The Family Guide to Gateway’s Virtual Campus
2020-2021 School Year

The Family Guide to Gateway’s Virtual Campus is designed to create a framework and shared understanding of our distance-based teaching and learning program. Each grade, classroom, and topic will have its own unique opportunities and challenges. This guide will hopefully provide the necessary resources to meet the needs of our students and families. This guide is not intended to answer every question or account for every scenario. This is a working document that will be updated regularly as we adjust to the ongoing experience of teaching and learning in a physically distanced context.
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Welcome to the 2020-21 school year

Today's context is unlike anything we've ever lived through before. Our children are leaning on us and learning from us in new ways. Our Virtual Campus program is designed with your children's best interests at heart; their academic, emotional, and social lives are our priority.

Our Virtual Campus program is based on a few key principles:
- Emotional safety and wellness is as important as ever
- Focus teaching and learning on essential knowledge and skills
- The roles of teachers and caregivers change in the virtual context
- Keep it simple

Our goals for distance learning are to maintain the integrity and continuity of our academic and specialist programs and to build the sense of connection that makes Gateway’s community unique and beloved.

We recognize that learning remotely requires students to develop new skills and ways of thinking. This model may present challenges for students as they make the transition. Teachers will honor student accommodation plans to the greatest extent possible and will remain attentive to student feedback about workload and deadlines. We encourage families to contact teachers directly if they need additional guidance or support. Because of the unique nature of distance learning and the uncertainty around the duration of this closure, we all need to remain engaged, flexible, and compassionate.

The teaching and learning that happens on campus cannot simply be replicated while in Virtual Campus mode; in particular, the invaluable social interactions that occur naturally among students and between teachers and students. Teachers must use new methods for providing timely and specific feedback to support student growth and learning.

Gateway deliberately uses the term Virtual Campus to reflect our view that quality learning can occur at a remote location, while still conveying the importance of the social component of learning that comes from gathering together (i.e. at a campus). We aim for students to engage in authentic learning experiences both online and offline. Gateway’s shift to a Virtual Campus begins with the consideration of how we can intentionally align remote learning experiences with our Mission and Vision, which gives teachers permission to think differently about the opportunities and possibilities that may result from the current challenging circumstances.

Our mission: to inspire children to lead lives of purpose and compassion through scholarship and citizenship

Our vision: a dynamic and intellectually challenging educational environment rooted in Progressive philosophy and reflective of evolving research
As our teachers reflect on how to best design or redesign their units and lessons, they have considered the following questions among many others:

- How can I leverage digital platforms to provide learning experiences rich in engagement, social interaction, and feedback?
- Which of the key understandings, skills, and habits of learning in our curriculum are transferable to a remote experience?
- How can I help my students construct their own understandings?
- Where might my students’ curiosity and motivation open other new possibilities?
- How can I design learning experiences that address the needs of different types of learners who need different kinds of support and guidance?
- How will I assess student learning in meaningful ways?
- How can I help my students manage the worry, fear, or isolation they may be experiencing as a result of this situation?
Glossary of Terms

Virtual Campus: Gateway’s academic and specialist programs delivered remotely.

Asynchronous: Learning experiences that are completed independently.

Synchronous: Learning in which participants interact at the same time and in the same virtual space.

Flex Time: This time is to be determined by the teacher. Some days it may be used for asynchronous learning, other days it may be used for one-on-one, small group, or even whole-class meetings. Teachers will be explicit with students about the purpose of flex times each morning.

Respectable Use Policy (RUP): This document lays out student expectations for responsible and appropriate use of Gateway technology.
**Technology Use**

Students are expected to follow our Respectable Use Policy (RUP), which is signed at the beginning of the year. Please contact the Main Office if you have questions about the RUP.

Gateway uses a variety of online tools and platforms regardless of whether it is in Virtual Campus mode or on campus at 255 Swift Street.

**Blackbaud:** A Learning Management System (LMS) that allows us to track attendance, post grades and create progress reports.

**Zoom:** A video conferencing tool that allows teachers and students to hold interactive and live class sessions online.

**Google Classroom:** A web service that allows teachers to create, distribute, and grade assignments. The primary purpose of Google Classroom is to streamline the process of sharing files between teachers and students.

