



WYOMING SEMINARY
founded 1844



Wyoming Seminary Virtual Learning Handbook



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VIRTUAL LEARNING

Sem may need to transition to virtual learning when face-to-face meeting is not possible. Virtual learning consists of synchronous (real-time) and asynchronous (self-scheduled) digital instruction. In the spring of 2020, Wyoming Seminary responded to emergency virtual learning by implementing a “hold-harmless” grading policy. This policy will not be continued during the 2020-2021 school year. As we prepare for a year that may include virtual learning, we are developing assessment practices, which will allow implementation of our traditional grading policy. At Wyoming Seminary, we believe that our virtual learning plan prioritizes learning and supports relationships in our community through partnerships with our families. Sem is committed to planning and implementing strong, interactive, and dynamic educational experiences.

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY

Whether teaching and learning in person or virtually, Wyoming Seminary holds true to its mission of ensuring a safe environment for all community members. Therefore, we believe it is necessary to highlight the meaning of Sem’s community and our community expectations as stated in the Wyoming Seminary’s Code of Conduct:

At Sem, we hold ourselves to high standards. We understand that other people matter. We respect others at all times, in all ways, on all platforms.

We strive for the ideals of honesty in action – we do not lie, cheat or steal. We want to be constructive, not destructive. We do not use drugs, alcohol or weapons. We do not degrade ourselves, each other, or our community. We respect boundaries, and we respect the law. We hold the safety of our community above all else, and we do not disregard laws for selfish pursuits.

We are a community of Blue Knights, bonded in our mission to become better versions of ourselves. With that in mind, we at Sem show up. We show up for class, we show up on stage, we show up for competition, and we show up to serve. Each time we show up, we represent our school culture. We hold dear the privilege it is to work and live together at Wyoming Seminary, and we honor our commitment to strive for the true, the beautiful, and the good.

If a community member feels unsafe or has a concern, please contact a teacher, advisor, or class dean.

VIRTUAL LEARNING APPROACH

- ❑ Our approach to virtual learning is grounded in the school's mission statement:
Within an exponentially changing world, Wyoming Seminary dares to teach our students to honor and strive for the true, the beautiful, and the good.

True:

- ❑ All community members are committed to following the Wyoming Seminary [Honor Code](#).
- ❑ Methods and content of assessment will be communicated in a timely, transparent, and appropriate manner.
- ❑ Communication between parents and the school is vital. Information will be consistent, practical, and easy to find.

Beautiful:

- ❑ According to the Wyoming Seminary Parent and Student Handbook, "As in any functional community, an atmosphere of cooperation, respect for self and for others and good judgment are essential for healthy operation. It is expected that Wyoming Seminary students, faculty, and staff make a good faith commitment to respectful, responsible, and honest standards of citizenship."
- ❑ All community members are expected to be engaged and participate fully whether on campus or in virtual learning.
- ❑ For students who cannot participate in synchronous class meetings, content will either be recorded or made available in an alternate format.

Good:

- ❑ Screen time will be used effectively and efficiently.
- ❑ Students will participate in community building events throughout the year, including but not limited to advisor meetings, assemblies, and class meetings.

- Sem is committed to a holistic approach to teaching and learning. As with on-campus learning, social/personal counseling and a supportive advisor system will continue to be available during virtual learning.

VIRTUAL LEARNING NEEDS

Platforms

Platforms used for Virtual Learning at the Upper School:

- Zoom
- My Sem/The portal
- Google Suite: Classroom, Docs, Sheets, Slides
- Others at teachers' discretion

Student will need:

- Internet access
- Laptop or Internet-capable device

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Faculty/Staff Directory

- ❑ President : Kevin Rea
 - ❑ Executive Assistant to the President: Nicole Brogan
- ❑ Vice President for Academic Affairs: Neil Cronin
- ❑ Dean of the Upper School: Tom Morris
 - ❑ Assistant to the Upper School Dean: Gloria Wallace
- ❑ Dean of Scheduling & Registrar: JoAnne Rossi
- ❑ Class Deans' Office:
 - ❑ Student Services Assistant: Alexandra Eidam
 - ❑ Class Dean, Class of 2021: Elizabeth Penland
 - ❑ Class Dean, Class of 2022: Rachel Bartron
 - ❑ Class Dean, Class of 2023: Mary Swaback
 - ❑ Class Dean, Class of 2024: Jessica Gensel
- ❑ Director of Health Services: Beth Blaum
- ❑ Director of Personal Counseling: Colleen Lewis
- ❑ Director of College Guidance: Jane Slaff
- ❑ Director of Library Services: Ivy Miller
- ❑ Director of Residential Life: Stephanie Heerschap
- ❑ Dorm Head, Carpenter Hall (grade 10-PG boys): Troy Edwards & Nick Fritz
- ❑ Dorm Head, Dart Hall (grade 9-10 boys): Kate Mercado
- ❑ Dorm Head, Swetland Hall (grade 9-12 girls): Morgan Penland & Rachel Garcia
- ❑ USPA Liaison: Rebecca Rosengrant

