



April 14, 2020

Dear Terra Verde Families,

I hope all of you enjoyed the weekend weather. In true Oklahoma fashion we shift from high 70's to snow flurries. As we look back on our fourth week of physically distant learning, it has been affirming to hear positive anecdotes from students about the impact of expanded interactive engagement. With the integration of added structure and synchronous class meetings, we've seen encouraging results and participation. I want to express my gratitude to you for your ongoing support of your children and our shared partnership. I know I have said this each week, but I need to thank our faculty, staff, and all of you who continue to extend yourselves in the face of this historical event. As is always the case at TVDS, if you know a family in need during this time, please reach out to one of our faculty, staff or myself so that we can best support our community.

This week we've put together our policy on third trimester grading ([click on LINK](#)) to provide greater clarity on the topic. It is critical that we articulate clear expectations and offer continued encouragement for our students and families. On Friday, I was able to meet on zoom with middle school students and Mr. Bell. The feedback from those in attendance has been positive and I came away lifted up by our students focus. It is clear that we need to continue to preserve the joys of learning and the curiosity to learn. At the same time, we want to reduce anxiety and uncertainty, which will enable our students and faculty to simply focus on the opportunities for continual growth and progress.

I plan on emailing our 8th grade students this week to gather virtually to discuss contingency plans for capstone projects. In discussions with middle school faculty, we find it to be critical that participation in this tradition continues, even in an alternative format. We have established dates-- May 20th, and May 21st for students to present this culminating project. I am incredibly proud of these students, whose final trimester on TVDS's campus has been turned upside down. I've been impressed by their efforts to press on while remaining caring, determined, compassionate, and resilient and I am looking forward to them sharing their fondest TVDS memories with our faculty/staff. Over the last few weeks, students in 8th grade have received positive admissions news from varied private high schools. Those who are not continuing a private education are well-poised to transition to local high-schools where our current alumni are representing our community well. In the next two weeks, we will have an alumni/middle school session where former TVDS students can share their experiences with those leaving the nest (no pun intended). We are also planning a parent to parent session as we believe these communication lines are critical.

As a reminder, we are continuing our admission process this spring. Those families interested in a TVDS education should reach out to the office, myself, or Mr. Bell for additional information as our campus tour dates have been moved to late June and July (See below). Student attrition at TVDS is at an all-time low and in a [time of great uncertainty, these results are encouraging and affirming. In my opinion, they speak to the](#)

quality of our faculty and the strength of the community that we enjoy. We never take any of this for granted and continue to put forth effort to improve our educational experience.

Important Dates

<u>Date of Event</u>	<u>Event Details</u>
April 20th-24th	Earth and TVDS Spirit Week (Details to be sent this weekend)
April 25th	Middle School Social Postponed
May 1st	FAFFF (postponed, a fun family activity/challenge will be sent)
May 4th	Standardized Testing Week Postponed
May 12th	Volunteer Appreciate Day Postponed but alternative plan in place
May 20th, 21st	8th Grade Capstone Project Presentations
May 22nd	Final Day of School
May 25th	Progress Reports Available
June 25th	Prospective Parent Tour
July 17th	Prospective Parent Tour
July 18th	BBBB Event
August 8th	TVDS 8th Grade Graduation and MS Social
August 9th-11th	Faculty Retreat
August 20th	Back to School Night
August 24th	First Day of School 2020!

Answers to Questions that may or may not have crossed your mind:

1. **How will 8th graders meet the requirements for the Driven to Read program?**
 - a. Oklahoma law requires students to successfully complete the reading portion of the eighth grade English language arts assessment or similar exam (CTP counts) in order to apply for a drivers license or permit. The CTP will not be administered this year as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The state board of education adopted an emergency rule on March 25th to allow the state to provide a medical exemption for this requirement. All 8th grade students in the 2019-2020 school year will receive this exemption.
2. **How will students currently seeking to obtain a driver license or permit secure the paperwork to meet the requirements for proof of reading proficiency and enrollment while schools are closed?**
 - a. The Oklahoma Department of Public Safety (DPS) announced it will waive the requirements to provide enrollment verification and reading proficiency documentation for students applying for their license or permit. As mentioned above, the reading proficiency requirement is permanently waived for 8th graders who would have taken the eighth grade ELA test or equivalent in 2020. Currently, DPS has suspended all face to face interactions and cancelled all driving skills tests.
3. **How is TVDS protecting users and faculty online? How can your family help?**
 - a. It is true that cyber security hackers are poised to capitalize during a crisis. Below are ways to ensure students are protected.
 - i. Make sure all devices have up to date anti-virus protection
 - ii. Use multi-factor authentication for accounts if available
 - iii. Work on only secure, password protected internet connections

- iv. Avoid accessing any confidential or sensitive information from public WIFI networks.
 - v. Beware of phishing emails and discuss this with your child (if applicable). The intent is to get you to download malware onto your device.
 - vi. Avoid using bluetooth in public places
 - vii. Please let us know if you a TVDS devise is lost, stolen or damaged immediately.
- b. All TVDS Zoom meetings are password protected and require a wait-room option for admittance. We have discussed security concerns and implemented best practices.
4. **Is it safe to deliver paper packets to students?**
- a. Based on information from the [World Health Organization](#), yes. The likelihood of an infected person contaminating goods is low and the risk of catching the virus that causes COVID-19 from a package that has been moved, traveled and exposed to different conditions and temperature is also low. However, much is still unknown about the coronavirus. It is advisable to handle packages and items that will be sent to students and families while wearing disposable gloves and to wash hands thoroughly after receiving and handling a package either through the mail or from another person. *We have designated certain staff to facilitate delivery of distance learning materials. These individuals will follow recommended guidelines when handling materials, including sanitizing prior to delivery.*
5. **What are schools required to report for student attendance?**
- a. Student attendance is being documented during zoom meetings as this documentation is appropriate for school accountability and determined by the individual school. The State Board of Education voted to stop average daily attendance calculations as of March 12th, 2020. While the reporting of absences and attendance is legally unnecessary, having accurate information is important and necessary for our records.
6. Other Resources for our School Community.
- a. CDC's [health communication resources](#)
 - b. CDC information on [stigma and COVID-19](#)
 - c. CDC information on [COVID-19 and children](#)
 - d. CDC offers several free handwashing resources that include [health promotion materials](#), information on [proper handwashing technique](#), and tips for families to help children develop good handwashing habits.
 - e. Other health and education professional organizations may also have helpful resources your school can use or share, such as the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#)[external icon](#)[external icon](#)
 - f. CDC's information on [helping children cope with emergencies](#)
 - g. [Stigma prevention and facts about COVID-19](#)

I apologize for the length of my communication as I often feel like I am writing short novels. T.S. Eliot referred to April as the "the cruelest month," but lets not forget Geoff Chaucer:

When that April with his showers soothe

When April with its sweet-smelling showers

The droghte of March hath perced to the roote,

Has pierced the drought of March to the root,

And bathed every veyne in swich licour

And bathed every vein (of the plants) in such liquid

Of which vertu engendred is the flour;

By the power of which the flower is created;

I will concede that this particular April, most of us may be feeling more on the T.S. Eliot side. Try to get outside in the fresh air if you can. I encourage you to check out our most recent Talk of TV and as always, be on the look-out for our uplifting faculty/staff video of the week.

Thank you for your unwavering support as we work together in support of every Owl. Here's to a very positive remainder of the week ahead.

Sincerely,

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