**Google Suite:** A collection of online applications for email (Gmail), documents (Google Docs), presentations (Google Slides), file storage (Google Drive), and other productivity tools.

**Google Hangouts:** An application that allows students to work collaboratively with peers, or get in touch with their teacher.

**Chrome:** This is the preferred browser for all students, as it integrates most smoothly with our use of other Google products. Students must be logged into their school account for fully integrated functionality.

**YouTube:** A platform for hosting teacher-created videos that supports large-format files. We will use Youtube to create an archive that can be rewatched.

**Other online resources:** The school has access to various online resources that may be used by teachers, and may use a number of different applications to provide distance and hybrid learning. A partial list includes the following:
- Flipgrid: a video message board
- EdPuzzle: an interactive video and formative assessment tool
- Educreations: an interactive whiteboard
- Nearpod: a flexible, multimedia student engagement platform
- Kahoot: a user-generated, multiple-choice quiz game
- Quizlet: a flashcard and study application
- A range of curriculum-based platforms (Bridges Math, College Preparatory Math, etc.)
**Access to technology:** We know that having the right technology is essential to the success of your child's learning while in Virtual Campus mode. This is why Gateway School is providing:

1. A Chromebook, Mac laptop, or iPad to every student
2. Appropriate software installed and ready to use
3. Trainings on Google Classroom for students and families
4. Study skills classes to students in grades 4-8 to aid in their successful use of technology tools, and in order to promote their learning at a distance.

We also understand that having a good internet connection can be a challenge, and that your family might have other individualized technology needs. Please contact Jeremy King, Director of Technology, at <jeremy.king@gatewaysc.org> if you have any questions about technology to support our program.
Pods and Learning Groups

Some families are choosing to form “pods” with other families in order to provide child care, learning support, and social experiences for their children.

While we understand the needs and desires leading to the choices to make pods, Gateway will not do any of the following regarding pods:

- facilitate their creation
- supervise or regulate the participation of students or families
- use them to create class, small group, or partner groupings
- alter the school curriculum or program in order to accommodate their schedules
- provide supplemental worksheets, materials, or curriculum

Just as we are always happy to discuss the ongoing curriculum with families, tutors, and educational support providers, we are happy to provide check-ins for pod organizers to review the knowledge and skills we are working on in our curriculum.

We hope that as families organize pods, they consider both the school day schedule and the impact that pods can have on our classroom communities. We encourage families to minimize conflicts between daily class schedules and pod hours, and to have students participate in class individually rather than as a group on a single computer.
Policies and Expectations

General Guidelines

Our goal is to create an online environment that allows students to engage successfully, interact safely and respectfully, and experience the dynamic and responsive teaching that Gateway faculty provide.

- Student cameras should be on as much as possible. We recognize that there are times when a student or family may wish to have a camera turned off.
- Students should be sitting up (not lying down) when on camera.
- Students should follow teacher directions about using the chat and microphone.
- Students should make every effort to be prepared and ready to go at the start of class. This means eating breakfast and other morning routines should be completed before class begins.
- Students should give their best effort during learning times, just as they would on campus.
- Students should adhere to the dress code policy as stated in the Family Handbook.
- Students and caregivers should actively communicate with teachers if they need assistance of any kind.

Attendance

Attendance will be taken daily during morning meetings in grades K-5, and during each class period in grades 6-8.

We know that life happens. Our community is not the same without your child’s presence. So if your child can’t attend, let us know as soon as you are able to so that we don’t worry. Please contact both the front office and your child(ren)’s teacher directly if your child will be absent.

Teachers will work directly with students and families to determine any make-up assignments or learning activities. Our goal will continue to focus on student growth and learning, which requires some amount of work production in balance with the emotional lives of children.

Assessment and Grading

Authentic assessment is a crucial component of the design of our instructional program. In remote instruction, timely and purposeful feedback is essential for student growth. Our program uses a wide variety of tools and techniques including tests and quizzes, public presentations and exhibitions of learning, portfolios of student work, rubrics and similar process-based assessments, guided peer and self-assessments, and of course individual conversation and direct observation by teachers. This rich array of approaches will be modified for appropriate implementation in our Virtual Campus mode based on the grade, content, and skill.
We will continue to provide grades on summative (final) assessments and semester-end progress reports in our Middle School while in Virtual Campus mode. We do not give grades at other times. Please see the Family Handbook for more information.

