

## Back to *SFS School on the Go*

Dear 4th - 5th Grade Families,

Thank you for your enthusiasm and cooperation as we initiate our Distance Learning Program (DLP), *SFS School on the Go*. The SFS faculty have been working diligently and have already become models and mentors to educators around the world (true story!) who are similarly transitioning to online instruction.

In summary, our DLP provides a flexible routine for the students where lessons are asynchronous, allowing the students to work on assignments and view videos/screencasts at their own pace. It avoids the use of "live" lessons to ensure that online school is being taught in an equitable manner and to allow for differences in wifi access and family schedules. Additionally, all students will have many chances to check in one-on-one, in pairs, and/or in small groups for "live" conversations via Google Meet with their teachers.

Last week, 4th - 5th grade students received their *School on the Go* bags, and all 4th - 5th graders were given an iPad to bring home to participate in school online. As students are often told, SFS iPads are ONLY for school assignments and should not be used for entertainment or other non-school related activities. Please make a routine of storing school devices away when they are not being used for school work. If they push back, tell them, "Because Steve Morris said so!"

On Tuesday, March 17, the Head Teachers will send a simple orientation to introduce families to digital learning. Starting on Wednesday, March 18, teachers will provide daily ParentSquare posts with suggested daily schedules and links to lessons and activities. The 4th and 5th graders will be working on many of their assignments online using GSuite and Seesaw. Additionally, Paige for 4th, Talia for 5th, and Nick and Maggie for 4th and 5th will be scheduling frequent small group and one-on-one conversations via Google Meet. If you have never used Google Meet before, please review this child (and adult) friendly reference, [Google Meet Participation Quick Reference and Best Practices](#). The Google Meet app is already on student iPads to facilitate scheduling meetings.

We recognize that there will be challenges, technical and otherwise, and we ask for your patience as we transition to our virtual school. All staff will be reachable during school-day hours (8:00 am - 4:00 pm) via email, and will also be available for one-on-one and small group Google Meet video chats by appointment.

Please let us know what is working for your family and what is not. We will be asking for feedback within the coming week, and through the duration of Distance Learning. Though the circumstances that have prompted the DLP to be necessary are distressing, we intend to seize this opportunity to create new and exciting learning experiences and opportunities for innovative collaboration with and among our students and teachers.

My own children lamented after the *long* weekend that they used to dream of being out of school for an extended period of time. They went on to sincerely say that they wished this was

not happening now. As a father and as the Head of School, I recognize that being away from school will not be easy on our community. We are mindful of the socioemotional impact that this experience may have on students. Our school counselor Laura McGourty, Special Programs Director Sharon Ng, and the Family Association will be updating our community in the next few days about resources and opportunities to help families plan and enjoy their time online and off. For now, go to our school [webpage](#) and scroll down to "Supporting Your Student During School Closure."

As SFS Staff began working from home today, they wanted to send some quick "hellos" from their homes to your families. You can find our videos [here](#).

Together,

Steve