

SMA FLEXIBLE PLAN FOR INSTRUCTIONAL CONTINUITY (Updated as of 03/12/2020)

1. SCHOOL IS OPEN. INCREASED ABSENCES.

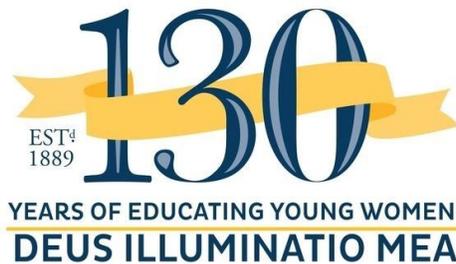
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INTRODUCTION

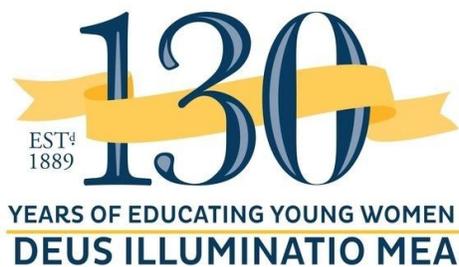
As a CSJ community, our concern is always for the well-being of all our families, students, and employees. As a school serving approximately 250 families and employing approximately 40, we have a serious obligation to ensure we are preparing and planning for any emergency that could create large-scale impact to the breadth of community members and campus operations. Sometimes, this means exploring alternative instructional delivery methods. This document does not address employment issues. Instead, it addresses how we, at St. Mary's Academy, can best prepare ourselves for prolonged absences and/or school closures.

As you read through this document, you will see an escalation in our instructional and school protocols for how we, as a caring and creative community of educators, might support students' well-being and academic progress when the conditions for teaching and learning aren't ideal or like anything we've experienced before.

In the coming pages, we discuss some of the implications for potential significant, though temporary, adaptations in your school practices. We want to begin by acknowledging that we all function differently when it comes to taking in a lot of information at once, especially in times of uncertainty. For some of us, the amount of information shared in this document, as well as the conditions of uncertainty, may cause anxiety, concern, frustration, or agitation. For others of us, having all the available information actually helps us begin to feel more comfortable about planning for the possibilities.

There are many resources available to support you. Of course, if students are unwell, the first priority is for families to take good care, rest up, and make sure students get better. Our community is blessed with incredible resources; these brilliant educators can help lighten the load when we're all lifting together. As a school, St. Mary's Academy is always ready to partner with you. The school administration is always available to discuss any concerns you may have. And, School Counseling is here for student members of the SMA community.

We can do this if we do it together.