**Behavior**

Our approach is sometimes called 4-R: Reinforce, Remind, Redirect, Reprimand. We know that student behaviors always have a "why" behind them. As adults, we have a choice in how we respond, and our goal is to address the underlying issues rather than the surface-level symptoms in disruptive or unexpected behavior. By using a scaffolded approach that helps students think meta-cognitively about their behavior, we are able to surface the unaddressed need or belief, and address that, rather than simply responding to the misbehavior. Faculty have the unique opportunity to get to know students and families very well at Gateway, and this relationship is the basis for meeting student’s needs. Please see the Family Handbook for more information.

**Cell phones**

Just like during our On Campus program, cell phones are not permitted during class in our Virtual Campus. Phones should be “off and away” which means both turned off and out of reach when a child is in class (on campus, this means in a child’s backpack or locker, not their pocket). We rely on children to be self-disciplined about this.

**Mental and Emotional Health**

We are living through a turbulent and complex situation that is having a profound effect on the mental health experiences of children and adults around the world. We need to stay aware of how new traumas may be formed as children navigate this unusual time, and their exposure to adults trying to manage their own emotions or shifting economic and family health situations, as well as through consumption of world news. In long-lasting, high-stress situations, past traumas may also surface, adding a new layer of complexity.

Responding to anxious children is a particular challenge for many parents and caregivers. We encourage you to read the short article [What to Do (and Not Do) When Children are Anxious](#), which has 10 specific suggestions for how to respond.

If you see any behavioral signs in your child that concern you, including but not limited to lethargy, disrupted sleep, loss of appetite, or increased emotional volatility, please contact your child’s teacher or Middle School advisor, or Hannah Wikse, Assistant Head of School, for support.
**Student Roles and Responsibilities**

- Establish daily routines for engaging in the learning experiences.
- Identify a comfortable, quiet space in your home where you can work effectively and successfully.
- Regularly monitor online platforms for announcements and/or feedback.
- Complete assignments with integrity and academic honesty, doing your best work.
- Do your best to meet timelines, commitments, and due dates.
- Communicate proactively with your teachers if you cannot meet deadlines or require additional support.
- Collaborate and support your Gateway peers in their learning.
- Comply with Gateway’s Family Handbook and Technology Responsible Use Policy, including expectations for online etiquette and behavior.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>For questions about...</th>
<th>Contact...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An assignment or resource</td>
<td>The appropriate teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A technology issue</td>
<td>Jeremy King, Director of Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A personal, academic, or social-emotional concern</td>
<td>Your homeroom teacher or Middle School advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other issues related to Virtual Campus</td>
<td>Hannah Wikse, Assistant Head of School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Family Roles and Responsibilities

- Establish routines and clear expectations for your child.
- Help your child to create a comfortable, distraction-free place to work and attend online classes.
- Assist your child in logging into the device and various applications, and help them through instructions when needed.
- Partner with your child’s teachers and reach out if any challenges arise.
- Help your child to plan and turn in their work.
- Provide opportunities for your child to play and move outside during the day.
- Do not join your children’s classes unless previously invited by the teacher.
- Consider how to support multiple children simultaneously, such as providing headphones or different rooms to work in to avoid distraction.
- Help your child track the daily schedule. You may want to have a printed copy of the weekly schedule readily available for easy reference.
- Model the attitude/behaviors you wish your child to demonstrate, such as flexibility, optimism, and creativity. As their greatest role model, you have unparalleled influence.

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<td>Hannah Wikse, Assistant Head of School</td>
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Partnering with the School

This is a complicated time for families! Parents need to think differently about how to support their children; how to create structures and routines that allow their children to be successful; and how to monitor and support their children’s learning. Some students thrive with remote learning, while others struggle. The guidelines provided below are intended to help you think about what you can do to help your children find success in a remote learning environment. We also know that we will all be flexing to respond to the needs that our families face during this time. If there are unique challenges, particular needs, or concerns that arise, please be in touch with us.

