



March 23, 2019

Dear Lower School Families,

As the mom of two young children, I understand that the idea of “remote learning” may create some anxiety for our families. Rest assured that our faculty has worked diligently to design plans that will continue to support and challenge your child while also providing your family with a good degree of flexibility. We have plans in place to support a wide variety of learners, provide different ways to access information, enrich students who need an extra challenge, interact with our students, and allow assignments to be completed at different times of day, all without being able to meet with students physically on our campus. While the days ahead may feel uncertain, it is my hope that the educational activities designed by our faculty will continue to keep our students engaged and provide a sense of normalcy and comfortable routine in the midst of a chaotic situation. As a faculty and staff, we remain committed to our core values and providing the support and challenge that students need to become independent, lifelong learners who make positive contributions in our world has never been more important to us.

As a school, we believe that education is more than a child glued to a screen or a packet of worksheets, and so you will see a variety of activities from both your child’s regular classroom teacher as well as specialty area teachers. Mrs. Hill will have daily read alouds on our Facebook page, Ms. Oosterhoudt is sending art assignments, and as a school we will soon be counting our steps to collectively record our progress on the Appalachian Trail, just to name a few activities. Some of our grade levels will be using ZOOM, a videoconferencing platform that allows students to interact with each other and their teacher in realtime. ZOOM sessions will have designated start times so that all students can begin together, but aside from that, most of the work that our lower school students will complete falls into the category of asynchronous learning, or assignments that can be completed at any time of day. We believe this flexibility is both developmentally appropriate for lower school children and helpful for busy families.

For children in preK - third grade, your child's classroom will reach out via email with assignments. Fourth and fifth grade teachers will utilize Google Classroom for daily assignments. We will start slow with a review of some familiar concepts to help everyone feel comfortable with remote learning, but ultimately we are committed to keeping academics at the forefront and curating our curriculum to ensure that we focus on the most essential skills for students as we move forward with new content. Classroom teachers at each grade level will share their expectations for collecting assignments and procedures for providing feedback.

Remote learning is a new exercise for everyone, and we all recognize that there may be a need to adjust our plans along the way. We always encourage you to reach out to your child's teacher with any questions or concerns, and we also have measures in place to collect your feedback periodically. While your first point of contact should always be your child's classroom teacher, you are also welcome to reach out to me or our Learning Coach, Tricia Guggenheim, for support.

Please take the time to carefully read each part of this edition of the Eagles' Nest, as I believe you will find components like the *Remote Learning FAQ* and *A Letter from Mrs. Guggenheim* especially helpful. We will resume our regularly scheduled Friday editions of the Eagles' Nest this Friday.

As always, we appreciate you trusting us with your child's education.

Sincerely,

Ellen O'Connor  
Head of Lower School