

November 18, 2020

Dear Upper School Families,

I hope that you all are doing well and staying healthy. I write today to follow-up on Dr. Nagl's [note](#) from this past Friday to explain the systems and structures that we have in place to support the transition to virtual learning for what we hope will be a brief period of time. We are disappointed by the interruption to in-person instruction but feel confident about the infrastructure we have in place to pivot to remote learning. We are grateful for the uninterrupted opportunity to build relationships with the boys since the start of September and believe this strong foundation positions us to execute an effective shift to virtual instruction next week.

One of the primary design criteria in the development of the 2020-2021 learning framework was a schedule that would allow us to maintain educational continuity between in-person and virtual learning environments. While we were hopeful that we would not need to move to virtual learning, we did account for the fact that this was a distinct possibility and intentionally developed a framework that is portable between virtual and in-person learning scenarios. Our decision on the structure of a virtual schedule was also informed by student and parent feedback regarding their experience with Virtual Haverford last spring.

We are confident in the framework that we have developed and are hopeful that the structural continuity between in-person and virtual modes of learning will minimize disruption and build the necessary consistency and predictability essential to an effective transition. We feel as if the smaller class sizes for most courses and faculty teaching fewer students at a time will allow for individualized learning support, important all the time, but particularly so during virtual instruction. Additionally, carrying three concurrent classes (rather than five or six) has the potential to positively impact student well-being by reducing cognitive load while also allowing for optimal conditions to facilitate interventions for academic support.

Please see below for a five day sample schedule [here](#). We will continue with a three day rotation between D, E, and F blocks. As you will note, classes continue to meet everyday and will be 75 minutes in duration (45 minutes on Wednesday). To help keep students connected, a community block is scheduled in between the first and second period to allow for the delivery of community programming such as advisory, assemblies, form meetings and other extracurricular activities. We also built in additional time in between classes to help with screen fatigue, provide time for individual extra help (particularly on Wednesdays), allow for physical activity (perhaps outdoors) and to ensure that students have the requisite time to make the cognitive transition from one class to the next.

## Virtual Haverford - Upper School Schedule



	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>
<u>9:00 AM</u>	<b>D Period</b> 8:45 AM - 10:00 AM	<b>E Period</b> 8:45 AM - 10:00 AM	Faculty Meetings	<b>D Period</b> 8:45 AM - 10:00 AM	<b>E Period</b> 8:45 AM - 10:00 AM
<u>10:00 AM</u>	Community Programming		<b>F Period</b> 9:45 AM - 10:30 AM	Community Programming	
<u>11:00 AM</u>			Office Hours		
<u>12:00 PM</u>	<b>E Period</b> 11:00 AM - 12:15 PM	<b>F Period</b> 11:00 AM - 12:15 PM	<b>D Period</b> 11:30 AM - 12:15 PM	<b>E Period</b> 11:00 AM - 12:15 PM	<b>F Period</b> 11:00 AM - 12:15 PM
<u>1:00 PM</u>	Lunch and Screen Break				
<u>2:00 PM</u>	<b>F Period</b> 1:30 PM - 2:45 PM	<b>D Period</b> 1:30 PM - 2:45 PM	<b>E Period</b> 1:15 PM - 2:00 PM	<b>F Period</b> 1:30 PM - 2:45 PM	<b>D Period</b> 1:30 PM - 2:45 PM
<u>3:00 PM</u>	Office Hours and Designated Virtual Extra-Curricular Programming				

Faculty members will use a variety of teacher-centered and student-directed learning modes to engage students during each class. Summer professional development as well as ongoing work this fall have allowed faculty to build a foundation for an effective transition and leverage a variety of resources to structure and support student learning and engagement in a virtual format. Canvas, our learning management system will continue to provide resources in support of learning in the virtual classroom. Teachers will take this week to review the infrastructure specific to their class to ensure that students have the necessary information to make the pivot to remote learning.

All information relevant to this transition will be shared with the boys via email and at an assembly this week where we will also review community expectations and norms for engagement during virtual learning. Students are expected to attend their classes as scheduled each day. If a student is ill and unable to attend class, a parent/guardian will need to notify the School and as they normally would (ext 1959 or [mdieckhaus@haverford.org](mailto:mdieckhaus@haverford.org)).

While students will not be walking the halls of the Upper School Building please be aware that the same community standards and shared responsibilities that govern interactions in person apply to our distance learning work. Of particular note is the need for students to refrain from

videotaping any portion of class or school programming (unless given permission to do so) and the need to have their camera on during class.

Please read below for more specific online meeting expectations:

- Be logged into the virtual meeting space before the official start of class.
- Be dressed appropriately. Standard Haverford dress code is not expected, but clothing should not be in a state of disrepair or display any inappropriate language, pictures, or symbols. Pajamas or sleepwear are not acceptable.
- Be seated at a table or desk and have the camera on facing a neutral background or using a google generated background.
- Have the class Canvas page open and have access to all necessary files shared by the teacher. Have supplies ready to complete work in class.
- Have their microphones muted when not speaking.
- Only post class-relevant items in the class chat.
- Focus on the lesson that is being presented.
- Refrain from using the internet as an opportunity to play games or do other work during class time.

I know that for many, most importantly many of the boys, this disruption to in-person learning is disappointing. I have been so impressed with how the boys have responded to the challenges of the current moment and am particularly grateful to the fantastic Class of 2021 who, like the other interruptions to normalcy, are likely feeling this change more deeply. The consistent leadership that the Sixth Form class has provided this year has been such a gift; they continue to be our most important assets in building a resilient and connected community. Also leading the way are our dedicated faculty whose professionalism and commitment to the boys' continued intellectual and ethical development have been steadfast regardless of the mode of learning. As we await the opportunity to return to in-person instruction, we will continue to 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. Thank you for your continued support of our efforts as we work together in partnership to support the boys.

Sincerely,

Mark Fifer  
Acting Head of Upper School