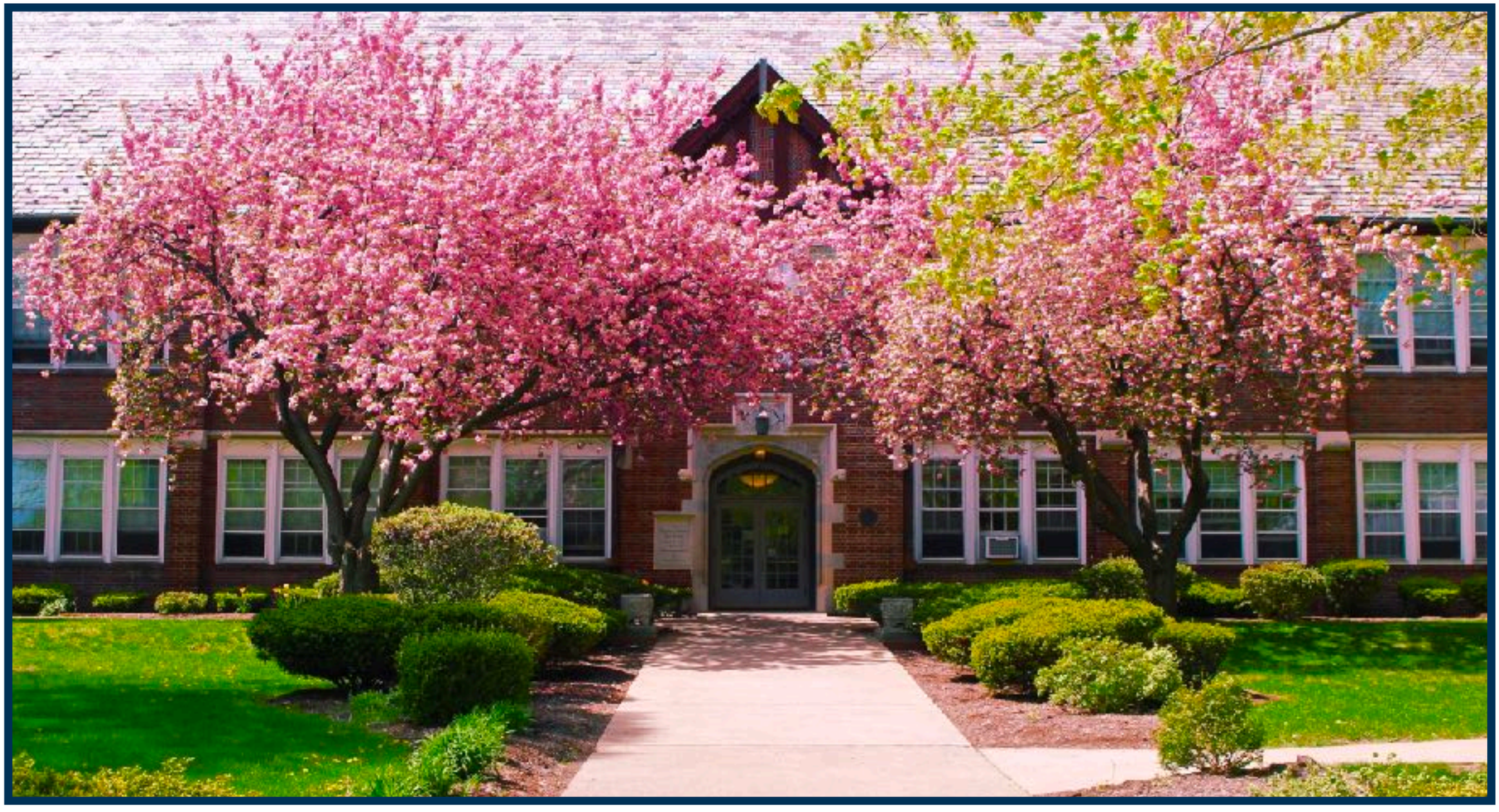
Virtual Learning Handbook

Wyoming Seminary Lower School



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Wyoming Seminary is grateful for the NAIS network. Some parts of this handbook were adapted from:

