



## Distance Learning 2020 Fall/Winter Terms

If and when directed by State authorities, Whitby will transfer to a distance learning model. We have learned a great deal from our distance learning classrooms from the 2019-2020 school year. The Whitby faculty committed themselves to a process of continuous improvement, and each week faculty continued to adjust and revise methodologies and schedules to enhance teaching and learning. The feedback parents provided by responding to surveys, speaking directly with classroom teachers, or in the Zoom conversations we held with SS-LE parents have shaped our course planning for the future.

Here is a sampling of lessons we learned that we will apply to an improved distance learning model for the 2020-2021 school year:

- Synchronous teaching with the classroom teacher is highly desirable at all levels, but especially with younger children. In all grades there must be far more synchronous learning than asynchronous learning.
- Small group and one-on-one sessions, especially with younger children, are more effective modes of instruction than larger group gatherings.
- A consistent schedule, sent out in advance, makes for more effective planning for students and parents who are assisting.
- Assignments and communication should be conducted on one platform, in developmentally appropriate ways, to simplify tasks for students and parents.
- Packets of materials for Montessori classrooms will continue to be prepared for each week of instruction.
- Parents of younger children have asked that the school develop videos to support them in their new teaching role. Parents want to know and need to learn how a particular assignment fits into the larger goals for the class. One parent told us, “We need more guidance in teaching since we are not teachers!”
- The school needs to develop more opportunities for students to interact socially via distance learning. Social isolation increased the importance of finding ways to nurture social-emotional growth.

### **Middle School: Grades 5-8**

There will be consistent instruction across all grades and all subject areas. Each student can expect:

- Beginning the day in small advisory groups.
- 18 - 20 hours of instruction over 5 days.
- Instruction includes teachers being virtually present to guide meaningful learning with a balance of live instruction, recorded instruction, small group work, and office hours.
- Students will be expected to complete individual work asynchronously to advance their learning.

- Electives will be part of the distance learning schedule to provide choice, balance, and the opportunity for multi-age groupings. ***Please note: Elective will not be available for at least the first six week of the 2020-2021 school year.***

### **Primary 3 – Grade 4**

- In Primary 3 through Grade 4, more consistent instruction will be created within and across grades. Each student can expect:
- 17-18 hours per week of instruction over 5 days with two thirds by the classroom teacher and one-third by specialists.
- Instruction includes teachers being virtually present to guide meaningful learning with a balance of live instruction, recorded instruction, small group work, and office hours.
- Students will be expected to complete individual work outside of instruction to advance their learning based on guidance from teachers.

### **Stepping Stones – Primary 2**

- In Stepping Stones through Primary 2, the hours of instruction will be slightly less than described above. Teachers will focus on spending more time with individual students and in small groups. The priority will be for classroom teachers to have contact with each student daily.