



March 28, 2020

Dear Upper School Students and Families,

I hope this note finds you healthy and well. Although this continues to be an uncertain time, I hope you will find that one of our commitments at Haverford is to remain in touch with you all. You have all been, and will continue to be, in my thoughts.

I want to use this opportunity to provide a couple of updates on our ongoing planning and preparation for Virtual Haverford, as well as reaffirm the broader educational goals shaping the program as we go forward. Although on Spring Break, the faculty spent the past week discussing and refining our approach. As we venture into the coming weeks and perhaps months, we will continue to partner with and take our lead from state and local authorities in the hope that we will be back together at 450 Lancaster Avenue soon. That said, we are preparing for whatever lays ahead.

In speaking with parents, faculty, and students, I have been struck by the amazing solidarity for all those impacted COVID-19 in the Haverford community and beyond. Parent and alumni messages of support and encouragement have been unwavering. The faculty's commitment to the boys' continued intellectual and ethical development has been steadfast. And, our boys have shown their ability to be flexible and resilient in what is an uncharted and difficult situation. I am particularly proud and inspired by the Class of 2020, whose grace and leadership heartens and inspires me. While it would have been easy to see this development as an end to their senior year, they remain engaged and show a desire to do whatever they can to help the school move forward.

As I have said in previous communications, Haverford remains committed to its core educational values. No matter our mode of operation, we will strive to connect and engage the boys in ways that encourage intellectual inquiry, character development, well-being, and balance in the name of preparing boys for a life of meaning and service. Although this new mode of learning will take some adjustment, I am confident that the boys will undoubtedly emerge with new skills and understandings that will help them in their paths to manhood.

In developing our program, we have drawn on the expertise of our faculty, professional online education companies, and educators at the secondary and university level. We begin with the idea that shifting our program to a distance learning model will require substantial modifications in course design, rhythm, and the amount of content that we plan to cover. We also spent a considerable amount of time developing a new schedule that would allow for continued real-time interactions between teachers and students, while also balancing family work-life issues and screen time concerns.

Our approach will continue to be a blended one. There will be elements of synchronous learning where students and faculty will meet together for discussion and collaboration in real-time through platforms like Google Meet and Canvas. There will also be asynchronous learning, which also happens online but without real-time interaction. These types of activities include video lectures, online discussion boards, and other digital-based projects. Both types of learning connect students and faculty together and require significant levels of student independence and initiative. For students, there will certainly be a period of orientation where the establishment of productive and healthy routines will be important. Faculty will work to help students navigate this ecosystem, doing their best to take a flexible approach that supports students and recognizes the unique circumstances that they may be in.

Regarding the schedule ([LINK HERE](#)), the class day will run from 8:30 - 3:30 on most days. Students should think about the schedule as they would a normal school day. They should arrive on-time for all commitments and use their non-class time to complete school-related work. You will note the following:

- **Classes:** each course will have two one hour blocks over a week in which to conduct synchronous (real-time) sessions. These sessions may take a variety of forms, but they will always include teacher-student interaction.
- **Advisory and Community Periods:** The schedule includes two advisory and community periods to continue fostering individual relationships and building community.
- **Office Hours:** The afternoon will consist of Office Hours in which students are expected to be doing their work. Students have the ability to access their instructors and/or other student support services through appointment.

It is also important that students and families recognize that though our mode of learning has changed, our core values and expectations of each other have not. The expectations for classroom conduct are explained in the [US Continuity of Learning Site](#) that was sent out last week. We will also continue to operate under our [Principles of Community](#) and [Honor Code](#) in the virtual environment. Teachers will make sure to review expectations and guidelines. Given the evolving nature of this program, we reserve the right to make modifications to policy, as needed.

Last week when we began our pilot of Virtual Haverford, I sent a note to faculty wishing them a “great (second) first day of school.” As winter falls away and spring’s colors burst forth, we approach the continuation of classes with a renewed ethos of joy, determination, meaning, and most of all, humility. We accept that there will be bumps along the way, but as always, we remain dedicated to growth and plan working toward preparing our boys for life. Moving forward, you will continue to receive updates from Dr. Nagl as well as the Upper School Office. We continue to build out our [COVID-19 Preparedness Updates page](#) which contains updates and resources. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me, your son’s advisor, or send a note to usoffice@haverford.org.

Sincerely,

K. Patrick Andrén

Head of Upper School