

DISTANCE LEARNING PLAN

2020 - 2021

NORFOLK
ACADEMY

1728



Bulldogs Online — Learning and Teaching (BOLT)

Headmaster's Letter: *Bulldogs Online — Learning and Teaching (BOLT)*

In our school's Portrait of a Graduate, we offer a vision of the approach to technology that we seek to inculcate in our students: **"As self-motivated individuals, they embrace the dynamic power of technology to fuel collaboration, exploration, and innovative ideas."** That statement captures, in a nutshell, the approach our faculty have taken to our enhanced Distance Learning Program, which we've dubbed **Bulldogs Online — Learning and Teaching (BOLT)**, the acronym a reference to the warp speed with which we launched this spring and the compressed schedule we met this summer, as faculty reimagined the program and the school purchased and installed new technology required to meet our own high bar for improvement. We consider our program to be our best effort to propel our young Bulldogs forward in their learning, allowing them to "bolt" ahead and keep pace with their restless curiosity, even when they cannot be in the classroom.

Our approach to learning at Norfolk Academy has rested upon the unshakeable conviction that students find true motivation and joy in learning when they feel a close bond with their teachers. Those relationships are built upon numerous daily interactions, each one shaped by school traditions that reinforce trust, starting with the Honor System. That belief in the power of teacher-student relationships is unchanged by the circumstances we face today; in fact, we believe in it more than ever.

That is why our distance learning plan seeks to harness technology in the service of building and strengthening those teacher-student relationships. Our investment in Zoom, and the integration of the platform into our learning management system, will allow students to connect with their teachers and peers—whether everyone is learning online, or some students are learning from home while others are engaged in the classroom. Over the spring, we all grew accustomed to seeing that multi-square display with so many faces of those we love in the Bulldog community; while we would have preferred to be together in person, we also began to appreciate the ways that technology can provide a surprising and comforting connection. We even mastered features of Zoom etiquette—muting our mics in order to really listen; using the "reaction" button to clap for a job well done; and sharing our ideas in breakout "rooms." We understood that Zoom opened possibilities for collaboration and continued exploration together.

Over the summer, we have purchased and installed HoverCams, state-of-the-art tools that allow teachers to translate the classroom experience for online learners. We have expanded our Bring Your Own Device program, and we are prepared to ensure that all students have access to technology enabling them to learn from home, if they need to do so at any point.

We believe **BOLT** offers the best possible approach to advancing education for our students. Yet, the focus on technology, as important as it is, and as fortunate as we are to have the resources to provide it, should not obscure a salient feature of this plan. The innovation, creativity, and attention to detail in it reflect the passion of its creators—the faculty and staff who will deliver the school's mission to your children. Their unstinting commitment to the craft is reflected in every word, and I am profoundly appreciative of their selfless dedication and enthusiasm for teaching, their determination not only to prevail but to excel in these challenging times. Together, we are Bulldog Strong, united in purpose as we launch into the year.

Yours sincerely,

Dennis G. Manning
Headmaster



Enhancing Distance Learning: The Creative Process

In early June, the Distance Learning Task Force sent a survey to faculty members in all three divisions as well as a select group of rising juniors and seniors, to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the school's shift to distance learning in the spring. On the basis of that feedback, along with best practices promoted by professional organizations like the National Association of Independent Schools and comparable independent schools across the nation and around the globe, the task force identified the following priorities and guiding principles for a revamped distance learning plan:

- Provide more consistency in the student experience both horizontally and vertically across grade levels and divisions
- Create a schedule that more closely approximates the rhythm of the ordinary school day, with longer class periods
- Provide more technological training and support to faculty so that they in turn can guide students and parents in navigating new digital learning platforms
- Provide faculty with more professional opportunities that support a pedagogical approach suitable to a distance learning environment
- Preserve those aspects of the Norfolk Academy experience that foster relationships, sustain a sense of community, and nurture the social and emotional wellbeing of our students

The Distance Learning Task Force Team

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Phil Call
Stephanie Cress
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Jackie Evelyn
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Steven Goldberg (co-chair)
Natasha Naujoks (co-chair)
Ed Patterson
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Technology

Norfolk Academy strives:

- *To recognize the value of traditional teaching methods as well as the necessity for judicious experimentation with the new.*
- *To incorporate into the curriculum sequential teaching materials, a variety of learning media, and community and global resources including current developments in technology.*

Digital Learning Platforms

Norfolk Academy Website



Parents and students are accustomed to accessing an array of information, including the directory, schedules, report cards, and more, through the website portal. We will continue to expand the array of online educational material available through our Resource Boards.

