



May 11, 2020

Dear Lynnhaven Family,

It is my hope everyone has found some sort of solace during these uncertain times that face our country and Commonwealth. It cannot be overstated that these are some truly remarkable times; a period in history that will never be forgotten. As with anything, this too shall pass and we, as a nation will be all the better for it.

The purpose of my correspondence is to update everyone on the following:

1. Graduation
2. Computer and Personal Item Return Process
3. Summer Reading Assignment
4. Faculty and Staff Updates
5. Next School Year: COVID-19 Response

### **Graduation**

On May 20th, Lynnhaven Faculty and Staff will caravan to each seniors home, deliver their graduation gift which includes the diploma, cap and gown, and I will declare them 2020 graduates of Lynnhaven Academy. We will film our journeys to each seniors home as a way to capture the moment in a tribute video that will be made public on May 29th. A link to this tribute will be made available on the website under a special page entitled "Class of 2020." It will be password protected, which will be made available the day before.

I am happy to announce that formal commencement exercises will be held on Friday, October 9, 2020 at 6:00pm in the church sanctuary. This will be a great time to celebrate the class of 2020 and to commemorate this important milestone in their lives. I will release more details in the coming months.

### **Computer and Personal Item Return Process - aka "Return Day"**

I have designated the week of June 1st the day for return day. There will be orange cones arranged in the parking lot for cars to follow. We will use our dismissal pick up pattern for the returns. I have designated your specific return day based on grade level clusters. Here are the details:

- Middle School: 10:00am - 12:00pm on Monday, June 1st
- Freshmen: 10:00am - 12:00pm on Tuesday, June 2nd
- Sophomores and Juniors: 10:00am - 12:00pm on Wednesday, June 3rd
- Alternative Return Day: 6:00pm - 8:00pm on Thursday, June 4th - This is designated for individuals who cannot make the days listed above due to work constraints. We respectfully ask that you only use the Alternative Return Day if you truly have a scheduling conflict.
- Seniors will turn in their laptops on May 20th when the faculty and staff deliver diplomas



All parents and students MUST stay in their vehicles as we have designated staff to collect your laptop and return your personal items. No one will be permitted to enter the building or use the restroom facilities. Mrs. Brown will confirm the receipt of your returned laptop via email. If your student's laptop is damaged, we will communicate with you via email by the end of June and determine next steps.

### **Summer Reading Assignment**

This year, summer reading and math enrichment assignments will be posted by the end of May on the website under Academics. We have made some changes to summer reading to encourage continuous reading throughout the school year. The traditional summer reading projects will remain the same, but students will get to select two novels from lists that Lynnhaven has put together: "30 Books to Read Before High School" and "45 Books to Read Before you Graduate." While completing the lists throughout their time at Lynnhaven is not required, it is a great way to explore the world of literature.

### **Faculty and Staff Updates**

Our continued commitment to our mission and vision requires a growing administrative infrastructure so that we can better support our faculty and students and continue to be a viable school option for families in Richmond. As you know, Casey Hitchcock has served at Lynnhaven Academy going on four years. She currently holds the title of Deputy Head of School and English and Middle School Teacher. To her credit, her leadership has helped the school evolve and grow over the years; she led the school through a massive accreditation process in 2018 and has taken on the added responsibility of helping lead the financial management of the school. She has demonstrated her ability to lead and is being called out of the classroom. She will now officially serve as the Deputy Head of School effective July 1. Her primary responsibilities will include leadership of academics and business operations. As a true administrator, she will be better able to support teachers and lead the business operations of the school.

Holly Brown will replace Mrs. Casey Hitchcock as the English and Language Arts Teacher starting July 1, 2020. As you know, Mrs. Brown has served as the Office Manager and Admissions Coordinator for the past two years. What you may not have known about her is that she has a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English from Virginia Commonwealth University. She has over 10 years experience teaching as both a former home school parent and tutor with Richmond Public Schools. Mrs. Brown is also certified in Orton-Gillingham which is a direct, explicit, multisensory, structured, sequential, diagnostic, and prescriptive way to teach literacy when reading, writing, and spelling. Her "all in" mentality will be a great asset to the classroom.

