

# The Cambridge School

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Dear Upper School Parents,

After the whirlwind of last week, the dust is settling and we are waking up to a new day in the life of The Cambridge Upper School! Your support over the past few days and weeks has been critical and so appreciated. Knowing that we have an encouraging and supportive parent community helped us to make difficult decisions and allowed us to quickly turn to planning the next steps to help our teachers and students continue teaching and learning.

**We will have a “soft start” on Wednesday, March 18th.** This will consist of an Orientation to Online Classes for you and your teens to attend (Zoom invitations will be coming soon for this with your specific time for your meetings). At this Orientation the students will be invited by a teacher to test their equipment, familiarize themselves with our Zoom platform, and ask questions about our online learning plan. **Online classes will officially begin on Thursday, March 19th at 9am.**

First, realize that online learning isn't what the Cambridge curriculum was designed for. In fact, the opposite is true. We value our mentorship model, where face-to-face interaction is essential. Our teachers won't be able to fully teach the way we normally teach, and elements that can only happen in person will be lost for the time that we are online. But we are committed to doing the best we can, and we are thankful for the tools of technology that are available to us to continue school and learning. We ask for your patience as we figure out how to do this best. We also ask for your cooperation, since we can't do it without you! As we figure things out, plans may change (we hope this won't happen too often), and we will all need to be flexible.

To get started, make sure that your teen has a computer with internet connectivity (while smartphones and ipads can work, laptops/computers will provide a better experience) and please download the Zoom app. Students will receive instructions for how to use the “Zoom” platform. They will also be invited to a Google Classroom for each of their classes. We ask that parents agree with the following for online learning:

- Student behavior is the responsibility of the parent. We hope that each student is engaging with class well, but since we aren't there in your home, we can't enforce standards of behavior. Students may be removed from a zoom classroom if their behavior is disruptive to other students.
- Parents need to monitor Zoom usage (Google Chats, etc.) whenever classes are not in session.
- Parents should be vigilant about the online security and safety of their teen. This is important now, more than ever. Students will need a quiet room with a good internet connection to attend classes, but we recommend that when students are not “in class”, they should be using their computers in a public area of the house with parent supervision.

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- **Students will have class instruction from 9 AM- 1 PM, Monday-Thursday. They will have small group conferences with teachers after 1 PM Monday-Thursday. Small group conferences with teachers will also happen on Friday.** Each student will have a unique schedule. Students will need to complete homework and study for tests/quizzes outside of class time.
- Class time will not be recorded and will NOT be able to be made up. Students should be on time to class on the computer interface and ready to learn.
- Students are required to go to their small group conference sessions. These are regarded as the same as class time.
- If students need individual help, this may be possible based on the availability of the teacher. We will continue to have math help and writing tutor help. All video conference communications with Cambridge School staff will take place only between the hours of 8:00 AM- to no later than 5:00 PM, Monday-Friday.
- Small group conferences and any one-on-one tutoring sessions will always be recorded.
- Each student will need a gmail email account in order to interact with Google Classroom. Please make sure your teen gets one and emails it to Cara Francisco: [cfrancisco@cambridgeclassical.org](mailto:cfrancisco@cambridgeclassical.org). If your teen already has a gmail account on file with us, we should already have that information available to teachers.

We anticipate that some teachers will get sick during the time that we have online classes. Should this happen, “zoom” classes may not happen with these teachers, but teachers will do their best to provide reading and self-study materials for the students through their Google Classroom. Teachers will communicate with students if there are any changes to the class schedule due to illness.

Student support services with Krista Hahn will be available. She has some standing appointments and she will also have office hours. We will give students instructions for how to make an appointment with her.

We will try to maintain community time and social ties as best as possible. We will continue to have House events and House lunch. House leaders are working on plans for these times together. We will also continue to have Assembly on Fridays.

Let’s try this out! We hope that we will all continue to learn and grow together in the best way possible despite the extraordinary circumstances. I know we all look forward to getting back to our normal classroom school routine as soon as possible.

SDG,  
Melissa Gingrich, Upper School Principal  
& Your Upper School Faculty Team