

August 11, 2020

Dear Families,

I cannot believe we are almost already halfway through August. I hope you've had time to take a look at the Re-Opening Plan, which was emailed to everyone on July 31 and can also be found on our website. We will continue to make revisions as necessary as we learn new information from the R.I. Department of Health and the R.I. Department of Education. As soon as we have any more information to share, we will let you know. When Gov. Gina Raimondo sets parameters for the reopening of schools (which is expected next week), I do not think it will be a "one size fits all" plan for all schools. I believe that because of our size and all of our health and safety measures now in place, The Wolf School will be in a great position to open in person on Sept. 2.

I am writing to you today with further updates about the start of the year. I will provide details on classroom groupings, faculty and staff changes, and transitioning back to school. There are a number of important dates listed below. Please make sure to note the dates and times for Open House and the back to school parent orientation. These will be done slightly differently than they have been done in the past.

Classroom Groupings:

Attached is the list of students in each classroom, along with the names of those on your child's classroom team, including the classroom teacher, therapists and teaching assistants for the upcoming school year. There will be three Lower School classrooms this year (Grades 2-5) and five Middle School classrooms (Grades 6-8). Many of the classrooms this year are multi-age and multi-grade. The Immersion Model© is designed to be able to create classrooms with students who are the best match academically and socially. Having more Middle School classrooms this year also allows us to keep class sizes to 10 students or fewer, helping us to create stable groups that are no bigger than 15 people, including students and your child's team.

At this time, we have 11 new students and families joining our community; 5 in Lower School and 6 in Middle School. Our current enrollment is 63, not including a few families in Lower School and one in Middle School who are still in the admissions process. We will update you, as needed, if there are any additions to your current classroom groupings.

Faculty and Staff Updates:

We said good-bye to some of our most beloved faculty at the end of last year. Marci Hannon (Classroom Teacher), Kara Gabriel (Classroom Teacher), and Anissa Khouri Drake (Speech Supervisor and Speech Therapist) coincidentally all moved out of state this summer. While we are sad to see them all go, we know they will take all of what they learned at Wolf with them as they pursue new opportunities. In addition, Judy Menton (Administrative Assistant), who spent the last ten years of her career at Wolf and basically ran the school :), retired at the end of June. She spent her last few weeks getting everything in order and working with Melisa to show her "the Wolf Way." We are so grateful for the tremendous impact they all had on Wolf. We wish them all the best and know they will keep in touch!

Now for the new hires...

Classroom Teachers

We are pleased to welcome Jody Sitver as one of our new Lower School teachers. Jody comes to Wolf with almost 30 years teaching experience in regular education and special education across all grades, from preschool through college age students. In addition, she has been a division leader at a day camp in New York for 18 years. She has her MA in Special Education from New York University. Jody is passionate about her work and skilled at meeting the needs of her students and dedicated to supporting their success in all they do. She is thrilled to be part of the Wolf community and we are thrilled to have her! Jody will be a great addition to our Lower School.

We are also excited to introduce Jennifer O'Reilly, who will be teaching in Middle School this year. Jenn has her MS in Special Education from Bridgewater State University. She has 9 years of experience and has spent most of her career working with Middle and High School students. Most recently, she has worked in public school, but she also spent 8 years at the League School outside of Boston. Jenn has a positive rapport with her students and goes above and beyond to make sure their needs are met. We are eager to have her join our Wolf family!

Speech and Language Pathologist

Anna Zembo will be joining our SLP team. She has her MS in Speech and Hearing Sciences from the University of Chapel Hill. Anna has worked with children of all ages in public school, residential and home-based settings. Most recently, she worked in a collaborative setting with children with pragmatic communication disorders related to developmental disabilities, autism spectrum disorders and social emotional difficulties. Anna also is a course facilitator at Emerson College for an online MA speech program instructing SLP students seeking a MA degree. In her spare time, she is also the program and theatre director for the Miracle Project of New England and the General Manager for Spectrum Theatre Ensemble, which are inclusive theatre and expressive arts programs for children and young adults with autism spectrum disorders. We are so excited to have Anna join our stellar team of speech therapists!

