

Notes from Back to School Night Question and Answer Sessions with Mrs. G and Mr. French

Thank you to everyone who was able to attend the Back to School Question and Answer (Q/A) sessions on Tuesday and Wednesday. As we mentioned, the following questions were asked during the Q/A sessions. We wanted to make these questions and their corresponding answers available for all parents. We plan to offer ongoing Q/A sessions though at least the first quarter. Please take our six question survey to help us determine the best day and time/s to offer these sessions. You may take this survey here: <https://forms.gle/1KnTNod6G7nFCACb6>.

Program Questions

How are the students organizing themselves this year since a paper planner/agenda was not provided? Is there a standard way to track homework, tests, and long-term projects?

The STEMinar classes will continue to teach the students how to track and organize their schoolwork, break long term projects down, and reinforce time management strategies. However, the teachers will be using both Google calendar as well as their Google Classroom this year instead of the traditional paper agenda planners. This allows the staff to keep a closer eye on every single student's electronic planner and it will allow the teachers greater freedom in helping students customizing their homework organization while still helping the students meet the basic requirements of the class.

When we go back to in-person learning, there was a model for middle school using outdoor spaces, rain or shine. Does that include snow/below freezing?

We will use as much outdoor space as we possibly can, given the weather conditions at the time. Since the soonest we will be moving back to in-person instruction would be second Quarter (November to January) the outdoor time would be greatly limited because of the weather. Instead, the students will spend the time they would have been outdoors in repurposed spaces such as the cafeterias, gyms, band room, etc.

What are the different levels of math classes for each grade?

There are at least three math levels at each grade:

- Grade level
 - Math 6
 - Pre-Algebra 7
 - Algebra 8
- Honors (1 year above grade level)
 - Honors Math 6

- Honors Pre-Algebra 7
- Honors Algebra 8
- Advanced (2 years above grade level)
 - Advanced Pre-Algebra 6
 - Advanced Algebra 7
 - Advanced Geometry 8

**Students testing higher than the course offering at the Advanced Group level will be considered for appropriate ability-level course-work on an individual basis and may, in rare cases, be granted permission to attend math class at Valley Catholic High School.*

What is the anticipate level of math the students will complete in high school, based on their middle school math placement (Depending on performance in previous courses)?

- Grade Level
 - Students who master Algebra as an eighth grade student should complete: Pre-Calculus or Calculus I as seniors
- Honors
 - Students who master Honors Algebra as an eighth grade student should complete: AP Calculus I or Calculus I as seniors
- Advanced
 - Students who master Geometry as an eighth grade student should complete: AP Calculus II or Calculus II as seniors

What are the different levels for the English classes?

There are two levels of English class offered at each grade level. These levels are Grade Level English and Honors English.

How are English and Math Placement Determined?

The following criteria is used in determining a student's English and math placement:

- Recommendation from previous teacher
- Observations from VCMS staff during the first few weeks of school
- Standardized test scores
- Valley Catholic visitation assessment testing (if applicable)
- Individual interview on visit day (if applicable)
- Ability to master concepts and skills
- Ability to master the rigor and pacing of the course
- Student's work ethic and active participation in his/her math education

Class Assignments

Could you please clarify: do the students have all classes except Math and English with the same group of other students?

For the 2020-2021 school-year, students were placed into their classes primarily based on their math class. This means that at least 6 of the 8 classes will be with the same students. In the past, VCMS has tried to mix the students up as much as possible over the course of a school day but given the requirements for social distancing, we set classes up to be in as cohesive of cohorts as possible, while still allowing for the leveling of classes and electives block (for 8th grade). Once these social distancing requirements are lifted, we will go back to allowing students to intermix with more students than just their cohesive cohort.

How many kids in each class?

Class sizes were determined by the size of the corresponding classroom the particular class would be assigned once we return to live instruction. In most cases this means classes will be no more than 22 students (to allow for the 35 square feet required for each person in the room). Several classes will be smaller, such a math, elective, and English classes because the corresponding in-person classrooms can only accommodate less students.

