

VPS News (Jan 29)

Valley Prep <admin@vpredlands.org>

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To: John Black <jblack@vpredlands.org>

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VPS Community:

Over the past six years, **tuition rates** (for both one-time AND monthly payors) have increased annually by 2-3%. This approach has allowed us to adequately fund programs (such as IB & STEAM) and maintain our staffing structure (at least until this year when our enrollment & staffing were impacted by Covid).

Moving forward, however, we must be careful not to over-price our "product." While we continually endeavor to improve that product, we need to ensure that our rates are not so high that the school becomes perceived as "elitist," which would not reflect the school's founding mission & vision.

Accordingly, we have reviewed our current tuition structure and compared it with other like-sized (non-religious) independent schools in the region, and have settled upon the following compromise ...

- For those families who choose to pay their tuition on a **monthly** basis, tuition rates will not increase for the 2021-22 and 22-23 school years.
- For those families who choose to pay **in-full** at the beginning of the school year, the rates will increase by 2.5% for 2021-22 and another 2.5% in 2022-23. Despite this increase, one-time payors will still save upwards 10% by continuing to pay in-full, rather than monthly.

Lastly, we were able to increase our allocation of **Tuition Assistance** this year by more than 25%, allowing us to assist nearly thirty families. We hope to continue gradually increasing our annual allocation until we are more aligned with other like-sized independent schools in the region. All families are welcomed to apply for the assistance, which is entirely income-based.

In late February, Mrs. Johson will be sending the **Re-enrollment Contracts** for the 2021-22 school year. These contracts will reflect the new rates.

Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns. And please join me in thanking our **School Board** for their continued support of our various initiatives, as well as their financial oversight of the school.

John Black, Head of School

jblack@vpredlands.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **February 12:** End of the 2nd trimester
- **February 15 & 16:** No school (Trimester break)
- **Weeks of March 22 & 29:** Spring Break

EUROPE TRIP 2021

As Covid-vaccinations become more widespread around the world, we are hopeful of resuming our international trips this Summer. A group of 11 Middle School students (and parents) are scheduled to travel to France, Spain, and Italy on June 7-17. Additional travelers (from 6-8th) are welcomed to register. The approximate trip-cost is \$5,000. All travel plans (including payment) is facilitated by Explorica Travel. One or two VPS teachers will also attend the trip. To learn more about the trip, please visit: www.explorica.com/Hanna-9208

OTHER OVERNIGHT TRIPS

- **4-5th** grades to Sacramento: May 3-6 (remains on-schedule)
- **5th** grade to Pali Outdoor Adventure Camp: April 19-22 (remains on-schedule)
- **6-8th** grades to Colorado River: April 5-9 (tentative: more info to follow)
- **8th** grade to Washington DC: Cancelled

HEALTH PLAN FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE YEAR

Although vaccinations for Covid-19 will soon be available to teachers in SB-county, we fully expect to continue with all of our current **health precautions until the end of the current school year.** This includes the wearing of masks; daily temperature checks; additional cleaning, etc. We will continue to follow the guidelines of the county's DPH.

Also, we are currently considering a few options for the **8th Grade Graduation & Moving-up Ceremony** in early June. Our hope is to have an in-person celebration of some sort. Additionally, preliminary plans are being made for our **Summer Camp**. Further details will be provided in the coming months.

Looking ahead to the 2021-22 school year, three key questions remain to be answered by DPH and our insurance carrier:

1. Will staff members be required to be vaccinated for Covid-19?

2. Will students be required to be vaccinated for Covid-19?
3. Will current health precautions be required to remain in-place (i.e. face-coverings, etc)

GALA 2021

Due to current health conditions in California, we will not hold an in-person GALA this school year. However, we are moving forward with plans for a **virtual auction** in the Spring. Although various platforms are available to manage such an auction, we obviously want to keep our overhead as low as possible. Accordingly, we are experimenting with a **single auction item**, graciously provided by our very own Dr. Berry. The attached flyer provides more information. Bids for the item can be made using the link below.

