

Dear Grace Families,

In less than one month, we will begin our 2020-21 school year at Grace Episcopal Day School. The administrators, teachers, and all staff members have been busy preparing for the school year. We are so excited to get started and to engage with your children again. As you know, we will begin class instruction virtually and want to share some information and ideas with you as you begin to think of distance learning for your child/children.

As we explained at our [Town Hall](#) on August 6 and in our [“What to Expect When” document](#), we have a full schedule of orientation activities for families and students starting the week of August 31. As part of that, each student will receive a special distance learning packet that will be assembled by the classroom teachers. In the packet will be materials that each student will use at home for his/her learning sessions and activities. This includes textbooks and workbooks that each grade level will need. These packets will be picked up at Grace, outside, on a specific date and time. We will provide information about pick-up dates and times soon.

You'll also be receiving a survey form where you can let us know about your child, your family, and your needs (technology and otherwise). Grace will be able to support families who are in need of a chromebook for their child. Many families have asked us for recommendations about purchasing their own devices for children. For tips, please scroll down to Mr. LaPietra's ideas on p. 2 of this letter.

Now is also a great time to assess your child's online learning environment in your home. It can be fun working together to create a workspace that is quiet and free of distractions. Whether you have just a corner of a room, or a separate room entirely, to dedicate to this space is less important than making sure that your child feels comfortable and supported in a space that is their own.

Here are some articles that may be helpful as you start to think about September:

- [Creating your child's ideal “home office”](#)
- [How to help your child have a great virtual school year](#)
- [Tips for creating a good learning environment at home](#)
- [8 tips to help your child focus and stay engaged during distance learning](#)

Also, if you are just beginning to discuss with your child the fact that school will have a remote start, this Washington Post article was full of good tips for news that may be disappointing to children:

- [6 strategies for sharing disappointing news with kids, in a year with a lot of it](#)

We hope you're able to spend the next two weeks doing some brainstorming with your child about their learning space, and also getting outside, relaxing, and having fun as a family!

Sincerely, The GEDS Academic Team

Technology Recommendations for Students from Mr. LaPietra (14 August 2020)

I wanted to share some of my thoughts and recommendations on devices as we approach the new school year.

First a note on Zoom:

Zoom is very taxing on computers. It uses up lots of resources and power (CPU and RAM). The device is required to encode your video and send it, and take the encoded videos from others and display them on your screen. It is juggling a massive amount of information.

Chromebooks have been a favorite among schools for their students. They automatically update and save, they are difficult to “break” in terms of accidentally downloading malicious programs, and they can be fairly rugged.

Currently, our school Chromebooks are the Asus C202SA. These work fairly well, although their processor is a little slow for Zoom.

Chromebooks are especially friendly with our Google Suite and Seesaw platforms.

Recommended Devices:

- Chromebooks
 - [Google Pixel Go](#) for about \$650
 - [Asus Flip C434](#) for about \$590
 - [Lenovo Chromebook Duet](#) for \$300
- PCs
 - [Microsoft Surface Go 2](#) for about \$650 with a keyboard. (A pen is an additional \$100).

Please note that I only have experience with the first generation of Microsoft Surface Go. I think it is a great product. All the other devices I am basing my recommendations on technical specifications.