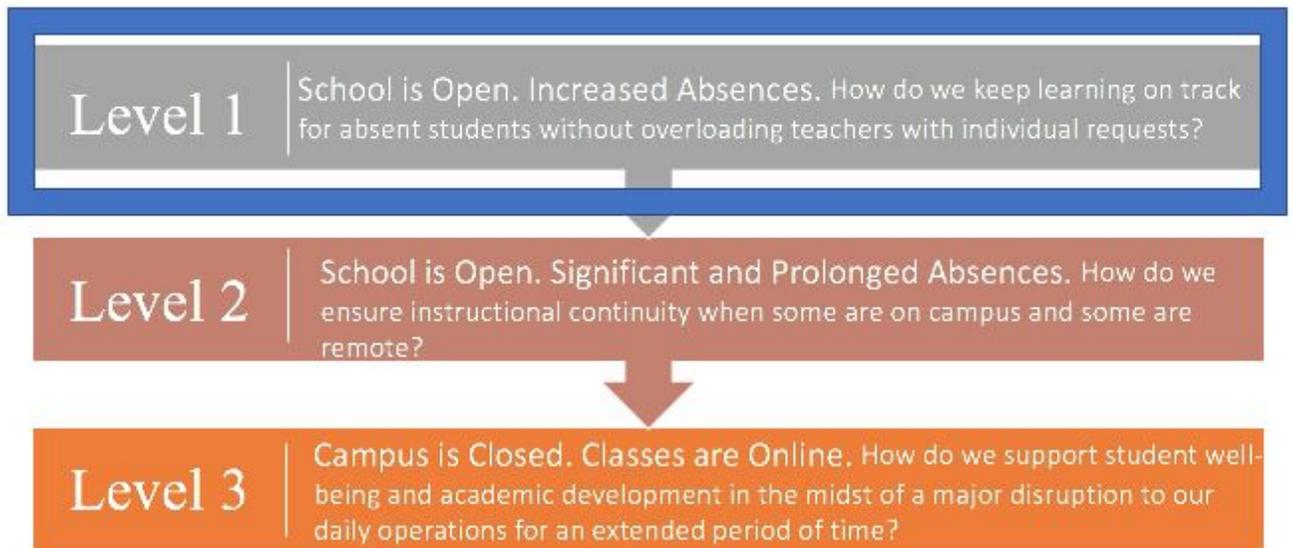


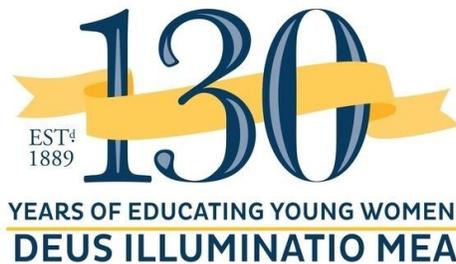
THE “LEVEL 1” SCENARIO & WHAT WE’RE SOLVING FOR

School is open and there are increased absences. Students and adults are absent more frequently and in greater numbers. There may be some students here and there who have temporary medical accommodations for attendance in place.

The challenge we’re solving for is this: How do we keep learning on track for absent students without overloading teachers with a flurry of individual emails and requests for re-teaching? How might we instead create a system for communicating daily work, keeping the learning moving forward, and supporting students who are trying to get back on track after an absence?

SMA Flexible Plan for Instructional Continuity

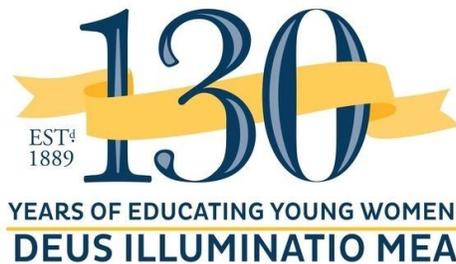




FOUR PLANNING & COMMUNICATION PRACTICES TO START NOW

The practices listed below are quick and easy ways to help absent students access their curriculum while they are home. Though each requires a little time up front, they will make student life easier in the long run, allowing students to get ahead of the steady collection of new material instead of asking, “what did we do in class today?” Or worse, “did we do anything while I was gone?”

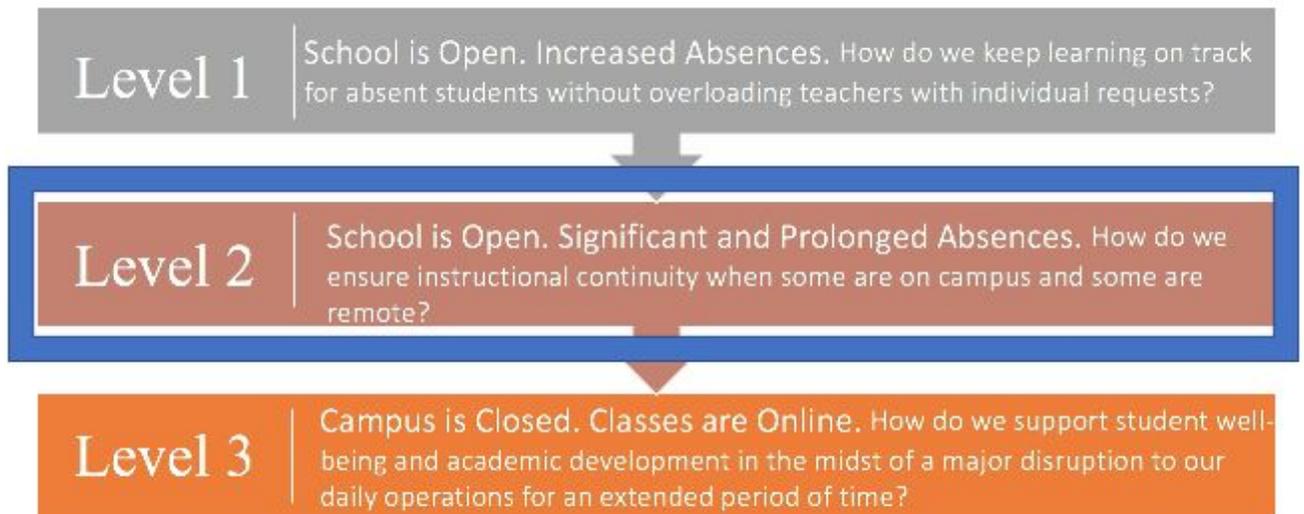
1. Teachers will be posting **daily updates to Google Classroom**, including: the agenda of what was done in class; links to resources, notes, slide decks, and copies distributed to students who were present; expectations for homework.
2. Students should set up a **buddy system**. Students should ensure they have the phone number of at least two classmates per block. Students should always have access to their device (Chromebook or laptop).
3. Keep in mind the **expectations of teacher(s)** that are already in place for absences in their class. Students must remember to check Google Classroom each day, and to connect with their buddy to Google Chat Conference into class if they are well enough to do so and it is appropriate for that class.
4. Student need to **stay home** when sick. Students will be supported in keeping up with their work. This will include allowing them to attend remotely if appropriate.