Teaching Assistant

Sydney Goldman will be working in our Middle School this year and comes to us from St. Andrew's School in Barrington, R.I., where she was a Middle School learning services teacher. She taught courses in Grades 6-8 at St. Andrew's and is a Google certified educator. Sydney graduated from Mount Holyoke College with a BA in French and Linguistics. Sydney also spent time developing life skills curriculum for students with developmental disabilities at the Berkshire Hills Music Academy prior to working in Rhode Island. Sydney will be a wonderful addition to our Middle School faculty and we look forward to learning some French from her in the classroom!

Additional Faculty Updates:

Administrative

Melisa Gomes started at the end of June as our new Administrative Assistant in the front office. Many of you have already had a chance to talk to her on the phone or meet her. She spent her first few weeks working with Judy to learn the procedures and routines of the job. There is a lot to learn and she is doing great! Melisa graduated from the University of Rhode Island with a BS in Human Development and Family Studies, which made her a perfect fit for this role! She has had a long career in the human service industry, working

as an administrative assistant, office manager and resource coordinator for much of her career. It has been a quiet summer, with only a few of us in the building, and she is looking forward to meeting all of the families and students. I am happy to welcome her to Wolf, and I know you will all do the same!

Admissions

As most of you know, Rosy Granoff, Co-Founder of Wolf and Director of Enrollment for the past 21 years, officially retired at the end of the school year, and I am thrilled to share with you that she just became a grandma as of just a few weeks ago! Paula Kelly, who worked with Rosy in admissions all last year, is the new Director of Enrollment managing admissions, next school placement and strategic enrollment moving forward. Paula has been part of Wolf for more than 14 years having been in the classroom as a teaching assistant, special educator and learning specialist for the majority of her time here. Admissions hasn't stopped all summer, and we expect to start the year with waiting lists in most of the classes for the first time in a long time. We are thrilled to have Paula on our Advancement Team and look forward to another busy year!

Classroom Support Staff

This year, given the challenges with the new schedule and plans related to COVID-19 protocols and procedures, we will have two dedicated classroom support staff in school every day to work with the classroom teams and provide coverage in classrooms regularly, help with monitoring student health and safety routines (hand-washing, sanitizing and cleaning), support the students during lunch, recess and specials and offer one to one support for students as needed. Colleen Chapman, who has worked at Wolf for the last two years as a long-term substitute and a teaching assistant last year, will be one of the dedicated classroom support staff next year. Colleen has worked in all of the classrooms over the years and has made great connections with our students and staff. We are still in the process of interviewing candidates for the second classroom support position.

Back to School Information:

School Calendar

You have received a one-page school calendar earlier this summer to assist you in your planning for the upcoming school year. A more complete calendar in a month-by-month format will be sent home at the beginning of the year. Please note that the calendar is subject to change (and most likely will get updated) as we navigate through this uncertain year of COVID-19. We will be sure to let you know of any changes as soon as we have more information. I do not anticipate any changes to the December or March breaks at this time, however.

Mentor Families

All of our new families have been assigned to mentor families. Mentor families will be contacting new families sometime in the next few weeks to welcome you into the Wolf School and to answer any general questions you might have.

Transition Back to School – Student Open House

On Monday, August 31 and Tuesday, September 1, we will have an Open House for **students only**.

The schedule will be as follows:

Monday, August 31 (Lower School)

10:00-10:45 Leah's Room

11:15-12:00 Ali's Room

12:30-1:15 Jody's Room

Tuesday, September 1 (Middle School)

9:30 - 10:15 Lane's Room, Jenn's Room and Sarah's Room

10:45-11:30 Meg's Room and Maureen's Room

Your child will have a chance to visit his/her classroom and get a preview of the changes in the rooms and throughout the building before the first day. It will be a great opportunity for the students to meet their teachers and see their classmates before the first day of school on Wednesday.

Parent Orientation Sessions

This year back to school parent orientation sessions will occur with me via Zoom. The link to the meeting will be sent out as we get closer.

