

St. Anne's-Belfield School

Dear Juniors & Parents/Guardians,

During this school closure, the College Counseling team plans to ensure your college process is **not** disrupted and to support you remotely – and, when appropriate again, in person. We remain committed to providing you with the same care and attention you would have received if school was in session. So much has and will continue to change. As such, we are also communicating with our extensive admissions and college counseling network and using the information we are learning to inform our work with you. We ask for your patience as we grapple with the changing admissions landscape.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I still schedule one-on-one meetings with my college counselor?

Beginning Wednesday, March 25, all meetings will occur virtually through Google Meet. To ensure that this process is as seamless as possible, we will continue to have Barb Sanford serve as the point person for scheduling all meetings. If you want to schedule a new meeting, please email [Mrs. Sanford](#) and let her know you would like to schedule a one-on-one meeting. She will send you a Google invitation with info on how to access the meeting. **Essentially, nothing is changing, except that meetings will occur virtually.** (Note: if your teachers schedule virtual meetings or class time that conflicts with a college counseling meeting, your teacher and class time are the priority - you may not miss these meetings. Simply email Mrs. Sanford to reschedule if such a conflict occurs).

Can I still schedule my Parent/Guardian Meeting?

These meetings will also continue as planned (just virtually!) beginning Wednesday, March 25. To schedule a meeting, please send an email to Mrs. Sanford and let her know you would like to schedule a meeting with your parents. Be sure to share two to three days and times when you are available. Also, please let her know who your counselor is and the names of the individuals joining you for the meeting.

What is the best way to communicate with the College Counseling Office?

The college counseling team will continue to check email and will respond to all messages within one school day. We look forward to interacting over email and hearing from you. While we're not thrilled about the social isolation, we understand that it is important for the greater good of our community.

What can I do now that the March and May SAT and the April ACT have been canceled?

Thousands of students in the U.S. and around the world are facing the same challenges. Like you, they do not have access to the SAT or ACT. You are not alone and conversations about how to support you are taking place at the national and international level!

In the meantime, some of you have questions about how to adapt your testing plan now that the SAT and ACT have cancelled the March, April, and May tests. Our office is monitoring the situation and has a contact at the College Board who is trying to provide updated and relevant information. Please do not panic: your counselor will work with you on modifying your testing plan. Our focus is to ensure we stay current on information about the SAT, ACT, and SAT Subject Tests because of the number of schools that require or recommend them.

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Do I still need to take SAT subject tests?

A small number of colleges (fourteen in the United States) either require or strongly recommend taking SAT subject tests. They have not yet weighed in on whether or not they will waive this requirement or recommendation for members of the Class of 2021. We recognize that the cancellation of tests like the SAT, ACT, and AP exam will impact thousands of high school students and encourage you not to panic. Our advice is to prioritize the SAT or ACT. We will share updates as they become available.

Will AP exams still take place?

The College Board has confirmed that AP exams will move to an online format. Below is an excerpt from an email I received. Students who have registered for one or more AP exams can expect to receive additional emails from me.

"Students remain eager to take AP Exams and have a chance to earn credit and placement. We surveyed 18,000 AP students and 91% indicated they want to complete this important step, urging us not to cancel this opportunity."

The AP Program will invest heavily over the next month in the following ways:

- For the 2019 - 2020 exam administration only, students can take a 45-minute online exam at home. Educator-led development committees are currently selecting the exam questions that will be administered.
- Some students may want to take the exam sooner rather than later, while the content is still fresh. Other students may want more time to practice. For each AP subject, there will be two different testing dates.
- AP curricula are locally developed and we defer to local decisions on how best to help students complete coursework. To be fair to all students, some of whom have lost more instructional time than others, the exam will only include topics and skills most AP teachers and students have already covered in class by early March.
- Colleges support this solution and are committed to ensuring that AP students receive the credit they've worked this year to earn. For decades, colleges have accepted a shortened AP Exam for college credit when groups of students have experienced emergencies.
- Students will be able to take these streamlined exams on any device they have access to—computer, tablet, or smartphone. Taking a photo of handwritten work will also be an option.
- We recognize that the digital divide could prevent some low-income and rural students from participating. Working with partners, we'll invest so these students have the tools and connectivity they need to review AP content online and take the exam. If your students need mobile tools or connectivity, you can reach us directly to let us know.
- The exam questions are designed in ways that prevent cheating. We use a range of digital security tools and techniques, including plagiarism detection software, to protect the integrity of the exams. Scoring at-home work for an AP Exam isn't new to the AP Program. For years the AP Program has received and scored at-home student work as part of the exams for the AP Computer Science Principles and AP Capstone™ courses.

