



Family Guide to Virtual School



The Imani School

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Philippians 4:6,7 ... do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

A Message From the Head of School

Dear Imani Family,

“What started out as adversity ended up being an opportunity!” This statement certainly summarizes the attitudes and experiences of the teachers and students of Imani as we have made the transition from the traditional classroom to distance learning! I believe that all of us, teachers, students, and even you, parents were filled with a modicum of fear and trepidation as we made the move into these uncharted waters. But together, we have worked through the hardest parts and we are emerging victoriously!

Though we will be unable to meet on campus at Imani, we remain determined to carry out the mission of our school. We will continue to provide a challenging curriculum, via distance learning, that develops our children’s faith, self-confidence, and academic achievement.

Distance learning is a new science for lower and middle schools, one that is not exact and one that will need revision and tweaking as students demonstrate their learning and struggles. Depending on the amount of time we are required to implement distance learning, the strategies and resources could change. There is no road map for navigating this uncharted territory. This document, and indeed, the process, are iterative. We will try, succeed, fail, and try again. Each time we will be better than the last. Our priority is the well-being and academic needs of our students. In spite of the interruptions caused by COVID-19, we are committed to ensuring that all of our students, but especially our eighth graders, be prepared to meet the challenges of the next school year.

Thank you for your patience and support as we work through this together, bound by a common goal, for the benefit of our children. We remain.... ***committed to excellence for the glory of God.***

In His Service,

Patricia Hogan Williams
Head of School

Tips for Parents

- As much as possible, provide them with an uncluttered, quiet area where they can work free from the distractions of television and video games. If possible, this should be in an area that can be monitored by an adult.
- **Tell your child that this is “real school” and they must pay attention and they cannot all talk at once or chat with their friends during instruction.**
- Encourage them to work the same as they would during the traditional school day.
- Ensure they have either a desktop, laptop or tablet with a working camera. If neither of these is available, cell phones may also be used. Keep in mind that if you have multiple children, you will need a device for each.
- Each child will need a notebook, paper and pencil each day.
- Each student has been assigned an individual email address and password to be used for all classes. This information will be emailed to you. Please stress to your child that he/she is NOT to change the email or password.
- Make sure that your student has “accepted” the teachers’ invitations to join the class.
- Help your child to immediately mute their microphone as soon as they join their class and to only unmute them when the teacher calls their name to respond.
- Each child will need to click on the red phone at the bottom of the screen to disconnect at the end of each class.
- Most assignments can be typed directly into Google classroom and submitted online. Teachers will provide directions.
- **Avoid critiquing instruction - please let’s treat each other with respect.** We are all giving our best, including our teachers. Transitioning from an in-person instructional model to fully virtual instruction is not an easy task, and is one that requires new training and new teaching methods. We have a fantastic support team working with our teachers, and we also appreciate your support and understanding. We will make mistakes, so please exercise Matthew 7:12. “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” We are all working hard to continue to deliver quality instruction virtually at Imani.

COVID -19 VIRUS UPDATE

Frequently Asked Questions

The COVID-19 virus pandemic has caused unexpected, and often, unwelcome changes in our daily lives and in the life of the School, and has forced us to adjust to a “new normal.” We hope that this information addresses some of the questions you may have during this period of so much uncertainty. Of course, feel free to reach out to us if your questions remain unanswered or if we may be of further assistance.

How long will the school be closed to on-site classes?

The Governor of Texas has issued an executive order that requires schools to remain closed for the remainder of the school year. We are closely monitoring guidelines from health officials regarding on site Summer camp. We are constantly monitoring information from federal, state, and local agencies regarding the COVID-19 virus for any changes that may be forthcoming. We will continue to communicate with you any updates via emails, and our Facebook page.

Will parents of children who are enrolled in the preschool and Infant and toddler programs be charged tuition while the school is closed?

No. However, we will be providing activities, videos, and other resources to keep our little ones engaged in developmentally appropriate activities and provide support to parents during this period.

Why did Imani close the preschool and infant/toddler programs since some day care centers remain open?

