

Dear Fuqua Families, Faculty, and Staff,

As we conclude the 4th week of our distance learning experience, settling into our new and primarily digital reality, I have had more time to think and reflect on our circumstances. Today, as we feel the burgeoning life that accompanies spring in Virginia and move through a week that is symbolic of rebirth and hope for the future, I would like to pause and express my gratitude to you.

There is no playbook to address this global pandemic. I admit to feeling not only fear at times, but also great loss — a loss of our daily routines, of our connections to one another, and of the comfort we too often take for granted regarding the health of our family, friends, and colleagues. And yet, even as our lives have been turned upside down, I have found inspiration in the one constant through it all - your commitment to educating our children and caring for one another.

As we approach the mid-point of the 4th quarter, I want to share how we are approaching distance learning and continue to ask for your constructive feedback as we remain on this journey together. The landscape today is different from what it was four weeks ago, and it will likely change and look a bit different four weeks from today. Communication is paramount, and we are committed to adjusting and accommodating in a manner that best meets the needs of all of our students.

Below is a list of the general guidelines faculty will be following as they continue to implement our distance learning plan.

1. Zoom sessions will occur about twice a week for most classes, especially for US and MS students. Additional one-on-one and small group sessions will be available as needed.
2. The faculty will document student progress by grading work and providing written and verbal feedback.
3. Faculty in the US and MS will send regular gradebook progress reports.
4. If a student is missing an assignment, the missing assignment will appear as an "M" in the progress report and not count against the students' grade in the class until the teacher, student, and parent have had an opportunity to discuss the circumstances surrounding the missing assignment.
5. If missing assignments and absences from Zoom classes become a chronic issue for a student, the division head will reach out, in coordination with the teacher, to collaborate on a plan to overcome the obstacles that are interfering with distance learning.
6. Approximate time on task by division excluding Zoom sessions should be:

- a. US – 5-7 hours per week per class (each US student has 2-3 core classes)
- b. MS – 2-3 hours per week per class (each MS student has 5 core classes)
- c. LS – 20-30 minutes a day total per grade level
 - i. PK – 20 – 40 minutes per day
 - ii. K/1 – 40 – 60 minutes per day
 - iii. 2/3 – 60 – 80 minutes per day
 - iv. 4th – 80 – 100 minutes per day
 - v. 5th – 100 – 120 minutes per day

I sympathize with and recognize the immense stress and strain you are experiencing. Teachers have been asked to change the educational model with which they are most familiar within a matter of weeks, requiring hours of extra work learning how to put courses online. Similarly, students have been asked to learn in way that is either completely or partially unfamiliar to them. And of course, we are all juggling our work responsibilities with everything from caring for children at home to worrying about the health of loved ones to wondering when this ends and what comes next.

And yet, you are meeting this moment with courage and compassion. I receive messages every day affirming our work together. The enormous effort and sacrifices everyone is making continue to fulfill our shared mission of helping each child realize their “boundless individual potential”.

Scott Berinato, senior editor at *Harvard Business Review*, has captured what many of us are feeling in his recent article, [“That Discomfort You’re Feeling Is Grief”](#). This article was shared with me by one of our teachers. The crux of the message is to give yourself permission to experience the feelings that are flooding all of us. As humans, we are wired to cope with difficult feelings by allowing ourselves to experience them and then moving on to the next feeling. He also encourages us to focus on the things we can control and to look for opportunities to demonstrate compassion and kindness. I encourage each of you to read the full article.

Again, please know I am available to answer any questions and to be a source of support for our community. I am grateful for the opportunity to work with each of you in these extraordinary times.

With gratitude,

John Melton
Head of School