



Dear Middle School Parents,

I hope you and your family are well. Like you, we are adjusting to the “new normal” in our lives, while taking care of our friends and family. As our Head of School, Matthew Nespole, has mentioned in his communications, I have been working closely with teachers to prepare for distance learning to begin on Wednesday, March 18. Not surprisingly, our teachers have been energetically planning together to develop engaging lessons, learning technological tools that will make teaching and learning more effective, and thinking about how they can remotely care for the social and emotional well-being of your children during a time that is likely to cause stress for students and adults.

I am writing to share our general approach to distance learning over the next two weeks, and how we are communicating lessons, assignments and activities to students.

- We are generally expecting students to do school work during the normal hours of a school day. We are also expecting teachers to be available to answer questions and work with students during that time. We also know that a healthy schedule for students will include some breaks, some nourishment and some physical activity throughout each day.
- In keeping with the breadth and depth of our program, teachers in all subject areas will be providing work and activities for students to do. The general principle is to give students an amount of work that is equivalent to the amount of class time they have in each class in our current schedule over the course of a typical week.
- The class websites will be the primary means of communicating classwork, assignments and activities to students. They will also be a place for teachers to share tutorial videos as needed, as well as links to other resources. For many teachers, they will continue to use their Power School sites, which parents have access to as well. Some teachers have additionally created Google Classroom sites to provide information to students. You can access your child’s Google Classroom site through their log in to see what teachers have provided.
- We have created a common template for a weekly syllabus that each teacher will be using as well, to communicate work to students. Each teacher will post the weekly syllabus on their class website. The first syllabus will cover Wednesday - Friday this week and will be posted by Tuesday evening. The syllabus for next week (Monday-Friday) will be posted by Sunday evening. This will allow students to see in a broad way the topics and lessons that will be covered over the course of that week.
- If students have questions or need help with any work or tasks that a teacher assigns, they should email teachers directly from their Key School email account. Teachers will determine the most effective way of communicating with students to give them help (email, online chat, video conference, or phone call).
- Teachers will be closely monitoring the work that students are doing to know if they are keeping up with their assigned work. Teachers will be sending an email to parents if their child is falling behind with their assignments.
- I have asked all Homeroom Teachers (Advisors) to send a message to the children in their group on Monday, Wednesday and Friday each week. This “check-in” will allow Homeroom Teachers to keep track of how the children are doing and offer support.
- In addition to the classroom teachers, we have many wonderful resources available to support our students and families. Our Middle School Librarian Wendy Braithwaite (wbraithwaite@keyschool.org) can help students learn about good, high interest “indie reading.” The Learning Department staff,

Sarah Judd (sjudd@keyschool.org) and Jessica Schwenk (jschwenk@keyschool.org), are available to help students with organizing their work and their schedule, or with particular assignments. From our IT staff, Tom Adams (tadams@keyschool.org) is available to provide technical support to students, teachers and parents. And our Middle/Upper School Counselor Randi Altschuler (raltschuler@keyschool.org) is also available to support students and parents through the emotional challenges that lie ahead.

From the communication I have had with teachers and from the parent survey, there doesn't seem to be a significant need for parents to come to school tomorrow to pick up materials and books for students. For those who are coming to school tomorrow, here are some instructions from Matthew to make this process go smoothly:

On Tuesday, there will be two windows of time for you to come to campus and pick up the items the faculty have put together for your child(ren): 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 3:30 to 6:00 p.m. Please note that we will not distribute items at any other times.

We ask that when arriving to campus you enter the Carroll House Parking Lot, off of Carroll Drive, and proceed toward the exit by Smith House at Hillsmere Drive. Staff will be stationed there with the materials that have been packaged together for your convenience. Items have been labeled with students' names, and in the case of Lower School, homeroom teacher.

When you arrive at the pick-up site, please roll down your window and let the staff know your child's name, grade and, if applicable, homeroom teacher. Staff members will place the item in your trunk, if you are able to open it, or in your backseat through the window.

Upon arrival, do not exit your vehicle and please follow any staff directives. We will move the line as quickly as possible, and we believe the pick-up blocks are long enough to mitigate your wait time.

On behalf of the Middle School Faculty and Staff, I appreciate your support as we all move into this new phase of learning. Our overall goal is to maintain continuity and integrity to our program, and to stay connected from a distance. I have complete faith in our teachers and students to meet that goal and I have confidence in our partnership with parents to support us and offer feedback as needed.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of help to you or your children in any way over the weeks ahead.

Take care,

Dave Magnus