



# Upper & Middle School Distance Learning Plan March 2020

9401 Starcrest Drive  
San Antonio, Texas 78217  
Ph: (210) 483-9100  
Fx: (210) 483-9299  
[www.smhall.org](http://www.smhall.org)

Dear Upper & Middle School Students and Parents,

We understand that you and your families are navigating uncertain times and many disruptions to your daily lives. Please know that this is first and foremost in our minds today and that we expect that you will be taking care of yourselves and your families before anything else. Saint Mary's Hall is a community, and your teachers and administrators and staff miss seeing you on campus and are looking forward to reconnecting online and continuing our educational journey with you.

Our distance learning plan will not be an exact replication of your on campus classes. We will reduce the number of assignments and focus on important concepts and skills for students, giving you plenty of time to complete work, ask questions, receive help and explore topics of individual interest to you. We outline below what this will look like for you students and ask that you participate to the extent that you are able, and that you communicate via email with your teacher and division head if circumstances arise where you are not able to be present for classes or complete assignments. We pledge to exercise extreme flexibility and compassion.

## **Distance Learning Plan**

Beginning Monday, March 23, our distance learning classes will begin with Upper and Middle School teachers and students following the meeting times of our normal Monday-Thursday schedule of classes. We will also follow this schedule on Fridays for consistency's sake while we are away from campus. In the coming days, each teacher will reach out to their students explaining the specific expectations for their classes. Please review those communications closely, and be sure to ask your teacher questions if you have them.

This does not mean that you will meet every class every day for the full 45 minutes. The Veracross Portal will be your most important communication to track each day, as teachers will post for you their face-to-face meeting times/days, any classwork or assignments they want you to complete with due dates, and any resources or materials you need to complete them. The teachers are well aware that you may not have your textbooks or notebooks or other resources since campus is closed and you are not allowed to retrieve them at the present time, so everything you need to do your work will be either provided to you through the portal or can be accessed online. You should plan on checking the portal every morning before 8am and again after 4pm to make sure you have the most current updates.

## **Class Meetings**

Your teachers will be using Zoom or Microsoft Teams to meet with you face-to-face as a class throughout the week. This [resource](#) provides step-by-step instructions for how to join a Zoom meeting, including if you're joining a meeting for the first time. Your teachers will email you an Outlook Invitation to a Zoom meeting for a specific time and day. All you need to do is go to the



# Upper & Middle School Distance Learning Plan March 2020

9401 Starcrest Drive  
San Antonio, Texas 78217  
Ph: (210) 483-9100  
Fx: (210) 483-9299  
[www.smhall.org](http://www.smhall.org)

Zoom link in the invitation at the correct time and it will take you directly to the video meeting. You do not need an account to join these sessions.

Keeping a regular schedule will be important for you, with breaks for exercise (see Physical Education Expectations), healthy meals and snacks, time for pleasure reading, mindfulness or prayer, and connecting with your friends and family online to maintain relationships. We're also assuming that your parents may have some chores for you or that you may be caring for siblings while your parents work. Please do let your teachers know if you have important obligations like this which may be a factor in your ability to participate in a particular online meeting or class. Again, we pledge to exercise extreme flexibility and compassion.

Teachers will follow the regular Monday through Thursday schedule for all class meetings, even on Fridays. This ensures that each teacher can schedule regular meeting times with you throughout the week without a conflict with another class. In some instances, teachers may ask to check in with you via Zoom or Microsoft Teams for part of the class and then leave you to work on classwork or research. They may also ask you to submit something to them (an assignment or an email response, for example) as a way to mark your attendance for that day rather than having a virtual check-in. Classwork will be submitted electronically using your normal avenues such as class cloud folders in OneDrive, Google Drive, or SMH email.

What is normally scheduled as your study hall (MS) or free period (US) is a great time to take a break and complete your physical education activity for the day. If you are in a dance class at that time, you will actually attend a virtual dance class with your teachers, either through Zoom or with a flipped classroom video.

