



March 28, 2020

Dear Middle School Parents,

We hope everyone is doing well and enjoyed spring break as much as possible, all things considered. We are excited, a little nervous but ready to re-open Virtual Haverford and the Middle School's Virtual Village tomorrow morning, Monday, March 30, 2020. We start the morning as we have with live homeroom sessions with your son's advisor at 9:00 a.m. before venturing to our first period class at 9:15 a.m. Our schedule is below. If your son has any questions, his advisor will be happy to assist him. We are following our block schedule (A-block through G-block) from this year and the boys will remain in their current sections. If the boys do not have their schedule from this year, it can be viewed on MyBackpack or their advisor can assist them in their planning.

<i>Time</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>
9:00 - 9:15	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom
9:15 - 10:00	A-Block	D-Block	G-Block	C-Block	F-Block
10:15 - 11:00	B-Block	E-Block	A-Block	D-Block	G-Block
11:15 - 12:00	C-Block	F-Block	B-Block	E-Block	Master Class
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch/recess	Lunch/recess	Lunch/recess	Lunch/recess	Lunch/recess
1:00 - 2:00	Homework	Homework	Homework	Homework	MS Faculty
2:00 - 3:00		Ensembles	Ensembles	Ensembles	Meeting

We are hopeful to return to Virtue Village as soon as we can, but until that time, we remain committed to providing meaningful interactions with the boys, engaging them in the learning process, enriching their minds and advancing our curriculum. As mentioned in my last letter, our faculty set goals of improving our student skills, communicating any and all concerns and working to make the delivery of our materials and content sustainable for as long as we exist in the world of virtual schooling. Since we closed for Spring Break, our faculty in all three divisions continued to work tirelessly discussing what will and will not work in the world of distance learning. We will continue to take this approach when we re-open and adjust the alignment of our schedule and curriculum as necessary. Therefore, we will need your assistance.

What makes Haverford so special is the relationships between students and teachers. We worked to continue that relationship the first few days of Virtual Haverford as well as over Spring Break. From the thrill of seeing the boys again in virtual classrooms, to the interactions we have in small groups, it remains clear to us that this is a critical part of the Haverford experience. It was also delightful to see the boys interacting with each other online. During advisor meetings over break, the conversation became so natural a few times, they seemed to forget I was even there. We aim to build on these interactions throughout the weeks ahead but understand that this cannot be done alone.

Teaching in a virtual world requires us to come into your home every Monday thru Friday. For our program to work as efficiently and effectively as possible, we need your assistance in making sure your son is appropriately dressed and ready to learn at the appropriate time, as free of distractions as possible, in a space with doors open and parental access. We require his phone to be away and his dedication to learn be present. Below we shared our expectations of netiquette while in the virtual world.

Please make sure the boys are properly clothed, outside of their bedrooms and acting appropriately while online. School rules for behavior are in effect. If the boys are acting inappropriately, they will be removed from the classroom and parents will be notified. Boys should not be on their phones during class and should enter every virtual classroom with their microphones muted.

We also feel that communication, both teachers to parents and parents to teachers, is key in ensuring the best possible experience for everyone in Virtual Village. The positive feedback we received after the first two days of distance learning was fantastic. Thank you again for all your gratitude. Included in these messages of support were occasional suggestions, some great, some unrealistic, as we understand both. We encourage communication regarding your son and any issues you have regarding his progress. However, if you have any questions, suggestions or concerns outside of your son's classroom, please contact me directly and permit the teachers to focus on the delivery of our curriculum and the progress of the boys. We encourage parents to continue to promote student independence in completion of work with appropriate adult supervision but minimal adult support.

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. This is new for all of us and we truly appreciate your patience as we do our very best in this new virtual world of education.

Our approach will continue to be a blended one. There will be elements of synchronous or real-time 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 these unique circumstances.

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 **Continuity of Learning Document** that was sent out last week. We will also continue to operate under our *Principles of Community* and *Honor Code* in the virtual environment.

Finally, we are working to maintain an appropriate level of consistency in our curriculum. We will continue to assess the boys work and we will continue to give grades. We ask our Form II parents to complete the Form III Course Selection forms as soon as possible, and we will soon request our 6th grade students to choose either Chinese, Latin or Spanish as their language of choice for next year. We will do our best to follow a business as usual mindset through highly unusual circumstances. Please continue to support our program and understand, distance learning cannot and should not look like regular school. We are doing what is best for the boys based on what we have found to be most appropriate for this age group and we will adjust as necessary.

All the best and we hope you are safe,

Jay Greytok