Greensboro Day School

The American School in Japan

Sidwell Friends

Introduction

Virtual Learning

In the event of a temporary campus closing, Wyoming Seminary may need to transition from on-campus learning to off-campus virtual learning for our students. During virtual learning Sem students will engage in daily, scheduled synchronous (real-time) and asynchronous (learning/sharing outside the constraints of time and place) learning. This type of learning involves using devices and platforms to continue learning when being on campus is not possible or when the school deems virtual learning is necessary. At the heart of our virtual learning plan is the relationships between community members. Virtual learning requires a unique partnership between Sem and our families. Flexibility, creativity, problem-solving, and communication are critical for successful learning experiences. Wyoming Seminary is committed to planning and implementing the best possible educational experience for our families during virtual learning.

> *"The students of the future will demand the learning support that is appropriate for their situation or context. Nothing more, nothing less."*
>
> Dr. Marcus Specht
> Professor of Advanced Learning Technologies
> Open University of Netherlands

Virtual Learning Approach

- Teaching and learning will continue, but it will look and feel different.
- Appropriate guidelines and expectations exist so that the virtual learning school day does not place students in front of screens too much. Suggested daily schedules for on/off screen time by grade will help support parents and caregivers.
- Consistent communication is a foundation for success.
- Methods of assessing students and communicating student progress will include conferences, video chats, traditional assignments, and more.
- Lessons will be recorded and made available when possible.

Virtual Learning Platforms

Platforms used for virtual learning will vary per grade level. Grade level teachers will contact their families with specific requirements. G Suite will continue to be an integral part of each student's learning.

Actively reading a novel on the iPad.

Introduction

Virtual Learning Platforms (continued)

- **Toddler-Preschool:** Students will not engage in virtual learning
- **PreK-Kindergarten:** Internet access, device (iPad preferred) for access to Internet, hands-on materials, and a space to work, play, and exercise
- **Grades 1-3:** Internet access, device (iPad preferred) for access to Internet, hands-on materials, and a space to work, play, and exercise
- **Grades 4-8**: Internet access, device for access to Internet, hands-on materials, and a space to work, play, and exercise

Contacts during Virtual Learning

Link to Faculty/Staff Directory

- *Head of School* -
Kevin Rea
krea@wyomingseminary.org
- *VP of Academic Affairs* -
Neil Cronin,
ncronin@wyomingseminary.org
- *Dean of Lower School* -
Kathleen Hanlon
khanlon@wyomingseminary.org
- *Lower School Counselor* -
Jess Montrella
jmontrella@wyomingseminary.org
- *Primary Learning Support* -
Lisa Bailey
lbailey@wyomingseminary.org
- *Middle School Learning Support* -
Jen Green
jgreen@wyomingseminary.org
- *Nurse* -
Carol Kollar
ckollar@wyomingseminary.org

Multi-media use helps students process information in different ways.

Wyoming Seminary Tech Help

The Wyoming Seminary Tech Team is available for faculty, students, and parents who need tech support related to virtual learning.

Please try the following steps before contacting the Tech Team:

1. Check to make sure that all necessary connections (USB, power, etc.) are plugged in properly.

Introduction

Wyoming Seminary Tech Help

(continued)

2. Run any updates.
3. Shut down, then power on the device that isn't working properly.

Students and parents needing tech assistance should fill out the tech help ticket form below:

🔗 Link to Help Ticket Form | Wyoming Seminary Tech Team

Faculty/Staff

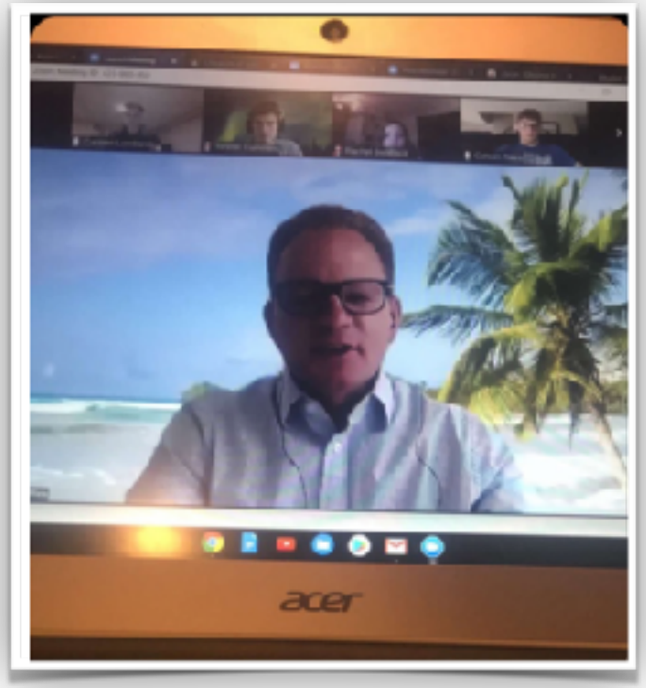
Faculty/Staff

Leadership Team

- Create, distribute, and update the virtual learning handbook.
- Establish clear channels of communications between faculty, staff, families, and students.
- Support faculty and students/families working in a virtual learning environment.
- Help teachers implement virtual learning and ensure high-quality learning experience for all students.

Classroom Teachers

- Attend school meetings, participate in professional development, and adjust curriculum for virtual learning.
- Set up virtual classrooms in appropriate platforms.
- Follow all recommended guidelines and best practices for technology used for instruction. This includes updating devices regularly, thoughtfully sharing links and passwords within the Sem community, and limiting Google classrooms and other virtual classroom spaces to students.
- Clearly define student expectations for synchronous and asynchronous learning:
  - Overview and practice with any digital platform that might be used.
  - Expectations for online behavior, including appropriate approaches (language, attire) to learning, participating in any breakout groups or online chats, etc.
  - Clarity about how performance will be assessed with online learning.
  - Expectations for makeup work if students cannot participate.
  - Encouragement to have a buddy in the class with whom they can connect in the event that they have tech/communication problems.



Wyoming Seminary's President Kevin Rea.

"Verum, Pulchrum, Bonum, - "The True, The Beautiful and The Good" - Sem's motto is a part of everything we do.

Faculty/Staff

Classroom Teachers (continued)

- Collaborate with other members of your team or department to design virtual learning experiences for students.
- Communicate frequently with students and, as needed, with their parents.
- Provide timely feedback to support student learning.
- Carefully document conversations with students and parents to ensure accurate record-keeping.
- Work with supervisors to review feedback about families' virtual learning experiences and make appropriate adjustments.
- Provide asynchronous learning for students if needed.
- Maintain established class schedules.
- Engage with students professionally as if teaching in a physical classroom (attire, language, setting, etc.).
- Keep gradebooks up-to-date (grades 5-8).
- Attend division, department, grade level, and full faculty meetings.
- Attend virtual assemblies with students in each division when scheduled.
- Hold "office hours" at the end of each day through Zoom (grades 4-8). Teachers may choose to make these open or by appointment.
- Utilize any workday time that isn't direct student contact time for planning, collaboration, curriculum work, assessment development, etc.
- Take attendance.

8th-Grade speeches are given through Zoom video conference.

Powerschool allows parents to see their students' progress at all times.

Staff and faculty are committed lifelong learners.

Faculty/Staff

Learning Support Teachers

- Support all teachers and teams in the implementation of virtual learning.
- Continue to offer support for students with learning plans and/or diagnosed learning differences.
- Support teachers in scaffolding or modify assignments for students to support subject or classroom teachers.
- Communicate regularly and continue to support subject or classroom teachers' efforts to differentiate lessons and activities for the students.
- Communicate regularly with students and their parents to help them have success with virtual learning, using Google calendar appointment slots.
- Provide supplementary learning activities for students who might benefit from additional practice to close academic and curricular gaps, or for students who need additional enrichment/challenge.
- Lead small groups online for study sessions and tutorials.

