

WOLF WATCH

— WEEKLY E-NEWS —

News for the Week of March 22

All School

A Note From the Head of School

Good afternoon, St. Francis families,

I never thought my communication with you after spring break would be addressing the new reality in which we all find ourselves. I have processed a range of emotions over the break, from enjoying the time with my family, to frustration that we will not be welcoming our students back during the timeframe we had hoped for, to worry over how our distance learning will go for students and faculty. At the same time, it has been energizing and affirming to witness the resilience and strength of our community responding to this unprecedented situation. We are one St. Francis family, and we will navigate this uncertainty together.

Below, your child's division head has provided an overview of academics in the coming weeks; specifics will come from your student's classroom or homeroom teachers in the next two days. I know all of us would much rather have our students in class, but I also sense an excitement on the part of our faculty and students as they engage in distance learning. While this mode of instruction will look slightly different, our goal is to deliver continuity of instruction as well as a connection to teachers, classmates, and community alike. Rest assured, your student will not be in front of their iPads or computers all day. Some lessons will be synchronous (delivered at the same time), and others will be self-paced and the student may work through in different manners.

Our staff is excited for this journey and prepared for the challenges ahead. Additionally, our board of trustees and our leadership team are highly engaged to address any issues and ensure that thoughtful plans are developed for as long as necessary. I am honored to be a part of such a tremendous group of educational leaders and staff members, all dedicated to preserving and serving our mission to develop imaginative, critical thinkers and *people for others!*

I encourage you to help us make this learning as engaging as possible for all. Send us your photos and help us connect through social media as one community united. Use the hashtag #SFEStrong.

In closing, please know that I am thinking of you, your families, and our community. It is my prayer that this situation resolves itself as quickly as possible. In the meantime, take care of yourselves and each other, and we will continue to keep you updated as we navigate this together.

With gratitude,

Steve Lovejoy

Share With Us on Social

We miss seeing our students so help us make this learning as engaging as possible for all. Send us your photos and connect through social media as one community united. Use the hashtag #SFEStrong and tag us, or send an e-mail to Photos@StFrancisHouston.org.

Distance Learning Extended Through April 13

After much careful deliberation, we have decided to keep St. Francis's campuses closed until April 10, with an **anticipated return date for faculty and staff on Monday, April 13, and for students on Tuesday, April 14.** This was not an easy decision, but the challenges associated with the novel coronavirus and the close contact that is the nature of school make this the best course of action to keep our community safe. [Click here](#) for further details, and for additional updates as they become available.

List of Resources for At-Home Learning

With the increased emphasis on “social distancing,” we know that many of you

are searching for activities to keep kids positively engaged at home. [Common Sense Media](#) is a nonprofit that aims to help parents and educators with appropriate technological recommendations for kids. A few days ago, the organization published [this list of resources for entertainment, at-home learning, and stress relief](#) as we navigate the COVID-19 situation. The resources are not exhaustive, but we hope sites like this offer some help as you and your family plan for the days and weeks ahead.

Virtue of the Month: Forgiveness

During the month of March, the St. Francis community is focusing on forgiveness. Our virtue verse is 1 John 1:9: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” Try to memorize it as a family. You can watch [this short video](#) to learn the ASL for forgiveness.

***Table Talk:** It’s family challenge time! Challenge each family member to live out the virtue of forgiveness within the family. Take turns sharing about times when you saw other family members being forgiving.*

Primary School

Distance Learning Starts Wednesday

I hope your spring break has given you time for rest, relaxation, and fun. I took time to see my children, catch up on some reading, and even begin the dreaded spring cleaning!

In the week before our spring break, our teachers spent each day after school and all day on Friday, March 13, learning more about ways to provide online learning opportunities for our students. This preparation was time well spent, considering our campus closure on March 23–April 10. **Our plan for staying connected to students and families through Tadpoles and the use of Zoom and other resources will support the continuity of learning during our days away from our classrooms.**

On Tuesday, March 24, your child’s teacher will be in touch with you via e-mail, using the information you’ve provided in My BackPack. (Please check to make sure that your contact information is current.) Your child’s teacher will let you know when they will have information available each day in Tadpoles.

We have worked hard to prepare for this method of learning, but know that there will almost certainly be challenges and glitches since this is new to all of us. We appreciate your support and understanding as we learn together.

Your child's lead teacher, teaching assistant, and enrichment teachers are available to support you, as are the St. Francis staff. We hope the following contacts will be helpful for you while we are away:

- Faculty and administration are available to answer questions and offer support. Feel free to reach out to us through e-mail or by calling our school phone extensions during school hours. If we cannot answer when you call, we will get back to you as quickly as possible.
- **If you have questions related to using the technology platforms given to you by teachers, please feel free to [e-mail our technology staff](#).** They are available to help you troubleshoot any challenges you may have.
- If you need to communicate health information to the school, please [e-mail Debbie Toler, RN](#), our school nurse.
- For the latest St. Francis Episcopal School information, please [visit this website](#).