Community Group Questions:

What are the Community Groups?

Community Groups are groups are groups of one VCMS staff member and 12-13 VCMS students. All of the students in the community group are from the same grade level and the teacher assigned to the Community Group is part of that grade-level's teaching staff (teacher cohort).

Community Groups are designed to offer a check-in/advisement period for the students. It allows them to develop a relationship with a small group of their classmates while having a time to ask questions, share concerns, or request changes. Especially since digital learning does not allow for spontaneous interactions and check-in time with students, we wanted to provide dedicated time where students could meet with their Community Group leader to help make sure no one student is feeling disconnected or is struggling.

What time are Community Groups?

There is a special schedule for Wednesday. On that schedule, there is an activity period. Community Group time happens, when scheduled, during that activity time. However, it is not every week, as there are other activities that may be scheduled during the month. Students will be notified when there is an activity or a Community Group meeting via Google Classroom.

Extracurricular Questions: Part Two

Why is the Spanish class not included in 6th grade? Will it be instated later in the year?

World Language, French I and Spanish I, is not offered until eighth grade. Eighth grade students may choose to attend French I or Spanish I as part of their elective choices. French I and Spanish I are the same courses offered at Valley Catholic High School and are taught in the high school by the high school French and Spanish teachers. Students who successfully complete the first year of French I or Spanish I may take up to French V or Spanish V as a high school senior. French I and Spanish I are currently being offered for eighth grade students.

Sixth and seventh grade students take a fine arts class during their elective time. The fine arts program is a hallmark of Valley Catholic School and is a legacy left by the Sisters. Sixth grade students (on a typical, non-Covid year) choose between band, choir, drama, and orchestra. Seventh grade students also may take band, choir, drama, and orchestra but (on a typical, non-Covid year) may elect to take one of several art classes in the spring instead of the music classes (space providing). The music and art classes will be added back as soon as we can do so safely given the social distancing requirements.

Will "Future City" occur this year?

VCMS students will not participate in the Future City Competition this year but will work on a parallel project that involves as many of the Future City elements as possible while digital learning and social distancing regulations are in place. The decision to skip the Future City Competition this year was made for two reasons:

1. Covid-19 and Social Distancing - The Future City project is a hands on design project that is based on teambuilding. We simply cannot complete all the elements of the Future City competition (?) in a way that works with the current social distancing requirements much less with digital learning. Additionally the competition is held in Washington state and we are simply unsure (if the competition will be held and, if so,) if travel will be allowed.
2. Staff Changes – The Future Cities project is a major project that has a lot of moving pieces. On a good year, under normal circumstances, Future City has turned into a very large undertaking for both the teachers and students. This year the two lead teachers, Mr. Efstathiou and Mrs. Iserson are not working at the middle school in the fall, which is when the Future City project needs to be completed to meet the contest deadlines. Mr. Efstathiou moved the Valley Catholic High School and is now their Director of Admissions while Mrs. Iserson is on maternity leave until second quarter. So while we will still have elements of this program, we simply cannot meet the requirements and timeline necessary for the competition and we made the decision not to participate in the competition portion of Future Cities.

Do you have any update on CYO sports for Fall and Winter?

Information regarding CYO can be found on their website: <https://www.cyocamphoward.org/home> or feel free to contact Kelly Alfieri, Valley Catholic CYO Athletic Director, at kalfieri@valleycatholic.org

How about orchestra in 7th grades? Is there a sessions for them?

Valley Catholic Middle School normally has a fine arts elective block that allows students, depending on their grade level and space availability, to explore a fine arts class. However, due to the restrictions placed on classes such as band and choir (which require twice as much space between each student) and art (which is only offered to eighth grade students in the fall), the only fine arts class we were able to offer sixth and seventh grade students was orchestra. Orchestra students have a prerequisite of already knowing how to play an orchestral instrument as, unlike band and choir, orchestra is an advanced music class, not a beginning class. This meant that an entire class period could only accommodate 10-15% of the total number of students needing a fine arts class, per grade-level.

