



WESTRIDGE SCHOOL

Transcript: Head of School Elizabeth J. McGregor's April 2, 2020 Update Video

Hello Westridge families!

I am speaking to you on Thursday, April 2, our fourth day of remote learning. Let me start with a heartfelt thank you for working with us in what is an educational experiment of sorts for the entire world. Your notes and words of support mean more than you can know. And I send special kudos to our faculty and students who are diving into remote learning with open minds and hearts.

We are off to a good start—I am impressed with how our teachers have adapted lessons online and are supporting their students through this transition, and I have heard wonderful stories of students thinking creatively about this new approach to learning (for examples, I've heard about Middle School students publishing their discussion board responses to a John Coltrane piece and a Cornel West quote, seeking comparisons, as part of a lead-up to their reading of *Animal Farm*, and I've heard from Upper School and Lower School students, including a fourth grader who is sending me greetings via animated penguins and claiming that her online life is a blast!).

With that said, there are and will be kinks to work out. And, as more time passes and we remain away from the people, activities, and routines that make up our lives, all of us—adults and students—will experience a range of emotions which will impact our ability to focus on school and work at times. To that end, with the infrastructure of our school without walls now largely up and running, we are working to expand our support programs. More and more co-curricular programs and events for students will be coming online. For parents, we are planning a series of online Town Halls with the division directors which should help answer your questions about remote learning. And Dr. Lisa Carruthers and Dr. Jim Holland will host weekly discussion sessions on the more personal and emotional side of parenting during remote learning and amid fearful times. These should start next week, so be on the lookout for details.

Also, beginning next week we will start providing information on assessment policies for remote learning as well as plans for spring events—those we are re-imagining, those we hope to reschedule for when we can be together, and those that will be cancelled. Regarding a timeline for overall remote learning, I am sure you have all heard the governor's statement that California public schools will be closed for the remainder of the school year. While we don't feel a need to make a decision at this point about extending remote learning at Westridge through to the end of the school year, I do want you to know we are assuming it is very likely that this will be the case. If



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there is any chance to reopen safely before year-end we would love to do so, but we want you to know our thinking so that you and your daughters can begin to process and plan with that in mind.

Our empathy and connection with one another are paramount at this time, and while we must stay focused on our students' education, we are wise to remind that social emotional wellness is essential to the most effective learning and indeed, to every aspect of our lives. This is especially true when fear of ill health and loss are very much in our minds. Focus on what comforts and heals you and your family. Don't worry if it feels as though your daughters aren't doing as much work as they traditionally do. They shouldn't be—but they will continue to learn a great deal and our wonderful teachers will make sure they get to where they need to be. As always, please don't hesitate to reach out to your daughter's teachers, deans, and division directors with your questions about what to expect and how to support your daughters' remote learning process.

We are here for you—and I am so proud of how our Westridge community members are coming together in support of one another.

Please stay well!