



Dear Odyssey Family,

Sept. 10, 2021

We want to thank you for your support this school year. As we weather the Covid storm together, we will be asking for your continued support— especially your patience with our administrators, teachers, and our schools. Working together, with your support, we promise, our faculty and staff will continue to work tirelessly to educate your children with care and excellence.

As you know, the school year began, unfortunately, while the Delta variant was peaking. The good news is that two computer models from the University of Florida and the University of Southern Florida, indicate we passed the peak for the Delta variant the last week of August. Last week, according to the Florida Department of Health, weekly cumulative Covid cases dropped 22,000 cases in Florida, and positivity dropped 5.1% during the last two weeks. Still too high, but this is the first trend downward since early June. The University of South Florida predicted we would reach herd immunity by September 11. Trends in other countries, like India, where the Delta variant began, showed the variant peaked around 8 weeks and then came quickly down over the following 4-6 weeks. We are beginning to see that same trend in Florida, and we are hopefully on a downward path. In Brevard last week, cases dropped 20%. All good signs for the school year ahead. We are all looking forward to these numbers coming way down and have seen that happening in our own data collection. We hope that this update will provide you with important information to support your student and family as we move forward this year.

The Governor and FLDOE have issued an executive order protecting the rights of parents to direct the education, upbringing, and care of their minor children. This order is in a state of constant appeal. These rights include an optional mask policy for students in public and public charter schools. Please note that while we respect the executive order, we are highly encouraging mask usage while we work through the Covid-Delta variant.

COVID DATA COLLECTION

Teacher, administrators, and staff are working valiantly on educating our students but find ourselves frequently becoming Covid managers and Covid data collectors. We recently created a Covid Dashboard that will be placed on our schools' websites (under School Newsletters). Please note that the collection of this data is not a perfect science, but we want to provide it to help keep our community well-informed. The Dashboard includes a twice weekly update (Wednesday and Monday) on the number of Covid cases for students and staff, as well as number of quarantines. Covid cases are highest in our Jr/Sr High School but are beginning to come down a bit. Within the last week or so, Covid numbers in our elementary schools, have, thankfully, begun to come down as well. <http://www.odysseycharterschool.com/Covid-Dashboard-Odyssey-Schools.pdf>

Last May, we surveyed you on mask usage to help us start this school year. We have always looked to see what is happening on our own campuses to make our decisions. We are sending another survey to you to better understand your thoughts about mask usage at this time. We count on everyone's voice, so please be certain to answer the short survey by Monday afternoon using this link. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2BF1CVV>

QUARANTINED STUDENT ACCESS TO INSTRUCTION AND CURRICULUM

If your student is placed on quarantine, we are providing access to the classroom via Canvas and Zoom for students to engage in their enrolled courses. These tools will ensure that the opportunity for learning is not interrupted by the physical absence from the classroom.

Canvas is Odyssey's learning management system (LMS), serves as the learning hub that provides a versatile platform for content delivery, communication, collaboration, and professional development. Canvas can be accessed through the school's Launchpad accessed via ClassLink. Zoom video links will be provided by the teachers through Canvas. These links will allow your child to use Zoom as a window into the classroom that they would normally attend. If your child has questions regarding the instruction or curriculum, the expectation is to message the teacher through Canvas. Directions for the use of both of these tools can be found at <http://www.odysseycharterschool.com/Quarantine-Student-Directions.pdf>

BUSES

Our Odyssey buses are high risk areas, particularly for our drivers. Although we have not identified any children on our buses with Covid, several of our bus drivers have gotten ill this year. As a result, we have strongly advised mask usage on our buses. This is especially important to our elderly bus drivers. Please encourage your children to, out of respect of our drivers, wear their masks on our buses. If our numbers of students masking do not go up considerably on our buses, this may have to become a mandate. Bus ridership is a privilege. We would deeply appreciate your support.

STUDENT ILLNESS

We also cannot stress to you how important it is that we keep ill children home. Please continue to monitor your children for symptoms. Covid-19 in children can be very mild, from sniffles, to a slight headache, but in adults, it can become very serious. Please help to keep our adults safe. If your children have even mild symptoms, please keep them home and have them tested.

We hope that you are taking time to find peace and serenity in your lives. We know that everyone has a different opinion on what actions the schools should take and that these opinions can become quite divisive. We will use our survey data to assist in guiding the schools. We will not be able to make everyone happy, no matter which course we take, but we do appreciate your views. As a community, let's pull together to weather these storms.

We also want to take a moment to thank our administrators, teachers, bus drivers, and staff for working so hard to provide stability in our schools. We are very grateful for the dedication they display every day on the front lines. We remain determined to treat every child and family with respect. We hope you will consider always doing the same. If you have any additional questions, please contact Ms. Wendi Nolder, Principal, Odyssey Elementary at nolderw@odysseycharterschool.com, or Mr. Mike Davis, Assistant Principal, Odyssey Prep at davism@odysseyprepacademy.com, or Mr. Mike Guevarra, Assistant Principal, Odyssey Jr/Sr High, at guevarram@odysseycharterschool.com. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Your Green Apple and School Leadership Team