TRANSITIONING TO DL

Since returning from Winter Break, we seen an increased number of VPS families choosing to transition their child(ren) from on-campus instruction to Distance Learning. Since this transition requires some prep-time for the teachers, please be reminded of the **24-hour 'grace period'** (1-business day) between the time that a family informs the school of the transition, to when DL-instruction can begin. Everyone's cooperation is greatly appreciated!

HEALTH UPDATE (as recommended by DPH to ensure transparency)

Since September 1, the school has been informed of the following:

- **12 students** have been tested for Covid-19, following possible exposure. 2 students subsequently tested positive.
- **9 staff members** have been tested for Covid-19, following possible exposure. 3 staff members subsequently tested positive.

ANNUAL GIVING CAMPAIGN

Our *Annual Giving Campaign* (Annual Fund) is one of our three annual fundraisers, including the Fall Fest (cancelled this year) and the GALA (which we remain hopeful of holding in April or May). As we continue to rebuild enrollment, proceeds from all fundraisers will be used to "**close the gap**" between the amount of tuition collected, and total expenses. For the current school year, we expect that gap to exceed \$150,000 (which includes monies allocated for Tuition Assistance). Your support of the Annual Fund will begin to close that gap! Last year, more than 90% of our families donated to the fund, which raised nearly \$40,000. Can we push that total to \$45,000? Or even \$50,000?!

- Through early January we have received upwards of **\$30,000**
- Stay-tuned for the January & February results.

Visit our website to learn more about the Annual Fund and to make your donation. Any amount is appreciated!

HEALTH PROTOCOLS

Please be reminded that a student (or staff member) is not allowed on-campus if they ...

- ... **Have a fever of 100.4 or above.** If a student is sent-home, they must be fever-free (without medication) for 24hrs before returning to campus. In other words, if your child is sent home on Monday, they could not return to school until Wednesday. The school will always confirm the temperature by using two different hand-held, touchless thermometers (not including the kiosks near the stage).
- ... **Are continually sneezing and/or coughing.** If a student is sent-home, they may return the next day, so long as they are not continually sneezing and/or coughing.

CONFIRMED TO HAVE COVID-19

- If a student (or staff member) in a particular class tests **positive** for Covid-19, that student (or staff member) must quarantine for a minimum of 10-days (from the time of the positive test) AND submit a negative test result before returning to campus. **NOTE:** If the student (or staff member) has completed the required quarantine and is symptom-free, but still tests positive, then a "clearance note" from a doctor may be submitted in lieu of a negative test result.
- If the positive test result occurs while school is in-session, then the entire class (including the teacher) must also quarantine for a minimum of 10 days. All students in the closed classroom would transition to 100% Distance Learning during the quarantine.
- If the student (or staff member) is in Middle School, then the entire Middle School would be closed and transitioned to Distance Learning.
- Each student (and the teacher) would need to submit a "clear/negative" test result before returning to campus.

EXPOSED TO SOMEONE WITH COVID-19

- DPH defines "*exposure*" as ... close proximity (within 6ft), without a mask, for more than 15min.
- If a student (or staff member) in a particular class is **exposed** to someone confirmed to have Covid-19, then the student (or staff member) must submit a test result to the school as quickly as possible AND quarantine (for a minimum of 10-days from the time of exposure, regardless of the test result) before returning to campus. If the test result is positive, then the procedure outlined above will be implemented.

- While waiting for the test result (from a student or staff member), other students in the class have the option of transitioning to Distance Learning (DPH does not require a class to be closed while waiting for a test result).
- Further, regardless of their own test result, if the student (or staff member) resides in the same household as someone confirmed to have Covid-19, then the student (or staff member) must quarantine themselves for a minimum of 10-days beyond the quarantine period of the person in the household who has Covid-19 (i.e. if the person with Covid ends their quarantine on the 1st of the month, then those residing with them must continue to quarantine until at least the 10th of the month).

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Our mailing address is:

Valley Preparatory School
1605 Ford St
Redlands, CA 92373-7130

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