Please stay well and let us know how you are doing. We look forward to seeing you again soon.

All my best,

Amy Whitley, MA
Head of Primary School

Mark Your Calendar

Monday, March 23–Tuesday, March 24

- *Teacher Preparation Days:* Campus closed
-

Wednesday, March 25–Friday, April 10

- *Distance Learning:* Campus closed

Monday, April 13

- *Teachers Return to Campus: Campus closed*
-

Tuesday, April 14

- *Students Return to School on Campus*
- *Chapel: 9:30 a.m.*

Lower School

From the Division Head

I hope you had a restful break. As we embark on this online educational journey, we ask for your cooperation and assistance. This has been a learning adventure for everyone, and we are sure there will be glitches. **For technical support, please [contact the St. Francis Technology Department](#).** If you need to speak with one of your child's teachers, please call their school extension, as they will have access to messages.

The teachers spent each afternoon the week of March 9–12 in training to prepare for a potential online-schooling scenario. Once a decision was made to transfer learning online, the grade-level teams met on Friday to work out the details for how online learning will be executed. What this will look like in kindergarten is very different than what it will look like in fourth grade. Know that the teachers will also be working remotely this Monday and Tuesday to prepare specific lessons and learning opportunities for your children.

Your homeroom teacher will send a Seesaw post each evening beginning Monday, March 23, in preparation for the next morning. This post will include a link for a live video check-in similar to our Morning Meetings. This morning check-in will serve as a daily attendance check. Please [e-mail Kristal St. Clair](#) if your child will be absent.

We are using Zoom for both live interactions and recorded learning videos. We will provide detailed instructions on Zoom before the students

start on Wednesday. The teachers did have time the Thursday before spring break to practice using Zoom with their students. We certainly do not want you to become the teachers, and we have been cognizant to prepare lessons and activities that students can do independently. However, some tech support might be needed from time to time. We have also been very intentional to limit screen time and provide offline activities for the students.

It will be important to keep devices charged. Students will need to return the iPad in the condition in which it was sent, along with any accessories checked out to students.

If anyone on our team can be of assistance to your family in any way, do not hesitate to reach out to us.

At times such as this, when we are uncertain of what each day will bring, I'm so grateful that we can all come together as a St. Francis community to do what's best for our students and families.

Warmly,

Carol Christ, MEd
Head of Lower School

Mark Your Calendar

Monday, March 23–Tuesday, March 24

- *Teacher Preparation Days:* Campus closed
-

Wednesday, March 25–Friday, April 10

- *Distance Learning:* Campus closed
-

Monday, April 13

- *Teachers Return to Campus:* Campus closed

Tuesday, April 14

- *Students Return to School on Campus*

Middle School

A Note About Distance Learning From the Division Head

I hope you had a restful and enjoyable spring break. Our priorities in the coming days are to provide a continued sense of connection with the St. Francis community and to continue offering instruction to your children. As we prepare to deliver instruction online this Wednesday, there are several important items to share:

- **Middle School classes resume on Wednesday, March 25. Student schedules begin with an advisory check-in at 12:15 p.m., followed by several required class sessions and concluding with available tutorial sessions through 4:30 p.m.**
 - The opening advisory session will serve as our daily attendance check. Please [e-mail Leigh Williams](#) if your child will be absent.
- All scheduled class and meeting sessions will be posted to teacher bulletins in the Student and Parent Portals.
- **The portals will be updated daily and will be your primary resource for academic information.**
- We will continue to assign and grade work while campus is closed.
 - Students will be assigned work in all classes and held accountable to posted submission dates and times.
- **Students are asked to wear St. Francis uniform tops** to help orient their minds to the fact that they are in class (SFES sweatshirts are also allowed).
- Faculty and administration are available to answer questions and offer aid. Feel free to reach out to us via e-mail or school phone number. If we cannot answer when you call, we will get back to you as quickly as possible.
- Faculty and administration are not your best resource for assistance with login or other technical issues that may arise. **For technical support, please [contact the St. Francis Technology Department](#).**
- If your student needs a laptop during this period of attending school online, please send an e-mail to Technology@StFrancisHouston.org

with your child's first and last name and grade level. Our IT team is organizing a pickup window on Tuesday morning and will confirm a time with you when the laptop is ready.

We will be using Zoom for both live interactions and recorded learning videos. If you are unfamiliar with Zoom, [click here](#) for a link to several quick tutorials. Your students have practiced with Zoom and should be able to use the software effectively, but they may ask you for help if they have a hard time connecting. We have also been very intentional to limit screen time and provide offline activities for the students. [Click here](#) to see a copy of the schedule of MS class meetings and tutorial sessions.

We are all in uncharted territory this week. We appreciate your support as we do our best to continue teaching and supporting your children in this altered format. I appreciate your partnership and flexibility in the days ahead!

