

"BEAR WITH ONE ANOTHER, CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER."

- ST. ANGELA MERICI

Dear Ursuline Families,

With the summer winding to a close, we're eager to share details of the upcoming school year with you. It will truly be a year like none other, yet the Ursuline tradition and the strength of our community offer reassurance that together, we will meet the challenges of these times and continue as a thriving community of education and caring.

As we emphasized in our virtual meetings with parents last month, our priorities are clear. First is the health of our community -- not only that of our students and employees, but their families as well. We're also taking great care to protect the emotional and spiritual well-being of our community; it is our ties to one another and the strength of our faith that better enable us to weather adversity. Finally, whether in person or at a distance, we will offer the excellence of the education for which we are known, ensuring that our students continue to engage in meaningful learning and intellectual growth.

The nature of the pandemic has required that we prepare three possible models of learning for the 2020-21 academic year: fully online learning, concurrent (or hybrid) learning, and fully in-person learning. With these three models, we are well-positioned to shift from one model to another should conditions change. As announced in our letters and virtual parent meetings earlier this summer, we will begin in September with our students engaged in online learning four days each week, and on campus one day a week for robust programming designed to foster community and support social-emotional learning. More details about September's programming are included in the following pages.

Please understand that the information contained in this guide may change at any time, depending on the course of the virus and guidance from state and local officials.

Once the improvements to the heating and ventilation of our main school building are completed in late September, we will again have access to our entire campus. At this time, we anticipate that beginning October 5, we will utilize our concurrent (hybrid) model of learning. (Additional information can be found on page 9.) This represents a shift in our thinking from earlier this summer and has been informed by the need to maintain social distance within our facility and by the responses to the parent survey distributed recently.

We are deeply grateful to our many Ursuline colleagues who have worked with determination, creativity, and grit over the last many months to prepare for the 2020-21 academic year. Our efforts have been informed by the guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), as well as the expertise shared by the many educational organizations to which we belong. As circumstances change, we will continue to adapt our practices as needed to best protect our community.

Perhaps more so than at any other time, our students need a strong partnership between parents and Ursuline. As young people, they are just developing the strategies and mechanisms that enable them to handle life's challenges. The stronger the collaboration between our parents and our school, the better able we are to support our students. Please reach out to us if you have any questions or concerns. We are here to help.

"Bear with one another, care for one another." In the wisdom of St. Angela's Merici's words, we find guidance for the days ahead. We are excited to begin this new school year and are confident that together, this can be a year of growth and discovery for all.

With warmth and gratitude,

Jare Lunge M.K. STRAUS

Kate Levesque '77 President

Mary-Kate Tracy '94 Principal

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GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Our plan for returning to school is guided by three core principles, all of which are extremely important for a school to function effectively in these unusual times. We believe we have arrived at a plan that optimizes each principle without emphasizing one to the exclusion of the others.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff are of utmost importance, as is the safety of the families and community members with which our students and faculty come in contact. We have planned our program and operations with this as our primary objective, and have taken into consideration the recommendations of the CDC, DESE, and the Massachusetts DPH.

COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

While the physical health of our community is of great importance, so too are the social, emotional, and spiritual health, especially for our students in their formative years. Close, in-person relationships between students and their teachers are one of the hallmarks of an Ursuline education, and the value of those relationships has guided our thinking.

LEARNING

Ursuline is committed to providing our students with the excellence of education for which we are known, regardless of the conditions in which we must operate during the pandemic. We are committed to offering an academic experience that allows students not only to absorb the content required in each discipline, but also to be able to interact with their peers and access their teachers for reinforcement, clarification, or extension of their learning whether in school physically or learning from home.



REOPENING: CALENDAR OVERVIEW

SEPTEMBER 8 - OCTOBER 2: ONLINE LEARNING WITH "BEAR CAVE DAYS"

We will begin in September with our students engaged in online learning four days each week, and on campus one day a week with their grade for "Bear Cave Days," fun-filled programming designed to foster community and support social/emotional learning. This plan allows us to complete our heating and ventilation improvements, providing improved air circulation and a healthier environment, and gives us the opportunity to incorporate new habits like mask-wearing, social distancing, onedirectional hallways, and a new academic schedule.



WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2: NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION



New students and one parent or guardian are invited to an important orientation in the Reynolds Center gym.

Grades 7 and 8 Grades 9, 10 and 11

9 - 11:30 AM 1 - 3:30 PM

WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 8: BACK-TO-SCHOOL DAYS

All students, separated by grade, are required to attend a three-hour Back-to-School Day in the Reynolds Center. Please pay close attention to the schedule, as the grades are not in order by day.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

Grade 7	8 - 11 AM
Grade 8	Noon - 3 PM
WEDNESDAY,	SEPTEMBER 9
Grade 12	8 - 11 AM
Grade 11	Noon - 3 PM
THURSDAY, SE	EPTEMBER 10
Grade 9	8 - 11 AM
Grade 10	Noon - 3 PM

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14: CLASSES BEGIN



Students will participate in scheduled, synchronous classes, utilizing Zoom, four days each week and will be on campus one day a week for "Bear Cave Days," which provide a variety of enrichment activities. The designated class days on campus may be found below and are further expanded upon later in this manual.

BEAR CAVE DAY SCHEDULE: SEPTEMBER 14 - OCTOBER 2

MONDAYS, 8 AM - 2 PM	Grades 7 and 8		
TUESDAYS, 8 AM - 2 PM	Grade 9		
WEDNESDAYS, 8 AM - 2 PM	Grade 12		
THURSDAYS, 8 AM - 2 PM	Grade 11		
FRIDAYS, 8 AM - 2 PM	Grade 10		

On Bear Cave Days, we ask that all students be picked up by 2:30 PM.



REOPENING: A DEEPER LOOK

CONTINUOUS LEARNING PLAN

Ursuline has developed a Continuous Learning Plan for the 2020-2021 academic year that allows the community to live our mission with excellence and to embrace our unique school culture in an ever-changing landscape. Under this plan, we will be able to shift among three instructional models as needed: fully online learning, concurrent (or hybrid) learning, and fully in-person learning. The adaptability of the Continuous Learning Plan is critical to community success both in the short and long term/s. This is a new version of Ursuline, but one that maintains the hallmarks of learning, serving the wider community, and building important relationships between all constituents.



We have designed the Continuous Learning Plan to support our eager and committed students and preserve the mission of Ursuline Academy. This plan adapts to changing circumstances by providing learning opportunities consistent with our curriculum and deliverable across conditions that may change due to health imperatives. Each model of learning under this plan facilitates development of a student's self-regulation, accountability, communication and collaboration, hallmarks of the Ursuline experience, regardless of location. Students will be expected to be engaged and participate in active learning five days a week. Different from our model last spring, all classes will be Zoomed for synchronous learning according to the regular class schedule.

CLASS SCHEDULE

We have designed a new class schedule that supports health, wellness, and social distancing and extends several academic benefits across the Continuous Learning Plan. When on campus, **longer passing periods** de-densify corridors and allow time for cleaning between classes. The **8-day rotation** is familiar to current Ursuline students and is easily managed by new students. It provides academic coherence because it is adaptable to the three different learning plans and does not change regardless of the learner's physical location. It allows teachers to plan their activities across units with regularity and predictability, key factors for student success. **Students will follow the 5- period a day schedule throughout the year**.

The schedule also provides a new feature: increased time through an enrichment period in which students return to their first period class later in the day for an extended seminar-like experience to explore content with faculty members.

			Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8
8:00	to	8:05	Attendance and Prayer							
8:05	to	8:45	A block	F block	C block	H block	E block	B block	G block	D block
8:45	to	9:00				Staggere	d Passing			
9:00	to	9:45	B block	G block	D block	A block	F block	C block	H block	E block
9:45	to	10:00				Staggere	d Passing			
10:00	to	10:45	C block	H block	E block	B block	G block	D block	A block	F block
10:45	to	11:00	Staggered Passing							
			Activity							
11:00	to	1:00	Enrichment Block A & Lunch	Enrichment Block F & Lunch	Enrichment Block C & Lunch	Enrichment Block H & Lunch	Enrichment Block E & Lunch	Enrichment Block B & Lunch	Enrichment Block G & Lunch	Enrichment Block D & Lunch
1:00	to	1:45	D block	A block	F block	C block	H block	E block	B block	G block
1:45	to	2:00	Staggered Passing							
2:00	to	2:45	E block	B block	G block	D block	A block	F block	C block	H block
2:45	to	2:50	Dismissal: Grades 11 and 12							
2:50		2:55	Dismissal: Grades 9 and 10							
2:55	to	3:00	Dismissal: Grades 7 and 8							