However, since the orchestra class is an advanced class, we are able to offer an after school Middle School Orchestra class that is open to all grade levels and will be a project based orchestra course. The projects will be both individual and collective. The students will be practicing and recording repertoire for the purpose of creating a virtual online synchronized performance of at least one piece. There will also be a poetry-in-music project that will require some research and some writing. Students who attend this class will receive academic elective credit. Note: Practicing will still be required as students earn course credit for participation. There is no fee to attend this class.

In addition, we will offer an additional English/Writing Workshop for sixth and seventh grade students, and a Capstone Seminar class for eighth grade students, to help guide students through our main assessment expectations Research, Writing, Presentation and Product. We found that the students simply were not able to dive as deeply into the editing and design process - research and write, receive feedback, edit and resubmit – as they do when in person. For this reason, we chose to use the time to help the students maintain and improve their writing in a way that accommodated the changes Digital Learning brings

How do the credits for orchestra work, seeing as how they are extra? How does it count toward final grades/GPA?

For students taking the after school orchestra class, it will be listed as a 9th class (one more than the normal academic load) on the student's transcript. The class will receive a standard academic grade, and the class credit will be applied, as an elective, with the same weight it would receive during a "normal" school year.

Electives, as a general rule, are not factored into the GPA. The Grade Point Average is based on the core subjects and on the elective classes. Given this, the after school orchestra class also does not factor into the GPA.

Do students need prior experience to participate in the after school orchestra class?

Yes, students must be proficient at reading music and already play an orchestra instrument.

For orchestra, do they need to attend all 4 days a week?

Orchestra class is offered three days a week on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday 5:00 – 6:15 pm. (Do they need to attend all 3 days??)

Will there be any NJHS activities this year? Are there any after school clubs going on virtually?

For the first quarter, we are not offering any after school or co-curricular activities such as clubs or organizations. We are using the first quarter to focus on helping the students be successful both academically and in building the overall school community while we are in digital learning. The 2020-21 registration fees that were collected last spring were either refunded, or for those who submitted payment by check, the checks were shredded.

We hope to bring back some form of after school or co-curricular activities for second quarter but those will vary depending on what the social distancing requirements are at that time.

Are there any parent volunteering opportunities?

Parent volunteer opportunities at the middle school level, in general, consist of helping chaperone field trips. Since we are currently in digital learning, there are no field trips scheduled and thus no parent volunteer opportunities.

Other roles that were typically filled by parent volunteers in elementary grades switch to the students in middle school. Middle school students are able to help, create, plan and volunteer for these activities on their own. We find the students feel a greater sense of ownership while helping through volunteering, and are also able to complete several of their service hours here at school (in a typical, Non-Covid year).

In the past students have been required to participate in service hours. Will service hours be part of this year's requirements? If so, what is expected?

Valley Catholic Middle School students traditionally are required to complete ten hours of service (five per semester) at school or for a school-sponsored event. However, we have waived the first semester service hour requirement since we are in digital learning the first quarter and we cannot ensure there will be enough volunteer opportunities when (if) we return to in-person instruction second quarter.

Standardized Testing:

Do the kids have STAR testing this year?

Valley Catholic Middle School no longer participates in the STAR testing. Our summative testing is conducted by Scholastic Testing Services (STS) which is the same company that conducted the Catholic high school placement exam, the test that these schools use as part of the admissions process.

STS allows us to look at not only scores for our students at the higher ability levels for math and English classes (something that STAR did not do), it also allows for a summative summary of information for other core subjects including science and social studies. We found this to be of particular importance especially as we move to more project-based learning. STS allows us to ensure we are meeting all standards while doing so in a way that allows students to apply the lessons they learn over their time in middle school.

Calendar Questions:

When are school conferences?