Teachers regularly participate in professional development.

Even teachers make time for their best friends!

Counselors

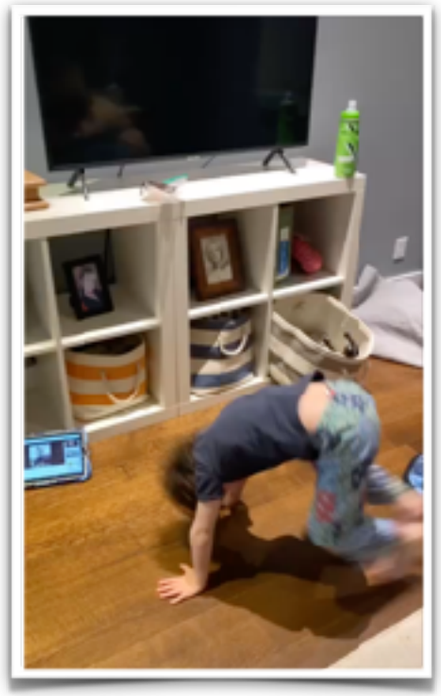
- Serve as liaison for communication with students and families in crisis.
- Maintain developmentally appropriate social-emotional resources.
- Host office hours at set times to access counseling by phone or FaceTime. Encourage employees, students, parents, and caregivers to schedule these meetings as needed.
- Support faculty with well-being tools, conversations, and collaboration.
- Support advisors and/or classroom teachers as needed with students who are absent or cannot participate.
- Lead small groups online for personal support.
- Facilitate weekly divisional parent support sessions.

Individualized attention is not lost during virtual learning.

Faculty/Staff

Specials Teachers

- Staying mindful of the resources and tools families may or may not have in their homes, develop a bank of projects and activities (including videos) for students, and share these with classroom teachers.
- Conduct face-to-face sessions (synchronous) class sessions at all grade levels.
- Collaborate with classroom teachers on how to integrate specialist areas into classroom projects and experiences.
- Use any non-student contact time to plan, develop curricula, collaborate, and support other areas of the school.



Technology can help students stay fit and active.

Classroom Aides

- Communicate regularly with classroom teachers to identify ways to support students and contribute to virtual learning.
- Monitor student learning and provide feedback to students as requested by the teachers.
- Participate in grade-level planning and division meetings.
- Use any non-student contact time to plan, develop curricula, collaborate, and support other areas of the school.
- Support students who are not able to attend class.

Building a community is still vital to who we are even when we go virtual.

Tech Support Team

- Manage a ticketing system for faculty, students, and parents.
- Review and develop how-to tutorials, ensuring teachers, students, and parents have the necessary tools and skills to excel in a virtual learning environment.
- Continually monitor the needs of teachers, students, and parents and troubleshoot their challenges, as needed.
- Be available in person or remotely to provide tech support help.

Parents/Caregivers

Wyoming Seminary understands that a shift to a virtual learning approach requires our students and families to make adjustments. Yet a continued partnership with parents and caregivers can play a vital part of ensuring the success of the plan. The dean, classroom teachers, learning support staff, and technology department are all available to support and guide students (and parents/caregivers). It is necessary to familiarize yourself with the student section to understand the expectations set for all learners. Below are some guidelines for parents/caregivers to help students achieve success with virtual learning.

Establish a Regular Schedule

It is important to establish a routine while learning from home:

- Begin with a regular bedtime and wake-up time each day.
- Build in breaks throughout the day, including nourishment and movement.
- Check in to encourage engagement throughout the day.
- Discuss the process of learning with your child and reach out to teachers if you feel they are struggling.
- Set home expectations about schoolwork.

Create a Study Space for Your Child

Productive learning relies on a conducive environment:

- Find a separate, quiet space for learning. Be mindful of noise and distractions.
- An open area will allow for monitoring and avoid an isolated feeling.
- The space will require room to work and a strong wireless internet connection.
- Tools for learning should be easily accessible.