REQUESTS FOR FULLY ONLINE LEARNING

Ursuline Academy will begin the 2020-21 school year in the fully online learning model -- online synchronous classes utilizing Zoom, with the students at home. At this time, Ursuline plans to transition on October 5, 2020 to a concurrent learning model where a cohort of students engages with classes from their homes on some days and are physically at school on other days.

For families who prefer that their daughter(s) are instructed exclusively through fully online learning, Ursuline is offering a 100% online learning option. Families who opt for 100% online instruction may request this option for the entirety of the first academic quarter (ending November 4). Students whose families choose this option may not change their option during the quarter. Please note that on-campus clubs and activities may not be available to students if this option is chosen. This option would be renewable on a quarterly basis in consultation with Ursuline's administration.

To request online learning for the first quarter, families must complete <u>this request form</u> for each student in their household seeking this option. All request forms must be submitted no later than Wednesday, September 2, 2020.



FOOD SERVICE

- During September, students will be required to bring their own lunch for the one day each week they are on campus.
- For October 5 and after, we have been working closely with our dining services company, SLA Management, on a new system to provide lunch when we return to campus. At this time, we do not anticipate that students will eat in the Tea Room, but instead will eat in their classrooms. For those interested in purchasing their lunch, we are considering a system whereby students will order and pay for their lunches in advance, and the lunches will be delivered to the students in their classrooms. Lunch options will include one or more prepackaged hot and cold entrees, with some a la carte items. More information will follow in the coming weeks.
- SLA employees are undergoing additional safety training, will be masked and gloved, and will be required to follow the same health and safety protocols as all other community members.



TRANSPORTATION

New regulations on safe distancing greatly reduce the capacity of buses. As a result, our ability to partner with other schools on transportation is greatly limited. We are working to identify available options, and will communicate with families as details emerge. In the meantime, we appreciate your patience.

SEPTEMBER IN GREATER DETAIL

As mentioned in the Calendar Overview, when classes begin on Monday, September 14, students will attend class online four days each week, following the 5x8 schedule. On the remaining day each week, students will gather with their classmates for "Bear Cave Days." On the day they are on campus, students will be excused from academic classes.

BEAR CAVE DAYS

With September's Bear Cave Days, our goal is to replicate, as best as possible, our typical back-to-school September experiences that promote social/ emotional learning opportunities, engagement, relationship-building among faculty and classmates, and a shared understanding of the Ursuline community and our traditions. All participants -- students and adults -- will be required to observe social distancing protocols. Students will be assigned to groups of 8-10, and will be directed and supervised by adults throughout the day. Activities will include a wide variety of topics: technology, the iHub, UA life, class meetings, Serviam, guidance and the arts. Each group will be led by an Ursuline administrator, faculty or staff member. In addition, we will be bringing in outside professional programming to add depth and variety to the experience.



WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 14



Dr. Nadja Reilly, Ursuline Academy's consulting psychologist since 2014, will be speaking to our students about managing the return to school as well as their social and emotional well being. Dr. Reilly's research and practice interests are in the areas of school climate and social/emotional learning, systems change, and treatment of anxiety and depression in children and adolescents. Her session is titled **"Finding our Strength for Success, Resilience and Hope,"** and in it students will share ways to approach the new school year from a strength-based perspective. Girls will reflect on their worries, and how to transform them into ways to create realistic goals, ask for help proactively, and create ways to promote their resilience.



Also during the first week, each class will participate in an **Opening School Liturgy** celebrated by Fr. Wayne Belschner of St. Mary of the Assumption Parish in Dedham. Fr. Wayne is well-known to the Ursuline community as a frequent celebrant of our school liturgies; St. Mary's is also the host parish of the LifeTeen youth ministry.