PARTNERSHIP: FACULTY/STAFF, PARENT/CAREGIVER, AND STUDENT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Virtual learning requires a unique partnership between Sem and its families. Flexibility, creativity, problem-solving, and communication are critical for successful virtual learning experiences.

Faculty/Staff

Senior Administration

- Communicate and update virtual learning standards.
- Support faculty and students/families in a virtual learning environment with available training and personal communication to ensure a high-quality learning experience.
- Maintain resources.

Class Deans/Department Chairs

- Maintain clear channels of communication among faculty, staff, families, and students.
- Maintain a safety net for students.
- Ensure all members of the community adhere to the code of conduct by maintaining the positive citizenship standards as laid out in the Parent/Student Handbook.

Classroom Teachers

- Participate in ongoing professional development about virtual learning.
- Establish and communicate Zoom expectations for students.
- Follow best practices for securing virtual classrooms.
- Serve as points of contact for families throughout the year in the role of advisor.
- Communicate frequently and provide timely feedback to support student learning.
- Work closely with the class dean and/or advisor to identify and address student issues as they arise and evaluate the need for intervention.

- Update Google Classroom with schedule of work and Zoom links by Sunday night at 5:00 p.m. EST/EDT
- Run synchronous or asynchronous classes during times designated in the schedule.
- Engage with students professionally as if teaching in a physical classroom.
- Keep PowerSchool gradebook updated in a timely fashion.
- Attend virtual assemblies and advisor meetings with students as scheduled.
- Provide Zoom links in Google Classroom/Calendar.
- Conference virtually.
- Maintain attendance records in PowerSchool.

Counselors

- Serve as liaison for communication with students and families in crisis.
- Maintain developmentally appropriate social-emotional and wellness resources.
- Host office hours at set times to access counseling services or consultation by phone or Google Meet. Students, parents, and caregivers are encouraged 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.

College Counselors

- Provide effective college counseling services to our student body, in order to help students find the optimal colleges where they can continue to thrive.
- Encourage students' self-exploration and self-advocacy that can guide them to make informed choices and present their accomplishments, talents, and potential.
- Advise students about their academic course schedules, their extracurricular profiles, and their individualized standardized testing plans.
- Remain engaged with students and their families, including individual meetings, communication of pertinent information, and original programming. Present opportunities for students to learn about tertiary institutions through college representative visits, virtual tours, and college fairs, webinars, and individual research.

- Connect with colleges and universities to understand the changing landscape of college admissions and to advocate for our students.
- Process all supporting documents for applications to colleges, scholarships, and summer programs.

Librarians

- Collaborate with colleagues to find resources for high-quality virtual learning experiences and research.
- Regularly check in with subject and classroom teachers to identify ways to support their design of virtual learning experiences.
- Maintain and update online library site for obtaining resources.
- Be available for teachers and students as needed for support.

Information Technology (IT)

The Wyoming Seminary IT Team is available for tech support related to virtual learning.

Please try the following steps before contacting the Tech Team:

- Check to make sure that all necessary connections (USB, power, etc.) are plugged in properly.
- Run any updates.
- Shut down, then power on the device that isn't working properly.

Tech Help:

Students and parents needing tech assistance should fill out the [tech help ticket form](#).

 **Help Ticket Form | Wyoming Seminary Tech Team**

PARENTS/CAREGIVERS AND FAMILIES

Wyoming Seminary understands that a shift to a virtual learning approach will require our students and families to make adjustments. A continued *partnership* with parents (and caregivers) can play a vital part in ensuring the success of the plan. Faculty and staff are available to support and guide students and parents should they need help. Below are some suggestions for parents to help students achieve success with virtual learning.

Help the Student Stay Engaged with Learning

During periods of virtual learning, it will be important for students to establish and maintain a *routine around the school day schedule*, beginning with a *regular bedtime and wake-up time each day*. This structure will help the student retain a sense of normalcy and stay engaged in learning.

