

Dear Hill School community members—

In the past few days, we have emailed you several times to let you know of the precautions and preparations we have been taking at Hill School regarding COVID-19. Today finds us at a crossroads with more cases being reported and a likely expectation of more to come.

We have decided to implement our distance learning program for the next several weeks. This is a preventative measure aimed at prioritizing the health and safety of our community members. We have focused on technological tools that enhance our teaching for years and we are perfectly positioned to change the modality through which we teach while continuing to deliver the excellent education for which Hill School is known.

We are designing a plan that would allow us to teach using Microsoft Teams and other software currently in use. We've asked faculty members to think about how they would teach their classes using those tools. All faculty are actively learning and planning as we transition into distance learning. Our request to you is that you have your child(ren) at their computer and ready to learn on March 23rd as we conduct a modified school schedule (more detailed instructions will accompany the reminder about the March 23rd school day).

Online instruction is different than on campus instruction. It requires a different mindset as well as some changes to your standard daily practices. While each individual student will have to decide what works best for them, the following tips will provide some basic suggestions on setting up for success while engaged in online instruction:

- Find a consistent place to engage in schoolwork. Somewhere that is quiet, free from distractions, and consistently available to you.
- Make a commitment to avoid social media and other online distractions during school hours. This is your education and it will require your engagement to get the most out of each online course experience.
- Engage actively in the content—this is not a vacation; school will continue as scheduled and it will require your full attention.
- For all the benefits of this online instructional model, it also has some challenges. There may be frustration if the technology doesn't work seamlessly. It may be hard for some to stay focused. Some may feel lonely or isolated. Be aware of what is working well and what isn't. Stay in close communication with your teachers about challenges you experience. Take note of your own feelings. This is a community-wide experience, so let's work together to make it as productive and pleasant as possible. We are all learning through this process, so let's embrace the challenge, support each other, and stay positive.
- Take breaks, practice mindfulness, and pace yourself. Take a break from your computer screen. Go outside, take a short walk, and get some fresh air during breaks you would normally have in your school day. Take a lunch break and eat a healthy lunch. There is a lot of important schoolwork that needs to take place in the coming weeks, but that does not mean you shouldn't pause to engage in healthy self-care activities throughout the day.
- Learn from each other. Talk to family members, classmates, and others who have worked from home in the past to learn what worked for them. Share your own experiences with others.

- Don't go it alone. Keep lines of communication open with your teachers and your advisor. Setup online study groups with classmates. Reach out for help, advice, and encouragement when you need it. If you need extra academic support, then contact your advisor. If you need additional emotional support, then contact one of our school counselors.
- Keep your equipment working. If you're having difficulties with your computer, e-mail phowley@hillschool.org for assistance.
- Hill School Counselor is available at msuttonsears@hillschool.org

Rest assured that we will continue to monitor developments closely. We are checking the most recent recommendation and news from multiple sources—CDC, WHO, NAIS and local public health officials. We will provide any additional updates as it relates to our school and our greater community as they are available.

Thank you in advance for your careful consideration,

Phillip Howley

Technology Director