BEAR CAVE DAYS (CONT'D)



WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 21

Ursuline has been partnering with **Hale Reservation**, a leader in outdoor education, for eleven years -- and this year, we are pleased to announce that Hale will be coming to the grounds of Ursuline Academy! The Hale Reservation staff are professional facilitators dedicated to providing a safe, active, and nurturing environment where participants can learn and grow. Hale staff will guide UA students (1 staff member per 8-10 students) through a series of outdoor and physically-distanced team building initiatives that can both help create a sense of connection across the community and set the stage for a successful high school experience together.

WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 28

BookSmart

Michael Delman and Jennifer Flewelling of Beyond Booksmart, the nation's leader in executive function coaching, will present **"The Boss of You: How Your Brain Helps You Win at School and Life.**" Students will learn:

- · What Executive Function skills are and how they develop
- Why these self-management skills matter now and for the future
- What students can do now to improve their ability to resist distractions, stay organized, and more
- · How to set effective goals for the school year

BEAR CAVE DAY LOGISTICS

Hours: Doors will open and drop off will take place at 8 a.m. at the Reynolds Center (front doors). Students are asked to remain in their cars until 8 a.m. and may not congregate outside the building. Pick up will be at 2:00 p.m. **All students must be picked up/off campus by 2:30 p.m.**

Dress Code: Students will be asked to wear appropriate and comfortable Ursuline spirit wear or athletic wear and sneakers.

What to Bring: Students are asked to bring their own mask, iPad, snack, lunch, water bottle, bug spray, hand sanitizer, and sun-block.

LOOKING AHEAD TO OCTOBER



CONCURRENT LEARNING (ANGELA & URSULA TEAMS) STARTING MONDAY, OCTOBER 5

Beginning October 5th, we plan to shift to the concurrent learning model outlined in the Continuous Learning Plan description. This is a cohort model that decreases exposure to illness by reducing the number of students on campus at a given time while preserving the face-to-face classroom experience. With this model, students see themselves as part of a whole, learning and working together concurrently with their grade.

HOW IT WORKS

- Students are grouped alphabetically (to make family commuting easier) into two teams or cohorts, the Angela team and the Ursula team. Dividing into alphabetically-grouped cohorts reduces the density of students on campus by approximately 50%.
- Each cohort attends classes for two days on campus, either Monday-Tuesday or Thursday-Friday. In-person instruction for two consecutive days deepens students' relationships with each other and with their instructors, so that when they are at home, they still feel connected to the physical classroom and the individual teacher who knows them well.
- On the days when a student is not on campus, she will engage in synchronous learning through Zoom, as she did at the start of the year. On Wednesdays, all students will be at home, utilizing Zoom for synchronous learning.
- While students are at home on Wednesdays, our facilities team will have the opportunity to do
 additional cleaning in all school buildings.



KEYS TO SUCCESS

TECHNOLOGY

While learning at home, in either the online or concurrent learning models, students will continue to utilize Google Classroom to access class syllabi, course content, assignments and rubric expectations, and will rely on our 1:1 iPad program for access. Most learning materials will be exchanged electronically; all printing of materials has been discontinued on campus.

Classes will be conducted synchronously through Zoom and will be recorded for students who may not be able to participate in real time. Zoom is now a seamless component of Ursuline learning experiences; in addition, classrooms are being equipped with Swivl cameras, a video conferencing technology to support learners at home. Livestreaming permits students both at home and at school to be united as a single classroom; they can see and hear each other and participate as a whole in class discussion or group projects.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ursuline is committed to providing a strong academic program in an optimal learning environment with a full curriculum of courses. To design and implement this robust plan, Ursuline provided its faculty with a wide variety of rich professional development opportunities over the summer from a host of experts in blended learning course design and development. Utilizing these in-person and distance education techniques, seeing themselves as collaborators with students and facilitators of their learning, faculty expect no disruption in their educational goals. Ursuline's faculty will continue, across multiple means of course delivery, to ensure that students' engagement with learning is not interrupted. While the implementation of best practices may look different among teachers and departments based on their own objectives, all teachers will use a combination of those techniques at various times and inculcate critical thinking skills across the breadth of content.

