



**SANTA FE INDIAN SCHOOL**

High School Academics

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Dear High School Parents and Students,

Thank you to every one of you who has reached out to us in the last few days to communicate your concerns and to ask questions. We are working hard to come up with answers that are satisfactory, but the fact of the matter is that we have a very difficult situation on our hands. The main problem that we are facing is the issue of internet access for all of our students. Many tribal communities are following recommendations and closing public spaces, which means closing our students' access to the internet. At this point, we cannot assume that students have access to digital learning, and so we cannot require that students continue with the opportunities we are providing them at this time. As I said yesterday, for that reason, we will continue to provide learning opportunities in all of our core subjects, but the learning opportunities will not be graded, and students who cannot access the materials will not be penalized.

We want to emphasize something very important - just because we are having challenges and because we are rapidly having to redefine our expectations for students, does not mean that they are not learning. In reality this time is going to look different for every student. As our teachers continue to provide enrichment and reinforcement, the students are also engaging in very important learning at home, learning that has always been a part of our core values at SFIS. Perhaps they have more time to care for an elder, to work in the fields, to learn and practice their language, to practice cooking, cleaning, caring for siblings or other creative ideas you may include. Also, do not underestimate how hard our children are thinking right now about the world, about their communities, about what is most important to them. Engage with your children with these things and in all the other unexpected gifts that may arise from being home in isolation. Love your child and keep them healthy, both physically and emotionally. (Maybe also make them put down the phone and read from time to time.) While SFIS will continue to provide academic opportunities however we can, I know that when we look back on this time, not many of us will remember what grades were given, but rather how our young people thrived and stayed connected during an extraordinary challenge.

We know that our students and their families, particularly our seniors, are experiencing some disappointment and grief right now about the uncertainty of important events such as the SHP symposium, prom, and graduation. We at SFIS share that disappointment but continue to focus on the big picture. This hiccup in our students' education does not diminish their hard work this year or in all their years at SFIS. Nor will it, in the long run,

impact their educational success. While this is a big deal, we are confident that our students will be resilient and will go on to follow all of their dreams.

As this situation continues to change, we will continue to share communication and plans with you. As always at SFIS, our students are at the center of everything that we do and so we will continue to make thoughtful decisions with ALL of our children in mind.

Sincerely,

Faith Rosetta, High School Principal and Bridget Love, High School Assistant Principal

### **Frequently Asked Questions for SFIS School Closure - High School**

#### ***My child left their schoolbooks and other personal belongings at school, when can we come get their books and belongings?***

Campus is closed to all non-employees until further notice from the Superintendent, and this includes access to dorm rooms. Before the majority of the staff left, we collected as many schoolbooks as we could from students who were absent and sent those out to the different tribal communities or by mail. We have limited staff at the school and will not be able to collect any more materials at this time. We will be in contact when the campus opens and parents and students can access campus to return to school to collect belongings.

#### ***Why are students not going to be graded on work completed during the school closure?***

Since some students left their schoolbooks and materials behind in their dorm rooms and other students live in communities where their entire tribe doesn't have access to the internet, we cannot reasonably expect all students to be able to access and complete assignments. Tribal libraries and other places where students might go to use Wi-Fi are closing and we cannot require students to work outside or in cars. We considered ordering hotspots through Verizon; however, we cannot guarantee that all students who need them would be able to use them in their homes and the devices wouldn't be available until April 25th.

#### ***Why were students assigned Chromebooks and laptops if they are not receiving grades for the work they are completing?***

We believe that even without grades, it is important that students be able to continue their learning in whatever manner they can. Students were assigned Chromebooks to provide access to educational opportunities if they have access to the internet. We were counting on tribal libraries but have come to learn that access is limited, and libraries are closing or others have lost their internet connections. Other students were assigned laptops because their dual credit courses needed special programs that cannot be accessed on a Chromebook. If these students cannot access the internet to continue their dual credit courses, then we will work with the college to see how they can complete the course when we return to school.

