognize fully the great investment families make in the educational experience we deliver. And while we have great faith in our strengths as a school and our ability to deliver our programs with high quality even in adverse circumstances, we recognize the considerable stress families may endure in committing such significant resources in uncertain times. Nevertheless, we are fully confident that we will deliver the value and passionate connection, from institution to individual, that families expect when they commit to Lawrence Academy.

With that said, the financial components of the crisis put severe limitations on our ability to adjust our budget model; in fact, even with tuition revenues remaining stable, our budget is forecast to run a deficit for the coming year. Therefore, day and boarding tuition rates will remain the same as announced in February. The adjustments to the daily and yearly schedule, investments that we are making in technology and facilities, and other state mandated requirements over the 2020-2021 academic year, will all likely result in increased expenses rather than the cost-savings that we experienced over the period of remote learning in the spring term.

Adjustments to tuition will only be made when a boarding student's status changes to day or remote for an entire term. Tuition refunds for limited periods of remote instruction will not be available. Individual

circumstances, including any prorated adjustments to financial aid, will determine the exact adjustment for each student.

More broadly, boarding students engaged in remote learning for the fall term (some international students and some domestic students), will have their tuition reduced by \$5,005. Boarding students who re-classify as day students for the fall term will also have their tuition reduced by \$5,005. This figure is determined by the boarding/day differential prorated over the percentage of weeks of the school year—from September through January.

We know that all of the areas we have described in this communication will raise questions and concerns, and we want to work with our families to establish a level of comfort and confidence that will reinforce our mutual commitment. Beyond the Webinar on Thursday night, we stand ready to answer questions and address individual circumstances as needed. While we cannot control the manifold uncertainties of the present, we can connect with and commit to our families meaningfully and consistently as we prepare for all that lies ahead.