We have not yet scheduled conferences. The hope is that as we get into October, the metrics will have changed enough that we could offer an in-person student-teacher-parent conference for those who are comfortable attending in person. We will send an update regarding conferences in early October. Either way, whether they are in-person or digital, both the high school and middle school will continue to offer conferences on the same days, particularly since we share so many staff members.

Outdoor school happening for 6th graders?

Outdoor school is one thing that we will need to wait and see what happens over the next few months. Outdoor school typically is offered in November, and we know for sure that it will not be occurring then. If we are able to arrange something this school year, it will likely occur in the later spring but it will be dependent on both meeting all social distancing requirements and finding a facility that can accommodate our group at a reasonable price. One thing to note, the Outdoor School Fee was removed for the Academic Materials Fee this year (as was the Waves of Love for 7th grade and Horning's Hideout for 8th grade).

I understand that the small group we have been in tonight represents the small group that kids will actually be together with when that time comes, but how many classes mix it up, and how large are those classes?

The current Oregon Blueprint requires students, when in person, to be in as cohesive of a cohort as possible. This includes very limited contact, even passing in the hallway, with other students and between cohorts of students. With this in mind, and assuming these regulations will still be in place when we return to in-person instruction, the classes were determined primarily using the math classes as the core.

(NOTE: To me this seems like more information than they need to know. I doubt most parents will be able to follow it – I'd leave this paragraph out entirely.) There are five math classes at each grade level, there are four sections of students for most classes (except math and eighth grade electives). The four sections are made up of the math classes except that the highest level math class was split up between the four groups to add a more balanced overall academic ability across the sections (particularly for group project work where advanced math skills may be needed to complete part of the project).

Class sizes were determined by the room's capacity when social distancing measures are in place. For most classes, the students will be in groups of 22 with English and elective classes ranging from 15 – 20 students per group.

This then greatly reduces the number of student contacts to only the main cohort (6/7 of their 8 classes), their English classes, and for eighth grade students – their elective classes. Even when factoring in student contacts for English and electives, the students stay well below the state maximum (of 100 people a student comes in contact with per week) when the cohorts are configured this way.

We highly value mixing students up as much as possible, traditionally mixing student at every semester so they have a great ability to meet new people, reconnect with friends, and to shuffle the dynamics of any given class. However, this is on hold until we can safely mix students again. Frankly, we want to be back in person. Since keeping as cohesive a cohort as possible allows for that to happen sooner, we have put the mixing of students on hold until we can do so safely.

How to Support Students

I have access to PowerSchool as a parent. Do I have access to their Google Calendar to follow along, or do I need to read their iPads?

Part of our program helps the students develop self-advocacy. That begins by students learning to take ownership of their school work. While parents remain the primary support system for their children, by middle school the day-to-day elements of the students' academic day are the responsibility of the student. For this reason, Google Classroom (which includes Google Calendar) is only provided to the students as it is a teaching tool (much like we only provide textbooks to the students). Parents may ask their child to see Google Classroom, but the primary communication for the parents remains in the PowerSchool program that shows real-time assignment information, attendance and grades.

Can parents join the Google classroom (muted)?

The classes are for students who are enrolled in Valley Catholic Middle School. Parents may not attend the classes. However, since the classes are offered over Zoom, parents may be in the same

room as their child but we ask that only the child is on screen and that the student's attention is fully engaged with the teacher, and not with the parent, during class time.

What is Self-Advocacy?

VCMS promotes self-advocacy for the students. However, this will look different for an incoming sixth grade student than for a graduating eighth grade student. It can also vary greatly among students within a grade. Self-Advocacy needs to be taught to most students. We understand that this is also an adjustment for parents as the primary ownership of the students' education now shifts to the students themselves. We understand that after being the primary person responsible for communicating with your child's teachers up until this point, is a change. However, we are confident that over the three years a student is in VCMS, there will be visible growth in the student's self-advocacy skills and in turn this will provide a solid foundation for your child as they head into high school.

