

Week 1 Update

March 16, 2020

Parents,

Our promise is to keep you well-informed as we navigate uncharted territory.

This is a quickly evolving situation, and we are doing our best to make decisions quickly yet in wise ways using common sense. We want to do everything we can to care for our neighbors, especially those who are most vulnerable. We make decisions to change our behaviors out of love, not fear.

Something for us all to keep in mind: In the end, it will be impossible to know if we overreacted or did too much, but it will be very obvious if we under reacted or did too little. We choose to proactively love others.

PREPARATIONS AND PLANNING

We have been planning for this kind of situation for about a week. Now the time has come for us to put our plans in place. We are ready.

Our faculty gathered this morning to touch base with each other, to worship together, and to pray. We then jumped into discussions regarding our current reality, the new normal. We were open with each other regarding our concerns, our fears, and our hopes. I am amazed and inspired by our faculty and staff's collective confidence in staying true to our mission. They are committed to serving you and your children well. They are digging in to make this the best situation possible, and I couldn't be prouder of the team. They are fantastic. Completely fantastic.

This will not be implemented perfectly. We are learning as we go, and we will make mistakes. But we will be kind and gracious with each other throughout the process.

THE STRUCTURE MOVING FORWARD

We hope your first day of adjusting to our new normal has been smooth. We will do whatever we can to ensure that learning continues and that you feel supported while students are learning from home. It is our desire that students experience a Sioux Center Christian School education while they are not able to be in our school building.

The structures we have put in place encourage easy implementation and limited technology use. We are picturing several students working at home at the same time and want to make this process as easy as possible for parents and caregivers, so we are choosing to use paper-based methods as much as possible. This may seem "old school", but it's something we know will work. Every family will be able to do it. They have the resources available. We can put this style of learning into place quickly in a high-quality manner. And we want to limit screen time.

We encourage you to set up regular routines at home during this time, as much as possible. A regular schedule provides for a sense of control and normalcy for students.

LEARNING PACKET PROCESS

Learning packets will be available for pick up for each student beginning on Wednesday morning at 8:00 AM. These plans include learning from Wednesday, March 18 through Friday, March 26. We will also have electronic versions available on our school website, if you prefer to access plans electronically, but would like everyone to pick up hard-copy packets for this first round of learning. Our first packet pick-up will take place in the orchestra room, due to the additional items needing to be picked up, such as instruments, boots, lost and found items, etc. If you prefer not to come into the building, a staff member would be happy to bring the items to your vehicle. All other pick-ups days will take place in the front entryway.

We will have new learning packets ready for pick up every Friday for the remaining 3 weeks. Please plan to turn in any student work when you come to pick up the updated packets. You are also welcome to email or send pictures of your student's work to teachers, if you prefer not to come to school. The doors of the front entrance will be open from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM each day, for pick-up and drop-off convenience.

There will be a learning packet available for each homeroom. Each learning packet will have materials for each subject area, including co-curriculars, such as art, PE, music, library, and guidance. We encourage you to focus on one day at a time on the learning plan and to approach the learning based on each child's personality and needs.

Teachers will also be sending video recordings including greetings to their students, instructional information, and any other resources they feel would be beneficial to share with you and your children during this at-home learning period.

TEACHER OFFICE HOURS

Teachers will be available from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM Monday-Friday to provide support and to answer any questions you may have. Feel free to call, text, or email during these times. If you need to connect with teachers outside of these times, please feel free to do so, keeping in mind that responses may be delayed. Teachers will be working from home, so please be understanding about interruptions that may take place, due to family members being present.

Students receiving resource or discovery support will be contacted directly by our resource and discovery teachers.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

We are making an adjustment to parent/teacher conferences. All conferences will be taking place on Tuesday, March 24 from 12:00 PM to 8:00 PM. We will need each family to sign up for a new time through this link: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1LPZK-MkMCqiWP1tnY8vFTU2n-GZtXUXL>. If there are no times on the 24th that work for you, please contact the teacher directly. Teachers will call the preferred number that you will provide on the sign-up sheet. This conference will give teachers a chance to provide insight into your child(ren)'s progress as well as a way to check in on how home learning is going. Students in 4th-8th grade students should go over their self-reflections at home prior to the conference. Students do not need to be present during the conference time. Individual student self-reflections will be available for pick-up with the learning packets on Wednesday. If you have any trouble with the link or signing up, please contact Tracy at teekhoff@siouxcenterchristian.com.

AVAILABLE HELP

We are also creating a list of current staff members who are available for tutoring and/or childcare and will be sharing that information soon so that we can provide for potential needs for your family.

KEEP YOUR CHILDREN HOME OR INTERACTING WITH THE SAME PEOPLE

The reason for closing schools is to limit the amount of mixing between people. We are being advised by state authorities and local health professionals that it is important to keep your children home or interacting with the same people. Please do your part in trying to stop the spread of the virus by not allowing your children to go to public places. They should remain home as much as possible. New guidance that just came out today is that groups of no more than 10 people should meet.

SCHOOL HOURS

Iowa will be forgiving the missed school hours that will occur during the next 4 weeks. We will not need to make these hours up. Even so, we want to provide families with the best possible Christian education during this time. We are committed to delivering our mission, even if it is in an unconventional way. Crisis causes creativity.

TRIP OFFICE

The TRIP office will remain open from 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM each day this week. Starting March 23 through April 9, the TRIP office will be open Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM.

UPCOMING EVENTS

We are continually adjusting our routines and making decisions regarding upcoming events. We are working with our team to brainstorm ways we can continue to connect as a school community while we are not able to be together. Please stay tuned for updates in the days and weeks ahead.

These are unprecedented times.

It's a good thing we have a strong school team, supportive parents, talented students, and a big God.

He's got this.

It is our desire to be as faithful as possible each step.

With you,

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