Finding a distraction-free zone for learning is key to a success.

Parents can also model for their children.

Partnering with parents is a goal for all of our faculty.

Parents/Caregivers

Communication

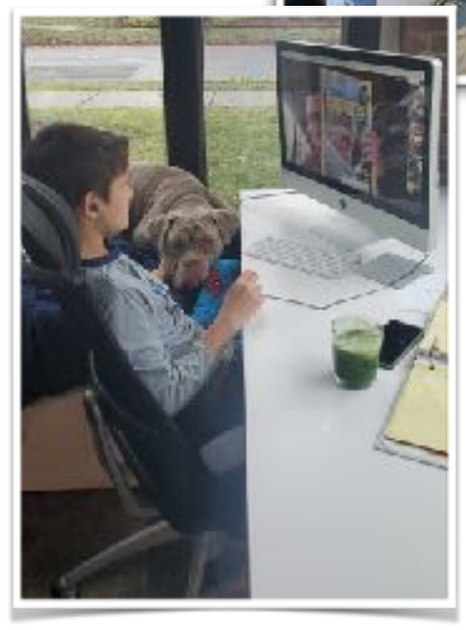
Your child's teachers, the dean, and other relevant learning support faculty/staff will maintain regular communication with parents/caregivers. The frequency of the communications will depend on your child's age, developmental stage, and level of independence. Please use email as your primary method of contact with teachers.

Encourage Independence

Be interested, but allow your child to take control of his/her learning:

- Stay engaged in your child's learning by asking questions at the end of the day.
- Encourage independence so they can take ownership of their own learning.
- Some productive struggle is essential to learning. Let children grapple with problems and come up with ideas for tackling them. Stepping in too quickly to help solve problems will deprive your child of the opportunity to learn, try new approaches, and gain greater independence and confidence.
- It is natural for you to help your children, but please allow them to participate in both synchronous and asynchronous school work on their own.
- Remember Zoom is their classroom where you would normally not be present.
- If your child becomes discouraged and/or overwhelmed by schoolwork, please reach out to your child's teacher.

When given the opportunity, students can really grow their independence as online learners.



Maintain Social Contact with Peers

It is very important for your child to stay in social contact with friends and peers during virtual learning periods. Encourage your child to interact with friends through other means if social distancing is required. When appropriate, students can form study groups created by their teachers or informal groups that they develop on their own.

Parents/Caregivers

Safety

The safety of our students is a priority. In order to create a safe environment, we recommend the following:

- Update devices regularly to ensure the safest experience.
- Links and passwords should remain within the Sem community.
- Only students will have access to Google Classroom and other learning management systems.

commonsensemedia.org

Wellness

Exercise is vital to maintaining physical and mental health, reducing stress and anxiety, and improving concentration and focus for more effective learning and retention.

- Monitor student stress levels.
- Reach out to the nurses or counselor for advice as needed.
- Consider unstructured, device-free, gross motor activities at home.

Time Management

Some students may need help with time management. It is important for parents to ensure that students are spending the appropriate amount of time on school work. Even if a student says that he or she is done with assignments, students should be actively working during the designated times to be certain they have met the specific expectations of each assignment.

Helpful Hint — Bandwidth

With the potential of multiple devices being used simultaneously in a home, bandwidth could be taxed. Please monitor so that students can have the best possible technology experience.

Students

In-school technology integration helps students to have a smooth transition to virtual learning.

Attendance

Families should email the homeroom teachers to report absences per regular expectations. Attendance will be taken in each class.

Grades

During the spring of 2020, Sem employed a "hold-harmless" approach to grading as our community adjusted to emergency online learning. If virtual learning is necessary during the 2020-2021 school year, students will be assessed and graded in all classes. Class grades and comments will be posted according to an announced schedule. Middle-school gradebooks will be open after the second week of each term.

Assessment

Teachers will design assessments that are appropriate for virtual learning.