1. Establish a regular schedule for your child: It will be important for parents/guardians to help students establish and maintain a routine and structure for their day, beginning with a regular bedtime and wake-up time each day. While some of our students may want to stay up late and sleep in, establishing a regular school day routine will help your child retain a sense of normalcy and stay engaged in learning. Be sure to help your child uses the breaks built into the school day and encourage them to stand up and move around so they are not remaining sedentary throughout the day. Setting clear expectations with your child about regular school day hours will help your child maintain a schedule and stay on top of their work.

2. Create a study space for your child: Productive learning relies on a conducive environment. We recommend that you create a separate, quiet space in your home for your child to study if possible. We recommend that you choose an open area in the family living space (kitchen table, dining room, etc.) to avoid isolating your child and to allow parents/guardians to monitor your child’s learning and screen activity. A room with strong wireless connection will also be important.

3. Stay in communication with teachers: Your child’s teachers will maintain regular communication; the frequency of the communications will depend on your child’s age, developmental stage, and level of independence. While teachers are available as resources for your child and for you, please keep in mind that our teachers will be in regular email communication with all of their families, so we ask that you be mindful when communicating with teachers, strive to be succinct, and focus on the essential.

4. Check-in daily with your child: Caregivers are encouraged to start and finish each day with a simple check-in with their children. In the morning, ask your child what they are learning today, how will they spend their time, and what support they might need. This brief grounding conversation allows children to process instructions, organize themselves, and set priorities. Older students may not want to have these check-ins with parents (that’s normal!), but they should nevertheless. Parents are encouraged to establish these check-ins as regular parts of each day for consistency. Not all students thrive in a distance learning environment; some struggle with too much independence or lack of structure. These check-in routines need to be established early before students fall behind or begin to struggle.
5. **Encourage independence and allow for productive struggle:** In the course of a regular school day at Gateway, your child engages with other students or adults dozens if not hundreds of times. These interactions include turning to a peer to exchange a thought or idea, participating in small or large group discussions, asking questions for clarification, collaborating on group projects, and countless other moments. While some of these social interactions will be re-created on virtual platforms, others will not. People learn best when they have opportunities to process their learning with others. Beyond the check-ins recommended at the start and end of each day, parents and guardians should regularly circle back and engage with their children about what they're learning. However, it's important that your child own their work; don’t complete assignments for them. Some productive struggle is essential to learning, so we ask that parents allow their children to 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. If your child becomes discouraged and/or overwhelmed by school-work, please reach out to your child’s teachers.

6. **Help your child maintain social contact with peers:** It will be very important for your child to stay in social contact with their friends. They can form study groups created by their teachers or informal groups that they develop on their own. Social interactions, even through virtual means, will help your child stay connected and feel part of the school community. We also ask parents to monitor their children’s use of social media, reminding them to be polite, respectful, and appropriate in their communications and to represent your family’s values online.

7. **Encourage physical activity and monitor student stress:** Given this is such an unusual and turbulent time, parents/guardians must help their children manage the worry, anxiety, and other emotions they may experience. Difficult though it may be, do your best not to transfer your stress or worry to your children. They will be out of sorts, whether they admit it or not, and need as much routine as possible. 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. Please monitor your child’s stress and reach out to teachers as needed.

8. **Monitor how much time your child is spending online:** Gateway does not want students staring at computer screens for five or six hours a day! We ask that parents remember most teachers are not experts in distance learning and that we are still finding the right balance between online and offline learning experiences.

9. **Be patient:** The transition to remote learning is a stretch for students, families, and teachers. We will work hard to be responsive to challenges that arise, and we know that routines and new teaching methods will become easier and more accessible with practice and integration of feedback. We know it will be important for families to balance work and family well-being, and that the transition to Virtual Campus is only one of the changes that families are experiencing.

