



March 19, 2020

Dear MVA Upper School Students and Families:

As you all are aware, we have decided to delay the opening of school following spring vacation. **Instead, MVA will begin the delivery of virtual instruction on Monday March 23. The campus will not open until Wednesday, April 15 at the earliest.** In keeping with current school, state, and national policies, students and parents may not visit campus until school has officially re-opened.

Challenges present opportunities, and we are excited about the process of providing the best possible virtual learning environment for our students. As with any learning environment, it begins with our teachers and their ability to deliver instruction. At MVA, we have an amazing group of energetic, engaging, and adaptable professionals who are excited about working with their students through this virtual process. They see this as a chance to provide our students with an experience which will guide them in their future academic practice. We will take this challenge and turn it into a memorable teachable moment!

Whom to Contact

Student or parent concerns regarding delivery or content will first be addressed with the instructor. Beyond the classroom teacher, questions or concerns may be addressed with an administrator or school counselor as needed.

In the Upper School, should you have further questions after speaking with the teacher(s), please contact your counselor or the Upper School Administration:

Mr. David Bernatavitz, Dean of the Upper School, david.bernatavitz@montverde.org

Mrs. Kimberly Brauman, Associate Dean of the Upper School/Director of Curriculum, kimberly.brauman@montverde.org

Mrs. Marcia Bernatavitz, Dean of Faculty & Professional Development, marcia.bernatavitz@montverde.org

Mr. Yordin Robinson, Associate Director of College Guidance and School Counselor, yordin.robinson@montverde.org

Mrs. Allison Varnado, Associate Director of College Guidance and School Counselor, allison.varnado@montverde.org

Monday, March 23, 2020

All students should be ready to connect by 7:45 a.m. EST Monday morning. Teachers will begin each period on Monday by taking attendance. **On Monday, class interactions will happen in real time, at the same time as the students' real-time daily schedule.**

Students may virtually attend class together via video conference (Microsoft Teams), livestream, or chat. Additionally, students in time zones that would make it unrealistic for them to join synchronously will be required to connect asynchronously through video recordings of the class and completion of the required assignments. The schedule will be as follows on Monday:

7:45 a.m.-8:30 a.m. 1st period: classes
8:35 a.m.-9:20 a.m. 2nd period: classes
9:25 a.m.-10:10 a.m. 3rd period: classes
10:15 a.m.-11:00 a.m. 4th period: classes
11:05 a.m.-11:50 a.m. 5th period: classes
11:55-12:40 6th Period- lunch, club, meetings
12:45 p.m.-1:30p.m. 7th period: classes, lunch (as assigned)
1:35 p.m.-2:20p.m. 8th period: classes, lunch (as assigned)
2:25 p.m.-3:10p.m. 9th Period: classes

Teachers' office hours will be from 3:15-3:45 p.m. each day and during other established time periods.

Attendance

When lessons are scheduled to be delivered through virtual means, attendance is still required. When you learn virtually, check your email account and Canvas daily for information from your teachers about coursework, lessons, and/or content.

Teachers will track and report virtual attendance in a variety of ways, and technology facilitates the confirmation of a student's participation in virtual learning. Teachers can identify who is in attendance by whether they:

- Attend scheduled live class sessions (as we are doing on March 23)
- Sign into Canvas and complete assignments
- Maintain communication through the sending and receiving of emails
- Participate in online chats
- Upload images, documents, videos, etc. documenting their learning

How will the delivery of the lesson take place?

Depending on the teacher and course, remote learning will include the following:

- some combination of synchronous online teaching and learning via videoconferencing tools

- asynchronous instruction through Canvas or other course management systems
- individual homework or other assignments that students complete on their own.

More specific information about individual academic work will be available on March 23. The teachers will make thoughtful decisions about what approach makes the most sense for each course they teach, given the transition to remote learning as well as consideration for students who may be in different time zones.

Each Division Dean, Assistant Dean, and the Dean of Faculty will be responsible for overseeing academic delivery in collaboration with instructors. Delivery or content concerns may be first addressed with the instructor and then with a division dean or assistant dean as needed.

What tools will be used to deliver each lesson?