Time	Period
8:00 – 8:50	Period 1
8:55 – 9:40	Period 2
9:40 – 9:50	Break
9:50 – 10:35	Period 3
10:40 – 11:25	Period 4
11:25 – 12:05	US Meeting (as called)/MS Lunch
12:10 - 12:45	US Lunch/MS Meeting (as called)
12:50 – 1:35	Period 5



# Upper & Middle School Distance Learning Plan March 2020

9401 Starcrest Drive  
San Antonio, Texas 78217  
Ph: (210) 483-9100  
Fx: (210) 483-9299  
[www.smhall.org](http://www.smhall.org)

1:40 – 2:25	Period 6
2:30 – 3:15	Period 7
3:15 – 4:00	Office Hours

You'll note that we left our activity period time before and after lunch for you. Reverend Gunnin will be providing us with a short spiritual video reflection weekly that you can watch in place of Chapel, and we will hold weekly Advisory Meetings with your advisors on Wednesdays during those activity period times where you will be asked to check-in with your Advisor. We have also left Office Hours in the schedule when you can email your teachers with questions to get extra help.

## Attendance

Teachers will take attendance when they meet with classes online and by checking assignments turned in to folders. Out of an ethic of care, our Deans of Students, Mr. Hebert and Mr. Mayberry, will follow up with parents if they see that students are not attending classes to make sure everyone is well and has what they need to participate in classes. We do ask that students be responsible and notify teachers, their Dean of Students, or their Division Head if they are unable to attend classes, either temporarily or for longer periods if they are ill or taking care of family responsibilities.

## Posting Assignments

Teachers will continue to post assignments on the SMH Portal, along with any resource materials or links to them that students may need to complete their assigned work. We ask that students check the portal in the morning and in the late afternoon to keep current on assignments.

## Grading

Our goals for this period of distance learning are for students to continue positive engagement with their subjects and continue necessary skill building to prepare them for the next academic step. Though teacher evaluation and feedback is vital to achieving that goal, students should expect that not every assignment will be graded. Teachers will assign grades for assignments as they deem it appropriate to do so. In short, students will be learning for the sake of learning and, given our unique circumstances, doing so without the typical pressures of a traditional school routine. The challenges teachers and students are facing just to transition so abruptly to distance learning provide enough pressure on their own. Our goal, then, is not to add to that stress, but simply to find a way to further our mission to "Prepare Students for Success in College and Fulfillment in Life" in spite of these challenges. We are SMH. We can do this!



# Upper & Middle School Distance Learning Plan March 2020

9401 Starcrest Drive  
San Antonio, Texas 78217  
Ph: (210) 483-9100  
Fx: (210) 483-9299  
[www.smhall.org](http://www.smhall.org)

## Teacher Availability

Teachers will monitor email as usual throughout each day in order to address student/parent questions and will remain available to all students during Office Hours from 3:15pm - 4:00pm daily. Students should email teachers directly with questions or concerns.

## Advisory

Advisors will “meet” with their advisory groups during US or MS Meeting times on Wednesdays using Zoom. This will be a good time for students to check-in with their advisor to identify what issues, if any, are arising with our distance learning plan and to share any other concerns going on in your lives.

## Wellness and Counseling Support

Our Wellness Team members listed below are ready and available to check in with students and parents to offer support during this period of distance learning. Dr. Lopez-Morales will be sending out helpful wellness resources to families; Rev. Gunnin will be sharing a weekly video reflection on Mondays for us so that we don’t miss Chapel; and Mrs. Clark and Ms. Palmer will be available for consultation and resources for mental health and wellness support. We encourage both students and parents to reach out to them with questions and concerns for support. We are here for you!

- Dr. Sandra Lopez-Morales [slopezmorales@smhall.org](mailto:slopezmorales@smhall.org)
- Rev. Dr. Cameron Gunnin [cgunnin@smhall.org](mailto:cgunnin@smhall.org)
- Liz Clark [eclark@smhall.org](mailto:eclark@smhall.org)
- Leslie Palmer [lpalmer@smhall.org](mailto:lpalmer@smhall.org)

## Fine Arts Classes

All Fine Arts classes, including private lessons and all dance classes, will be taught online during their regularly scheduled periods. Look for more detailed information which will be coming soon from your Fine Arts teachers. You won’t want to miss what they have ready for you!

## Middle School Physical Activity Options for Distance Learning

Middle school students will have the option of doing a pre-made [Darebee.com](http://Darebee.com) workout that will be sent by one of the following coaches. The MS students can build their own [Darebee.com](http://Darebee.com) workout. They may also choose to do 30 or more minutes of sport related activity (soccer, tennis, lacrosse, football, basketball, etc. with family members), or do 30 minutes on an exercise machine (treadmill, bike, elliptical, rower, etc. if available at home). Our coaches are open to other ideas for physical activity. If you do not see something that you would prefer to do for 30 minutes of physical activity, just reach out and ask your assigned coach about that activity for approval.