Canvas



Norfolk Academy has expanded the use of Canvas, a web-based Learning Management System (LMS) for first through 12th grades. This platform promotes the sharing of information like assignments and resources, while also allowing teachers to assess student learning and mastery.

Zoom



A video communication platform that provides a virtual classroom for synchronous instruction, as well as a virtual office for meetings with individual students and parents.

Microsoft Office 365



A web-based version of Microsoft's Office suite of productivity applications, including Word, Excel, and Powerpoint. Storage on One Drive allows for easy sharing of work between teachers and students.

Google Apps



Cloud-based productivity and collaboration tools.

HoverCams

The school has also invested in the purchase of HoverCam Solo 8Plus document cameras for each classroom, which will allow for more robust synchronous instruction in a distance learning environment. With seamless integration into a Zoom call, these devices allow faculty to complement their computers' webcams with an additional, wide-angle document camera to capture high-quality live video images of real-time instruction, texts, whiteboards, lab experiments, etc. Within a hybrid learning model, with some students learning remotely while others are on campus, these devices will allow faculty to serve both populations simultaneously by broadcasting both audio and video from the classroom to students at home.

BYOD Program (Grades 6-12)

We are expanding our Bring Your Own Device Program to encompass grades 6-12. The BYOD program provides students the flexibility to choose their preferred technology for use at school and at home; students should plan to have available a fully charged laptop, notebook, or tablet as determined by their own technology needs or their teacher's guidance or requirement. While many students have mobile phones, the school strongly discourages reliance on phones for carrying out academic work in class or completing assignments.

Many students already have a laptop, notebook, or tablet, and if that is the case, they are all set for the fall—there is no need for new equipment. Families who need to purchase a device can do so through any vendor. [The school's BYOD policy](#) offers minimum recommended specifications for devices. If families need to purchase a device but would experience financial challenges in doing so, please contact [Mrs. Susan Gall](#), student accounts manager; the school will examine requests confidentially on a case-by-case basis.

iPad Loaner Program (Grades 1-5)

Students in grades 1-5 will be using iPads as their primary tool for accessing Canvas and other learning apps both in school and at home. Families who will need access to iPads during distance learning may borrow an iPad from the school as each grade level will be furnished with two iPad carts, creating a 2:1 student to iPad ratio.

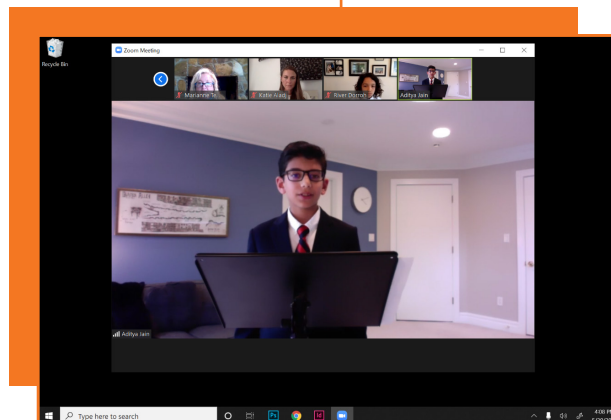
Teaching and Learning

Norfolk Academy strives:

- To foster intellectual curiosity and individual creativity and personal responsibility so that education goes beyond the classroom and ultimately beyond the experience at this school.
- To help students to learn organizational skills and good study habits, to develop skills in reasoning and in critical and creative thinking, and to train them in research methods and in the use and value of resource materials.
- To emphasize the importance of oral communication and to encourage and assist students in acquiring these skills.
- To prepare students academically for college and adult life by fostering an atmosphere in which learning is seen as its own reward, by encouraging all students to do their best work, and by helping students decide their specific academic interests through exposing them to a variety of disciplines.
- To recognize and to provide for individual differences in learning rates and academic interests wherever possible within the framework of our school.