To assure an engaging and high-quality learning environment, we will follow these guidelines for Upper School:

- The primary tools for communication between teachers and students will be Canvas, Teams, and email. All Upper School students should have their iPad and internet connection to engage in the learning process beginning next Monday. Beyond Canvas, a resource that will be used by your teachers is Microsoft Teams. This is a platform that combines chat, video meetings, file storage, and application integration. This application has been already added to the student's iPad by the MVA Technology Department. Students will see this Teams icon on their iPads:



- Course materials will be linked in Canvas course modules.
- Students will be expected to join a Canvas/Teams Conferences for each of their classes at the times stated in the synchronous learning schedule defined by their instructor. Links to Canvas and Teams Conversations with start times will be posted on each teacher's Canvas page. Students unable to connect synchronously (real time) will be required to connect asynchronously (via recorded lesson) within 24 hours of the originally scheduled time.
- Students may be asked to complete work independently or collaboratively during class via Canvas, Teams, Google Docs, or other web tools.
- Assessments will still be administered, using the honor system, and student work will still be graded.
- Learning experiences are designed to be completed independently or in collaboration with other students. Parents/guardians should refrain from providing too much assistance. It is our objective to adequately determine the level of the students' knowledge and ability as we engage in the online learning process.

- Students are encouraged to be proactive in reaching out to teachers via email or Canvas messaging when they have questions or assignments are unclear.

Online Learning Tips for Parents and Students

Online learning requires that parents and caregivers consider various factors. Specifically, parents and guardians have the responsibility to support their student's meaningful engagement in learning through virtual means. The tips and tools offered here identify specific actions that can be taken in support of the endeavor to promote continuous learning outside the four walls of a classroom.

The following needs to take place to ensure a smooth process:

- Establish daily routines for engaging in learning experiences. Sustained periods of virtual education are successful when students have a routine to follow and a space in which to work and learn. As you consider how to support your child's online learning, be clear about the time of day any online video sessions will be held as well as the extent of the assignments your student will be asked to complete. If you're not sure, ask your child's teacher(s). Once you have an idea about daily time commitments, help your child plan a schedule to follow. Stick to as predictable a daily routine as possible. Don't forget to include times for breaks and lunch. In addition to developing a daily learning schedule, it is important to identify an at-home learning space. Ideally, this space should have:
 - A computer, iPad, Chromebook or other device
 - Good lighting
 - Ready access to learning materials and tools
- A dedicated learning space for virtual learning should ideally be located in a shared area of your home such as at the kitchen table, a large kitchen counter, or a desk in a living room or family room. When your student's learning space is separate from their bedroom and distanced from the television, it sets the expectation and tone that the space is for work and not play. Additionally, an online learning space in a shared area allows parents and guardians to readily support learning while also monitoring online activity.
- Regularly monitor online platforms (Canvas, Teams, email, etc.) to check for announcements and feedback from your teachers.
- Complete assignments with integrity and academic honesty, doing your best work.
- Be prepared to meet timelines, commitments, and due dates.
- Communicate proactively with your teachers if you cannot meet deadlines or if you require additional support.

Video Conferencing Etiquette

- Mute yourself immediately upon joining a conference and keep your microphone muted when you are not speaking.
- Use the chat to ask questions and make comments related to class. No spam, please.
- Use headphones if there are other people in your home using video conferencing.
- **No Pajamas Please. Dress appropriately.**
- Be in a common area when you join the virtual meeting (no bedrooms).

- If the preferred form of communication is not working, email your teacher immediately to discuss alternatives.

**Please note: All sessions will be recorded by your teacher and posted on Canvas as a resource.*

Follow Digital Citizenship Standards and Expectations

When anyone engages online, it's essential that everyone behaves appropriately. Montverde students must follow the school's Code of Conduct. As a quick reminder, when you're online, be sure to:

- Use respectful behavior and language
- Stick to appropriate topic discussions
- Send only appropriate video transmissions
- Use only appropriate icon, emoji, and avatar submissions
- Wear school appropriate clothing if you are attending meetings via video
- Be honest and do not plagiarize or copy the work of others -- in other words, use academic integrity
- Never falsify information about yourself or impersonate others online

Establish a Learning Routine & Space

Here are some things to think about when you engage in online learning:

