



University Liggett School

COVID-19 Update: Learning continuity plan

Executive Summary

- Online learning to commence Tuesday, March 31 via Zoom Education
- School accessible to collect materials, books, and instruments on March 30
- Ensure student has access to Wi-Fi/cellular network and a device that can support video conferencing (computer, tablet, smartphone); contact your division head if access is an issue
- Further communication from division heads on rollout is forthcoming later next week
- All sports activity currently suspended by MHSAA
- Status of on- and off-campus events and trips to be determined and communicated on a rolling basis.
- **Campus is closed: please discourage students from attempting to access fields/buildings**

Dear University Liggett School Families:

I hope this note finds you well and safe. I am sure that for many of you this Spring Break has turned out very differently than you might have imagined a few weeks ago. Indeed, all of us are adjusting to our temporary new normal during the COVID-19 pandemic. I hope you are managing to find moments of joy and togetherness amid the significant sacrifices we are all making to mitigate the spread of this virus.

At University Liggett School, we are busily planning for a return to learning the week of March 30. As you are aware, Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer has closed all K-12 schools through April 6. As it is possible, perhaps even likely, that these closures will be extended, we are prepared to move to a distance/remote learning model for the indefinite future.

We have secured a Zoom educational platform as our primary tool for these purposes. Each teacher will have ability to host group video conferencing calls for as many students as is required. Zoom also has screen-sharing technology and a digital whiteboard feature for note-taking and sharing.

Additionally, our academic team, technology leaders, and teachers are developing a portfolio of additional resources, including apps, Google education products, and features of our own learning management system (Whipple Hill Portal) that can be deployed to support synchronous and asynchronous learning.

Monday, March 30, will serve as a faculty professional development day to ensure all faculty members are prepared to use these tools to the best of their ability. Additionally, **the school building will be accessible so students may pick up all academic materials (including instruments)** they will need. Such pick-ups should happen efficiently and, of course, in small groups.

Beginning **Tuesday, March 31**, students should be ready to begin to be engaged in online learning. Tuesday may serve as an orientation day in which we reconnect with students, test their ability to get online using the tools, and troubleshoot.

Online learning will look different in each division. It will be a work in progress, of course, but we are confident that we can creatively continue our academic growth together.

In the **Middle and Upper School**, students should anticipate virtually “following” their normal daily schedule. At the appointed time a class or advisory would normally meet, they will join a Zoom session hosted by that particular teacher. Please note that each class will be managed differently, as designed by the teacher. Some classes may use the entire period to engage in an online discussion/activity, while others may check in to start, give students a task or direction, and then check in at the end.

In the **Lower School**, Zoom will be used differently. Classroom and resource teachers may schedule group and individual check-ins throughout the day and employ asynchronous tools, such as See-Saw and Google Classroom, to give feedback on student work that is completed at each student’s own pace. In our youngest grades, communication, primarily with parents, will provide guided activities and resources to support educational play.

Please expect further communication from your division towards the end of next week about specific rollout plans. The best way to prepare now is to ensure your student has access to a video-enabled device (computer, tablet, smartphone) and a reliable Wi-Fi or cellular network. Also, it will behoove you to establish an appropriate place for your student to participate in online learning in your home. If you anticipate access issues related to technology, please contact your division head.

Also, please note that the **MHSAA has suspended all sports**. The association is actively prohibiting all formal and informal practices, training, lessons, or conditioning for high school athletes REGARDLESS of season. This includes athletes preparing for fall 2020 sports. It is the equivalent of the typical summer “dead period” until further notice.

I am sure many are wondering about the variety of campus and off-campus events and trips that are part of a traditional spring at University Liggett School. We will make decisions about those events on a rolling basis and communicate as soon as we can when those decisions are made.

Finally, please note that our campus is currently closed to all students and visitors. We appreciate the appeal of open spaces amid a time of social isolation, but students gathering on campus for pick-up sports works directly against the goals of social distancing and, given that there is no adult supervision, creates a dangerous situation. Please discourage your students from meeting/gathering at ULS and trying to access our fields or buildings. As much as it pains us to do so, given that their intent is simply to play and connect, we will continue to send them home if we encounter them on campus. We look forward to returning to normalcy and welcoming everyone back to campus, but ask for your cooperation until we have been permitted to do so.

As always, don’t hesitate to reach out to your division heads or me with questions or concerns.

In this time of challenge, I'm reminded that our institution has been in continuous operation for 142 years. Those 14+ decades include two World Wars, the Great Depression, and, yes, even a few pandemics, including the Spanish Flu of 1918. In fact, one of our predecessor schools, Grosse Pointe Country Day School, was founded in response to a typhoid outbreak in 1915.

Resiliency and pluck are simply part of our DNA. Together, we will do our best to continue making learning happen and look forward to moving beyond this moment.

Sincerely,

Bart Bronk
Head of School

3/18/2020