Schedule

Lower	Middle	Upper
<p>All Grades</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be homeroom time for a morning meeting and Girl/Boy of the Day. • There will be time for several breaks, independent and small group work, lunch, office hours, and a closing homeroom meeting. <p>Grades 1-4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be two 30-minute core instruction times for math and literacy. • There will be two revolving 30-minute instruction times for resource, PE, science, and social studies. <p>Grades 5-6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be three 30-minute core instruction times. • There will be two 30-minute sessions for PE and a revolving resource class. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On full rotation days (typically Mondays), all classes will meet for 25 minutes; the rest of the week will follow a block schedule with longer class periods (45 minutes). • Students will have longer “passing time” (10 minutes) to facilitate transition between classes. • Faculty will have dedicated Office Hours for one-on-one instruction. • Students will have flex time in the afternoons for PE/athletics, study hall, faculty meetings, etc. • There will be an afternoon Assessment Period for longer tests, allocated by department. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On full rotation days (typically Mondays), all classes will meet for 25 minutes; the rest of the week will follow a block schedule with longer class periods (45 minutes). • Students will have longer “passing time” (10 minutes) to facilitate transition between classes. • Faculty will have dedicated Office Hours for one-on-one instruction. • Students will have flex time in the afternoons for PE/athletics, study hall, faculty meetings, etc. • Quizzes and tests will be scheduled during class, with an afternoon period for longer assessments as needed.



Daily Schedules

The schedules in this booklet will be observed when an entire grade level or division must shift to a Distance Learning Program for any length of time. However, when classes are following a flexible model, with some students on campus and others using Zoom to connect from home, students at home will adhere to the daily school schedule, allowing them to participate in the class activity as it happens.

Grades 1-2

	Focus	Activity
8:30-9:00	Live: Homeroom	Morning Meeting
9:00-9:30	Live: Instruction	Core: Literacy
9:30-10:00	Independent Work/Small Groups	
10:00-10:30	Live: Instruction	Resource or PE
10:30-10:45	Break	
10:45-11:15	Live: Instruction	Core: Math
11:15-11:45	Lunch	
11:45-12:00	Break	
12:00-12:30	Independent Work/Small Groups	
12:30-1:00	Live: Instruction	Science or Social Studies
1:00-1:15	Break	
1:15-1:45	Reading/Small Groups	
1:45-2:00	Live	Closing Meeting
2:00-2:30		Office Hours

Grades 3-4

	Focus	Activity
8:30-9:00	Live: Homeroom	Morning Meeting
9:00-9:30	Live: Instruction	Core: Literacy
9:30-10:00	Live: Instruction	Resource or PE
10:00-10:45	Independent Work/Small Groups	
10:45-11:00	Break	
11:00-11:30	Live: Instruction	Core: Math
11:30-12:00	Independent Work/Small Groups/Research	
12:00-12:30	Lunch	
12:30-12:45	Break	
12:45-1:15	Live: Instruction	Science or Social Studies
1:15-1:45	Reading/Research	
1:45-2:00	Live	Closing Meeting
2:00-2:30		Office Hours

Daily Schedules

The schedules in this booklet will be observed when an entire grade level or division must shift to a Distance Learning Program for any length of time. However, when classes are following a flexible model, with some students on campus and others using Zoom to connect from home, students at home will adhere to the daily school schedule, allowing them to participate in the class activity as it happens.

Grades 5-6

	Focus	Activity
8:30-8:45	Live: Homeroom	Morning Meeting
8:45-9:15	Live: Instruction (1)	Core
9:15-9:30	Break	
9:30-10:00	Independent Work/Small Groups	
10:00-10:30	Live: Instruction (2)	Core
10:30-10:45	Break	
10:45-11:15	Live	Resource
11:15-11:45	Boosts	Small Group Work
11:45-12:15	Lunch	
12:15-1:00	Independent Work/Reading	
1:00-1:30	Live: Instruction	PE
1:30-2:00	Live: Instruction	Science/Latin
2:00-2:15	Live	Closing Meeting
2:15-3:00		Office Hours

