



## **BROOKLYN FRIENDS SCHOOL**

March 30, 2020

Dear Lower School Families,

We hope your children enjoyed the activities that the Lower School colleagues put together for today! From read-alouds to math games to meditation and breathing exercises, I know the day was filled with a variety of at-home learning. Thank you for your flexibility and partnership as we explore what virtual school looks like for our young learners. Lower School teachers have been planning, learning new platforms and sharing ideas about how to deliver content. We will no doubt be revisiting, reviewing, and refining our process over these upcoming weeks.

In Jackie's communication last week, she mentioned that we would be slowly including synchronous ("live") opportunities for students and teachers to come together. This email will provide you with more information and details for the roll-out of these gatherings.

Zoom Gatherings ("Synchronous Opportunities")

Beginning on Wednesday, April 1, the Lower School will begin to host Zoom gatherings for the students. The Zoom times will be staggered throughout the morning so there is not a conflict for families with children in multiple grades. Here is the schedule for the Zoom gatherings:

9:00am: 4th Grade

9:30am: 3rd Grade

10:30am: Kindergarten

11:00am: 1st Grade

11:30am: 2nd Grade

The Zoom gatherings will be 15-20 minutes long. Attention, especially for children who are engaging over screens rather than in-person, tends to drift after a 20 minute period. However, we are asking families to block off a 30 minute period in case there are technical difficulties that need troubleshooting during the call.

On Wednesday (4/1) and Thursday (4/2) classes will meet in ½ groups at the time listed above. Your classroom teachers will let you know which half group will be gathering on which day. Similar to setting up a brick-and-mortar classroom at the beginning of the school year, establishing classroom management in a virtual Zoom room requires deliberate planning and practice. By meeting in smaller groups on Wednesday and Thursday, teachers will have a chance to familiarize students about norms and expectations for participation (similar to what

is established in the physical classroom) in order to have a successful gathering with the full class on Friday. On Friday (4/3), classes will meet as a full group, still at the established time.

So that families can plan accordingly, the grade-level Zoom times will remain consistent each day. After this week, if there is a change to the Zoom time and/or we add additional times, we will make sure to give you plenty of advance notice.

At this point, these Zoom gatherings provide an opportunity for children to connect with their classmates and teachers. If your child cannot make it one day for any reason, it is completely fine.

In addition to the class Zoom gatherings, teachers will conduct one-on-one 5-10 minute Zoom check-ins with each child in the class. This will not only allow children who may not be able to attend the larger group synchronous time to have an opportunity to connect with their classroom teachers, but we have also found that some students prefer the calmer atmosphere of a Zoom call with just one other person. Your classroom teachers will be sending out a sign-up for 1:1 Zoom check-ins on Wednesday (4/1). This week, the 1:1 check-ins will occur on Thursday (4/2) and Friday (4/3).

So that you are prepared for the Zoom gatherings at the end of the week, make sure you review the [Zoom Technical Guide for Families](#) that was previously emailed. Additionally, Tracy Chow, our LS Technology Integrator, has put together a list of helpful reminders for successful Zoom times at home: [Video Conferencing Etiquette for Lower School](#).

#### Remote Learning Plan Schedule and Updated Daily Schedules with Zoom Time

This morning, you received the plans for Monday and Tuesday. On Wednesday morning at 8:30am, you will receive another email from your classroom teachers with the activities and lessons for Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. For now, we will use this schedule of communication (Monday morning: M/T plans; Wednesday morning: W/Th/F) for any typical 5 day week. As teachers are working late into the evening and on weekends, we've chunked the delivery of content in this way in order to allow for maximum coordination and collaboration across the grades and colleagues.

We've included some more schedules in this email. These schedules have suggestions for how long activities can last, as well as optional times, if you would like to mirror a school day. Please remember that the lessons can be switched around and that an activity block can be broken up into smaller segments (for example, 15 minutes of social studies, a 5 minute break, and then another 10 minutes of the same lesson). Some activities might be shorter while some children might want to explore a concept for a longer amount of time!

[Basic Daily Schedule \(with optional times\)](#)

[Kindergarten Schedule \(with added Zoom time\)](#)

[1st Grade Schedule \(with added Zoom time\)](#)

[2nd Grade Schedule \(with added Zoom time\)](#)

[3rd Grade Schedule \(with added Zoom time\)](#)

[4th Grade Schedule \(with added Zoom time\)](#)

Specialist teachers are adding activities and lessons to the Monday and Wednesday template, but these lessons are intended to be spread out over the week. We are suggesting that students pick two activities provided by the Specialist teachers every day. We've created a [Specialist Activity Bingo Board](#) if children would like to keep track of the activities they've completed.

Families are juggling many balls right now: multiple children and schedules to manage, working from home themselves, caring for loved ones, keeping everyone healthy, and so much more. Our intention as a Lower School community is to provide activities and lessons that can be done at various points throughout the day, depending on your needs. There may be a day that learning cannot begin until later in the morning, or that there needs to be a period of time in the middle of the day when your child is engaged in independent play. If screen time feels stressful and your child needs to read or draw quietly (or bake, or do a puzzle, or cuddle), that is absolutely understandable. If your neighborhood is quiet in the morning and that's the best time to go for a walk while remaining socially distant, start the day that way rather than launching into remote learning. Please do what is best for your family.

As adults and children, we are navigating what it means to be operating in this very different and unprecedented time. Thank you, again, for your patience and invaluable support.

In friendship,

Katie Banks

Assistant Head of Lower School for Academics