What are Office Hours?

Office hours are daily for every staff member, 8:00 - 8:30 am. This time is set aside for students (only) to drop in and ask for help. This is not a time for parents or department meetings.

How often are teachers looking at their emails?

Staff is expected to check email throughout the day including, but not limited to, the start of work day (by 7:45 a.m.), mid-morning (by 11:00 a.m.), end of lunch (by 1:00 p.m.), end of work day (by 4:00 p.m.) and once in the evening (prior to 9:00 p.m.) in case there are student homework questions. Staff is asked to check email at least once on the weekend by early Sunday evening (6:00 pm) to check for any student needs or staff notes. Non-essential emails may wait for a response until Monday but if a student has a question about something for Monday it is expected that the staff member will take time to address these issues on Sunday evening.

Are teachers able to tutor after school?

To avoid a conflict of interest (real or perceived), staff members are not allowed to tutor students who attend school in the same campus entity in which the staff member is employed. That means that a VCMS teacher cannot tutor a current VCMS student, regardless of whether the student is currently enrolled in the teacher's class, for any type of compensation. It is permissible for a teacher to tutor a student at another school on campus other than the one in which he/she is employed. For example, a VCMS teacher may tutor VCHS or VCES students. However, since the teacher would be acting as an independent contractor, the tutoring must occur off campus.

What support is available for students who are struggling?

There are three options for homework help:

- Teacher Office Hours which are every day 8:00 – 8:30 for every teacher.
- After School Homework Time which is offered four days a week (Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday) 4:00 – 5:00 pm

- Night Time Homework Time which is offered four days a week (Monday – Thursday) 7:00 – 8:15 pm

Attendance and Grading:

I recall seeing that attendance will be taken at both the beginning and end of each class. How will that work?

The first time attendance is taken, which is within the first few minutes of the start of class, teachers will enter the attendance information into PowerSchool.

The students are required to return to class to check in before signing off for the day, at the least for the last ten minutes of the class period. This attendance is completed by the teacher and the teacher maintains those attendance records. However all procedures for missing both the start of class but also the last ten minutes are the same.

The teacher reaches out to the student, then to the parent, and then to the administration.

Why is attendance taken at both the start and end of the class?

Because we believe personal contact between teachers and students, and direct instruction is important and necessary, there will be a minimum of 30 minutes of synchronous instruction per scheduled class. Depending on the lesson, students may have an entire class be synchronous, may be working with peers in break out rooms, or may have the opportunity to mute their audio and video to work independently for part of the instruction time but the teacher will stay live on Zoom for the entire class. Students and teachers are expected to be available during the entire scheduled class time. Both asynchronous (independent work) and synchronous (whole class) instruction will be used during distance learning.

The last 10 minutes of class will be synchronous instruction so the teacher can check in with students. Attendance will be taken again at the end of class during the check-in time, The teacher will make sure the students have what they need to complete the homework, review information, or prep for tests including a review of both the immediate needs and long-term assignments.

Is the school planning to use pass/no pass grading system during the first semester of this school year?

All classes will receive academic grades. We are not using pass/no pass grading.

In addition, students should expect to see two (or more) individual grades/assessments entered into the grade book each week for every subject, including electives. These could be assignments, tests, and/or participation points to show student engagement and progress.

How will my student know what work they need to complete?

Teachers will give directions verbally and visually. They will be sure that there are at least two forms of directions given for each assignment and that all assignments are posted in Google Classroom.

All work, unless otherwise stated, is due the next day that class is in session. In addition, work is due at the start of each class unless the teacher specifies a different homework collection routine. For example, a math teacher may want the students to keep the assignment so the student can self-correct it before turning the assignment in to Google Classroom.

Why do you assign student work outside of the school day?

Homework is assigned to enhance a concept or as a way to finish work that was started in class. Homework must have a direct connection to the work occurring in the classroom. Homework may be given for each night the student was in school. For most weeks, this means homework may be given for five nights.