We thank you in advance for your patience and partnership!
**Elementary School: Priorities & Considerations**

- Mental, emotional, and physical health are our priorities.
- The beginning of the year is a crucial time for building connections. These relationships help children be ready to engage with new academic content.
- Synchronous learning will occur as a fluid mix of whole-class, small group, and 1:1 sessions.
- Students will have both off- and on-screen learning activities designed to engage them in experiences connected to current curriculum.
- Learning tasks and activities will provide direction to families on how best to support student learning and the expected level of adult involvement.
- Students in grades K-2 will necessarily need higher levels of support than students in grades 3-5.
- We will regularly evaluate the experience of students, families, and teachers, and make changes to the schedule or program as appropriate. **Please consult your child's teacher for the most up-to-date weekly schedule.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades K-2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community connection</td>
<td>15 minute Morning Meeting daily</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15 minute Closing Circle daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core academics (reading, writing, math, science, cultural studies)</td>
<td>Two 60 minute blocks daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist classes</td>
<td>Three-week rotation: Disco, Music, Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Every week: Life Lab, PE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flex time</td>
<td>Three 15 minute blocks per week</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 3</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community connection</td>
<td>15 minute Morning Meeting daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15 minute Closing Circle four days/week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core academics (reading, writing, math, science, cultural studies)</td>
<td>Three 60-90 minute blocks daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist classes</td>
<td>Three-week rotation: Disco, Music, Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Every week: Life Lab, PE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flex time</td>
<td>One 15 minute block per week</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades 4-5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community connection</td>
<td>15 minute Morning Meeting daily</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15 minute Closing Circle four days/week</td>
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<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core academics (reading, writing, math, science, cultural studies)</td>
<td>Three-week rotation: Disco, Music, Spanish Every week: Life Lab, PE (twice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flex time</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Digital Citizenship</td>
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**Suggested independent activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading (alone or aloud)</td>
<td>At least 10-30 minutes per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative play (drawing, painting, dancing, etc)</td>
<td>As much as inspired!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical play (building, tinkering, running/ball games)</td>
<td>As much as inspired!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social connection (letter writing, neighbors)</td>
<td>As much as inspired!</td>
</tr>
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Middle School: Priorities & Considerations

- Teaching and learning
  - Our central philosophy continues: learning is an active process requiring students to construct knowledge, and create meaning and understanding of their world.
  - Teachers will use a range of instructional strategies to deliver content effectively.
  - The purpose of feedback is to help students understand their own learning and actively manage their own growth. We will provide feedback in a timely manner.
  - Mental, emotional, and physical health are our priorities.

- Student Engagement
  - Classes will take place synchronously and asynchronously.
  - Classes, by type, are shared in the table below.
  - Remote learning will strive for a balanced, holistic learning experience; thus, students will have both off- and on-screen activities designed to engage them.
  - We encourage students to seek out social interaction, even if in a remote way.
  - As remote learning is meant to mimic on-campus learning, tutoring and parent/guardian support should continue as appropriate.

- Communication and Resources
  - The primary tools for communication between teachers and families will be email.
  - The primary tools for communication between students and teachers (in class groups, small groups, and 1:1) will be Zoom, Google Classroom, and email.
  - Teachers will share homework and class materials (readings, videos, and audio, liked resources) via Google Classroom

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Meeting Style</th>
<th>Additional notes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advisory</td>
<td>Synchronous</td>
<td>Each day begins with a 30 minute advisory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>Mix of synchronous &amp; asynchronous</td>
<td>Classes range from 30-90 minutes. Asynchronous resources are posted on Google Classroom by 8:30am.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math &amp; Science</td>
<td>Mix of synchronous &amp; asynchronous</td>
<td>Classes range from 30-90 minutes. Asynchronous resources are posted on Google Classroom by 8:30am.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Mix of synchronous &amp; asynchronous</td>
<td>Classes are 45 minutes. Asynchronous resources are posted on Google Classroom by 8:30am.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>Mix of synchronous &amp; asynchronous</td>
<td>Classes are 45 minutes. Asynchronous resources are posted on Google Classroom by 8:30am.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electives</td>
<td>Mix of synchronous &amp; asynchronous</td>
<td>Classes are 90 minutes. Asynchronous resources are posted on Google Classroom by 8:30am.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Study skills</td>
<td>Synchronous</td>
<td>Classes are 15 minutes, two-four times per week.</td>
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