



# Carey High School

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Blue Devils:

The start of the school year is almost upon us. Your teachers, counselors, staff, and administrators cannot wait to finally see all of you again! Just think, it will have been over 5 long months since we last saw one another in a school setting, and to be honest, that is just too long because we **MISS YOU!!** We want to get back to learning with all of you, watching you grow, laughing with you, having fun, watching your activities, and everything else that makes Carey High School – OUR SCHOOL! It has been an extremely lengthy time to be away from each other, and it is so fantastic to think that we will all soon be together again.

Before we do come back, it is important that you are made aware of some new and/or altered policies that we will be implementing due to COVID-19. Below are some informational items that will help us begin the school year. It is not an exhaustive list, but it does encompass some important information that will get us off the ground.

## **NEW BELL/TIME SCHEDULE**

We have made a slight change concerning our bell schedule for this year to help alleviate some hallway/cafeteria issues with the elementary. We have altered the beginning and end of our school day by five (5) minutes, but NOT the length of the day. Rather than having the warning bell at 8:05AM and beginning 1<sup>st</sup> period at 8:10AM as we did in 2019-2020, we will now open the doors at **7:55AM**, ring the warning bell at **8:00AM** and 1<sup>st</sup> period will begin at **8:05AM**. Likewise, the end of the day will shift from 3:03PM to **2:58PM**. This small five (5) minute change goes a great deal in helping better accommodate our elementary friends in the cafeteria and hallways as well as our afterschool activities. I have attached the NEW bell schedule to this informational letter.

The other, and probably more important, schedule alteration that we have decided to implement for at least the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter is to run each day on a Block Schedule. After thinking about how much our regular 8-period schedule requires movement of students, “cross-pollination” of classrooms, locker/hallway activity, and management of a large amount of persons in a confined space for a brief amount of time as well as the limited amount of time between periods to allow for classroom “wipe-downs” and/or staggered dismissals, it became apparent that the traditional 8-period model may not be our best course of action for the foreseeable future. Rather, the “Block” model best suits our efforts to limit hallway traffic, give time for classroom and hallway sanitizing, and eliminate unnecessary crowding in the hallways or between classrooms to begin the school year with rotating odd/even block days.

Our current block set-ups do not fit nicely into a five-day week and this change will require some adjusting and flexibility on everyone's parts, including your teachers and office staff. For example, we will have some weeks where the "Odds" Block meets three times and the "Evens" Block meets twice with the following week then having the "Evens" Block meet three times and the "Odds" Block twice. There will be a bit of time for us to get used to this new routine, but I believe that we can get through this *temporary* transition. I have included the Block Day Google Calendar with this letter so you can see how an entire quarter would look in this format.

### **LOCKERS/HALLWAY**

One of the main obstacles in providing adequate social distancing and limiting people flow is the constant changing of class periods. By utilizing a rotating Block Schedule as mentioned above, the need to visit lockers or be in the hallway during the day should be greatly reduced. To further help with this, we are limiting locker stops to *before school, before lunch, after lunch, and at the conclusion of the day*. Making this adjustment means that students will have to carry their class materials with them in the morning and then again in the afternoon. Teachers are going to help with this as much as possible by maintaining hardcover textbooks and other instructional items in the classrooms rather than assign them to you to put in your lockers. As with anything, this might not be entirely feasible for everyone as I know distancing desks and materials in classrooms may hinder storing everyone's items, but we are certainly going to try to make this happen in order to keep locker/hallway traffic down to a minimum.

With the hallways, students will also notice a change that honestly, we should have begun a long time ago. As you walk the hallways, we are going to ask everyone to "STAY ON THE RIGHT" side of the hallway depending on which direction you are traveling. If you can imagine our hallways being streets, we want all students to travel the hallways much in the same way you would if you were driving down a street. The reason we are doing this is to make getting to and from classrooms more efficient and cut down on the "traffic jams" we seem to have. Hopefully, we will have some floor stickers and signs to help with this process in the near future, but the most important aspect is that students (and teachers) follow through with this change.

### **FACIAL COVERINGS (MASKS)**

Per the recent statewide Governor's order, Carey High School is requiring ALL individuals to wear a "facial covering" when in the building (hallways, classrooms, common areas), on school transportation, and/or in areas outside the building when social distancing is impractical. A "facial covering" is defined as a covering of the nose, mouth, and chin that is secured to the head with ties, straps, or loops over the ears or is wrapped around the lower face. It is **NOT** an item that covers the entire face or comes over the person's head like a hood nor is it a plastic face shield as those have been limited by the Governor's order. Students will wear their facial covering when working in close proximity to another individual (teacher, peer, etc.) for a sustained period of time (ex. classrooms), moving in the classroom, traveling the hallways, and other designated areas. Students will have opportunities to take "mask breaks" only with the permission and at the discretion of their teachers or staff. Students will also be permitted to remove facial coverings in the cafeteria (once seated). Adherence to these items as well as the types of facial coverings permissible will be defined by the mask policy (attached), the dress code, and Student Code of Conduct.