EXPECTATIONS FOR AT HOME LEARNING

Student/teacher relationships remain at the heart of a virtual classroom experience. When learning at home, students are still in school and expected to do the following:

- Be proactive in reaching out to ask for help.
- Understand that assessments will be presented in a variety of formats.
- Understand that departmental grading and GPA policies will be in effect, including policies for late work.
- Understand that teachers will take attendance daily during synchronous class time and absences will be documented.
- Turn in assignments at the date, time, and location designated by their teachers.

Student iPad cameras must be turned on. The purpose of Zoom classes is to communicate in real time, so students need to see each other and their teacher.

- Because students are seeing and being seen, be sure to be in "school" mode. Be aware of your interactions and space.
- Pay attention to what is behind you. Avoid high traffic areas or anything you don't want seen. Ursuline will provide school-approved virtual Zoom backgrounds that you may use at your option.
- Respect others, their opinions, and their privacy.
- Be punctual, courteous, and pay attention no multitasking. We can see you!
- If it's improper for a face-to-face class, it doesn't work for video either.
- Wear an Ursuline uniform shirt and be appropriately groomed.
- Sit at a desk or table.
- No eating!
- Realize that all video classes will be recorded.
- Have a light in front of you, not behind you, so you won't miss any of the class visuals.

If the chat box is an option . . .

- Set a respectful tone.
- Read, think, then type.
- Use proper writing style.
- Don't judge others.



KEEPING OUR COMMUNITY SAFE

Health and Safety of Students and Employees

As the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve, Ursuline Academy's top priority is the health and safety of all students and employees while upholding our mission of the total development of the individual student. Ursuline's actions have been informed by the guidelines of the CDC, DESE, and the DPH. Additional information on health protocols will be shared before the start of school.

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DAILY SCREENING

Daily health screening is mandatory for all community members as well as any visitors before they are allowed admittance to the Ursuline campus.

- Parents are the first line of defense against transmission of the virus. Please utilize the Ursuline Daily Wellness Check to screen your daughter carefully EVERY day before leaving home. (The Wellness Check will be distributed prior to September 8.) Please do NOT send your daughter to school if she has any of the symptoms listed.
- Some symptoms of COVID-19 are the same as the flu or a bad cold. Please do not assume it is another condition. When in doubt, STAY HOME.

STAY HOME IF YOU HAVE:

- Fever (temperature of 100°F or higher, chills)
- Cough (not due to other known cause)
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Headache when in combination with other symptoms
- Muscle aches or body aches
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Fatigue, when in combination with other symptoms
- Nasal congestion or runny nose (not due to other known causes such as allergies) when in combination with other symptoms
- Recent exposure to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19
- Tested positive for COVID-19
- All students, faculty and staff returning to campus from outside Massachusetts must review and follow the Massachusetts Travel Advisory. If individuals are returning from states or countries with significant community spread, there may be a required quarantine period.



MASKS

All students, faculty, staff and visitors are expected to wear a school appropriate mask without writing, characters or large logos. Masks may be any color, a mixture of colors, or have a pattern. All masks must cover both the nose and mouth all day. Bandanas, scarves or gaiters are not permitted.

Ursuline will provide each student with two cloth masks, which they may wear if they choose. Students will be required to have a spare mask available in their backpack should it be needed. We ask that masks be laundered nightly.

MASK BREAKS

Mask breaks will be incorporated in the schedule throughout the day. Students are expected to adhere to all directions and to social distance during a mask break. Mask breaks will be allowed only in certain areas designated by the school and they will be clearly marked.