Valley Catholic Middle School's student work practices and procedures are designed to teach and reinforce skills that the students will use throughout their lives. Everything we do as a middle school staff helps to enforce this perspective. Unlike high school, where students are expected to know how to complete and submit work, manage absences from school, and become a self-advocate when content is difficult - our middle school program uses student work as an ongoing teaching unit designed to allow students to practice the skills so they can master the content of the subject along with the study skills expected of a high school student.

How much homework should we expect on weekends?

Homework will not be given without in-class instruction time and will not be assigned on days when the students were not in school (no Saturday or Sunday homework).

There will be homework assigned for Friday night, but it is up to the student as to whether to complete Friday night homework on Friday night or another Saturday or Sunday.

The same is true for long-term assignments. Teachers may post student assignments early providing the opportunity for students to work ahead. Teachers will determine the due dates for long-term assignments by calculating the number of school-days needed to complete the assignment. If a student decides to postpone working on the assignment until the weekend, that is the student's choice and not the intent of the teacher. Thus, a student may choose to work on Saturday but that would be in exchange for the time the student would normally put in on a weeknight to complete the work.

How are you enforcing Academic Integrity while participating in Digital Learning?

The expectations for academic integrity are exactly the same for distance learning as they are for in-person learning. Students are always expected to complete their own work unless otherwise instructed. They are expected to cite sources as instructed. Violations of academic integrity are

taken seriously and can lead to consequences including receiving a zero on the assignment up to expulsion for a third offense. Please review the complete policy in the Handbook.

How will I know if my child is struggling?

Staff is expected to send emails to parents when there is a significant academic or behavioral concern. This includes anything out of the norm, such as a sudden drop in academic scores, repeated negative or worrisome behavior, or other chronic issues that are not corrected with interventions.

In addition, parents are strongly encouraged to use the PowerSchool portal to track academic assignments, absences and status of student work. After the first two weeks of school (orientation weeks), staff is expected to enter all grades into the grade book/PowerSchool at least weekly.

Can you explain, specifically, how the teachers will address a potentially struggling student?

For student concerns or issues such as late to class, unexcused absences (absences not reported to the school by a parent), not turning in assignments, poor academic performance or achievement, or small behavioral issues, staff will follow these steps:

1. Contact the student. Staff will contact the student by email or private correspondence on Google Classroom where the staff member will address the concern or issue with the student first, before involving parents, counselor or administration unless another issue arises from this interaction.
2. Contact the student's parent/s. If the concern or issue is not resolved or continues to occur, the next step is for staff to contact the student's parents. Staff members will contact the parents via email to inform them about what is being observed.

In some cases the school counselor and school administration will be copied on the email. This allows the counselor and administration to be informed in the event that the student needs additional support. This also allows the counselor and administration to track the student to see if the concern/issue is isolated to a single class or is a pattern that is developing in two or more classes.

What is the Academic Support that is available?

There are two hours of additional support offered after school hours at no additional cost. These study sessions are not tutoring sessions. They will provide guided/monitored study sessions for students in a group setting. Students who are struggling academically, especially with the transition to digital learning, will also be provided with a staff member who will check in with the student at least weekly. In most cases the school counselor, the academic support teacher, or in some cases, the STEMinar teacher will be the staff member assigned to the student for academic support.

What Social Emotional Support is available?

There will be an hour of additional daily support, programs, breakout rooms, and other opportunities designed to help support the social emotional health of the students. Again, these opportunities are provided at no additional cost. This support might be embedded into orientation or academic classes, before school, during the lunch break, or after school time, and there will be several extended blocks of time during the school day that will be set aside over the course of the quarter that will address the social emotional needs of the students.

Students who are struggling with social emotional issues (feeling accepted, being included, managing conflict, anxiety, transitions, friendship issues, etc.), especially with the transition to digital learning, will also be provided with a staff member (Community Group teacher) who will check in at least weekly and offer support in helping the student take full advantage of the opportunities provided as a way to support students who struggle with one or more students.