## **DESK SHIELDS**

We are providing each student this year with a foldable, three-sided desk shield. These desk shields will be carried by students throughout the day and utilized in classrooms and the cafeteria, as designated by school personnel, to provide an extra layer of protection from airborne contaminants. Students are to take care of these items and keep them free of writing and decorations. If students deface, damage, or lose their shield, they will be responsible for the cost of the replacement. These shields will be sanitized on a routine basis and information on how that will occur will be delivered when we are back in session.

## **LUNCH**

We have been looking at our lunch numbers and the ability to seat all of our students in a distanced manner in the cafeteria. After some creative maneuvering, we believe we can do this. We are going to utilize our ENTIRE auditorium/cafeteria area to seat all of our lunches safely, orderly, and properly distanced. It is possible that students will have assigned seating areas based on homerooms or grade levels to help with contact tracing if needed, but that has yet to be determined. Staggered dismissals to the lunch lines will most likely continue as they did in the past as well as the implementation of physical distancing/facial coverings while in the lines. Students may also notice some changes in how food is served due to the health guidelines being enacted by the State of Ohio. There will be some new ways of doing things in the cafeteria, but we will continue to work with our cafeteria folks and supervisors to work on these ideas as well as develop more organized protocols to ensure the success of our cafeteria plan.

## **STUDENT ID CARDS (NEW)**

This year, all students will be required to wear their student ID cards around their neck on a school-issued lanyard. There are several reasons for this new procedure, but the most important are that they will help us maximize our safety protocols and they will serve as a student's access card in the cafeteria line which alleviates the constant touching that goes on during the payment process. Students will be expected to always have their ID card on their person and displayed throughout the school day. Failure to do so could result in discipline measures. Students will also be expected to keep track of their ID card as replacement cards will be charged back to the student.

## **WATER BOTTLES**

Due to the Department of Health Order which states that drinking fountains are to be disabled, we are permitting students to carry clear, plastic water containers with them throughout the day that can be filled in the water bottle filling stations in order to stay hydrated. These clear, plastic containers should have screw on caps/lids and not be more than 20oz. They cannot be the normal beverage bottles, similar to what would contain Propel, Aquafina, Dasani, etc. if purchased at the store, a concession stand, or in the cafeteria.

## **ONLINE LEARNING**

As we move into the new school year, there is going to be a continued emphasis on the part of your teachers to utilize the digital options available to them in order to make certain that both students and teachers are familiar with a good number of digital tools if we are required to move to a period of remote learning again this year. Last year when school was shut down, your teachers did a commendable job in transforming their physical classrooms to lessons and activities that they could deliver in ALEKS, Study Island, Google Classroom, Schoology, etc. This was not always an easy task, but they worked hard to do this in order to continue to provide the essential learning that all of you needed and deserved. Likewise,

all of you did your best to adapt from learning through face-to-face interactions to learning from online content, such as, Google Slides, Powerpoints, Google Meets, Zooms, and online videos. This too was not effortless, but many of you were able to adapt, adjust, and continue to keep up with your coursework.

With that stated, I want each of you to continue to be familiar with all of the digital tools presented to you as well as keep your link/sign-in information to the Clever portal handy. Clever was an effective, one-stop gateway for teachers to post lesson plans/activities and for students to access each of your courses' upcoming assignments without having to navigate many, many links. Your teachers are going to be doing more with Clever this year, and it is important that you are able to find everything that you need in the portal.

Another aspect of online learning that I feel is important to address is the fact that this year's online experience, if we are forced to move to that option, will be noticeably different than last school year. As I mentioned above, both your teachers and you adapted well and did the best anyone could to teach and learn under those circumstances. We flipped our school from face-to-face to all online in a little under a week. It was remarkable. However, even with achieving such an enormous feat, we were able to look back and see that there was some need for improvement in how we operated courses, took attendance, assigned work, determined grades, and communicated expectations. Looking at those things we know if we have to move into remote learning this year, students will most likely experience some changes from last year, such as, required class meeting times, more firm assignment deadlines, and work expectations that more closely resemble what is expected during a normal school day. These changes are meant to ensure that the online experience is as beneficial and practical to students as much as it can be.

As we progress throughout this school year, we will no doubt experience a generous portion of challenges, changes, and feelings related to being back together. I know that some of you are ready to come back right now. You want to see friends and teachers that you have not seen in a while, and you want to get back to the extracurriculars and school activities that you missed so much. Yet, I also know that some of you want all of that, but you are a bit anxious to come back. You do not know what to expect or how to prepare. You want to be cautious. Trust me when I say that it is "OK" to feel however you feel, and it is very important that everyone respects those around them who may feel differently than they do about coming back. We are all in this together. We can all get through this together. We can all be successful together. Understand, there are many, many people in this building from your teachers and coaches to support staff and administrators who care a great deal about each and every one of you. You MATTER to us and each one of the people listed above have been working hard over the summer planning and preparing in order to make certain that this school year is as "normal" as possible for everyone, including YOU! What we ask from all of you is to have patience, show understanding, be helpful, and please cooperate in following the policies and procedures that have been instituted to ensure the smooth operation of OUR (all of us) building, but most importantly, the well-being of all.

Go Blue Devils,

Peter Cole  
Principal