We recognize that many of our parents do not have families in the Houston area, many are health professionals, and others are in “essential” positions which require them to continue to report to work. Therefore, the decision to close was reached after much deliberation and in consultation with members of the Board, two of whom are physicians. Given the dire nature of the predictions regarding the COVID-19 virus, and the Mayor’s recommendation, it was decided that our job is to err on the side of what would protect the greater good in the event of the unexpected. We had to consider what the possible negative impact of not acting could be. We chose to err on the side of the unknown in order to protect our children, our families and the community.

Will students in Kindergarten through eighth grade continue to pay tuition while they are involved in distant learning?

Yes. Although the method of delivery has changed, our commitment to the education of your child has not. The faculty, administration, and staff are working diligently every day to ensure your child's learning is uninterrupted and that a sense of normalcy is maintained.

When deciding to end the instructional day at 2:00p.m. rather than 4:00p.m., several factors were taken into consideration.

- The attention span of the students
- The home environment allows for more distractions, making focusing even more difficult
- The traditional school day does not require students to sit in one spot for 6-8 hours. There are many opportunities for a change of scene and activity, i.e., Chapel, lunch, changing classes, restroom breaks, P.E., recess, speech, etc.
- Providing flexibility for family plans

Our administrative offices remain open. School operations are continuing, but in a different format.

How will remote learning be different for students and faculty?

The transition to remote classrooms has required a shift in thinking and the acquisition of new skills for both teachers and students. However, with determination, patience, and a great deal of humor, we will triumph!

The primary difference is that the children will not be in the same physical space. They are still able to see and interact with their friends and classmates which will help dispel the feelings of isolation which may come from being confined to the home. It is important to stress to your child that this is “real school” and they must sign in to class on time, pay attention, wait their turn to speak, participate, and do their homework just as they always have.

Let's look at some of the many opportunities that have come from this time of adversity:

- Seeing and interacting with their friends and teachers restores a sense of normalcy and provides reassurance for the children. Children love and need consistency and order. Having a regular schedule for getting up and “going to school” provides a sense of security in the midst of so much change.
- Parents' experience with their child's education has been primarily limited to “Drop off and Pick-up.” Now, you can see your child learning first hand. You can see them engage with the learning activities and experience these with your child.
- The children have grown up in this digital age and therefore, adapting to this virtual learning comes easily to them. They will emerge stronger and better.

- The live delivery of our learning experiences, as opposed to pre-recorded videos, allows the teachers to hear the children read and /or solve problems and provide immediate assistance and feedback.
- The teachers are making themselves available to work with small groups after class to provide that little extra support that a child may need or simply want.
- Teachers are reaching out to parents with virtual meetings, calls, and emails
- While many schools in our area are still struggling to make the transition to distance learning, Imani is up and running!

The primary platform that teachers will utilize for distance learning is Google classroom. Teachers will post all homework and information on their Google classroom sites, which are already up and running. Ms. Tiffany Gray, in the administrative office, will be available to provide support if needed.

Will the students receive grades during this time?

Yes. The students will still be expected to pay attention, complete daily assignments, and be an active participant in their classes. The Imani School teachers remain committed to the same high expectations and continued development of all of our students as we do when we're in the classrooms. Students should bring as much energy, creativity, thoughtfulness, and effort to this new adventure as they can and reach out for help when they need it, just as they do when in our traditional classrooms.

What is the schedule for remote learning?

Kindergarten- 5th grade classes will begin at 9:00 a.m. each morning and will continue until about 2:00 p.m. Middle school classes will begin at 8:00 a.m. and continue until approximately 2:00 p.m. [Click here for class schedule.](#)

Distance Learning Formats

Imani will use a combination of synchronous (live, real-time) and asynchronous (independent) formats for our distance learning classes.

Synchronous

- Teachers will create a synchronous (real-time) classroom experience using Google Classroom, combined with offering asynchronous (independent, not time limited) opportunities for students.
- In this environment, teachers have the ability to present information and interact with students in real-time. Students will be able to see and interact with their classmates, ask questions, share work, respond to questions, and participate in classroom discussions.
- Teachers will also be available to provide additional help after classes.
- Ancillary and Spanish the teacher will meet with each class on a weekly schedule.