***Do students still have to do the work that is assigned on Google Classroom or that is being mailed?***

We strongly encourage all students to continue engaging with the enrichment assignments and opportunities being offered online and through the paper packets that will be mailed out soon. We want students to keep their minds engaged in school work so that when we return, we are ready to pick up where we left off. We also want parents to support their students at home and understand that students may be struggling with the sudden change in their lives. We believe that even without grades, it is important that students be able to continue their learning in whatever manner they can.

***Do students enrolled in dual credit courses still have to do the work that is assigned? What if a student can't access the class?***

The school is working closely with colleges and dual credit teachers. If students have access to the internet regularly and have the appropriate technology, students should continue with the assignments that their teachers are posting for dual credit courses. If students cannot complete the course because of limited access or other issues due to this health emergency, we will work with colleges to issue incompletes for the credit until the student can complete the course work.

***How will the students know if they have enough credits to graduate?***

Seniors will not be penalized for this school closure. Seniors who are on track to graduate, will graduate. Seniors who are engaged with credit recovery will also be given support to ensure that credit is fulfilled. Since SHP for most students is a dual credit course, we are working with IAIA to ensure that students will not be penalized for the school closure and will have the opportunity to pass this dual credit course. Dr. Grimley and Ms. McFadden both feel that most seniors are on course to earn this credit for graduation.

For all other grade levels, we are working hard to ensure that no student is denied credit for courses towards graduation because of this school closure. Students who are on track to promote to the next grade level will not be penalized due to the school closure.

***If a student turns in late work that was due before the school closure, can the student still get credit for that assignment?***

**Assignments that were due on 3/12/20:** If students turned these assignments in, teachers must assign a grade and enter that grade in NASIS. If students were absent on 3/12/20 and didn't have the opportunity to turn in the work or had other extended absences that week which prevented them from turning in work, teachers will not enter any grades or grades of zero (leave blank or mark "Exempt").

**Assignments that were given and/or due the first week of closure 3/16 - 3/20:** If students turned these assignments in, teachers should provide some participation points/grades (this will essentially be extra credit) and do not enter

grades of zero for students who did not turn in assignments (leave blank or mark "Exempt").

**Learning enrichment assignments/activities beginning 3/23 - 4/8:** Teachers will not give credit/points or grades but will provide feedback on Google Classroom, or for students receiving paper packets, on the phone or through "snail" mail.

Students are encouraged to work with their teachers if they would like to request to turn in assignments that were due prior to 3/12/20.

***What about the SHP Symposium? Students worked really hard to complete their work and want to present.***

SHP teachers are currently in contact with seniors about their individual presentations. Most seniors were able to present to their mentors before the school closed but also needed more time to practice with teachers and peers before giving a public presentation. We are considering a variety of alternative plans and will continue to keep all our students and parents informed.

***Will we have prom?***

We certainly hope to have prom but at this point we do not have a firm answer, and much will depend on the New Mexico State Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham's executive orders and the orders of our Pueblo Governors, Superintendent and Board of Trustees.

***Will school be closed for the rest of the semester?***

We miss our students very much and we know this is not easy. We certainly hope that we can return as planned on April 20th, but we also recognize that orders and guidance is changing day-to-day and much is left unknown.

***Is there going to be a graduation ceremony?***

SFIS graduation is a rite of passage for many of our students and is such an important day for families and the school community. Again, this will depend on the New Mexico State Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham's executive orders and the orders of our Pueblo Governors, Superintendent and Board of Trustees. If we cannot hold graduation on the schedule date, the school would prefer to consider holding graduation at a later date rather than a "virtual graduation," something other colleges and schools are considering. We will reach out to parents to get their feedback. But again, this is all dependent on the unknown direction our leaders will take at the tribal, state, and national levels.

Thank you for your continued collaboration and understanding as we navigate this unexpected health crisis and continue to provide educational experiences to our students. We will remain in touch regarding any changes.