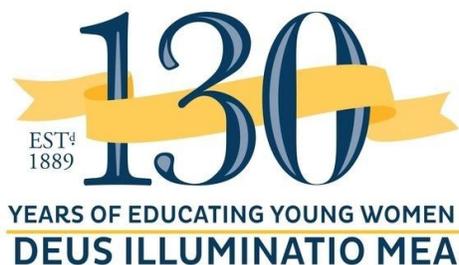


THE LEVEL 2 SCENARIO

School is open, but with significant and prolonged absences. The question here is how do we ensure instructional continuity in a hybrid model where some community members are physically present, some are virtually present, and others are absent? In Level 2, we are trying to find creative ways to support families with mitigating health circumstances who are more vulnerable and may need to stay home, those who may be quarantined but otherwise able to participate in school, and those who are recovering from illness and want to get back on track. We have activated new attendance codes in PowerSchool so we can keep track of students who are learning from home, and finding new ways to support each other at other levels.

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SUPPORTING ABSENT STUDENTS DURING LEVEL 2 EVENT: VIRTUAL ATTENDANCE

If a significant number of students are absent for a prolonged period of time, we will use a flexible attendance plan. If students cannot physically be on campus but are able to attend virtually, they can join their classes remotely to keep up with their studies. The school will activate an additional attendance code allowing teachers to mark students remotely present. Students who are ill and unable to virtually attend should focus on getting better. They will be marked absent.

Teachers Will Keep Posting Daily Updates to Google Classroom, including: the agenda of what was done in class; links to resources, notes, slide decks or PowerPoints, and copies distributed to students who were present; expectations for homework; screencasts of lessons and lectures whenever possible.

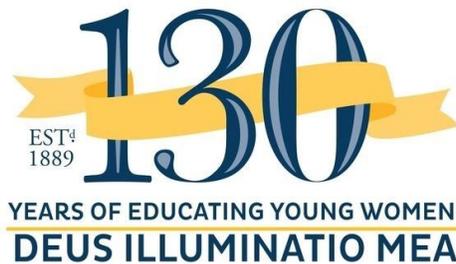
Enlist Students: Students will be asked to always bring devices to school for the foreseeable future. Students should create a buddy system to ensure every student has at least two other classmates they can call to attend class virtually. Remind students that they can (and should) still attend class if they are able.

Attend with Audio: If students already have copies of shared resources (or can retrieve them from Google Classroom), students can simply call into class. When appropriate, ask students to exchange phone numbers with their buddies and have the in-class buddy call when the block begins.

Attend with Video: Students are very adept at video conferencing. Using the buddy system, students can set up FaceTime (most popular) or Google Hangouts to attend virtually.

Teacher Hosted Virtual Classroom: Teachers may choose to set up a virtual classroom so that many students can join. Google Hangout Video Chat can be created and the teacher can post the link or meeting code to Google Classroom.

