

St. Anne's-Belfield School

Dear Seniors & Parents/Guardians,

During this school closure, the College Counseling team plans to ensure your college process is **not** disrupted and to supporting you right through the end of the school year – 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.

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 Mrs. Sanford serve as point person for scheduling all meetings. If you want to schedule a new meeting, email Mrs. Sanford. 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. We still want students to take the lead in scheduling these appointments so parents/guardians, please encourage your student to reach out. **Students**, to schedule a meeting, please send an email to **Mrs. Sanford**. Be sure to share two to three days and times when you are available. Also, please let her know who your counselor is.

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.

What should I consider as I finalize my college choice?

Please continue to keep your SCOIR account updated with admissions decisions. Your college counselor is eager to talk through the decisions you receive and your final college choice, which must be made by May 1 at most colleges. Given the extraordinary circumstances, some colleges have pushed their enrollment deadline to June 1. These enrollment deadlines are school specific. Please click on this [link](#), that the National Association for College Admission Counseling has created, to check on the process or procedure the colleges on your list have implemented. I expect that this webpage will be updated routinely. Please check it frequently. *If your school is not on the list, please check their website for updates.*

In addition, we have been monitoring colleges' responses to COVID-19 and many have canceled tours and admitted student programs. There are other ways to learn more about your choices (e.g. virtual tours, connecting with alumni) and your college counselor is happy to discuss options with you. We are sharing a wonderful article a counselor colleague has written about [how to choose a college during a global pandemic.](#)

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More than a hundred colleges have 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. **Since this document is not owned by St. Anne's-Belfield School, please do not make any changes to it.**

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.

What will waitlist activity look like?

Given the uncertainty that COVID-19 has created, we expect that colleges will choose to have larger than normal waitlists. If you are placed on a waitlist at a school you have a serious interest in, please accept your spot on that waitlist. Demonstrated interest is incredibly important at this stage of the process. We will share information about how to demonstrate interest soon. Please let us know if you end up on a waitlist. We are happy to help you figure out next steps.

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On a related note, if you have been admitted at a college but know you will not enroll at that college, please decline that offer of admission. This will help colleges determine whether or not to go to their waitlist.

What will happen with the financial aid process?

As long as you submitted all of your financial aid documents on time, you should receive a financial aid package at the same time as or shortly after you receive your admissions decision. If you do not receive an aid award, please reach out to the financial aid office directly. Colleges should let you know what to expect. Please make sure you know how to log into your admissions portal. While some schools still mail decisions and financial aid awards, many only release them via your portal. Make sure you log into your portal in March so you are prepared to compare financial aid packages.

Is it possible to appeal my financial aid award?

Yes. If your financial circumstances have changed or you are not able to pay for college with the financial aid you have been awarded, you should consider appealing. This [resource](#) offers some advice on how to appeal your award.

What impact will virtual learning have on my college admission?

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.

Will the process to transfer I-20's for F1 visa holders change?

At this point, the process of transferring your I-20 from our school to your college remains unchanged. As soon as you make an enrollment decision, please log into SCOIR to update your admissions decisions. Once you've made your enrollment decision, it would be helpful if you also send your counselor an email. However, Ms. Schwargel cannot begin the process until you have enrolled at a specific college.

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!