



Dear Parents,

Welcome to the BIS Houston Virtual School Experience. Our goal is to continue to provide a premium education experience whether on our school campus or at our virtual school.



Academics

It begins with our commitment to a continuity of curriculum. Our curriculum is divided into unit plans, these will continue to drive the learning for the students. Teachers have designed a range of learning experiences that will include, where appropriate; live video lessons, pre-recorded video sessions, seminars, question and answer sessions, small group conferences etc. These will be balanced with time for students to work independently on tasks. We are very conscious of the quality of screen time and have spent time working on creating a range of activities for students that will keep them engaged and enjoy the learning.

Wellbeing

The Wellbeing of our entire community is crucial for us, and therefore there will be regular opportunities where our teachers can check in with the students and families to ensure that their personal, social and emotional wellbeing is supported. In addition to this, our School Therapist Samantha.Schlanger@houston.nae.school is available to support students and families.



Learner and Leader Profile

There are various other elements of our virtual school that will help keep students connected to regular school based around the Learner and Leader Profile, from assemblies to House events and a continuation of our rewards like House Points and our Virtual Bulldogs.

Global Partnerships

Our partnerships with Juilliard, MIT and UNICEF continue through our work in Performing Arts, Design Thinking and Humanities. In addition to this there are Global Campus challenges for our students to access in Primary and Middle School. <https://globalcampus.nae.school/auth/oidc/>

Enrichment and CCAs

Although we are not able to run our full Enrichment and CCA Programmes we are continuing to look for opportunities for students to engage in activities that enrich and enhance their learning. We have built these into our planning in the form of extension activities and challenges, including a number of Physical Education challenges, House challenges and even a continuation of our Mother Tongue Languages Programme and individual music lessons.

Enjoy your Virtual School Experience.

Mark Wilson

Principal



How to *support* your child during their Virtual School Experience



1. STRUCTURE EACH DAY

Adopt a routine to help your child stay on task and reduce any anxiety they might experience whilst being absent from school and friends. Follow your child's teacher's learning plan for best results.

2. CREATE A DEDICATED LEARNING SPACE

Ensure that your child has an appropriate area to learn with minimal distractions. Suggest that they sit on a comfortable chair at a table to work and not on a bed or sofa.

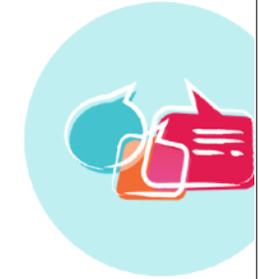


3. BE FLEXIBLE WITH YOUR EXPECTATIONS

Understand that as this is an irregular learning situation for your child. Follow your child's teachers expectations for each task assigned, but feel free to stop if your child appears to be taking longer. Communicate with your teacher accordingly.

4. ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO SHARE THEIR LEARNING WITH YOU

This will allow them to demonstrate their understanding and will ensure that they have a positive and enjoyable learning experience during what can be an unsettling time.



5. TAKE REGULAR BREAKS

Ensure that your child remains focused by taking regular breaks. Encourage them to participate in a short burst of physical activity to help alleviate any stress or anxiety.

6. MONITOR SCREEN TIME

Try to ensure your child alternates screen time with off-screen activities. Your child's teacher will provide a variety of activities to encourage a broad range of learning opportunities that extend beyond the use of a digital device.



Whilst your child is experiencing our Virtual School, please continue to regularly check your email for updates from your child's teacher and Senior Leadership Team.



Secondary Virtual School

Dear Secondary community,

We hope you are keeping well and adapting well to the change in circumstances in this unprecedented time. We are aware of the challenges faced and want to assure everyone that we are committed to delivering the very best education to all students over the course of this indefinite period.

Next week we are launching the next phase of our plan, shifting from Distance Learning to Virtual School. This will include the existing delivery of resources and pre-recorded teaching content as well as the additional element of Live Learning sessions. Over the course of the coming weeks we will continue to seek feedback and adapt our approach to ensure we deliver the very best we can offer under the current circumstances. Please see bullet points below regarding what you and your child can expect as a part of our virtual school.

