



August 5, 2020

Dear Oakdale Academy Family:

This letter is my direct communication regarding the reopening plans for Oakdale Academy regarding the 2020-2021 school year.

In over twenty years in education, I cannot remember a time where the reopening of school was such a debated topic in our society, let alone one that adds to the seemingly divisive nature in our country.

Through prayer and consultation with a wide range of resources, I developed the plan on the following pages and believe it represents the core of a balance between who we are as a classical Christian school and the ever-changing health conditions we find ourselves in today.

If this time has taught us anything, it is that each of us experiences and reacts to situations differently. My charge to us all as a community of Christians is rather a simple one, yet one that is sadly becoming more challenging today. It is to remember *Who* we serve and the mission He gave this school.

In this, *we cannot falter*. Our mission becomes all the more relevant with each passing day. As our world becomes darker, we *must* instill in our students Character, Truth, and Wisdom so their life of service to God, family, community, and country will be grounded in these traits.

At Oakdale Academy, we have the opportunity to shine a light in a dark world unlike any other time in our school's history. As we enter our tenth year, it is critical we **together** work toward the theme I selected for this year based on Matthew 5:14: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid."

I am reminded of so many places in Scripture (Acts 20:7, 1 Cor. 12:21, Mark 1:21, Luke 2:41, Hebrews 10:25, etc.) where we are *commanded* to gather together to worship God and that is truly what we do daily at Oakdale Academy. We honor and worship Him at Opening Ceremony, at Chapel, in the hallways, lunches, and in our classes.

Consistent with the provision in the laws of the State of Michigan pertaining to private and parochial schools (MCL 388.551-558 and associated), **Oakdale Academy will open to in-person instruction for the 2020-2021 school year starting on August 26, 2020.**

Some may question this in light of the text of Romans 13 and 1 Peter 2, which talk about being subject to the governing authorities. This is a very divisive topic in modern



Christian circles today and one that has become a stumbling block for the Church in so many ways.

At Oakdale Academy, we believe in the power of the state to first and foremost protect our rights and to properly provide for our defense. We likewise affirm the role of the family and the church as being supreme in the raising and educating of children.

As stated above, as a private school with an established record of religious instruction, we hold the state, through the use of executive orders, has violated the tenants of the United States Constitution and the laws of the State of Michigan.

As such, to answer the questions many pose about Romans 13, I remind us that in the United States, the true authority God established here is encapsulated in the Preamble to our Constitution, “We the People”.

In other words, the people are the authority, under God, in the United States and, as a Republic, we allow officials to govern with our consent. It is our responsibility, according to our original contract, the Declaration of Independence, to continually monitor the work of our government and ensure it does not overreach. In the end, I echo the words of the Peter in the early church who, when questioned about obedience to the government, answered “we must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

With that in mind, Oakdale Academy will open with the below provisions and reminders in place. Understand these are done with a mind toward not only health and safety, but primarily to the importance of our mission, our continued partnership with parents, and the needed focus on the spiritual health and academic progress of our students.

As I have stated on several occasions, **God is not done with Oakdale Academy.** We exist as a community of believers seeking after God in all we do through our academics; in that we must continue to be united. Our enemy wants nothing more than to ensure division among us and I implore us each to seek to understand first rather than to fall into divisiveness.

These are decisions I have wrestled with prayerfully and believe them to strongly represent our community, its needs, and our calling while providing flexibility.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Stanton" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr. David J. Stanton IV
Headmaster



Oakdale Academy Preparedness Plan | 2020-2021

The following specific guidelines will be in place for the 2002-2021 School Year. Note many of these provisions are reminders of already established policies at Oakdale.

1. Facial Coverings

- a. Students, Faculty, and Staff may **voluntarily** wear facial coverings at school.
- b. Facial coverings must be clear so the person's mouth may be visible at all times.
 - i. You may click [here for a shield example](#) or [here for a mask example](#).
 1. *Please note these are examples only and not endorsed by Oakdale.*
- c. The methodology of classical education calls for the direct interaction between teacher and students. Speech, both verbal and nonverbal, is critical in this interaction and the ability to see each other is paramount.

2. Assemblies

- a. Opening Ceremony will be conducted **outside** except during severe weather (e.g. thunderstorm); students and families should be prepared for all types of weather. This process will continue throughout the year unless the temperature reaches 10°F or lower.
- b. Lunch and Chapel will continue to be conducted as normal.
 - i. Should parents choose, due to a health concern, their student(s) may eat in a different location.
- c. Outdoor recess will continue as per our normal routine.