Asynchronous Learning

- Class interactions happen without real-time interaction. Imagine Math, homework, Freckles, Khan academy, Nearpod, etc. are examples.
- Students engage in class materials and complete work at their own pace, typically within a given time frame, often using discussion boards to drive peer-to-peer engagement.
- Assignments will be posted in Google Classroom. Students will submit work through email or Google Classroom in accord with the teacher's instructions.

Helping our Kids Cope with COVID-19!

Everyone of us is being impacted by the coronavirus COVID-19, even the kids. Their lives have been upended by school closures. School is closed, but we can't go anywhere. Moms and dads may seem worried. Why aren't you going to work? Many of them know someone who has contracted the virus. What's going to happen to them? Are you going to get sick too? Are they? These are just some of the spoken or unspoken fears that children may have. **Your children are our children.** We are concerned not only about their academic progress, we are concerned about their physical and mental health. Therefore, I am sending a link to some age appropriate resources, and guidelines from the Child Mind Institute that you may find useful in helping our children navigate through this quagmire called Covid-19.

Stay home and stay safe. I miss my kids.☺

<https://www.kqed.org/mindshift/55627/six-age-appropriate-books-and-resources-for-teaching-kids-about-covid-19>

News of the coronavirus COVID-19 is everywhere, from the front page of all the papers to the playground at school. Many parents are wondering how to bring up the epidemic in a way that will be reassuring and not make kids more worried than they already may be. Here is some advice from the experts at the Child Mind Institute.

- **Don't be afraid to discuss the coronavirus.** Most children will have already heard about the virus or seen people wearing face masks, so parents shouldn't avoid talking about it. Not talking about something can actually make kids worry *more*. Look at the conversation as an opportunity to convey the facts and set the emotional tone. "You take on the news and you're the person who filters the news to your kid," explains Janine Domingues, PhD, a child psychologist at the Child Mind Institute. Your goal is to help your children feel informed and get fact-based information that is likely more reassuring than whatever they're hearing from their friends or on the news.
- **Be developmentally appropriate.** Don't volunteer too much information, as this may be overwhelming. Instead, try to answer your child's questions. Do your best to answer honestly and clearly. It's okay if you can't answer everything; being available to your child is what matters.
- **Take your cues from your child.** Invite your child to tell you anything they may have heard about the coronavirus, and how they feel. Give them ample opportunity to ask questions. You want to be prepared to answer (but not prompt) questions. Your goal is to avoid encouraging frightening fantasies.
- **Deal with your own anxiety.** "When you're feeling most anxious or panicked, that isn't the time to talk to your kids about what's happening with the coronavirus," warns Dr. Domingues. If you notice that you are feeling anxious, take some time to calm down before trying to have a conversation or answer your child's questions.
- **Be reassuring.** Children are very egocentric, so hearing about the coronavirus on the news may be enough to make them seriously worry that they'll catch it. It's helpful to reassure your child about how rare the coronavirus actually is (the flu is much more common) and that kids actually seem to have milder symptoms.
- **Focus on what you're doing to stay safe.** An important way to reassure kids is to emphasize the safety precautions that you are taking. Jamie Howard, PhD, a child psychologist at the Child Mind Institute, notes, "Kids feel empowered when they know

what to do to keep themselves safe.” We know that the coronavirus is transmitted mostly by coughing and touching surfaces. The [CDC recommends](#) thoroughly washing your hands as the primary means of staying healthy. So remind kids that they are taking care of themselves by washing their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds (or the length of two “Happy Birthday” songs) when they come in from outside, before they eat, and after blowing their nose, coughing, sneezing or using the bathroom. If kids ask about face masks, explain that the experts at the CDC say they aren’t necessary for most people. If kids see people wearing face masks, explain that those people are being extra cautious.

- **Stick to routine.** “We don’t like uncertainty, so staying rooted in routines and predictability is going to be helpful right now,” advises Dr. Domingues. This is particularly important if your child’s school or daycare shuts down. Make sure you are taking care of the basics just like you would during a spring break or [summer vacation](#). Structured days with regular mealtimes and bedtimes are an essential part of keeping kids happy and healthy.
- **Keep talking.** Tell kids that you will continue to keep them updated as you learn more. “Let them know that the lines of communication are going to be open,” says Dr. Domingues. “You can say, ‘Even though we don’t have the answers to everything right now, know that once we know more, mom or dad will let you know, too.’”