- **Lower School Families:** Monday, August 31 from 4:00 – 5:00 p.m.
- **Middle School Families:** Monday, August 31 from 5:00 – 6:00 p.m.

At least one parent should attend this session (please mark your calendars). I will be reviewing arrival and dismissal procedures related to our reopening plan as well as a number of other new guidelines and policies for this upcoming school year for you and your child. There will be time for questions at the end of each session, but feel free to reach out sooner if you have any questions before the start of school.

Arrival and Dismissal

There will be new drop off and pick up procedures this year that we will review at the parent orientation sessions (see Health and Safety Procedures for Families and Students handout in your packet). Please refer to the **attached map** of the building to know where your child will need to be dropped off and picked up each day. Parents and van/bus drivers will need to drop off and pick up students at the marked entrance/exit for their classroom. In addition, students will not be allowed to be dropped off prior to 7:45 a.m. this year. Between 7:45 a.m. and 8:00 a.m., students will be dropped off at their designated classroom door and head immediately to their classroom. Masks must be worn upon entering the building. If your child arrives at school after 8:00 a.m., they will need to sign in and come through the main entrance. All outside doors will be locked by 8:05 a.m. Students will be dismissed at 3:00 p.m. and will be walked to their cars, vans and buses with their masks on by the classroom staff.

After-School Programs- Lower and Middle School

We will provide more information about after school programs, including Middle School sports and homework club, closer to the start of the school year. We are waiting for further guidance from the State to determine the feasibility and safety of running after-school programs. Stay tuned!

Camping Chair Request

We are strongly encouraging as much outside teaching and learning time as possible when we go back to school in September. Teachers are planning creative ways to use the outdoor spaces we have around the building and we have ordered tents and canopies to provide some shelter and a break from the sun during

the start of school. We will have a variety of seating options available, but thought it would be best for each student to have their own dedicated chair to easily transport with them outside. We are asking that each student bring in a lightweight, easy to carry and store camping chair that can be his or her very own seat for outdoor time. These can be sent in with them the day of Open House. Please feel free to send one in that you may already have at home, or you can buy them online from Dick's, Walmart, Amazon or Target for anywhere between \$10 - \$30. If anyone needs help finding one, please don't hesitate to reach out to me.

Face Coverings

All students should have at least **two** face coverings that can be sent in to school each day. The spare face coverings should be kept in a sealed plastic bag labelled with his or her name. Students may need to change his or her mask during the day (for any number of reasons :)) and we want to make sure they have a spare. There will be disposable masks available to students if needed during the day, as well. Each student will receive a washable mask from school, but your child may prefer a certain mask that feels most comfortable for them. Over the next few weeks, please have your child practice wearing his or her mask for longer periods of time and work with them to figure out what type of mask feels best. All masks will need to be washed each night and returned to school the next day.

Weekly Parent Forums

It has been great seeing some of you at our weekly parent forums and getting to meet some of the new families. As a reminder, I am holding virtual parent Q and A Zoom sessions on Wednesday evenings from 7:00 - 8:00 p.m. and Friday mornings from 8:00 - 9:00 a.m. These are not mandatory, but provide an opportunity for you to ask questions, give feedback and to hear updates about the Reopening Plan for Wolf.

Here are the remaining Parent Forum dates:

- August 12
- August 14
- August 19

** Please note there will not be a parent forum on August 21.

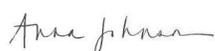
COVID-19 Commitments for Families and Self-Attestation Information

There will be additional information coming out soon about the self-attestation app that we will be using on a daily basis this year. In the meantime, please read over the "COVID-19 Commitments for Families" form in this packet. Once you have read it over, we are asking for all families to sign and return this form prior to the start of school. It will be very important for everyone to do their part this year in helping to keep our community healthy and safe.

As a final reminder, if you haven't already done so, **please send in your school forms**, which will help us get ready for September.

As always, if you have any questions, please call (401) 432-9940 (work), (401) 829-6499 (cell) or email me (ajohnson@thewolfschool.org). I am looking forward to seeing you and your children in a few weeks.

Warmly,



Anna Johnson, Head of School