It gives me great pleasure to reintroduce 2LT Marikia Kidd to Lynnhaven Academy. She will serve as the new Office and Facilities Manager. As you all may remember, 2LT Kidd was the resource teacher earlier in the school year, but was called to active duty at Fort Polk Louisiana in December.



After COVID-19 plagued our nation, she was reassigned as the Logistics Officer to assist the Virginia

Department of Health and their need for items in hospitals and testing sites throughout the Commonwealth. These experiences and her familiarity with our students will be an added value to Lynnhaven. She is a graduate from Virginia State University. We are very happy to have her rejoin Lynnhaven Academy.

Lastly, we say goodbye to Mr. Hartline. He has been a great addition to our faculty as the history teacher. Mr. Hartline has decided to move closer to his family and will seek other employment. We wish him the very best. Mrs. Hitchcock and I are in the process of screening applicants for his replacement. We have several interviews scheduled over the coming weeks. I hope to have the position filled by the end of June.

### **Next School Year**

A little over seven weeks ago, I made the difficult decision to close Lynnhaven due to COVID-19. Today, I am happy to inform you that Lynnhaven plans to resume in-person teaching, learning, and school operations this Fall 2020.

As the 2019-2020 school year comes to a close and we plan for the future, I want to thank you for your patience, agility, and resilience. I understand that this time has not been an easy one. As we anticipate the opening of our state and the country, we must prepare for another stage of transition with faculty and staff returning to Lynnhaven, and most importantly - the return of your child in this fall.

The senior leadership, i.e. COVID Task Force and I are working through a variety of scenarios that will allow Lynnhaven to reopen and resume operations in the fall. Our path to reopening Lynnhaven is based on the public health frameworks guiding the gradual relaxation of the intensive social distancing measures adopted this spring. To that end, we are closely monitoring the curve of the pandemic in Virginia and nationwide and are in contact with local health officials for guidance.

The overarching theme in my various correspondences to you has been one of uncertainty. It is important for me to communicate to you that this uncertainty will not allow for “typical” resumption of school operations. We are now preparing to adjust all academic, student life, and school operations, while still providing a Lynnhaven education. The schoolhouse we return to in the fall will be different by design as we install critical health and safety procedures and protocols. They may (or will) include:

- Continued social distancing for academic settings, i.e. implementation of block scheduling to reduce class transition and desks at the appropriate social distance
- Staggered start and end time schedules
- Modification of recess, parent engagement activities, and after school activities
- Adjusted dismissal procedures



- Screening and tracing protocols, i.e. faculty, staff, student, parents, and guest temperature checks, frequent hand washing and sanitation
- Requirement of all faculty, staff, students, as well as guests to wear masks upon entering the building
- Frequent disinfecting classrooms and bathrooms, and common areas of the school.
- Increased outdoor learning spaces
- Developing protocols for Westover Baptist Church Members and their guests as they enter and exit from the building

The goal is to work towards the resumption of in-person classes, but we must be realistic in that there may be localized 14-28 day rolling closures triggered by outbreaks. This scenario planning will allow for flexibility to launch Connected Learning, should the virus resurge in the coming months or within our community.

I realize COVID-19 has impacted the social and emotional well being of our students. As a faculty, we recognize students are experiencing COVID-19 differently. We at Lynnhaven believe all students deserve supportive relationships and nurturing learning environments, particularly for students who face additional stress. Our “whole child” approach is the mainstay and ethos of our school. It’s why your student is at Lynnhaven. If you believe your child might need some extra support during this time because of COVID-19 or the associated protocols, look at [Child Mind Institute](#). It’s a great resource.

These are some of the major factors involved in planning for reopening Lynnhaven. It is important for you to understand that although planning is subject to change due to potential outbreak spikes and or orders from the governor, as well as our own evolution, we are committed to a full reopening and return to in-person teaching. I value your input, so please share your thoughts and ideas by reaching out to the [COVID Task Force](#). As plans take more shape, I will provide regular updates.

I have the utmost confidence that the work we do together in the weeks and months ahead will lead to our successful return to in-person teaching. Stay safe. Wash your hands. Practice social distancing.

Best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Johnathan G. Harris".

Johnathan G. Harris, Ed.S.  
Headmaster, Lynnhaven Academy