

March 16, 2020

Dear Grace Community,

I am in school today and have just finished meetings with our faculty and administration regarding our distance learning plans. I am incredibly proud of our teachers and the way they are adapting and creating learning for your children. This follows last week where they kept a sense of calm and routine for all of us amidst the rapidly developing updates.

This is an unprecedented moment of crisis and change for all of us. And what we usually cling to as a community in moments like this -- our connection and our relationships with each other -- has been disrupted. I hope you know that we are here for you in spirit as you navigate this time with your children at home. We miss you already as we are walking through the empty hallways craving our daily contact with each other. We may not be in our regular routine each day, but we are still Grace and our mission and the ethos of our culture and community remains.

**Here are some ongoing updates to share:**

- The best way to reach any of us will be by email, and we will be available all week should questions or concerns come up.
- We will be on Spring Break next week as planned and we will communicate our post-break status on March 26 via email and text.
- It is looking likely that we will not reopen on March 30; we plan to follow MCPS and/or the state regarding a decision to reopen school.
- The Auction will very likely be held online this year and our committee and co-chairs are hard at work creating that platform. We hope you will spread the word in communities to bid early and often in support of Grace! Be on the lookout for invitations with more information.
- Please be in touch with Noelle at [nmchugh@geds.org](mailto:nmchugh@geds.org) if anyone in your family is diagnosed with COVID19. Follow these [guidelines](#) provided by the CDC. We will not share names with our wider community, but we will try to keep each other informed about cases by class. You must also contact the health department.
- Follow this CDC [site](#) for ongoing recommendations about social distancing. The more we can self-contain our families, the better chance we have to flatten the curve of the epidemic.
- The school building is closed and will undergo a deep cleaning of every common space, classroom, and hard surface before we return.
- You will hear from your child's classroom teacher today or tomorrow and their learning can begin officially on Wednesday with the prompts provided. We recommend that you try to establish what the routine of your day will look and feel like. Ask your child, especially if they are in Kindergarten or above, to help create the schedule. You may have seen some examples on social media from parents. A routine will help alleviate the unpredictability of this time for your children.

- Finally, our school counselor, Renee Stewart, is back with us after her maternity leave and plans to make herself available to you and your children on Fridays. Should you wish to contact her regarding any social or emotional concerns, please send her an email ([rstewart@geds.org](mailto:rstewart@geds.org)) so you can arrange a time for a call. I hope she can be a resource for any of you as we continue to manage this very difficult time.
- On a lighter note, I wanted to share one of my favorite recipe [blogs](#) that is featuring meals that can be made from items in your freezer. Let me know if you make any of these dishes with your children!

My heart is heavy today. When Mr. L led us in meditation this morning, I saw so many of your faces in my mind. Please know you are in my thoughts and prayers and I am an email away as we all weather this very challenging time. Please reach out to me to let me know how you are doing. Being a part of this community is one of the greatest joys of my life. I look forward to the day we are back together on this campus together.

May we all be healthy and well,

Jen Danish