Some suggestions:

- Take Breaks - Encourage the student to stand up and move around so they are not remaining sedentary throughout the day.
- Check-in - If possible, parents should check in at regular intervals to ensure that the student is successfully engaging in virtual learning.
- Self Advocate - The student should be encouraged to reach out to their teacher, advisor, or class dean to advocate for themselves. However, if you observe the student struggling emotionally or academically please reach out to a teacher, counselor, advisor, or class dean.

Establish a Home Learning Environment

Productive learning relies on a conducive environment. While we realize that this may be a challenge, we suggest a **separate, quiet space** during synchronous learning (via Zoom or Meet). The room with the **strongest internet connection** is preferable. When working asynchronously, an open area in the family living space may work better for some students.

Maintain Communication

Sem expects students to initiate and maintain regular communication with their teachers and advisor. Please check in with them to make sure that they are communicating effectively. If you have any questions, please reach out via email to the teacher, advisor, or class dean.

Attendance

For the best learning outcomes, attendance is expected at regular synchronous classes. The parent must contact the school (Assistant to Student Services) for a student to be excused from a class. The student should also notify the teacher(s) as soon as possible. If there are consistent connectivity issues, the parent should contact the class dean. Attendance issues will be addressed by the class dean.

Encourage Independence and Allow for Productive Struggle

Stay engaged in your student's learning by asking them questions and having them share their thoughts while *encouraging their independence* so they can take ownership of their own learning. Some *productive struggle is essential* to learning, so we ask that parents allow their students to grapple with problems and come up with ideas for tackling them. Stepping in too quickly to help solve problems will deprive the student of the opportunity to learn, try new approaches, and gain greater independence and confidence. If the student repeatedly becomes discouraged and/or overwhelmed by schoolwork, the student should contact their teacher, advisor, or class dean. However, if you observe the student struggling to communicate please reach out to a teacher, counselor, advisor, or class dean.

Help the Student Maintain Social Contact with Peers

It will be very important for the student to stay in social contact (through virtual means) with their friends and peers during periods of virtual learning. Encourage the student to interact with friends through Facetime/Google Meet or through phone conversations if social distancing is required. They can form study groups or informal groups that they develop on their own. Maintaining social interactions, such as in virtual lunch groups and involvement in school clubs and organizations, will help the student *stay connected* and feel a part of the Sem community.

Wellness: Encourage Physical Activity and Movement and Monitor Student Stress

The health and wellness of students is important. Physical movement and exercise are vital to maintaining physical and mental health, reducing stress and anxiety, and improving concentration and focus for more effective learning and retention. Parents should *monitor student stress levels* and reach out to the school counselor, advisor, or class dean for advice as needed.

Time Management

During certain times in the virtual learning schedule, some students may need help with time management. Teachers, advisors, and class deans are available to assist, but it is also important for parents to *ensure that students are using their time effectively on school work*. Even if a student says that he or she is finished with assignments, it may also be valuable for them to meet with teachers, study with peers, or prepare/review for future work. Students should be actively working throughout their school day or during scheduled bell times.

Bandwidth

With the potential of multiple devices being used simultaneously in a home, bandwidth could be taxed. To help with these issues, it is recommended that streaming or playing video games is avoided if multiple devices are being used. It is also important for teachers to know if there is an issue with bandwidth or internet connection.

STUDENTS

Virtual learning is different from on-campus learning and requires more student responsibility and independence. Students should develop a system for determining the work required for each class and a plan to complete that work in a timely manner. Although we are online, your support systems remain in place. Please continue to conference with your teacher or work with your advisor or class dean if you need additional support to manage virtual learning. Your Sem community is here to help – please reach out.

Attendance and Engagement

Synchronous - For the best learning outcomes, attendance is expected at synchronous classes. For a student to be excused from a class, a parent must contact the school (Assistant to Student Services). The student should also notify the teacher(s) as soon as possible. If there are **consistent** connectivity issues, the parent should contact the class dean. Attendance issues will be addressed by the class dean.

Asynchronous - The timely completion of asynchronous work, based on teacher requirements, is an important part of evaluating student engagement. If there is an assignment in place of synchronous learning, that assignment is critical to the completion of the course and will be used as a system of evaluating engagement.