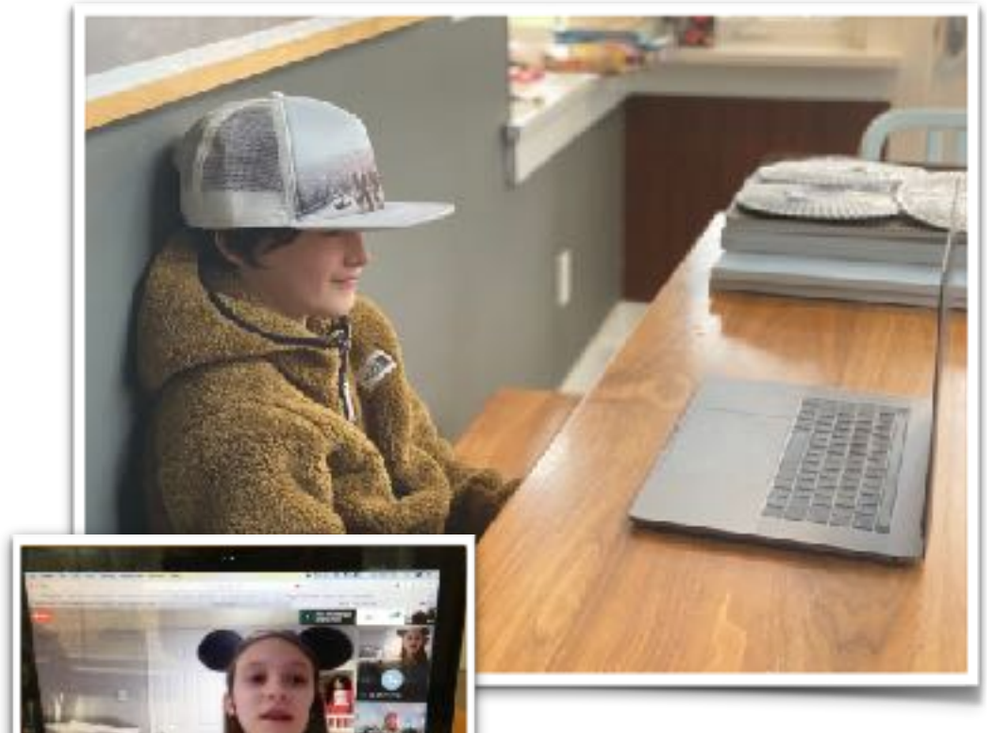
Engagement

- For best engagement practices, students will...
  - Be dressed appropriately and ready for school.
  - Be on time for scheduled synchronous meetings.
  - Be respectful to teachers and peers. Be aware of background noise.
  - Have an appropriate work space during synchronous meetings.
  - Be prepared with tools needed for class.
  - Respect expectations of individual teachers.

Students

Engagement (continued)

- During synchronous classes, student video must be turned on. Those who are distractions to others for any reason may be muted or may have their videos turned off.
- Teachers will not be able to assist with technology issues during synchronous meetings. Questions and concerns should be directed to the teacher after class or use IT support.



Community building "Hat Day" done through Zoom video.

Safety

Student safety is a priority at Sem. In order to create a safe environment, we recommend the following:

- Update devices regularly to ensure the safest experience.
- Links and passwords should remain within the Sem community.
- Only students will have access to Google Classroom and other learning management systems.

Honor Code

The Wyoming Seminary Honor Code and acceptable use policy apply to the virtual learning plan.

Using manipulative with technology helps students to solidify content information.