- **Have a daily routine.** Stick to it. Ask your parent or another important adult to help you develop your schedule, if you need assistance. Be sure your routine includes breaks, time to be active, time to play, and time to eat lunch.
- **Have a learning space.** Use this space when it's time to learn. Create your learning space in a shared area of your home like at the kitchen table, a large kitchen counter, or a desk in a living room or family room. The reality is that when your learning space is separate from your bedroom and distanced from the television, it triggers your brain that the space is for work and not play. You really will be more productive. And, like it or not, an online learning space in a shared area allows the adult(s) in your home to readily support your learning while also monitoring your online activity.
- **Have the tools you need.** Be sure your learning space includes what you need to learn. You'll need a computer or iPad. You'll need paper, pencils and/or pens. You'll need tools to help you with math like a calculator. You'll need your textbooks, composition notebooks, or any other curriculum materials that your teacher provides. Note: If you left any of these necessary items in your locker or dorm room, please send an email to Mr. Weaver (john.weaver@montverde.org), and we will ship those items to you.
- **Build a Daily Schedule** Learning online is just as challenging and rigorous as a day of learning in the classroom. Learning just happens in a different place. Like in school, your daily schedule might be a bit different on each day of the week. There will be certain things such as your stretch and nutrition breaks as well as your lunchtime that you'll probably want to keep consistent. What might change are the times you go online for video sessions or online chats. The more time you spend learning virtually,

the more you'll know about what works best for you in terms of keeping focused and on task. Design a plan for each week and stick with it. You will be expected to follow your normal schedule.

- **As time permits, explore areas of interest!** A traditional school day doesn't usually allow you time to explore subject or topics that might be of interest to you. Would you like to learn a new language? Learn about forensic anthropology? Learn about personal finance and investments? Now would be a great time to explore topics of your own interest! Your teachers can guide you to reliable websites and other sources of information.

Communication from Administration, College Guidance, and School Counselors

Canvas and email will continue to be the means by which school-wide information is delivered. Please check these **daily** for updates regarding events and changes to the school schedule, policy and procedures, and other necessary items that relate to your education!

Communication will be forthcoming early next week from our Director of College Guidance, Rick Ellis, regarding information about navigating the College Admissions process for all current seniors and juniors. In the meantime, access to our College Guidance and School Counseling Office will be available for our students. For assistance with any needs associated with College Guidance you can reach out to

Mr. Rick Ellis, Director of College Guidance

rick.ellis@montverde.org

Ms. Stephanie DiNonno, Associate Director of College Guidance / Test Coordinator

stephanie.dinonno@montverde.org

Mr. Yordin Robinson, Associate Director of College Guidance and School Counselor

yordin.robinson@montverde.org

Mrs. Allison Varnado, Associate Director of College Guidance and School Counselor

allison.varnado@montverde.org

Ms. Mayra Rodriguez, College Guidance and Counseling Office Coordinator

mayra.rodriguez@montverde.org

Such a drastic change in delivery instruction may cause stress and anxiety for many students, and we want to continue to care for our students' overall well-being. Students who may benefit from the assistance of a counselor can also reach out to Mr. Robinson or Mrs. Varnado to schedule a virtual conversation:

Mr. Yordin Robinson, yordin.robinson@montverde.org

Mrs. Allison Varnado, allison.varnado@montverde.org

Learning Support Services (LSS) will continue to provide support services to our students in the program. Mrs. Maureen Kesselring, the Director of Learning Support Services, will be reaching out separately to the LSS students and their families over the next few days.

Tutorial Services

Tutoring services must take place outside of the academic day. In no case will tutoring be permitted while classroom instruction is taken place. As always, the first level of support for

students should be the classroom teacher. MVA teachers will not permitted to tutor students between 7:30 a.m. and 3:45 p.m. as they will be committed to their classroom instruction at that time.

MVA Community:

MVA is all about relationships and communication. We are committed to maintain this sense of connection by ensuring that needs of the student are met and that they know they are cared for whether they are here on campus or learning remotely. While the environment for learning has changed we continue to be steadfast to our mission of inspiring our students to become leaders with a passion for knowledge, global vision and innovation while developing character in a nurturing and diverse community.

Please let us know if you have any questions. Be assured that you will be receiving routine updates via email, Canvas, and various social media platforms.

Sincerely,

Mr. David Bernatavitz
Dean of the Upper School