



October 23, 2020

## Notes from Ojai Valley School

Dear OVS Families,

While we've had to adjust a few procedures and protocols, our transition back to in-person learning has been seamless. We see that our students are happy and teachers are thrilled to have them back. At Lower Campus, 89% of students have returned for in-person instruction while 11% of students remain online through our "conditional" model. We are pleased that OVS can offer a way for everyone to be a part of our everyday classes.

I have been asked if it is better for a child to be in-person or stay online. There are so many different answers to that question that it really depends on the individual child's learning style, social and emotional needs, and each family's unique situation.

At OVS, I am very proud of our students and teachers for their successful online experience. However, research shows for the students who are able to come back in-person, this learning model holds them accountable for being active and alert during class time, it provides more one-on-one support, more opportunities to collaborate in small groups and to receive teacher feedback and support, even while social distancing.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recently stated that "children learn best when physically present in the classroom." Part of this is because nationally children get much more than academics at school. They learn social and emotional skills, are provided healthy meals, and receive other services that cannot be easily replicated online.

The students have told me they are most excited to see their old friends and make new friends. This is understandable given the little interaction many children have had over the past eight months. Our staff is well aware of how essential it is for our students to have social interactions to improve their confidence and communication skills, but also for the children to feel "normal". These interactions can be successful online, but are much more natural in person. There are more opportunities to make new friends in person, but we are also working to make sure new friendships are being created online for those who cannot be here.

Kudos to the faculty members who are simultaneously teaching with students online and in person. I am so impressed with how they are balancing their lessons while keeping the children socially distanced, and often outside, while still communicating to the students on the screen. Teachers and parents have done a great job adapting to make this work. There is no doubt, online learning requires a lot of responsibility and supervision from the parents. Thank you to the parents for all of your support!

Finally, the teachers are aware that children may experience some academic gaps in learning from the past eight months. I am confident we can get the children caught up. It is their social and emotional wellness that we need to monitor and support. This pandemic has been a challenge for all of us. Please keep an eye on your child and if you see signs of concerns, please reach out to us or your family practitioner. Here are two resources for wellness:

- [How COVID-19 Affects Children's Mental Health](#)
- [COVID-19 Parental Resources Kit - Ensuring Children and Young People's Social Emotional and Mental Well-being.](#)

As we close the first academic quarter, it is with sincere gratitude and appreciation that I thank our teachers, students and families for the tremendous work that has been done over the past few months. We overcame obstacles together and worked to do what is best for our students. We are getting closer to “normal” and we could not have done it without everyone’s support.

Warm regards,



Laurie Clark,  
Head of School,  
Lower Campus

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## Reopening Reminders

We are open! Our middle and high school students returned for in-person classes yesterday, 52 days after we opened the 2020-21 school year. Students are socially distanced and wearing masks. Classes are small and are being held outdoors as much as possible. We are keeping it safe and excited to be together again! If you have questions about schedules or health protocols, please visit the [Roadmap to Reopening](#) page of the website.



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## College Counseling

OVS guides students through the college admission process, starting from the freshman year through graduation. Join College Counselor Fred Alvarez today at 5 p.m. for a virtual college admissions presentation exploring the landscape of college admissions and how we strive to help students find their “right fit” college or university. Click the link below to join this [Zoom meeting](#).



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## Family Weekend

Following the college counseling presentation, join us for a parent social at 6 p.m. that will feature a hard hat tour of the new Upper Campus buildings with OVS President/CEO Michael Hall-Mounsey and Upper Campus

Head of School Craig Floyd. This will be a great opportunity to get a sneak peek at the new Aramont Science and Technology Center, the rebuilt Grace Hobson Smith House girls dorm, and the Littlefield Student Commons. Click the link to join this [Zoom meeting](#).



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## Fandango of Fables

Join us for a screening party! Students in grades 3-5 will present their fall play, “A Fandango of Fables,” on Saturday at 5:30 p.m. This 45-minute series of mini-plays is inspired by the fables of Aesop, with a few twists. Expect singing, dancing, and plenty of comedy in this original play by Performing Arts Coordinator Andy Street. Traditionally, the elementary play is performed each fall in the Greenberg Center. However, due to the pandemic, this year’s show has been filmed and will premiere on the [OVS Vimeo page](#).



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## Ojai Valley School

723 El Paseo Road,  
Ojai, CA 93023  
805.646.1423



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