



ST. THOMAS HIGH SCHOOL

## Office *of the* President

**Office of the President**

St. Thomas High School  
4500 Memorial Drive  
Houston, TX 77007

**P** 713-864-6348

**E** james.murphy@sths.org

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April 2, 2020

Dear STH Community,

In light of recent updates surrounding the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and direction set forth by the governor of Texas, St. Thomas will be extending our campus closure and STH Remote Learning Program, through Friday, May 1st. Currently, our plan is to reopen the campus on Monday, May 4<sup>th</sup>.

The safety, health, emotional, and spiritual well-being of our STH community remains our highest priority. We are grateful for the dedication and vigilant efforts of our teachers and staff who are providing our students with a consistent learning environment and as normal a routine as possible. We continue to be amazed by how quickly our community has been able to shift to this new way of teaching and learning. We have seen sparks of innovation, collaboration, and creativity, as we work together to keep our traditions alive.

We remain deeply committed to the on-going effort to cease the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and stand together with our STH community as we navigate through this uncharted territory. During this time of uncertainty, it is imperative that we encourage our students and their families to talk about the pandemic, explain why social distancing is important, and examine all the measures we must take to protect ourselves and others from COVID-19. If we want to get our children back to school, it is important as a community that we act – through social distancing and other preventive measures as requested by authorities – and do our part to limit its effects.

We remain in constant communication with local health officials and state education agencies as we work to ensure the best plan for our community and campus. Please be assured that we will communicate any updates to our community as soon as they are available.

Thank you for your understanding and patience during this time while we work together to strengthen our community while practicing our motto of goodness, discipline, and knowledge.

Regards,

Fr. James Murphy, CSB

President, St. Thomas High School

Dr. Aaron Dominguez

Principal, St. Thomas High School



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*We will view this time as one that brings out the very best from every member of the St. Thomas community. In the midst of so much confusion and instability, St. Thomas will be strong and sure. Despite opportunities lost, we will focus on what can be gained. We will seek and find God's grace.*

*-Fr. Jim Murphy, CSB*

### **STH REMOTE LEARNING TIPS**

1. **Treat each day like a normal school day (as much as possible).** Establish a routine similar to what you did when you went to school. Eat breakfast, shower, get dressed, and proceed to attend each class. You may find that it helps to dress up a little or engage in other habits you had when attending school physically.
2. **Set up your own learning area.** While you don't have to have a designated desk, you should try to make a space in your house your own. Keep your supplies and organization systems in this space, so that searching for them later isn't a distraction. It is best to find an area where you can sit up straight and work on a flat surface, so that you can avoid getting drowsy or distracted.
3. **Keep class materials organized.** Your organization system will now have to be virtual/digital. This will happen naturally in some cases, because your teachers have separate classrooms. Just as you would with your binder or folder system, make sure you have designated areas for notes, LAPs, assignments, etc. for each class. Ask your counselor or Ms. Becker for more help.
4. **Take regular breaks.** You'll need to move around regularly. Your teachers are planning for 30-35 minutes of instruction, so you should have at least a ten-minute break between classes. Grab a snack, talk to a family member, or walk around the block. ***Do your best to avoid electronic distractions during breaks.***
5. **Take care of your body as you work.** Try to set up a work space that is ergonomically beneficial. See this article for more tips: **Ways to Make Your Work From Home Space More Ergonomic.**
6. **Be a productive and good digital citizen.** You should always be thoughtful about what you post online, but especially what you post in your shared classroom spaces. Be kind to others and think before posting.
7. **Collaborate with classmates.** Your teachers will ask that you do this as part of your classwork; in addition, it's a good idea to develop virtual study groups. Your peers often have the best and most relatable advice for approaching an assignment, asking for help, and staying organized.
8. **Include your family in your learning.** Share your ideas about classroom topics with your parents and siblings. Ask them for their support to preserve your learning space and their help to stay organized.



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9. **When in doubt, ask for help!** You have several resources at home and at school to help you be successful during this time. Contact your teacher, counselor, LEC specialist, or the IT help desk with questions ([helpdesk@sths.org](mailto:helpdesk@sths.org)).
10. **Care for your mental health.** This new mode of learning, not to mention the COVID-19 pandemic, can feel overwhelming for all of us. Take a breath and give yourself a break. If you find yourself feeling stressed – exercise, meditate, pray, write in a journal, cook a meal...whatever it is that relaxes you. Check in with your counselor or Mr. Hagler ([Patrick.Hagler@sths.org](mailto:Patrick.Hagler@sths.org)) for more support.

### **RESOURCES:**

- Harris County Public Health – [COVID-19 Virus](#)
- Harris County Public Health – [COVID-19 Virus Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- Center for Disease Control – [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- Center for Disease Control – [COVID-19 Virus Transmission Facts](#)

### **HEALTH TIPS:**

#### **Social Distancing**

- Keeping a safe distance (approximately 6 feet) from others
- Avoiding gathering of 10 people or more
- Avoid crowded, public places such as schools, churches, etc. by:
  - Working from home
  - Switching to remote online classes
  - Visiting loved ones by electronic devices instead of in person
  - Cancelling or postponing conferences and large meetings

#### **Preventing the Spread of Germs**

Common symptoms of Coronavirus include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Transmission of the disease is spread person-to-person through coughing, sneezing, or close contact of others. Please be mindful of the following steps that can be taken at home, and within the community to help protect you and others.

- Please stay at home if you are sick (and avoid contact with people who are sick)
- If you have not received an influenza vaccine, please get one as soon as possible
- Emphasis on frequent and thorough handwashing with soap and water
- The use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Avoiding hand contact with eyes, nose, and mouth



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- Cover your cough with tissue/paper towel or the crook of your elbow
- Frequent wiping of commonly touched surfaces with disinfection supplies
- Do not pass personal electronic devices from one person to another
- Avoid sharing dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, etc. with other people or pets in your home
- In our efforts to prevent the spread of viruses, please refrain from shaking hands, as this is how transmission often occurs. Please find other ways to promote friendliness and care when greeting one another and/or guests you may meet.

### Cleaning Protocols

Ongoing maintenance on campus helps to fight the spread of infection as well. Our ground crews continue to:

- Wipe down all handrails with disinfectant at the end of each day
- Clean and disinfect the entrance doors around campus several times a day
- Ensure the kitchen surfaces and cafeteria tables are sprayed and wiped with disinfectant after each lunch period, followed by a deep clean at the end of the day
- Our locker rooms surfaces are also sprayed and wiped down each day with disinfectant
- Finally, the campus undergoes periodic deep cleaning utilizing a third party vendor to apply antimicrobial product to all door handles, desks, handrails, gym equipment, and locker rooms.