

## **EMAIL: THURSDAY, MARCH 26<sup>TH</sup>**

Hello Rise Families,

Thank you for making us aware of your questions and concerns, and for sharing your ideas of ways to support Rise during this challenging time. This is an unprecedented situation that has evolved rapidly, and we appreciate your open communication and understanding as we work diligently alongside our board of directors to determine the best course of action for our community, as our students, families, and staff are our top priority. A few questions arose that we would like to address to provide additional transparency and clarification.

### **Ability to operate as an Essential Business**

Many of you have asked why we are not operating as an essential business based on the exemption for childcare facilities. The new order states that childcare facilities that provide services enabling exempted individuals to work are permitted, however to the extent possible, they must operate under the following mandatory conditions to prevent cross-contamination and reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19:

1. Childcare must be carried out in stable groups of 10 or fewer
2. Children shall not change groups
3. Each group shall be in a separate room
4. Childcare providers shall remain solely with one group of children

Based on our current business model, we do not fit these conditions. We serve classrooms of 12 students, our therapists and floating teaching assistants move throughout the classrooms during the day, and our aftercare program combines students from different groups. In order to provide services, a restructuring of our program may be necessary to address these conditions. Additionally, the order is unclear as to whether we are able to provide services ONLY to those students whose parents are exempted. We have placed a call with the City of Austin and submitted a request for clarification on this exemption and how it applies to our organization, however, we are still waiting for their feedback. Until we receive clarification, we do not feel confident asking families to bring their children to campus. In the meantime, we are working on potential restructuring models. **If you work for an Essential Business, [please fill out this form.](#)**

We also serve and are staffed by a unique population, including people who are considered high-risk. We therefore need to consider the health and safety of our teachers in addition to the health and safety of our students.

### **What is Rise doing about tuition?**

We know many of you have asked about tuition. At this time, we are working diligently to determine Rise's next steps. Any decisions regarding tuition will be determined once we have a plan of action. Please know that we are working as swiftly as we can and that these decisions impact everyone in our community and therefore, we are working as a team to ensure everyone's interests are considered.

### **How will Rise support families with essential workers and families who have experienced job loss?**

We are working through potential scenarios and will let everyone know as soon as we have a plan in place. In the meantime, **[please let us know if you fall into one or both of these categories](#)** as this information will help as we explore our options. For essential workers, please use the form linked above.

We know this has been an extremely challenging time and our hearts are with everyone in our community. We are all in this together. Please know that we are working as quickly as we can to develop a course of action, and we will provide updates as we are able. Please continue to communicate any questions, ideas, or concerns with our team, and thank you all for your patience and understanding.

Once we have updates, I will let you know. Take care and stay safe, families and staff. Wishing everyone well.

Kindly,  
Meg