Daily Responsibilities

- Check email and Google Classroom daily.
- Follow the [bell schedule](#).
- Attend all synchronous classes.
 - Follow general [Zoom etiquette](#). Additional expectations may be conveyed to you by your teacher.
 - Report any attendance or connection issues to your teacher.
 - Communicate with your teacher for missed work if you are absent from class.
 - Complete all asynchronous assignments in the time specified by your teacher.
- Communicate questions or concerns with teachers as soon as possible.

Zoom Class Behavior & Etiquette

These are general expectations. Please follow any additional instructions from your teacher.

- Be sure to have your device charged.
- Limit distractions by choosing a quiet place when tuning in.
- Dress appropriately for online classes. All students are expected to adhere to Sem's expectations for dress down day attire at a MINIMUM.
- Your video should be on and your face visible for class. If there are consistent connectivity issues, your parents must contact the class dean.
- Pay attention to the speaker.
- Be patient and respectful just as in an on-campus classroom.
- When you are talking, look into the camera and speak loudly and clearly.
- When you are not talking, mute your microphone unless otherwise instructed.

Honor Code and Responsible Use

The Wyoming Seminary [Honor Code](#) and [Acceptable Use Policy](#) apply to on-campus and virtual learning.

Grades

During the 2020-21 school year, Wyoming Seminary will be issuing grades for all students in line with our traditional grading policies. The following sections provide an overview of Wyoming Seminary's expectations for communication about grading and posting of assignments for students, parents, faculty, and administration.

PowerSchool Expectations for Teachers/Advisors:

- Parent contacts will include an email address. This will be updated by class deans/administrative assistant.
- Meeting attendance will be taken and recorded in PowerSchool. This is monitored by class deans and the advisor and follows the attendance policy of [the school handbook](#).
- Community service - [Community Service Forms](#) should be submitted to and recorded by the class deans/administrative assistant.

- Community Service hours can be checked in PowerSchool; click the backpack, select Community Service from the drop-down menu on the right.
- Quick Lookup - when clicking on the grade, students, advisor, and parents can see assignments, graded work, missing work, and comments when entered.
- Teacher comments - shows comments given at the end of each marking period (F1, F2, W1...)

PowerTeacher Class Expectations:

- Class Description - the grade calculation (weighing, standards-based, total points) should be entered here at the start of the class (year or term).
- Attendance will be updated for each class meeting and reflect late arrivals.
- PowerSchool will open after the second week of the term and remain open for the majority of the term.
- Grades should be updated every week by Sunday night by 5:00 p.m. EST/EDT. Assignments collected but not graded should be labeled as missing or late. Larger assignments will be graded and returned within a seven-day cycle.
- PowerSchool will close at the beginning and end of a term to allow teachers time and space to finish grades.
- Both the frequency and the variety of assessments should be appropriate for the grade level and the class content. Regular feedback will allow students to monitor their progress in the course.

PowerSchool and PowerTeacher Trainings:

- Parents:
 - Are encouraged to check PowerSchool once a week; we suggest Mondays after courses have been updated.
 - Will learn how to access the grades and check on assignments through PowerSchool with help sessions and shared tutorials from the school.
 - Should understand that grades are a snapshot but constantly evolving. Trends are important. If there is a problem, talk about it with your student and encourage the student to engage in conversation with the teacher directly.

- Teachers:
 - Use the comments feature to give updates on student’s work and progress. These updates can include noteworthy assignments, projects, concerns about mastery, or completion of work.
 - Pursue professional development on types of grading and what it looks like in PowerSchool; include category weighing, total points, standards-based learning.

Google Classroom Expectations:

- All classes must use Google Classroom for the delivery of content and engagement with the class and students.
 - For students enrolled in the Alternative Learners Program (ALP), Mary Lou Clemente should be added as a guardian. She will contact the teacher directly.
 - Grant Department Chair and VP of Academic Affairs teacher status.
 - Label each class: Class (trimester if needed) bell teacher i.e. “Bible F5 Latcham”
- The week in review should be uploaded by Sunday night at 5:00 p.m. EST/EDT.
 - Includes an overview of the expected work for the week.
 - Includes Zoom links and times.
- There must be clear and consistent structure to the organization of your classroom. Use topics and subtopics.
 - By week
 - By unit
 - By topic
 - By type of assignment/work
- Assignments should be graded within a seven-day cycle and all grades should be transferred to PowerSchool by Monday morning.

Assessments

Teachers will design assessments that are appropriate for the virtual, on campus or hybrid learning settings and for their subject.

