



ST. MARY'S DOMINICAN HIGH SCHOOL

7701 WALMSLEY AVENUE | NEW ORLEANS, LA 70125

(PHONE) 504.865.9401 | (FAX) 504.866.5958 | WWW.STMARYSDOMINICAN.ORG

2020-2021 Home Learning Only Students

August 14, 2020

Dear students and parents,

On behalf of St. Mary's Dominican High School, I would like to welcome you to the 2020-2021 school year. Much effort has gone into ensuring that your daughter's virtual home learning experience will provide the same high-quality education that you have come to expect from St. Mary's Dominican High School. Home learning this year will be different than last year's fourth quarter experience. Your daughter will have live classes, class period accountability, and opportunity for virtual live interaction with her teachers. This letter serves to give you an outline for our home learning program planned for the start of this year. I would like to stress that just as we are doing for our students involved in the Hybrid Learning Environment, we will be assessing this program every two weeks and making adjustments administration determines are necessary. We appreciate your patience as we expect there will be challenges that arise once we start school. While we anticipate these challenges, we are also preparing to meet those challenges as they arise. You and your daughter should be prepared for bumps in the road and to be prepared to overcome them in partnership with us.

Attending Classes

By now, you should have received the COVID-19 class schedule. This is the schedule you should follow while participating in home learning. Prior to the start of her class, your daughter will receive invitations to each of her class meetings via TEAMS and her St. Mary's Dominican High School email. For the start of each class, your daughter will open the TEAMS app and click on the calendar located to the left of the screen. From there she will locate the day's date, accept the invitation for that class, and join the class meeting. These steps will take your daughter to her virtual classroom where she will see her teacher in the classroom and the screens of classmates participating in home learning for the day.

While in her virtual classroom, your daughter will be able to see her teacher and hear her teacher's instruction. Her teacher will be able to share screen, meaning whatever her classmates in the physical classroom can see on the Smartboard or screen in the classroom, she will be able to see. She should be able to hear questions and discussions from in-class students. She can participate by sending questions and comments to her teacher through the chat feature of TEAMS or with the permission of her teacher, unmuting her microphone so that she can ask/answer questions or comment on discussion. Your daughter is required to turn on her camera and keep it on unless otherwise directed by her teacher. It is important that she appears in the camera's frame during the duration of class. Failure to keep the camera on while engaged in the class meeting can result in your daughter being counted absent. Microsoft has released updates to their software that allow teachers to track dates and times that a student is virtually present in a class TEAMS page. Teachers will be able to tell if and how long a student's device is active in a TEAMS activity.

There may be days, the number of which will depend on the course and the teacher, when your daughter will join her class, receive an assignment, leave the class meeting at the teacher's request for her to complete the assignment, and then submit the assignment by the end of class. On these days, your daughter will have access to her teacher if she has questions via the chat feature, the discussion feature, or the capability to rejoin the meeting to have a conversation. The assignment due at the end of class may or may not be assigned credit. Regardless, your daughter must submit the assignment so that she will be counted present in the class for the entirety of the class and not be counted as signing out early (an absence).

Attire/Background

Home learning students do not need to wear their school uniforms if they do not wish, but they must wear appropriate attire as defined by the Student Parent Handbook. Additionally, students should choose an appropriate background. There are several virtual backgrounds available for students to choose in TEAMS meetings. Please note that a virtual background requires the absence of background movement. The benefit of choosing one of these backgrounds is that your family is afforded some privacy while your daughter is engaged in her classes and background movement does not become a distraction for others who are also learning from home.

Attendance Requirements

The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) has not changed the attendance requirements for students this year. As a result, daily attendance, even virtually, is required. Any student who exceeds the maximum amount of absences, as defined by the LDOE, will be required to make up class time. Attendance for all students, hybrid or home learning only, will be taken every period of the school day.

If a distance learning student will not be attending classes for any reason, her parents/guardians must call the Attendance Office, (504)861-8026. If a student joins her class meeting after the start of class, she will be marked tardy.

Assignments/Assessments

Assignments are to be submitted per the teacher's instructions. Missing or late assignments are subject to the penalties listed on the assignment rubric or the teacher's policy sheet.

Major assessments (tests, projects, and papers) for home learning only students may be in a different format than those taken or submitted by students who are participating in the hybrid learning environment.

Make-up Tests

Home learning only students who miss a test for an excused absence must make up their test virtually during the regular Saturday make-up session, beginning at 8:00 a.m. Failure to make up a test at the designated scheduled time will result in penalties outlined in the Student-Parent Handbook.

Details for making up a virtual test will be given to a student by her teacher when she schedules the make-up test.

Technology

St. Mary's Dominican High School is not responsible for the quality of internet service or bandwidth available to a student at her home. Inadequate internet access or connectivity will not be considered a valid reason for missing class time or not submitting work or assessments on time.

St. Mary's Dominican High School does not repair or replace student devices. It is the student's responsibility to maintain her device in good working order. In the case that a student must send her device for repairs, it is expected that she will have access to another device that is compatible with Microsoft 365 and its related applications.

If a student experiences problems with Microsoft 365 or its applications, she and/or her parents/guardians may schedule an appointment, either virtual or on campus, with a member of the Dominican Information Technology staff.

We strongly encourage students and parents to read and keep at hand the Troubleshooting Guide that is forthcoming.

I would like to reiterate that we expect that there will be problems that arise with this new mode of learning; however, with your patience and partnership, we expect to be able to overcome these problems and meet the challenge of home learning.

Sincerely,



Mrs. Jennifer Drouant, O.P.
Academic Assistant Principal
St. Mary's Dominican High School