

## Back to *SFS School on the Go*

Dear 6th - 8th 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. We began preparing students when we were still in session last week, and DLP will commence on Wednesday, March 18.

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/advisors.

Last week, Middle School students brought their iPads 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!"

For these initial days, Middle School students should continue assigned school work from last week as detailed in Schoology. DLP for 6th - 8th graders will begin on Wednesday, March 18 with new assignments and teacher meetings. Since Middle School students are already familiar with Schoology, we anticipate a relatively smooth transition. On Tuesday evening, Nancy will send a message to Middle School parents/guardians via Parent Square that will include access to a "live" Google document for each grade level which will list daily assignments posted to Schoology as well as specific times each teacher and advisor will be available for virtual check-in and help sessions.

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