SOCIAL DISTANCING

Everyone is expected to practice social distancing on campus at all times. At least six feet of separation should be maintained while interacting within the school community. No congregating will be permitted in lavatories, the parking lot, or in cars. **High-fiving, hugging, and physical contact of any kind are not permitted.**



PERSONAL HYGIENE

- Students are expected to come to school with their own personal hand sanitizer. Hand sanitizer will also be available in all classrooms and common areas.
- Students are required to exercise sound hand hygiene (hand washing or sanitizing) upon arrival at school. Hand sanitizer will be available at all entryways.
- Students should make a conscious effort to engage in routine hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. When hand washing is not possible, use of hand sanitizer for 20 seconds will suffice. Special attention should be paid to hand hygiene at mask breaks; before, during, and after eating; after restroom use; after blowing your nose, or after coughing or sneezing into a tissue or the crook of your elbow while wearing a mask.
- Absolutely no sharing of items is allowed. This includes but is not limited to food, drinks, utensils, brushes, hair items, makeup, school supplies, iPads, etc.
- Should a student exhibit any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 during the school day, they are expected to inform the school nurse immediately.



CODE OF CONDUCT

Just as Ursuline requires parents and students to sign that they've read and agree to the policies in the Student/Parent Handbook, families will be asked to sign a Code of Conduct regarding policies and procedures so that all community members will take reasonable precautions to minimize transmission of the virus and help protect the health of our community. This Code of Conduct will be distributed before the start of school.

CAMPUS ADJUSTMENTS TO FOSTER SAFETY



TRAFFIC FLOW

When students arrive on campus for Back to School Days (September 8-11), they will be fully informed of the one-way traffic flow that will be used this fall in order to encourage appropriate social distancing.



SIGNAGE

Ursuline will utilize signage at entrances to the school buildings, in hallways, stairways, restroom facilities, classrooms and other gathering spaces, etc. as a reminder of expected practices and protocols.



HAND SANITIZING STATIONS

While all students have been asked to bring their own personal hand sanitizer with them to school each day, Ursuline will also have hand sanitizing stations located throughout campus.



LOCKERS AND BACKPACKS

For at least the fall semester, student lockers will not be in use. Students will need to carry their backpacks with them between classes.



PRINTING

Due to the prevalence of digital modes of learning and to minimize the need to pass paper from hand to hand, there will be no printing facilities available to students this semester.

CAMPUS ADJUSTMENTS TO FOSTER SAFETY



HEATING/VENTILATION ENHANCEMENTS

The main school building has recently undergone an extensive heating and ventilation upgrade to replace existing equipment with new classroom heat/ventilation units and filters. Science Wing air conveyance systems recently underwent a comprehensive cleaning/ sanitization process. The Reynolds Center, a newly constructed building, has modern HVAC equipment for which Ursuline follows a strict maintenance regimen.



CLEANING

We have created cleaning protocols in conjunction with the DESE guidelines. These include cleaning of all high-touch surfaces three to four times daily with disinfectant, cleaning of desks between classes, and thorough daily cleanings of floors, bathrooms, and hallways.



CARE AND COMFORT ROOM

An isolation area will be provided on campus in the event that anyone on campus becomes ill with symptoms associated with the COVID-19 virus during the school day.



CAMPUS VISITORS

To properly observe physical distancing practices, visitor access to campus will be limited this year.

- All visitors will enter through the lobby entrance of the main school building only.
- All visitors must check in at the main office to be screened and logged in, and must wear a mask.

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES



ATHLETICS

We are in the process of assessing the demand for and the feasibility of offering fall athletics under the guidelines set forth by the the MIAA. Further information will be provided in the coming weeks.

CLUBS AND EXTRACURRICULARS

While the pandemic and the necessary health and safety precautions have altered our school operations, every effort will be made to ensure the foundational elements of the Ursuline experience. Most non-athletic extracurricular activities and clubs will continue to run this year, with both in-person and remote components. Please note that modifications to clubs and activities will be necessary at times.

STUDENT EVENTS

Due to current guidelines, large-scale student activities, events, retreats and travel opportunities have been postponed for the foreseeable future. However, we will strive to reimagine meaningful events online or on a smaller scale in order to allow students to gather for socialization, meaningful connection, and worship. When not possible, events may be postponed to a later date or cancelled entirely.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

At least for the fall, a majority of our community events, like parent gatherings and workshops, will be held virtually. As events are scheduled, they will be communicated via Bear Essentials, posted on the website calendar, and emailed directly to parents when appropriate.





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