Sample Schedule: PreK & K

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9:00-9:30	Morning meeting in Zoom	Morning meeting in Zoom	Morning meeting in Zoom	Morning meeting in Zoom	Morning meeting in Zoom
9:30-10:15	Independent work in SeeSaw	Independent work in SeeSaw	Independent work in SeeSaw	Independent work in SeeSaw	Independent work in SeeSaw
10:15-10:45	Brain break	Brain break	Brain break	Brain break	Brain break
10:45-11:30	Independent work in SeeSaw	Independent work in SeeSaw	Independent work in SeeSaw	Independent work in SeeSaw	Independent work in SeeSaw
11:30-12:00	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:00-12:30	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess
12:30-1:15	Independent reading	Independent reading	Independent reading	Independent reading	Independent reading
1:15-2:00	Art	Physical education	Music	Dance	Library
2:00-2:30	Closing circle in Zoom	Closing circle in Zoom	Closing circle in Zoom	Closing circle in Zoom	Closing circle in Zoom

Sample Schedule: Grades 1 & 2

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9:00-9:45	Morning meeting & live math instruction in Zoom	Morning meeting & live math instruction in Zoom	Morning meeting & live math instruction in Zoom	Morning meeting & live math instruction in Zoom	Morning meeting & live math instruction in Zoom
9:45-10:15	Independent work	Independent work	Independent work	Independent work	Independent work
10:15-10:30	Brain break	Brain break	Brain break	Brain break	Brain break
10:30-11:30	Literacy instruction: whole group in Zoom	Literacy instruction: whole group in Zoom	Literacy instruction: whole group in Zoom	Literacy instruction: whole group in Zoom	Literacy instruction: whole group in Zoom
11:30-12:30	Lunch & free play	Lunch & free play	Lunch & free play	Lunch & free play	Lunch & free play
12:30-1:15	Physical education	Music	Dance	Library	Spanish/French
1:15-1:30	Brain break	Brain break	Brain break	Brain break	Brain break
1:30-2:00	Literacy instruction: small group in Zoom	Literacy instruction: small group in Zoom	Literacy instruction: small group in Zoom	Literacy instruction: small group in Zoom	Literacy instruction: small group in Zoom
2:00-2:30	Independent work	Independent work	Independent work	Independent work	Independent work
2:30-3:00	Closing circle in Zoom	Closing circle in Zoom	Closing circle in Zoom	Closing circle in Zoom	Closing circle in Zoom

Sample Schedule: Grades 3 & 4

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9:00-9:45	Live instruction period 1 in Zoom	Live instruction period 1 in Zoom	Live instruction period 1 in Zoom	Live instruction period 1 in Zoom	Live instruction period 1 in Zoom
9:45-10:15	Independent work	Independent work	Independent work	Independent work	Independent work
10:15-10:30	Brain break	Brain break	Brain break	Brain break	Brain break
10:30-11:30	Live instruction period 2 in Zoom	Live instruction period 2 in Zoom	Live instruction period 2 in Zoom	Live instruction period 2 in Zoom	Live instruction period 2 in Zoom
11:30-12:30	Lunch & free play	Lunch & free play	Lunch & free play	Lunch & free play	Lunch & free play
12:30-1:15	Spanish/French	Art	Physical education	Music	TBD
1:15-1:30	Brain break	Brain break	Brain break	Brain break	Brain break
1:30-2:15	Live instruction period 3 in Zoom	Live instruction period 3 in Zoom	Live instruction period 3 in Zoom	Live instruction period 3 in Zoom	Live instruction period 3 in Zoom
2:15-3:00	Independent work/ office hours in Zoom	Independent work/ office hours in Zoom	Independent work/ office hours in Zoom	Independent work/ office hours in Zoom	Independent work/ office hours in Zoom

Sample Schedule: Middle School

Please Note:

- Each class will have three meetings per week.
- For each class, at least two class meetings per week will be synchronous. Grade-level teams will coordinate.

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9:00-9:45	Spanish	Science	iPresent	Algebra B	Social Studies
9:55-10:40	iPresent	Algebra B	English	Latin	Science
10:50-11:35	English	Latin	Social Studies	Spanish	Algebra B
11:35-12:35	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:35-1:20	Social Studies	Spanish	Science	iPresent	Latin
1:30-2:15	Physical education	Independent work	Physical education	English	Speeches & assembly
2:15-3:00	Independent work/ office hours	Independent work/ office hours	Independent work/ office hours	Independent work/ office hours	