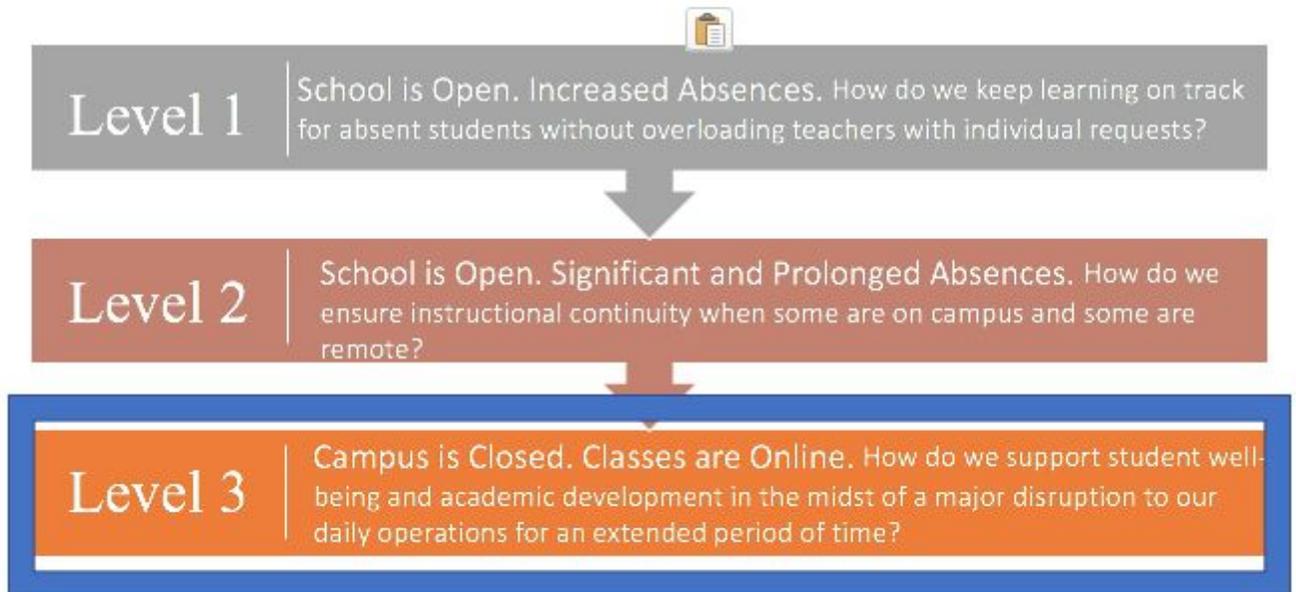
Loop In The Counselors: School counselors, the Director of Administrative Student Services, and the Dean of Students are the “point people” to make sure teachers and other stakeholders (parent(s)/Guardian(s), etc.) are aware if a student is on an extended absence when families notify the school. Parents and students should communicate directly with these staff members to ensure everyone is on the same page and all parties are connected with a student’s plan of action.

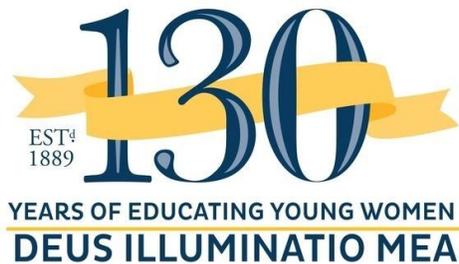


THE “LEVEL 3” SCENARIO

Campus is closed; classes are held online. The essential question here is, How do we support student well-being and academic development in the midst of a major disruption to our daily operations for an extended period of time? How do we continue to foster student learning without being able to meet our students in person?

SMA Flexible Plan for Instructional Continuity





ANTICIPATED CHALLENGES IN SHIFTING ONLINE

When traditionally on-ground schools move unexpectedly to fully online learning, there are some anticipated challenges. Fortunately, we aren't the first school to think through this move. The questions below come from colleagues in our profession around the world who have generously offered their insights and experiences. We are especially grateful to the Taipei American School in Taiwan and Sacred Heart Schools in Atherton, CA for sharing lessons learned. We have responded to each of these questions in our plan.

Schedule. What's the schedule? This is useful even if there aren't any synchronous classes being held. It gives students predictability.

