



Valley Stream Christian Academy

12 E. Fairview Avenue
Valley Stream, NY 11580
Phone: 516-561-6122
516-823-0022
www.vscacademy.org

4/4/20

Dear VSCA Families,

I apologize that you are receiving school correspondence on a Saturday, but it has taken me a while to navigate the new Executive Order that came about this past week. Some of you may know that Governor Cuomo made the executive decision that schools should continue to operate during what would have been our Easter Recess. This news was disheartening, to say the least. In the past few weeks I have been in extensive conversations with school personnel (both public and private), parents, and students and ALL have made it clear that they could not wait for the upcoming break so that they could have time to take a breather from the current circumstances. One of my meetings included a teacher from China who has been in lock down mode since January. While they would not normally have had an Easter break, they were planning on something similar, as their parents and staff were burned out.

Part of the challenge with what can be called "Crisis Schooling," is to continue to provide academic integrity, while at the same time acknowledging that there are numerous stressors facing our students and their families. These include, parents juggling their own at-home work schedule, financial strains, and various other challenges. The most difficult trial of all is that members of our VSCA family (including staff) and/or relatives are now being faced with the diagnosis of positive testing for the Covid virus. Even more devastating has been the news of the loss of loved ones. Based on all of this, you can imagine my utter disbelief that the decision was made to forego a much needed respite for all.

Because of all of the above (and so much more), VSCA will have an adjusted schedule. While most public schools will be totally closed on April 9th and 10th (to accommodate Good Friday and Passover), VSCA will be closed Friday, April 10th through Monday, April 13th. On Thursday, April 9th, there will be NO teaching of new material, and no work to be submitted. Each class will have only ONE virtual meeting that day and they will be focusing on mental wellness (think "fun activities"). On Tuesday, April 14, each class will be given a video to view, after which they will have until the following Monday (April 20th) to send in a response to the following question: "What was something new you learned from the video?" During the next three days, students will have one virtual class each day (this schedule will be coming in my next correspondence). The facilitators for these classes will be Mrs. Shanhai, Ms. Adams, and myself! These virtual classes will be filled with games, songs, and other fun activities. Please note- NO new material will be given from April 10th - April 17th. But here is one of the most important parts of this letter: As a pastor, I am focusing on the mental health of our entire VSCA community. I believe that it is imperative that our parents' "recess" is respected. I have instructed all of the classroom teachers, to honor this request. At the same time, I am making the same request of our families. That being said, if you have a need to contact the school about any needs or concerns, the school phones will still be on and available and Mrs. Shanhai, Ms. Adams, and I will be there to assist you in any way that we can. We are also available via email.

I know that this is a lot to digest and another detailed correspondence will be coming with the new "recess schedule." Let me say that it is possible that a few parents welcome the distraction of school work. I hope that the knowledge that many of our families are facing a monumental crisis will help you understand why I strongly feel the need to adjust our remote learning schedule. By adding in the virtual classes during the break, it may help to be a diversion for some. Let me be transparent- we are giving the choice to the parents as to whether or not you feel these virtual classes would be beneficial for your child to attend. Only YOU know what your child needs during these difficult times. We are here to give you options.

On April 20th we will resume with our regular schedule. It is my hope that by then we will be ready for continuing to focus on Academic, Mental, and Spiritual health!

I am so grateful for this wonderful community of which we are all a part. Many of you have shared your joys and heartbreaks with us during this time. The staff and I feel privileged to be able to lift your needs up in prayer. Many are having their faith challenged during these unusual times. Do not be moved, do not be shaken, do not give the enemy one square inch. We are more than conquerors, strong warriors, whose strength comes from the Lord. If you are growing weak, I implore you to go to the throne room. Receive all that your spirit needs. It is there waiting for you.

God's Richest Blessings,

Leslie Fowley