

**Takoma Academy Preparatory School
(TA Prep)
Handbook for Distance Learning
2020-2021 School Year**



Our Mission: *Takoma Academy Preparatory School is a Christian school that honors God in nurturing its students to embrace Biblical truths, pursue academic excellence, and prepare for a life of service.*

Our Vision: *The vision of Takoma Academy Preparatory School is to graduate scholars who are Thinkers, Achievers, Peacemakers, and Servant Leaders.*



Dear TA Prep Families,

This handbook will provide you with information and resources that will guide you as we journey through the 2020-2021 school year. This document is an addendum to the 2020-2021 TA Prep School Handbook. It addresses policies and expectations specific to distance learning, and will be in place until we are able to return safely to the school campus.

Cheryl Booker-Malcolm

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Principal

TA Prep Guiding Principles

- We are committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all students and staff at TA Prep
- We will adhere to CDC, State, and County guidelines and regulations
- We will provide a robust instructional program that meet the needs of all students, and create a schedule that closely resembles a school day
- We will promote equity and accessibility of learning for all students and provide each student with a laptop
- We will be true to our mission by providing a quality Christian Education that honors God in nurturing its students to embrace Biblical truths, pursues academic excellence, and prepares students for a life of service
- We will clearly communicate expectations to our staff, students, and families



**GUIDING
PRINCIPLES**

Teaching and Learning

Teacher-Facilitated Instructional Time (Synchronous Instruction) - This time will consist of teachers being present virtually to guide meaningful learning with a balance of live instruction, recorded instruction, group work, and other student-centered opportunities.

Self-Directed Learning and Review (Asynchronous Instruction) - Individual work outside of instruction time. Teachers will post clear instructions in Google Classroom for asynchronous instruction. Assignments will be posted with clear due dates and instructions on how the students should submit completed work.

Classroom Schedules – It is important to note that teachers have the discretion to adjust their classroom schedules based on the needs of their students and classroom. In addition, it may be necessary from time to time to make changes based on the Potomac Conference school calendar, weather, or any other extenuating circumstances. We want to support our students in their well-being, social-emotional learning, and academic skills. Please do your best to follow your child's class schedule.

Home/School Communication – TA Prep will continue to utilize the normal day-to-day communications. Email will always remain the primary mode of communication when appropriate. Voice messages will be sent via RenWeb and communication will be posted on the school website and on Facebook. Weekly messages will go out every Friday. Urgent messages will be communicated any day of the week if the need arises. Teachers will communicate using Google G Suite (Gmail, Google Docs, Google Classroom, Google Meet, etc.) If you have questions about learning or instruction, please contact your child's teacher directly.

Distance Learning Expectations for Home

We need your help to ensure your student finds ways to make distance-learning work. In order to help them stay focused and prepare them for a successful learning experience you will need to do the following:

Establish a Learning Space - Your child will achieve his/her best work in a quiet, comfortable, distraction-free space dedicated to learning. Ideally, this will be a different set-up than where they normally play games or watch television. Be careful to have it open enough for a family member to provide encouragement and allow them to monitor what is on the screen.

Allow for Physical Movement - Make sure that your child takes plenty of breaks in order to get physical activity and time away from screens. Set alarms similar to those they would encounter at school and encourage them to get up, get some fresh air, go for a walk, or have a snack so that they are not sedentary for the entire day.

Have Clear Focused Expectations - Even though staying home from school might feel like a holiday, remind your child that they do still have to be accountable for their learning, and proper technology use as well as school responsibilities

Follow the Class Schedule - Schedules are important to help set expectations and maintain a sense of normalcy. Closely follow the published daily schedule. Be mindful of upcoming assignments, requirements and tests. Be on time for school.

Accessible Supplies at Hand - Have your child get all of the supplies they need ahead of time, before sitting down to work. This will help minimize distractions. Materials may include pencils, paper, art supplies, textbooks, and manipulatives, as well as a computer or other device. Headphones are highly recommended during online learning.

Synchronous Class Sessions – During class, students should have their videos on. Cell phones or other private means of communication should not be in use unless directed by the teacher for educational purposes. Chat functions are to be used respectfully and for the

educational benefit of the class. Parents and/or students are not allowed to record, screenshot, share, post, or capture any digital content during distance learning.

Dress for School – Start each school day well-groomed and with the mindset of being at school. Dress in the appropriate attire. Wear your school uniform top (Polo shirt) to class. Do not wear pajamas.



Attendance

Please reference TA Prep’s attendance policy in the 2020-2021 School Handbook. There is an expectation that students will attend all synchronous classes scheduled by their teachers and be present, on time, and ready to work and engage. Attendance will be taken during distance learning and unexcused absences and tardies will be given.

Classroom Teacher Virtual Office Hours

Teachers will maintain standing office hours to assist students who need extra help and to meet with individual and small groups. Parents may schedule a time during teacher office hours to ask questions or receive support.

Discipline

TA Prep’s Student Discipline policy is a way to ensure the safety and welfare of each member of our learning community. Students are responsible for adhering to the Discipline Policy while at school and during distance learning. Please review all aspects of the policy, including those that would involve inappropriate behavior during online instruction.

Grading and Reporting

TA Prep will continue with the traditional grading system during distance learning.

Examples of Tools Student and Teachers can use to Demonstrate Learning

Quizzes and Tests	Discussions	Posters
Presentations	Journals	Worksheets

Multimedia Tools	Google Classroom Threads	Google Docs
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Whom to Contact

Questions about an assignment or class	Classroom Teacher
Notification about a child's absence from Virtual Class	Classroom Teacher Registrar
Questions or concerns about Virtual Learning	Principal Classroom Teacher
Issues with technology, usernames, passwords, student devices	Technology Teacher IT Specialist
Student and Family Support	Principal Counselor
Financial Matters	Business Manager

Resources

- [How to Protect Yourself and Others](#)
- [COVID-19 Fact Sheet \(English\)](#)
- [COVID-19 Fact Sheet \(Spanish\)](#)
- [Montgomery County Government COVID-19 Information Website](#)