



HEAD OF  
SCHOOL

Dear Students and Parents,

While it has only been a little over a week since I last wrote to you, it feels like it has been months, and the world looks very different now than it did back then. In my last message, I announced that we would be extending March break by one week for our students and that we would hold classes online from March 30 until at least April 10. We know that we need to revisit this date and we will be taking up this question as we work virtually with faculty and staff members this week. I expect that by the time classes begin on March 30 we will have a clearer sense of how long we might have to engage in online learning. I continue to meet daily by videoconference with our Crisis Management Team and we are monitoring the recommendations of the CDC, WHO, and federal, state, and local governments closely. I am also in regular contact with fellow heads at other boarding schools throughout New England as we share information and best practices about how to navigate this crisis.

In the meantime, I wanted to let you know what has been happening on our virtual campus since I wrote to you on March 13 and give you a sense of what you can expect in the coming days. Last week a group of faculty members and administrators were hard at work building the foundation for our transition to online learning. We have made decisions about what our daily schedule will look like, what technologies faculty members will use as they engage with students online, and how we will use the coming week to work with faculty members individually and in groups to plan how their courses will run for the rest of the third quarter (which now ends on April 10). I have been inspired by the way in which faculty members are embracing the challenges ahead. They are committed to finding new ways to provide our students with a different kind of educational experience that is every bit as engaging, supportive, and valuable as the experiences they have traditionally provided in an on-campus classroom setting. On Thursday, March 26, Elaine White will send detailed information about what you can expect for the first two weeks of online learning.

This week faculty members will plan their online courses. Consistent with CDC recommendations for physical distancing, all of this work will be done virtually. I have been in constant communication with faculty members and administrators for days, but I have not seen any of them in person, except for a wave from a safe distance while walking on campus. This has not slowed us down in the least. In fact, I have been incredibly impressed by the work that dozens of colleagues have been doing, at a time when many of them have their own children at home because their schools are closed and are coming to terms personally with the impact of this pandemic, to ensure that we can deliver an online

learning experience that meets the high standards that we have at the Academy. I am confident that because of the work we did last week, and the work that the full faculty will engage in this week, we will be able to deliver on that promise.

At the same time, I would ask for your patience and cooperation. Moving our curriculum online on short notice in the midst of a global crisis has not been easy, and it will not be executed perfectly. There will be bumps in the road. Faculty members will be using unfamiliar technologies and there will inevitably be glitches. Students will be asked to engage in new ways with their teachers and their classmates using technology that will be unfamiliar to them as well. But we will move forward, reassess frequently, learn from our mistakes, and keep improving.

We all have a role to play in making this transition a successful one. Gova is the family that we all know and love in large part because of the faculty and staff members who dedicate their lives to helping our students discover who they are and who they have the potential to become. I am confident that their dedication to our students will not suffer simply because we will not be together in person.

Students, we want this online experience for you to be anything but lonely and isolating. You will have opportunities to engage with your friends and connect with your teachers individually and in small groups. We want you to feel that even when we are physically distant, we are socially and emotionally engaged. So do not try to hide in this experience. When you receive a video message from a teacher or a student leader, watch it. When your teacher or coach or advisor reaches out to talk, share what's on your mind. Lean in and take advantage of the opportunities you have to connect.

Parents, I often say that we do our best work in educating our students when we are working in partnership with you to support them in and outside the classroom. We will need your help in this effort now more than ever. While we will do our best to leverage technology during this period, you will be the ones who will see your children every day. You will see things that we cannot, so please encourage your children to engage, and let us know what we can do to support you and them in making this transition a successful one.

Before I close, I want to draw your attention to a few Academy events, that you or your children may or may not have been planning to attend, that have been canceled as a result of the COVID-19 crisis:

- Spring Student Film Festival - Sunday, March 29
- Accepted Student Days (now virtual) - Thursday, April 2 and Tuesday, April 7
- ACT - Saturday, April 4
- *The Allies* meeting - Wednesday, April 8
- Student Symposium co-sponsored with Museum of Old Newbury – Thursday, April 16
- Grandparents and Grandfriends Day – Friday, April 24
- Boston Business Leaders Luncheon – Thursday, May 7

As we struggle with the uncertainty of the COVID-19 crisis, I am more grateful than ever to be a part of this school community. The tasks in front of us are challenging, to be sure, but they are not insurmountable. We will find our way through this crisis, and when we are on the other side, we will appreciate even more profoundly the privilege we have to be together with each other in person and share our daily lives with each other. Until then I hope you all are safe and healthy. Please reach out to me or other faculty and staff members if you have questions.

My best,  
Dr. Quimby

Peter H. Quimby, Ph.D. '85, P'14  
Head of School

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