



BROOKLYN FRIENDS SCHOOL

March 26, 2020

Dear Lower School Families:

As we are days away from the reopening of school, I must first share with you my deepest appreciation and acknowledgement for all the ways that our school community has been and will stay committed to supporting one another.

BFS colleagues have been working together throughout the break to prepare for the opening days and weeks ahead. Thank you for the inspirational and positive messages and photos you have shared with us. Thank you for sharing your concerns and worries as well. These are unsettling times for all of us. We are here to support, to learn together, and to love. Without question, we will need to remain nimble as we grow together as colleagues and families.

In this letter you will find:

- What to expect when we return to school - asynchronous and synchronous learning, sample schedule
- Zoom - getting started, technical guide
- Additional platforms for remote learning and connectivity
- Support and connection for community members
- Closing remarks

What to expect when we return to school, Monday, March 30:

On March 30, we will build on the remote learning platform that we rolled out on March 12 and 13. Lower School teachers will send you a video message each day to play for your child, as well as a written message each day. This will be sent through your Classroom Post. The post will include literacy and math assignments. Some grades will include assignments under the heading, “Other” or “Social Studies.”

Our specialist teachers have contributed enriching and stimulating lessons and activities as well. We have also included websites, games, activities, and educational links that can be accessed from home.

We have designed lessons; activities; pre-recorded mini lessons; and, read-alouds. This is considered asynchronous learning. This means that your child and

you can select lessons to do at the time of day that will work best for you and your family. Learning will look different in each home. Your day can begin at 8:30 a.m., and your child can complete assignments and specialty classes by 1:00 p.m. (with, of course, appropriate breaks, snacks and play time). Or, you can get started much later in the day. Asynchronous learning allows for diverse access to our assignments, as many families during this time will be sharing “home office” space, wifi, or a device.

Here is a [sample schedule](#) of what an asynchronous day can look like.

Synchronous learning is when the entire class or ½ group gathers together “live” with their teacher and with each other to greet one another; to play a game; listen to a set of instructions; or, learn a new idea or skill all at once. This point of connection is of importance, especially during these isolating times. Using Zoom, we will begin to create age-appropriate, synchronous learning opportunities for our children, beginning Wednesday, April 1. This will begin in ½ groups so that our teachers and children can learn proper online etiquette. (Please see directions for setting up Zoom below.)

Please keep in mind that your child will need frequent breaks. Kindergarten and first grade children will be able to engage in an activity for 10-15 minutes and then will likely need to stretch or eat a snack before returning to or completing the task at hand. Older children will be able to sustain their attention for 20-30 minutes. We would like our children to engage in literacy and math work each day, as well as one-to-two specialist classes each day. Some activities will be completed in 10 or 15 minutes. No activity/lesson should take longer than a half an hour for younger children, or 45 minutes for older children. Of course, your child might really want to go deep and quietly read for an extended period of time, or create a book of mythical monsters, or work through every math challenge, or play a recording of a song multiple times. Learning will look different in each home and your days may need to be adjusted depending on family circumstances.

We have designed our assignments to be age-appropriate and largely hands-on. Your child will need to be supported by an adult to read directions or gather simple materials (paper, pencil, deck of cards, dice). **The degree to which you can leave your child to do a task on her own will vary depending on the age of your child. Remote learning for K - 4 children, just like learning at school, requires adult engagement.** Again, depending on the age of your child, the amount of time that an adult needs to check-in or partner will vary.

We will send updated sample schedules as we build in synchronous learning times. We anticipate one synchronous time per day, at first. We will let you know the time of day this will occur so that you can plan your day accordingly. **Synchronous learning will require that an adult be present** to help your child get started and to support her with any technical glitches. As the days progress, we anticipate building in additional synchronous learning times as appropriate.

Zoom - Technical Guide for Families:

Please [click on this link to learn more about Zoom](#) and how to access Zoom on your home device. Next week we will share with you a document outlining Zoom etiquette for the home/classroom.

Additional Platforms for Remote Learning and Connectivity:

Lower School Colleagues are receiving training and beginning to use the program Seesaw. This is a digital platform for student engagement which will provide another way for us to share our lessons with children and for children to share their at-home work with us in a more systematic/interactive way. Seesaw can be accessed on any device. As we prepare for its implementation, we will send you a tutorial and QR code to access your child's account. Please be on the lookout for this information the week of April 6.

Support and Connection for Community Members:

We are hoping to schedule a short individual "Zoom" for each child and classroom teacher by the end of our first week back. As always, classroom teachers and specialists will be available to support you.

Please know that Dr. Rachel Maldonado, our Lower School Psychologist, remains a resource to you and your family at this time. Tomorrow, in her communication to families, Crissy will include a letter from our counselors with details on how you can access them for support.

Katie Banks, Assistant Head of Lower School for Academics, and Tracy Chow, Lower School Technology Integrator, are here to support you with any academic or technology questions you might have.

Soon, we will provide information to you about our virtual office hours so that we can offer additional ways to be of support to you.

As a reminder, all BFS colleagues can be contacted by email: first initial last name@brooklynfriends.org.

Closing Remarks:

As we navigate these unprecedented times, please know that we are here, that we care, that we are designing a new curriculum and a new way of teaching and learning along with a nation of educators and families.

Let's model compassion for one another and draw one another closer. There are so

many different ways in which we are all experiencing this time as we balance the care for our children, elderly parents, friends, and our personal and professional demands. As we let go of what's "normal" and create and imagine possibilities, let's lean into our school's practice of Meeting for Worship. As we continue to center ourselves, let's remember to breathe and to let ourselves be still, if only for a few moments.

I will be sending a short video message to the children at the end of this week. I hope you will play it for them. Please give your children a BFS hug. Let's all "hold" each other just a little tighter.

In friendship and with love,

Jacquelyn Condie
Head of Lower School