



September 4, 2020

Notes from Ojai Valley School

Dear OVS Families,

We have successfully completed the first fabulous week of school, and we want to thank you for all of your help and cooperation. It has been a pleasure to welcome our new and returning students for what promises to be an outstanding 2020/21 academic year. We appreciate you letting us know if you have any concerns or issues so that we can address them quickly.

Throughout the week, we have been visiting online classes and are so happy to see how engaged the students are in their lessons. Last spring proved to be a training ground for distance learning. Now, we have taken what we learned and made it better, including adopting full-length schedules similar to our in-person schedules. By doing so, it has allowed teachers to use different modalities to engage the students. Whether by using breakout rooms, working one-on-one on a writing assignment, or engaging students with a flipped classroom, the faculty are working within the scheduled time periods to instruct and assist students to provide the best educational experience possible while working within the current confines of "virtual" education.

Even as we launch remote learning, we are preparing classrooms on both campuses for the anticipated return of students. We expect this will begin in grades 1-6. We have submitted our request for an elementary waiver from the Ventura County Health Department, and we will share details as we know more in the coming days. We truly believe our students will benefit by being on campus and thank all of the parents who contributed letters of support of our waiver. Please know if we are granted permission to reopen we will do so in a very strategic way to make sure our students and staff are safe.

Whether online or in person, we are confident that as the year progresses you will see your student's intellectual curiosity and passion for learning flourish. In short, you have made a good choice by sending your children to Ojai Valley School. We welcome your feedback, especially as we navigate changes to distance learning and the new academic schedules. Please contact our offices with any questions or concerns, and stay safe!

Warm regards,



Craig Floyd,
Head of School
Upper Campus



Laurie Clark,
Head of School
Lower Campus

Remote Learning Reminders

We have a few reminders for our distance learning students:

- Be on time for class as attendance is taken
- Notify school personnel of any technical issues immediately
- Set up a learning space that is free from distractions; eliminate background noise and visitors from entering the screen
- Sit in a seat so your instructor can see your wonderful face. PE or other classes may require you to have more space to move around

- Remember, snack and lunch occur at scheduled times and not during class
 - Please set aside your toys, blankets and stuffed animals until after class (this includes you too, high schoolers)
 - Make sure your device is fully charged and ready for each session
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Construction Update

The best views of the Ojai Valley soon will be found from three new buildings at Upper Campus! The new Grace Hobson Smith House dormitory for resident girls, the Aramont Science and Technology Center, and the Littlefield Student Commons are taking shape and will transform the high school campus when they open in Spring 2021. Learn more on the school [website](#).

Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten

We would like to send a big *thank you* to the PK and K parents for being patient as they drop off their children and wait for wellness checks. The process is getting faster each day. We ask that you please have your yellow name card visible in your right-hand visor so we can see your child's name (a couple of rubber bands around the visor is a great way to secure it.) We also ask that you arrange your car seats so that your child can exit and enter the car on the passenger side to avoid walking through the parking lot. Please be sure your child's mask fits snugly. We are discovering children need youth-sized masks and we have ones available. If you feel your child's mask is too loose, please consider tying the ear loops up or buying a mask with adjustable ear loops. We encourage parents to do this so teachers are not having to touch your child's mask. Finally, please send your child in a clean mask everyday.



Equestrian

We are back to school - and back in the saddle! Lower Campus students returned to riding classes this week for the first time! Our youngest students in PK and K learned about barn safety, then got to meet the ponies and take their first rides. Middle school students, as well as those in grades 4 and 5, also had the opportunity to ride during in-person classes. Ojai Valley School runs two riding centers, one on each campus, that are permitted to operate during the pandemic, which has given our students the opportunity to safely continue their equestrian education.

Virtual Symphony Trips

It has been a Middle School course requirement to attend a Symphony Trip (or theatrical production) to provide students with the opportunity to attend a live performance - an experience that is stimulating, inspiring, and thought-provoking. Obviously live performances are not happening this fall due to the pandemic, so Performing Arts Coordinator Andy Street has organized a series of Virtual Symphony Trips, starting on September 25 with a performance of "Treasure Island" from the National Theatre in London. Students must contact Mr. Street to sign up. Others performances during the semester are still to be determined, but will culminate on December 4 with a performance of Beethoven's Choral Symphony to celebrate his 250th birthday.



Health Center Reminder

As we approach Labor Day Weekend, we encourage you to stay safe and stay home as much as possible to minimize any virus exposure. As we prepare to welcome more students back to campus, it is important that families develop a 30-minute pick-up plan in the event your child shows any symptoms of illness while at school. The Health Center will isolate any students who may not feel well, but does not have the capability to quarantine a child for a long period of time. We thank you in advance for your cooperation and preparation.

Materials Pick-Up Day #2

Lower Campus students will have an opportunity to pick up classroom materials on Friday, September 11, between 2:30-3:30 p.m. Pick-up will work the same as before:
Grades 1-4: Please come to the East Entrance
Grades 5-8 Please come to the West Entrance

And Finally...Petunia the School Bus

During the virtual orientation at Upper Campus this week, three student leaders mentioned the story of Petunia the School Bus as a "fun fact" about OVS, so we thought it would be fun to share more. When the Upper Campus was first established in the 1960s, resident boys lived at Upper but attended classes at Lower. They were transported in a yellow bus affectionately known as Petunia. When her engine turned off for the last time, after countless trips hauling teenagers up and down the winding country road, Petunia was buried on campus under the athletic field.



"Petunia was often used to transport teams to games, but it was also the link between Upper and Lower, and once the classrooms opened our senior year Petunia brought the girls to Upper," OVS Trustee and alumnus Spencer Garrett (L62, U65) recalled in an email this week. "As I remember it, when it was just the 10th graders up on the hill, VW buses were often the main transportation, but in 1963-64 there were three dorms and Petunia carried us to class." There were occasions in which a few boys would challenge the bus, driven by dorm parent and later OVS President Mike Hermes (L53), to a race up the hill. The boys got a head start by about five minutes, and occasionally threw obstacles on the road to try to improve their chances.

"Finally, Mike decided it was time to call it quits and allowed there to be one more race," Garrett said. "One person, Stan Carlson (L62, U65), went on his own...We drove along expecting to find things in the road but there were no blockades. Stan simply ran and ran. He made it to the top by the maintenance area before the bus did. I guess he would have made a good cross country runner had such a thing existed back then."