Dear Northstar Families:

These last few weeks have seen sweeping changes in education.  Like you, Northstar Academy has been working very hard to address all the many issues this pandemic has caused while still trying to meet the needs of our students, their families, our faculty and staff.  While we shared information briefly last week, I wanted to provide a more detailed update about our plans including distance learning and expectations for students.

**Updates to our Distance Learning Plan**:

**Week 3 and beyond** – As ordered by Governor Northam, our campuses will remain closed through the remainder of the academic year.  However, as I shared previously, beginning Monday, March 30, 2020, our online courses will become more robust to provide the required essential learning.  Teachers will enhance online academic services to include both review and new material. These lessons will become even more interactive with both online and offline work built into an updated daily schedule including Advisory.  Included in this new schedule is time for teachers to work one-on-one with students. We highly encourage you to schedule time with teachers so they can provide the assistance students will need. You can find a detailed copy of our [distance learning plan here](https://drive.google.com/file/d/17vK6kmmM6swN6_8Jevn-wvJJ5OKOPJQQ/view?usp=sharing).

Our transition to a more interactive virtual experience has been gradual to allow students to adjust this new, albeit temporary, normal in an online world of instruction.  That being said, we fully expect this plan will require flexibility and possibly some tweaks along the way.

**Related Services** – For our students who receive speech, OT, PT or other related services.  We are working with providers or the county to determine if they can be provided and how.

**Packets** – For now, please save those packets.  We are exploring several options for families to return those in the future (e.g. via mail, during a locker cleanout if allowed, dropping them off at school, etc.).

**Graduation** – We recognize this is an important time for our seniors.  First, guidance from the Virginia Department of Education outlines flexibility that will allow students to graduate on time if they are on track to graduate.  We are also holding our reservations at St. Michael’s Catholic Church for our Baccalaureate and Graduation ceremonies originally scheduled for June 11 and 12. We know this is an important event in the lives of our students and their families.   If necessary, we will explore posting those ceremonies to a later date.

As a reminder, we are still honoring spring break as regularly scheduled.  We know many families were already scheduled for time this week. While travel is not occurring right now, we want to honor this family time.  Also, these last 3 weeks have seen increased frustration and anxiety for families. We want families to have this break so they can, even if just for a short while, have one thing removed from their plate.

Finally, we have updated our website, [www.northstaracademy.net](http://www.northstaracademy.net/), with a page dedicated to Northstar’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic.   We encourage you to check the page often as updates will be posted there.

Thank you for your patience, understanding, and, most importantly, your partnership as we continue to navigate this difficult situation.  We look forward to a productive learning experience and are committed to providing a continuum of services for our students who need routine, reinforcement and *support.  Our incredible faculty and staff are working hard to do this!--*

*Thank you,*

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