Attendance. How will we take attendance? What constitutes "present"?

Community. How will we support students' needs to socialize and connect? Opportunities for peer-to-peer connection will be especially important.

Clarity. For student's sake, teachers will clearly put all assignments in one place (Google Classroom), explain objectives and expectations up front, and meter the workload.

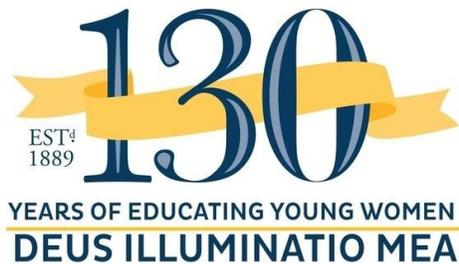
Administrators. Work to provide some measure of accountability and support for students and staff.

Assessment. Teachers will alter assessments as needed to fit the new paradigm of online learning.

Screen time. We will think creatively about what students are doing/working on so they aren't glued to a screen for 8 hours each day.

Set Expectations. Teachers/Staff will clarify expectations for students/families, including attendance, participation, work load, communication if absent, etc.

Tech Check. We will clarify expectations for home technology requirements.



KEY TERMINOLOGY FOR ONLINE LEARNING

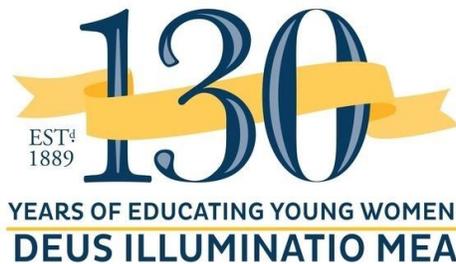
Though much of teaching and learning online is the same as in the shared physical classroom, there are a few key terms that will help you navigate the shift.

Asynchronous: Class interactions happen via Learning Management System (Google Classroom) without real-time interaction. Students engage in class materials and complete work at their own pace, typically within a given timeframe, often using discussion boards to drive peer-to-peer engagement. If you're comfortable using Google Classroom, you are already totally capable of running your classes fully online.

Synchronous: Class interactions happen in real time, at the same time. Students may virtually attend class together via video conference, livestream, or chat. We have Google Hangout for synchronous meetings. Most online courses are a blend of synchronous contact and asynchronous study/work. In describing their experience of shifting school completely online, colleagues at the Concordia International School in Shanghai explained that *asynchronous* instruction worked best for deep learning, whereas *synchronous* instruction was essential for maintaining relationships.

Screencast: A digital video recording of your computer screen, usually including audio narration. Screencasts are a form of instructional video. Google Hangout, Screencastify, QuickTime, and Camtasia are common tools for screencasting.

Video Conference: A virtual meeting in which participants in different locations are able to communicate with each other with audio and video. We will use Google Hangout for this function.

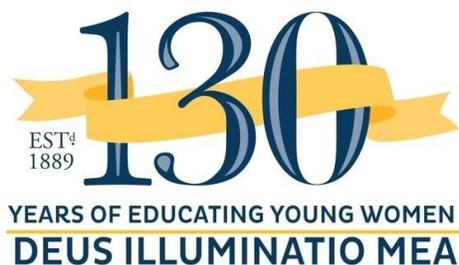


WEEKLY SCHEDULE IF SCHOOL IS CLOSED

We will run a modified weekly schedule if school moves from on-campus to online. We may need to be prepared to run classes for a sustained period of time -- at least a couple of weeks. It will take all of us to reiterate to students that *school is still in session*, just in a different space. In the schedule below, the designated time slot for each class period indicates when teachers will need to sync with students and/or when teachers will host virtual class via Google Hangout.

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri
AM 8:30 - 11:30	A Block	C Block	Late Start Wednesday for Students Clubs, Orgs, and Community Groups have the option to meet.	E Block	F Block
PM 12:00-3:00	B Block	Office Hours Check-Ins (Counselors, Student Life, etc.)	D Block	Support Block	Office Hours Check-Ins (Counselors, Student Life, etc.)