In partnership,

Chris Bertha, MA
Head of Middle School

Mark Your Calendar

Monday, March 23–Tuesday, March 24

- *Teacher Preparation Days:* Campus closed
-

Wednesday, March 25–Friday, April 10

- *Distance Learning:* Campus closed
-

Monday, April 13

- *Teachers Return to Campus:* Campus closed
-

Tuesday, April 14

- *Students Return to School on Campus*

Upper School

A Note About Distance Learning From the Division Head

I hope that you and your families have had a restful and rejuvenating spring break experience. We are about to begin the final stretch of the school year, and it will look a little bit different this time around. This Monday and Tuesday, our faculty will continue work that was started before the break, making final preparations for the **online instruction that students will begin on Wednesday, March 25**. You and your children will still be able to refer to students' SFES planners to reference our six-day rotating block schedule and determine the day's schedule that we will be following.

However, **the times for each online class session have been modified according to the schedule below:**



Upper School Schedule

	Time	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
Block times = synchronous online sessions	8:30- 9:00	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3	Block 4	Block 5	Block 6
	9:15-9:45	Block 3	Block 4	Block 5	Block 6	Block 1	Block 2
	10:00- 10:30	Block 5	Block 6	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3	Block 4
Tutorial times = practice & teacher consults (students join online call as needed and/or requested by teacher)	10:45- 11:15	Block 7	Block 8	Block 7	Block 8	Block 7	Block 8
	11:30- 12:00	US Faculty Mtg.		US Faculty Mtg.		US Faculty Mtg.	
	1:00- 1:45	Tutorial 1	Tutorial 2	Tutorial 3	Tutorial 4	Tutorial 5	Tutorial 6
	1:45- 2:30	Tutorial 3	Tutorial 4	Tutorial 5	Tutorial 6	Tutorial 1	Tutorial 2
	2:30-3:15	Tutorial 5	Tutorial 6	Tutorial 1	Tutorial 2	Tutorial 3	Tutorial 4
	3:15- 4:00	Tutorial 7	Tutorial 8	Tutorial 7	Tutorial 8	Tutorial 7	Tutorial 8
	4:00- 4:30	Advisory	Arts/PE	Councils	Arts/PE	Clubs	Advisory

Attendance will be taken by teachers at the beginning of each morning block time. Students will be accessing course content and synchronous learning sessions through the Google Classroom platform. Students are not expected to meet online for study hall.

You will notice:

- **Students have a 15-minute break between each 30-minute synchronous learning session.** (This is a great time for a bathroom or snack break.)
- **Students have an extended mid-day break from 11:15 a.m. until 1:00 p.m.** (This is ideal for a working lunch. Students can get started on assignments from their morning synchronous learning sessions and make plans to join an afternoon tutorial time when needed.)
- **Students have 45-minute tutorial times (corresponding with the classes they had in the morning) each afternoon.** These sessions

are mostly optional, giving students who have questions or need additional practice a dependable time to meet with their teachers for this support. There may be times when a teacher requires use of some or all of this tutorial time for either some or all students. If/when that is the case, students will receive that information directly from the teacher by the end of the morning synchronous learning session. No tutorial sessions will be held for Study Hall.

In closing, we are all embarking on this online learning journey together, and there will likely be opportunities for all of us to practice patience, compassion, and flexibility along the way. Please remember that you are never alone. We are just a phone call or e-mail away if you need our support or assistance.

- For technical support, please contact the [St. Francis Technology Department](#).
- If you need to contact one of your child's teachers, please e-mail them.
- Please [e-mail Cathleen Flaniken](#) if your child will be absent.
- Please feel free to [contact me by e-mail](#) with any follow-up questions.

Thank you for taking the time to read through this message and to familiarize yourselves with this information, which was shared with your children before break.

Gratefully,

Cara Henderson, EdD
Head of Upper School

Mark Your Calendar

Monday, March 23–Tuesday, March 24

- *Teacher Preparation Days:* Campus closed
-

Wednesday, March 25–Friday, April 10

- *Distance Learning:* Campus closed
-

Monday, April 13

- *Teachers Return to Campus: Campus closed*
-

Tuesday, April 14

- *Students Return to School on Campus*

Church

Church Services Available Streaming

Visit the [church website](#) for more information on streaming services.

Forgiveness Workshop Scheduled for April 4

Father Bates will lead a **forgiveness workshop on Saturday, April 4, from 9:00 a.m. to noon in the Hogan Board Room**. This will be a time during Lent to consider whom you need to forgive, and to work through a process of learning to release others and yourself.

“Everyone says forgiveness is a lovely idea, until they have something to forgive.” —C.S. Lewis

Please RSVP to Sally Jo Crowson [via e-mail](#) or call the church office at 713.782.1270 if you plan to attend.

Register for the GLOW/Youth Summer Mission Trip—Save the Date!

All middle and high school students are invited to attend the **GLOW mission trip to Galveston, TX, on June 4–7**. [Register online here.](#)

- Additional information will be provided after registration is completed.
- This is a great way to earn service hours since we will not be having Week of Wonder (VBS) this summer due to construction!
- With questions, please [e-mail Allison Devlin](#) or [Joanie Kirksey](#).