

Dear Armstrong Families,

March 18, 2020

Life for all of us has changed drastically since our last update to you on Friday. While we recognize that all members of our school community are adjusting to Armstrong's At Home Learning, we also know that change is within the very challenging broader context – government “shelter in place” restrictions, concerns about our families and friends, and the difficult uncertainty of not knowing when and how this crisis unfolds and ends. We hope our continued efforts to educate your students provide a beacon of light for them and your family.

### **At Home Learning**

**Off to a Good Start:** From what we are hearing from our teachers and our families, teaching and learning is going as well as it can be given the monumental task and the newness of doing so from home. Thank you for working in partnership with us through this transition. We asked you to be patient with us and support your children at home as they begin to come to school remotely. From everyone's feedback, we know that you are doing so... and we are grateful. Members of our Program, Technology and Leadership Teams have participated in multiple conference calls with local educational leaders over the last 10 days; these interactions have confirmed that we have a solid plan in place academically and socially and, fortunately or unfortunately, are ahead of many other schools right now at implementing constructive At Home Learning.

**Respecting Boundaries:** One of our ongoing goals during this time is to support our teachers as best we can while they teach from home. Many of our teachers have children of their own who are also out of school. We have encouraged our teachers to remember to set professional boundaries, so they can take care of themselves and their family members in addition to teaching your children and staying in contact with you. We remind you of our email protocol; faculty and staff are not required (and in the current environment, discouraged) from answering emails after 6:00 PM or on weekends. We have also asked our faculty not to communicate with you via text. Faculty have the right to reserve texting for their personal lives. All of us, and I assume our families, are overwhelmed with information that is coming in through multiple channels and with incredible frequency. We recognize that there are logistical questions during Week 1; we are working to be as responsive as possible in a timely manner. Please remember to use the Lower and Middle School Padlets as a way to share information.

**Tutoring:** A few of you have asked about tutoring while our faculty are teaching remotely. Our tutoring protocol is the same as when school is in session - a classroom teacher cannot tutor a student that they teach in either small or large groups. Thank you for respecting this policy. We ask you to also be realistic about setting up new tutoring relationships; the demands on our faculty are, frankly, greater than ever to deliver quality At Home Learning. We simply cannot promise faculty will have the bandwidth to facilitate new tutoring relationships right now.

**Staying Connected as a Parent Community:** In addition to planning for teaching and learning, we are working for ways to stay connected as a Parent Community. During the time our students are home, we hope to communicate with you three times a week (at least that is the plan!): (1) families will hear from your Division Directors weekly, on information specific to Lower and Middle School, (2) we will continue our COVID-19

Updates weekly for general information, and (3) the Bulletin will be sent weekly and focus on resources not directly related to At Home Learning but which might be helpful for you and your family to navigate the current situation. Next week, we will schedule a virtual Parent Coffee for any of you who would like to join a general check-in chat (you will need to supply your own coffee). We are committed to keeping us all connected.

### **Length of Time for At Home Learning**

We are very aware of the Governor's statement yesterday that students may be home for the remainder of the school year. As you probably know, the Governor expressed this sentiment as a gut feeling, not as a strong prediction or mandate at this time. Currently, **until you hear differently from Armstrong**, we are still looking at April 13<sup>th</sup> as the earliest possible return date. We are aware of the current environment and expect that this date will almost certainly need to be extended. There is no reason to do so at this time and we are approaching this decision and others day by day and week by week right now ... and we encourage your students and families to try to do the same if possible.

We are thinking of you all. Please take care of yourselves and your families.

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