3. Visitors

- a. Parents and visitors will not be allowed into the building unless an appointment has been scheduled. Adult guests entering the building will be screened.

4. Before and After School Care

- a. Before school care will remain in the gym with additional tables in place.
 - i. Please plan to drop your student(s) off between 7:30-7:55 a.m.
- b. After school care will be provided, however families should register ahead of time (details as to how will be in a future Patriot Post along with TADS billing details).
- c. We continue to encourage families to pick up their students by 3:30 each day or to arrange carpools and shared childcare with friends if a parent cannot come by 3:30.

5. Hygiene and Cleaning

- a. Oakdale will use cleaning using products with at least 60% alcohol.
- b. Students will continue to be encouraged to wash hands with soap & water for at least 20 seconds and/or the safe use of hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- c. Oakdale Academy will follow cleaning protocols with new our cleaning contractor.



6. Screening of Students and Staff

- a. *Parents are responsible* for screening students daily before bringing them to school, addressing any and all risk factors.
 - i. Students who have a temperature of 100°F or greater should not come to school, per our Handbook.
- b. Faculty and Staff Members will **daily** notify the Office Manager regarding health screening and per their contractual agreement regarding paid time off (PTO).

7. Athletics

- a. We will follow the guidelines of our athletic association, the Michigan Association of Christian Schools (MACS), and any venue in which we have an event.
- b. For the foreseeable future, Oakdale Academy will not offer transportation to athletic events.

8. Field Trips

- a. Field Trips will be decided on a case-by-case basis and will be dependent on the restrictions at the field trip location.

9. Notification

- a. As with all health information, Oakdale Academy will honor the privacy of its families to the best extent possible. As a private institution that does not receive state or federal funds, Oakdale is not subject to either HIPPA or FERPA regulations.
- b. The decision to inform parents regarding sicknesses, illnesses, etc. will be done on a situational basis as always.

10. Waivers/Forms

- a. All families and staff are required to sign an Assumption of Risk of Liability form.
 - i. This is done to protect the school from any litigation in this uncertain time.
- b. Families and staff who elect **not** to wear a facial covering must also sign a waiver.



Remote Learning v. In-person Learning

Oakdale Academy will offer **in-person instruction beginning on August 26.**

It is understood that while most families want students to attend school in person, some families will need or want to make more use of virtual instruction. We will allow families to make this choice. Families **in grades 7-12** who prefer may elect remote learning.

A few specifics regarding distance/online learning:

- This is a specific family choice and is not intended for students to attend school in person one day and via distance learning the next.
 - A family who elects remote learning will notify Mrs. Benninger and Miss Bradford who will, in turn, notify Teachers.
 - The choice for remote learning will be for a *one-month period* at a time.
 - Families who elect remote learning understand this incorporates missing extra-curricular activities during that period.
 - Oakdale Academy reserves the right to cancel this option during the year.
- Students will use their login for FACTS (our new student information system – more details to come as we transition away from TADS).
- Students who are sick or need to be at home (*not vacation*) are not to use this option.
 - Absent work will be given per our Handbook as normal.
 - Students who are sick at home should rest and recover.
 - Students on a pre-arranged absence (e.g. vacation) will continue to follow our policies found in the Handbook.
- Families who pursue the remote learning option should be aware classes will be held **at their normally scheduled times** during the school day.
 - Attendance will be taken and recorded, and students should be actively and fully engaged in each lesson, including being in uniform, with an active microphone and webcam.
- Parents that choose to keep their children home will play a critical role in their child's learning. Unlike this spring, because teachers will be teaching during normal school hours, students will be expected to interact in class even if remote learning.
- Monthly tuition will not vary based on whether a student is in person or remote.
- Parents who elect this option for August/September must inform us **no later than August 14.**



Back to School Schedule

- Thursday, August 20
 - Fall Athletics information night – 7:00 p.m.
- Friday, August 21
 - Upper School annual water fight – 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
- Monday, August 24
 - Open House, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
 - Upper School Orientation, 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
 - Prayer and Dedication, 5:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, August 26 – First Day of School, 8:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
 - Half Day for all students.
 - House Kickoff for Upper School students, 11:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
- Friday, September 4 – Monday, September 7 – No School (Labor Day weekend)

The remainder of our school calendar is available on our website –
www.oakdaleacademy.com