Middle and Upper School

	Full Rotation		Block ACEG	Block BDFH
8:15-8:30	Chapel		8:15-8:35	Chapel
8:40-9:05	A Bell		8:45-9:30	A Bell
9:15-9:40	B Bell		9:40-10:25	C Bell
9:50-10:15	C Bell		10:35-11:20	E Bell
10:25-10:50	D Bell		11:30-12:00	Office Hours
11:00-11:25	E Bell		12:00-12:30	Lunch
11:35-12:00	F Bell		12:35-1:20	G Bell
12:00-12:30	Lunch		1:30-2:00	Flex time
12:30-12:55	G Bell		2:00-3:00	Assessments
1:05-1:30	H Bell			
2:00-3:00	Assessments			

All Divisions

- Synchronous instruction will take place via Zoom. As an enhanced security measure, all students will be provided with a Basic Zoom account, which allows faculty to limit participation to authenticated users.
- Attendance will be tracked and reported to each division office.
- Students should observe the following etiquette during Zoom calls:
 - Defined work space with good lighting
 - Cell phones silenced and stowed away
 - Presentable dress
 - Cameras on at all times
 - Microphones muted except when speaking
 - Student's first name and last initial as Zoom Participant name

Lower	Middle	Upper
<p>All Grades</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each Friday at 8:15 am, a digitized bulletin (matching our printed bulletins) will be posted on Canvas providing information about class meetings and assignments. Canvas will be made friendly for younger students through explanatory welcome pages, clearly marked buttons for daily work, and a limited number of navigating tabs (ex: Home, Modules, and Announcements), requiring as few clicks as possible. Canvas training for parents and students will be provided. Assignments are due by the end of the designated date; teachers will reach out promptly to parents and students about missing work. Each grade level will develop clear and consistent expectations about the meaning of honorably completing assignments and assessments in a distance environment and communicate these expectations to parents and students. <p>Grades 1-3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All assignments should be able to be completed by the end of the school day at 3:00 pm. The evening should be spent playing or on independent reading. <p>Grades 4-6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> After using independent work time during the school day, students should not take significantly more time after 3:00 pm to complete work (4th grade - 40 minutes; 5th grade - 50 minutes; 6th grade - 60 minutes). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All class meetings, assessments, assignment deadlines, etc. will be posted to the Canvas Calendar by 8:00 am Thursday of the week prior. Weekly grade level homework Assignment Bulletins will also be posted on the Royster Canvas page. Students may have a maximum of one hour of daily work per course to complete outside of class time. Academic departments will establish clear and consistent guidelines for assignment and assessment parameters. Working in conjunction with the Royster Honor Council, faculty will reinforce the core values of the Honor System and clearly communicate any modified expectations imposed by the distance learning environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All class meetings, assessments, assignment deadlines, etc. will be posted to the Canvas Calendar by 8:00 am Thursday of the week prior. Students may have a maximum of one hour of daily work per course to complete outside of class time. Academic departments will establish clear and consistent guidelines for assignment and assessment parameters. Working in conjunction with the Tunstall Honor Council, faculty will reinforce the core values of the Honor System and clearly communicate any modified expectations imposed by the distance learning environment.





Community

Norfolk Academy strives:

- *To live by our conviction that sound moral and spiritual values define the individual in a more significant way than academic achievement.*
- *To communicate a spirit of friendliness and thus to promote an atmosphere in which an individual is encouraged to relate to his peers.*
- *To strengthen the attitude, through such observances as chapel services, that spiritual values are the foundation of life.*

Lower	Middle	Upper
All Grades <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly chapels will be held by grade level bands (1-3, 4-6) at 8:15 am. • Daily morning and closing meetings in homeroom will continue Girl/Boy of the Day presentations. • Teachers will schedule one-on-one time with students to check in based on the Girl/Boy of the Day rotating schedule. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily Chapel with 9th Grade Speeches will be held via Zoom. • Structured advisory meetings will be held via Zoom. • Club meetings and activities will be held via Zoom. • Leadership Lab (9th grade) will be held via Zoom. • Athletics meetings will be held via Zoom. • Enhanced use of Canvas and other digital learning applications will increase “face time” and build relationships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily Chapel with Senior Speeches will be held via Zoom. • Structured advisory meetings will be held via Zoom. • Club meetings and activities will be held via Zoom. • Leadership Lab will be held via Zoom. • Athletics meetings will be held via Zoom. • Enhanced use of Canvas and other digital learning applications will increase “face time” and build relationships.

