

Dear HA Family:

As you probably know, Governor Kay Ivey announced in a press conference today that all K-12 schools in Alabama will be closed starting Thursday, March 19. Schools could reopen on April 6, depending on the situation at that time. **Houston Academy will follow Governor Ivey's recommendations. We will be closed, at least, through April 6th.**

You should be aware that since it became apparent that the COVID-19 virus was going to threaten Alabama, our administration and teachers have been working on a plan to continue education, remotely. Each Division Head (Mrs. Boothe in Lower School, Dr. Janney in Middle School, and Mr. Selig in Upper School) will be in touch with you about the particulars. However, we will be hosting classes remotely starting Monday, March 30th, the date when we were previously scheduled to resume classes after Spring Break. While we know that there is no substitute for face-to-face classroom time, we believe our students will be able to have a meaningful educational experience while our students are out. Our teachers have received training on how to conduct online classes, and our technology infrastructure and MacBook program make the possibility of online learning eminently achievable.

Extracurricularly, we have received notice from the Alabama High School Athletic Association that all contests, practices, conditioning, and team gatherings are cancelled for the duration of the school closings. Of course, we would urge our student athletes to maintain a basic level of fitness by running, practicing skills, or exercising at home.

Another student activity that falls within the time frame of Governor Ivey's directive is Prom. We will need to postpone Prom, which was scheduled for April 3rd. We assure you, however, that Prom **WILL** take place. Our sponsors will work on the details and let you know what will transpire.

On another note, **we are strongly urging families NOT to travel during the time that school is closed.** The purpose of the school closing is to decrease the possibility of people who have contracted COVID-19 from coming into contact with those who have not been infected. Travel to other regions defeats the purpose of the school closings.

I would reemphasize what I said in my previous communication: this is serious. While the vast majority of our students and families are healthy and face no serious risk from COVID-19, we have members of our community who are at serious risk, either because of immune deficiencies, age, or both. We ask you to consider the devastating impact of losing ANY member of our HA family to this virus.

To that end, we also ask you to inform us if any member of our community is exposed to the COVID-19 virus. Again, the health and well-being of our HA family is our primary concern.

You can email me at phillippss@houstonacademy.com or call me at 334-350-0171 if you have any questions or concerns. Please stay safe, and God bless you all.

Dr. Scott D. Phillipps

Headmaster, Houston Academy