# Upper & Middle School Distance Learning Plan March 2020

9401 Starcrest Drive  
San Antonio, Texas 78217  
Ph: (210) 483-9100  
Fx: (210) 483-9299  
[www.smhall.org](http://www.smhall.org)

All MS students not participating in dance will be expected and encouraged to do one of the activities Monday-Friday. There are times within the daily class schedule that are set aside for physical activity. However, there is ultimate flexibility in when a student chooses to be active, but we encourage everyone to take the time to be active for their health and well-being during this time of distance learning. At the end of each week, students will report their daily activity to the following coaches:

- Form 6- Tiffanie Barta [tbarta@smhall.org](mailto:tbarta@smhall.org)
- Form 7- Barry Chamberlin [bchamberlin@smhall.org](mailto:bchamberlin@smhall.org)
- Form 8- Lance Lewis [llewis@smhall.org](mailto:llewis@smhall.org)

## Upper School Physical Activity Options for Distance Learning

For US spring athletic teams, each Head Coach will be responsible for creating a daily workout for their team members and emailing the team those workouts. The team members will report directly to the Head Coach about their workouts.

All other US students will have the option of doing a pre-made [Darebee.com](http://Darebee.com) workout that will be sent by one of the coaches. The students can build their own [Darebee.com](http://Darebee.com) workout. They may also choose to do 30 or more minutes of sport related activity (soccer, tennis, lacrosse, football, basketball, etc. with family members), or do 30 minutes on an exercise machine (treadmill, bike, elliptical, rower, etc. if available at home). Fitness class students will report their weekly workouts directly to Katrina Benoist ([kbenoist@smhall.org](mailto:kbenoist@smhall.org)) and Stephanie Takas-Mercer ([stakasmercercer@smhall.org](mailto:stakasmercercer@smhall.org)). This will not be mandatory for all US students who are not in a spring sport or fitness class, but highly encouraged for everyone's health and wellness during distance learning.

“Lack of physical activity destroys the good condition of every human being, while movement and methodical physical exercise save it, and preserve it” -Plato

## Note to Parents

Know that we understand the significant responsibilities parents have upon them at this time. We do not expect you to oversee your student's online learning beyond a few simple guidelines:

- Set a regular school day schedule for your student, waking in time to eat a healthy breakfast and join classes by 8am.
- Encourage your student to participate fully in class activities and assignments.
- Make sure your student takes the Physical Education requirements seriously.  
Participating in regular exercise will not only keep them physically fit, but will also keep



# Upper & Middle School Distance Learning Plan March 2020

9401 Starcrest Drive  
San Antonio, Texas 78217  
Ph: (210) 483-9100  
Fx: (210) 483-9299  
[www.smhall.org](http://www.smhall.org)

them mentally relaxed and strong. They will sleep better and deal with stress better. If you can, try to work out with them, even if it is taking the dog for a walk after work together.

- Set a normal weekday bedtime and hold tight to it. Sleep is essential for learning and mental health.
- Move electronic devices to charge outside of the bedrooms.
- Please reach out to Brent, Sam, or one of the counselors or wellness faculty if you or your student are experiencing any challenges at home. We are a community and we are here for you.

## **Last Thoughts**

Our transition to distance learning is a challenge and an exciting opportunity for both our faculty and our students. We ask that everyone comes to class with a growth mindset and a collaborative spirit. Out of this, we will create truly remarkable learning experiences for our community. Please remember that we are going to focus on important concepts, skills, and essential questions, and that we hope students will bring their best ideas to our virtual school every day in whatever way you are able to engage. Your teachers are excited to work with you and see you face-to-face soon. Please know that you only need to communicate with them if you are not able to participate or complete work for health or family reasons. They will understand. In the same spirit, we know that YOU will also understand that if your teacher becomes ill or must care for a family member and must reduce or suspend a class in the interim.

Finally, as we move online, it is important to remember that you are still in school and that all Saint Mary's Hall Handbook rules apply, especially the Responsible Use Policy all students and parents signed with your enrollment contract. Everyone has worked tremendously hard to continue a quality education for you, and we expect that you will undertake it with a positive attitude and maintain good digital citizenship with your classmates and teachers. We all look forward to seeing you online soon!

Brent Spicer  
*Head of Upper School*

Sam Hamilton  
*Head of Middle School*