Live Learning is a term we are using to describe the live interactions that we will be offering. Keeping with best educational practice, direct teacher instruction will not encompass the full learning session. Rather, these sessions will incorporate a range of teaching methods that students will have experienced during their normal schooling, as well as some that have proven to add significant value whilst working virtually. The central shift to virtual school means students have access to live learning with the teacher as well as the important independent study time. The bullet points below describe a few of those methods that range from direct teacher instruction through to open forums where students can ask about specific challenges they have and get targeted feedback about how to improve. All subjects will have at least one Live Learning session a week with many having more than one.

Another important point is to recognize that there will be differences across subjects in terms of delivery, type of work and amount of tangible learning that students exhibit. This is normal and happens every day in a school setting as every subject, teacher and student is different and we therefore advocate that the delivery and approach should always be the most suitable for the group working together to deliver maximum progress.

Following this communication, a timetable for every year group will be sent by the Head of Year. This will help students and parents recognize when the live learning sessions are for each subject so that students can follow this live timetable. We recognize that many students will be working to the normal school timetable but others may not be available for the live sessions so we will endeavor to record the sessions for their use.

Teachers will continue to set work and make contact through our Show My Homework platform as is already the case. When the Live Learning session is approaching teachers will forward a link via the ShowMyHomework platform that will enable all students to enter the virtual classroom directly. The Live Learning episodes will take place using either Zoom or Microsoft teams.



At the start of each new academic year, the Show My Homework passwords are shared with both students and parents. Parents are able to see all that is being set and interactions. If you do not have access to this yet, please feel free to download the app and contact your Form Tutor or Head of Year who will be happy to forward log in details again.

We recognize that we are all currently experiencing a lifetime event which is unprecedented in our generation and everybody, no matter what their experiences are, will feel somewhat anxious. This is normal in these circumstances and our commitment to our whole community is that we will always endeavor to maintain the highest quality of education to support the progress our students make in every way possible.

The circumstances we are experiencing also affect our teachers, who have families to look after and challenges in terms of logistics themselves. As such, we encourage everyone to be patient as we address any teething problems whilst transitioning to the virtual school.

Our teachers are passionate about the learning of all of our students and are continually sharing good practice and training through the various video conferencing platforms. Our goal, as always, is deliver the very best as we continue to adapt to this ever-changing reality.

Kind regards,

Mr. Murphy and Dr. Lyso

Head of High School and Head of Middle School

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STUDENT LEARNING

What to Expect?

- By 9am on Monday morning, weekly plan will be set by subject teachers on Show My Homework
- Form tutors will continue to have weekly wellbeing check-ins with their form students
- We will be introducing live learning sessions for all classes where appropriate
 - The expectation is to have one 30min live session per week for classes that meet 3 or fewer times a week and two 30min sessions if the class normally meets 4 or more times per week
 - The timetable for these live learning sessions will included in the weekly communication.
 - The live sessions may include any of the following (the list is not exhaustive):
 - Direct teaching sessions
 - A discussion on a learning topic
 - Question and answer session
 - Clarifying a learning task they will be doing that week
 - Seeking feedback on the learning tasks from the week
 - Giving examples of content that will be covered that week
- If possible, the session will be recorded and placed in a location students can access if they were not able to join (eg. OneNote, Teams, etc.)
- Students should make every effort to join the live sessions and let their teacher know if they will not be joining or if there were technical issues that prevented them from joining
- If teachers are sick, they will email the students indicating that the live session that day will not be taking place

Wellbeing

Here are a few guidelines to support with wellbeing:

- If you are sick, communicate with your Form Tutor. Like a normal sick day, rest and take care of yourself. You will not be expected to join any live sessions
- As we seek to do the very best for you and your learning while ensuring we make time to take care of ourselves and families in this uncertain time, note that communication from the school will not go out after 7pm
- Make time to do things you enjoy, get rest, exercise, and eat healthy
- Keep in touch with your Form Tutor, Head of Year, or Head of School on any concerns/issues that we can help with
- Please refer to guidance previously received regarding appropriate dress and behaviors for video conferencing