How can I learn about colleges if I cannot visit?

We know some of you have planned travel to colleges over April break. We encourage you to contact those colleges about the status of tours and information sessions. Some colleges are canceling tours and open houses, and have even closed their campuses to visitors for the safety of their students. There are other ways to learn about colleges (including visiting at a later date, virtual tours, connecting with alumni, meeting with college reps who visit St. Anne's-Belfield in the fall, etc.) that your counselor can explore with you. In addition, more than a hundred colleges have

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shared information about the virtual information sessions they are hosting. This list is constantly being updated. [Click here](#) for a list of the colleges as well as information about their virtual sessions.

How will you deliver the junior College Counseling curriculum?

We will share PowerPoint presentations with you about various aspects of the college process. We ask that you read the information and reach out with questions. As we learn the new technology that supports virtual learning, the College Counseling Team may record short videos to accompany the PowerPoint presentations and aid in your learning. Please stay tuned for those additions.

When will parents/guardians get access to SCOIR?

Parents/guardians can expect to receive an email invitation on Tuesday, March 24. Please check your email and spam folder. If you do not receive an email by Wednesday, March 25, please email [Mrs. Sanford](#). In the meantime, please watch [this video](#) about how to use SCOIR.

Do parents/guardians have the opportunity to complete a parent/guardian questionnaire?

Yes, but this task will not be assigned until May. Please be on the lookout for an email.

What should I be doing now?

You can still engage in the college process even if we are not at school. When you have a free moment, update your *Activities and Achievement Section* or create and upload your resume via your Google Drive in SCOIR. In addition, please complete your YouScience survey.

What impact will virtual learning have on my college process?

Admissions deans are assuring college counselors and prospective students that virtual learning will not have a negative impact on your enrollment status. Click on the following links for messages we have received about virtual learning and the impact of COVID-19 on the high school experience from the [University of Chicago](#), [George Washington University](#), [Kent State](#), [Columbia University](#), and [MIT](#). Several states have closed their schools and moved entire school districts to virtual platforms. You are among thousands of students who have moved to a virtual platform. In addition, hundreds of colleges and universities have also closed their campuses and have moved their classes to online platforms. This is the new normal for high school and college aged students.

What changes can I expect in the 2020 - 2021 school year?

We don't yet know all the ways in which colleges and universities will adapt their admissions process. College and high school closures, the move to distance learning, SAT/ACT/AP/TOEFL cancellations and more will have some impact on the process. The College Counseling Office at St. Anne's-Belfield School is committed to keeping abreast with changes and will continue to provide you with high quality, high touch care and attention during the coming months. Our priority is not only to usher and guide you through this process, but also, to provide you with the tools to navigate and weather these changes.

As you know, the College Counseling Office has three full-time counselors (Sandra Sohne-Johnston, Ann Wicks, and Kelly Hedgspeth) and an administrative assistant (Barb Sanford) who work with and guide Upper School students through the college process. Ms. Hedgspeth has been an incredible member of the College Counseling team. She will

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be relocating to California at the end of this academic year. While we are sad to say goodbye, we have a transition plan in place to ensure that students and family members currently assigned to Ms. Hedgspeth will have a smooth transition to Colleen Belak, who will join us in August for the 2020 - 2021 academic year.

Ms. Belak is currently in the midst of completing her M.Ed. at the Harvard University Graduate School of Education (HGSE). Previous to her studies at Harvard, Ms. Belak served as associate director of admissions at the University of Chicago in Illinois. During her time as an admissions officer, she led recruitment efforts for students from North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia (she read applications from our school for one year), China, Southeast Asia, and Oceania. She reviewed more than 1,000 student applications each year, supervised more than 80 student employees, and led workshops about the college admissions process for students. Ms. Belak holds a Bachelor of Arts in political science with a minor in human rights from the University of Chicago. In addition to her graduate studies, she currently serves as a part-time reader for a small liberal arts college and manages the alumni ambassador program for HGSE's Office of Admission. In preparation for Ms. Belak's arrival in August, we would like to begin the process of allowing students to connect with Ms. Belak and vice versa this spring. At a date to be determined, we will offer juniors and their parents the opportunity to schedule one-on-one meetings with her.

Finally, while this unexpected closure is a challenge for all of us, we invite you to join us in embracing the new and different learning opportunities that will come from it. Remember that you are not alone. The College Counseling team will continue to offer support and guidance in the coming weeks and months. Stay in touch with us and let us know if you have questions or concerns.

Please let me know if you have any questions. Starting Wednesday, March 25, the College Counseling Office will return to "business as normal" – just virtually!