Communication

Norfolk Academy strives:

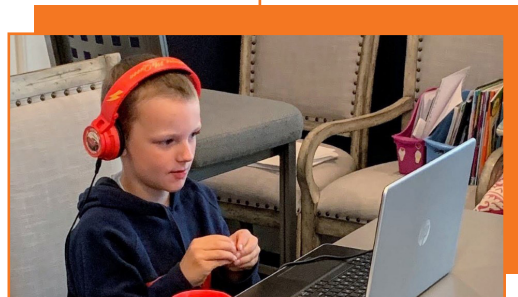
- To maintain open communication within the school family, including students, parents, faculty, staff, trustees, alumni, and friends.
- To promote the growth of a sense of responsibility by holding students accountable for their own actions and by insisting that they meet their obligations to others as well as to themselves.

All Divisions

- Canvas Announcements will be the primary vehicle for communication from faculty to students about class-related news and updates. In addition, each divisional office will also use Canvas Announcements for news related specifically to that division. Students are encouraged to adjust their [notification preferences](#) within the Canvas website (or the Canvas app if on a mobile device) to ensure that they receive these Announcements in a timely fashion.
- Faculty will use email to communicate with students and/or parents about matters specific to that student. Students are encouraged to get in the habit of checking their Norfolk Academy email accounts at least once a day.
- In the event that we are in a distance learning environment at the time that parent conferences are to take place, those conferences will proceed as scheduled via Zoom.



Lower	Middle	Upper
<p>All Grades</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email and Canvas will be used to deliver frequent, brief, and clear communication from teachers and administrators to both parents and students. • Administrators will continue to hold Virtual Parent Meetings. • Teachers will check in with families about every two weeks to share progress, expectations, and highlights, setting up conferences with families as needed. <p>Grades 4-6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will have access to NA email and Canvas Inbox. Most teacher-student communication will occur through Canvas Inbox. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty may collect students' mobile phone numbers for faster communication in the event of technical difficulties during class or assessments. • Should the first marking period take place in a distance learning environment, each seventh grader will receive a comment from each teacher at both the interim and end of the marking period. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty may collect students' mobile phone numbers for faster communication in the event of technical difficulties during class or assessments. • Should the first marking period take place in a distance learning environment, each tenth grader will receive a comment from each teacher at both the interim and end of the marking period.





Faculty Support and Professional Development

Recognizing that teaching in a distance learning environment poses new and unique challenges, the school is investing in a variety of resources to support faculty in pedagogical innovation to accomplish the following objectives:

- Design online learning spaces that are easy to navigate and interactive
- Create learning experiences that promote student engagement and collaboration
- Determine what types of learning require synchronous connection, while fostering student agency through asynchronous connections
- Design authentic assessments that allow students to demonstrate their learning in different ways
- Build trust and community in online spaces

Expanded Canvas Training

Over the summer, all Lower School teachers participated in training with a technology specialist whose school has used Canvas with lower school grades for several years. They learned the mechanics of this learning management system, practiced making it accessible for young students, and utilized templates to create a consistent approach across and within grade levels.

Global Online Academy and Stanford Online High School

Faculty have been encouraged to participate in professional development opportunities with Global Online Academy and the Stanford University Online High School. These courses and webinars coach faculty in the essentials of effective online teaching as well as discipline-specific instructional strategies. We will continue to identify and provide support for participation in future opportunities through these and other organizations over the course of the school year.

Faculty Meetings

Prior to the first day of school, time will be set apart for teachers to collaborate as divisional and department/grade level teams to share instructional strategies, refine assessment and grading protocols, and experiment with the most appropriate technological tools that will allow them to serve students whether they are in the classroom or learning from home.

Technological Support

Ongoing asynchronous faculty training will be provided through a Canvas course created by our tech team and faculty. This course houses video tutorials and other guides to help faculty master the use of Zoom, Canvas, and other digital learning platforms. It also features discussion boards for crowdsourcing solutions from our in-house “Canvas Mentors” and other faculty.



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