Although Blocks have a three-hour window in which teachers and students can sync, we certainly aren't advocating for a three-hour virtual class. Teachers will decide to host a virtual class via Google Hangout and choose what time within that window the class will meet. The other portions of that three hour window would be used to complete the learning activities for that Block.



EXPECTATIONS FOR COUNSELORS

Counselors will be available during Office Hours and during the A-G schedule to meet/work with students. They will continue providing services to their caseloads, primarily in a one-on-one format, throughout the course of each work day. Both Counseling staff will be available to help support students who are absent/cannot participate, and may choose to lead small groups online for study sessions, tutorials, or personal support. Counselors will work with the Administration, including the Dean's Office, to communicate with families about attendance/participation concerns and support students in getting back on track.

EXPECTATIONS FOR MODERATORS OF CLUBS & ORGS

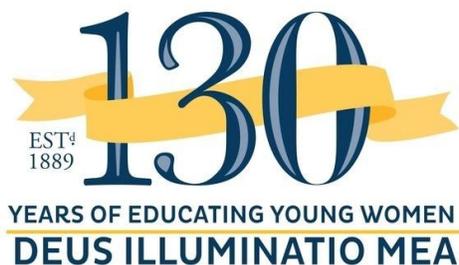
Faculty moderators will discern, in dialogue with student leaders, how it makes most sense for an activity, club, or other community group to continue its work in the event of a closed campus. Faculty Moderators will communicate their overall approach to the circumstances as well as clear expectations about: (1) virtual syncs during the Wednesday Clubs & Orgs period, (2) assignments and deadlines, and (3) other shared experiences they may wish to facilitate in an effort to sustain community (e.g. a video, reading, or virtual discussion). In some cases, it may not make sense for an activity, club, or other group to continue to engage in the context of a closed campus. If a faculty moderator determines this is the case, they will communicate their decision and rationale to group members.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM ADMINISTRATORS

The Principal will send a weekly communication to students and families via email with updates, announcements, and a reminder that school is still in session. Schoolwide administration will communicate with the community at least weekly.

CONTINGENCY PLANS IF YOU'RE SICK

Please communicate with school personnel and teachers if a student is ill and cannot participate in class session(s). This will help in creating a plan for students to get back on track once healthy.



FOR COLLEAGUES AT OTHER SCHOOLS: SHARING, THANKS, & RESOURCES

This document is the product of collaboration with colleagues at Sacred Heart Schools and around the world. We have built on our own experience and the experiences of others. Our plan is based on known best practices for face-to-face and remote instruction. But also, it responds to lessons learned from colleagues at schools around the world who suddenly had to close for multiple weeks at a time as a result of pandemic. We are grateful to our teaching colleagues around the world who have generously offered their insights and experiences, most especially the Taipei American School and the Concordia International School in Shanghai.

The lead writers of this plan are [Diana Neebe](#) (@dneebe) and [Joy Lopez](#) (@technomaven). What's Okay: Please feel free to share this widely and adapt for your needs. We welcome your insights and resources in return. What's Not Okay: You may not use this material for commercial purposes. Please give appropriate credit if using, adapting, and sharing. ([CC BY-NC 4.0 License](#)).

UPDATE: Many colleagues have emailed us asking for a suggested citation. Try this: *This guide is [loosely adapted, modified from] the "Flexible Plan for Instructional Continuity" from Sacred Heart Preparatory, Atherton, CA (tinyurl.com/instructionalcontinuity). The lead writers are Diana Neebe (@dneebe, dneebe@shschools.org) and Joy Lopez (@technomaven, jlopez@shschools.org). If you adapt or build on their work, they would appreciate hearing from you so they can continue to revise the plan that is being made stronger each day by talented educators around the world.*

Below are links to a few resources that helped shape our approach and thinking:

- [International School Resources for Virtual School \(Google Drive Folder\)](#)
- [Next Vista: Facing an Emergency and Switching to Online Learning](#)
- [Concordia International School, Shanghai: When Virtual Learning Is Your Only Option \(podcast\)](#)
- [George Washington University Tools for Instructional Continuity](#)

Mary Rose Batungbacal
Principal
St. Mary's Academy, Inglewood, CA

Kristopher Anderson, Ed.D.
Vice Principal
St. Mary's Academy, Inglewood, CA