

## Assalamu-Alaikum Universal Families,

The State Superintendent announced that beginning Tuesday, 3/31/20, school closure days moving forward will no longer be considered 'Act of God Days' but will become Remote Learning Days.

The biggest change that need to occur now that we are moving to a Remote Learning Plan and are not following the 'Act of God' Days is grading. Beginning Wednesday April 8th, students must submit work and will be provided with feedback/grades.

Middle School and High School have already been utilizing Google Classroom and are well on their way with Remote Learning. Elementary will be transitioning to Google Classroom this week. We will take it slow as parents and students learn the ins-and-outs of the platform. Students will receive their unique school emails this week and will practice logging in and uploading.

For consistency across grade levels, we are asking teachers to consider a few **key principles** as they plan their remote lessons, keeping in mind that their professional judgment and their knowledge of their students should drive their decisions.

- **Teach and communicate with compassion and flexibility.** This is perhaps most important as we know significant physical, emotional, and financial strain are new realities for our families.
- **Focus on core skills, not simply content coverage.** This means that while we are attempting to move students along with curriculum goals, we know that nothing fully replaces what is done in the classroom. Lessons will be pared down, along with time and product expectations for students. The goal here is quality over quantity.
- **Present lessons in a way that allows students access throughout the day.** For families, this means students can watch videoed lessons or complete assignments when it is most convenient for them and their parents. Remote learning may be more effective when students participate live with their teacher, but we know it may not be possible for every student to tune in on any given day or time. If students are unable to attend the live session, they can watch the video when it is more convenient for the family. At times, a teacher may want to also meet with small groups of students. In that case, if possible, it would be helpful if you can arrange for your child to have a computer device and quiet space available to them at the scheduled time. Do what works best for your family. These sessions work best if students are given the autonomy to learn, and parents keep in mind this is not an opportunity for a parent-teacher conference, especially since time is short and other teachers are present.
- **Assign "classwork" only, with no additional traditional "homework".** We know students take varying amounts of time to complete assignments, be it in class or at home. Teachers will adjust the quantity and type of work they are assigning as they assess student work and progress. Flexibility along with compassion for everyone's life situation is key for us. While we do need your help to provide encouragement and an environment conducive to learning in your home, we do not expect you to teach the course or curriculum.
- **Provide clear directions.** This is something we're learning day by day as we receive feedback from students and parents. If you have questions regarding the content, please email teachers, for questions regarding online platforms, please

email [remotelearningsupport@universalschool.org](mailto:remotelearningsupport@universalschool.org) and for questions regarding devices please email [itdept@universalschool.org](mailto:itdept@universalschool.org). And remember, don't panic if you don't receive an immediate answer; there's a five day re-do period after due dates. This [Google Classroom Training for Parents and Students](#) and the attached slides will be helpful to get started on Google Classroom.

May Allah swt keep you and your family healthy and safe,