April 24, 2020

Dear DV Families,

In today's Friday message, I will address a number of topics, from last week's survey of your feedback on Distance DV 2.0, to some thoughts on the 2020-21 school year, to the coming week's parent coffee series.

Distance DV 2.0 Parents/Guardians, Students, and Faculty Surveys
Many thanks to everyone who provided feedback regarding how Distance DV 2.0 is serving students. With several weeks of online learning still ahead of us, it has been reassuring to receive the simply overwhelming affirmations of our faculty's dedication to their students' learning and to maintaining our critically-important connections. The feedback across all three groups revealed that we are on the right track with the program and helped us decide to stay the course for now. One modest change, which only applies to Upper School, is that the second advisory session of the day will now occur immediately after third period, at 12:05. Lunch will then begin at 12:20. There was also a small number of middle and upper school parents who asked for additional afternoon learning opportunities for students, and we are currently looking into independent study options to address this request.

Planning for the 2020-21 School Year
While the school has been working hard to ensure the best possible experience for our students for the remainder of this school year, we have also turned our attention to 2020-21. Navigating a pandemic and the resulting measures to protect society is new territory for all of us and there is no clear roadmap. We do not know what the next school year will bring, but we are looking to examples of other nations that have begun to gradually "reopen" and toward guidance put out by leaders across our country. When we have more details to share, we will update families on what to expect. For the present, we are scenario-planning for a range of possibilities including, but not limited to:

- A return to our school building in the fall with social distancing and/or other protective guidelines put in place by health and/or governmental authorities. These restrictions might include modifications to our furniture layout, mandated indoor traffic flows, increased cleaning throughout the day, staggered attendance times and days, restrictions on group congregations, vigilant health screening, and other measures.
- Periods of entering and exiting Distance DV for days, weeks, or longer depending on the overall health guidelines within our state and the nation
- Minor to moderate modification of the school calendar, impacting individual days or weeks.

The one thing that we can be reasonably sure of is that our daily lives will continue to be impacted in small and larger ways while COVID-19 remains a concern. DVFriends is committed to keeping our entire community connected and healthy to the very best of our ability and we will work tirelessly to do so. That is our promise to our families and our employees.

As you know, returning DV families were issued re-enrollment contracts earlier this year and we are actively planning for the start of the next school year based on those contracts. With the knowledge that it is unlikely for our society to simply return to business as usual, but with a better understanding of what the future might bring, I encourage families to fully review their obligations under their enrollment agreement before May 1. DV will continue to offer the best possible educational and community experience for its students in the coming year whether we are operating from our campus or remotely. If you have any concerns or wish to discuss these ramifications further, please do not hesitate to reach out to your division leaders, David Calamaro, Justin Wheeler, me, or any other senior DV administrator. We are all in this together and we will come through the challenges stronger if we partner and communicate whenever necessary.
Upcoming Parent/Guardian Coffees

I want to share two important opportunities for all DV parents and guardians. Triangle Associates, the consulting firm which has been supporting the Board of Trustees in its strategic planning process, have generously offered to host two parent coffees in the coming week. They have already facilitated valuable discussions among our faculty about the experience of teaching and supporting students during the current crisis and they will do the same for parents. If you are interested in joining one of the coffees, RSVP to Judy Sheridan (judy.sheridan@dvfs.org) prior to the date of each event. Judy will send a Zoom link to all registrants ahead of time. The division-specific dates are:

Upper School Parents/Guardians
Wednesday, April 29 from 4:30 to 5:30

Lower and Middle School Parents/Guardians
Thursday, April 30 from 4:30 to 5:30

Finally, please remember that Monday, April 27 is a day of student, parent, and advisor conferences for Middle and Upper Schools, so classes for those divisions will not meet that day. If you have not already scheduled your conference, please reach out immediately to your student's advisor. Because Lower School already held spring conferences, Monday will be a regular class day for that division.

I wish everyone a restful, safe, and enjoyable weekend.

In Friendship

Kirk Smothers
Head of School

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