



March 26 Parents Webinar Summary

12 p.m. session featuring Head of School John Packard
Academic Dean Susanna Waters, Associate Head for Student Affairs Andrea Heinze
and Director of Technology Ryan Dobbins

Q: How will community-building work in virtual mode?

Our community has a huge capacity to be creative and once classes begin — and advisor groups and clubs and affinity groups and dorms and classes find their way back to each other — we're confident that the adults leading groups and the student leaders will find new ways to build community together. We're continuously questioning, 'How do we keep being Brooks School?' Chapel is a part of that and we're thinking of ways to open up chapel opportunities in different forms. We'll be inviting students to think with us about the ways to do that, too. Community is who we are.

Q: What if a family loses power and the student can't work/submit work?

Teachers will absolutely be flexible. If your student isn't able to meet synchronously, please communicate that to the teacher. It's not that there's a penalty for being absent, it's just so teachers know the student is OK and on top of their work. Students can work with teachers for an extension if need be.

Q: How will music and arts classes happen?

It's hard to have a ceramics class without clay or a chamber ensemble without fellow musicians. Music and art classes at Brooks will still happen, they'll just look different. If you don't have your instrument, please let us know. Andrea Heinze and Willie Waters can help troubleshoot to try to get you your instrument or one you can use during this time.

Q: Is there still a dress code?

There is no formal academic dress code during this time, though our Distance Learning Plan outlines no pjs, tank tops or clothing with inappropriate slogans. We recommend that students try to have a daily routine and to dress in a way that has them thinking about going to school dressed appropriately — just as we recommend that students sit at a desk or a table and not do their work from their bed.

Q: Will there still be a prom?

The April 26 prom that Brooks had scheduled will not happen, but fear not: We will figure out a way to celebrate it if we're able to come back to school this spring.

Q: What about the college process?

The resources provided by Brooks' College Counseling Office continue to be as strong as ever. Our college counselors will hold a webinar in the future to address all concerns. Until then, please reach out to members of the college counseling office with all specific questions about testing opportunities and other college counseling issues.

Q: With everything moving online, what recommendations do you have for parents to help students manage their screen time?

Parents can create opportunities for their student to be off their screen (game nights, a nudge to physical fitness) while also recognizing the need for community and connection. Our best advice is to set limits and work with your child on a schedule. There is research to support capping online learning at one hour, which is why our classes are 50 minutes and the distance learning schedule features just two synchronous blocks. There are no extended blocks in the distance learning schedule because we don't want students onscreen 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. How parents can help is to ask their student what work is expected of them on each day and help them stick to that.

Q: Is there a chance of spring sports being moved to the fall?

We don't know and anticipate that could be challenging. We want to allow our athletes, at all levels, to have some form of team experience together when we're back but the schedule itself will be thrown out, and we'll arrive at a new model in May, if we're able to return to campus together.

Q: Will there still be Saturday classes?

No. Saturday morning classes have been integrated into the weekday schedule.

Q: How can parents can be aware of students' classwork and obligations?

The key to knowing what's going on in the academic life of your student is to ask them. We are expecting that our students will continue to be independent and resourceful learners accountable for their own learning.

Q: What if a student is struggling in class? Can a parent join their class meetings?

Your child's advisor is the first person they should go to. If it gets to a point at which they need to increase the intensity of their communication or support, we will do that. Students who have a Learning Center appointment in their daily schedule will continue to honor that appointment. We hope it will continue to be a learning opportunity between instructor and student. If a parent

wants to be involved, they should be in touch with Moira Goodman, Director of the Learning Center. Office hours are also worked into the schedule and offer another opportunity to connect with teachers for extra help or to go over things and touch base. There are three periods a week in which students can do that, so please encourage students to self-advocate for that and use office time to connect with teachers if they need help.

Q: Will you recap the grading system?

In distance learning mode, arts classes will be graded pass/fail. All other academic classes will be graded per usual.

Q: Are office hours one-on-one or for groups?

Because some teachers have up to 60 students, we've asked that teachers try for small groups and whenever possible make them more individualized.

Q: Will peer tutor sessions still meet?

We're going to get a week or two under our belts and see where we are before coming to a decision on peer tutoring. It's a wonderful opportunity for students but the go-to for now is classroom and Learning Center first.

Q: If school is closed all summer, should students just leave their belongings on campus until the fall?

We hope we're not in that circumstance, and will update you as soon as we know more about when school will resume on campus, but going forward we do want to continue to emphasize that no student should come to campus at this time.