In most cases the school counselor and the academic support teacher will be the staff members providing academic support for struggling students. In addition, the student will be asked to identify a teacher they feel particular close to who will become part of their support system.

How long does it take to receive feedback on an assignment?

A student will receive a grade for an assignment no later than five school days after the work was submitted. The teacher may take longer than five school days to grade an assignment if the assignment is a larger assessment (such as a research paper) and requires longer to grade and the expected turnaround time is published when the original assignment is given so that students/parents know to expect a delay in grading

Do the students still get “yeah, but...” this year, and how many?

Because we are in digital learning, there has been an adjustment to the late work practice for the first semester. Any student work that is not submitted by the published deadline will be considered a late assignment. There will be no YEAH BUTs this year. Instead, a late assignment will drop 10% per day (a letter grade), even if it is submitted the same day but after collection time), for up to four school days from the time it was collected. After 5 school days the grade drops to a zero. There is no extra credit or recovery for an assignment once five school days have passed as student should focus on staying up to date on the current work.

What is the extra credit policy?

Extra credit may be offered in some courses as a way to provide enriched learning opportunities for the students. Valley Catholic Middle School does not allow extra credit or the opportunity to “redo” assignments as a way to increase a grade.

What if we think there should be an extension granted due to special circumstances?

While extensions may be granted at teacher's discretion (with the consultation of the department head or counselor), the student must be proactive (reach out to the teacher PRIOR to the due date) in order to receive an extension. Proactive communication includes the STUDENT emailing the teacher, attending office hours for help, etc. No extension will be granted for a reactionary communication (after the due date) unless there are extreme extenuating circumstances that are beyond the student's control. However, please note that some students may be granted an extension because it is part of a pre-existing Individual Learning Plan accommodation. Teachers will have these Individual Learning Plans (ILP) by the second week of school.

Who do I notify if my child misses (or is late to) class for some kind of appointment?

Please notify both the teacher/s and Mr. French via email when a student will miss class.

How do we collect homework after an absence?

Following an absence, students are responsible for seeing each teacher the day they return to make arrangements for make-up work. Alternate assignments may be given for assignments including lectures, group work and science labs. Any work assigned prior to the absence is due the day the student returns. Students have the same number of days they were absent to make up work assigned during the absence. Make-up work received after this, including all quizzes, tests and projects that were assigned prior to the absence, will be considered late. Students should check Google Classroom while they are absent to accomplish as much as they can while they are absent.

If a student is absent on the day a long-term or final project is due, the student is responsible for making sure that the teacher receives the long-term or final project on the day it is due. No extension is granted unless an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) is in place.

General Questions:

Has the Archdiocese Office for Schools offered you any help in terms of reopening, or in terms of what flexibility Catholic schools might have to reopen?

Yes, we have been very involved with both the Archdiocesan Department of Catholic Schools as well as the Oregon Department of Education and cohorts with other Catholic, private and public schools. These interactions, planning sessions, and training have been occurring since the spring and will continue throughout the year.

Has there been any discussion to join the lawsuit that was filed by Christian Horizon and the other Christian Schools?

No. We are focused on providing the best education we can given the restrictions required for social distancing.

We tried collaborating with another student earlier this week on Google classroom troubleshooting but the students couldn't share screen with each other. Will that be the setup for the whole year?

The Zoom accounts are held by the teachers and the teachers invite students into their Zoom rooms. If a parent would like to arrange something with Zoom so their child can work on assignments posted in Google Classroom with a friend via video conference, the parent will need to create an account and manage the interactions.

How will you be address the election? What is the school's policy on debating issues?

It is important that VCMS classrooms remain a safe place for students with varying political convictions. As a general topic of discussion, politics and personal opinions will be kept out of the classroom unless a staff member directly teaches content related to a political topic or affiliation. When political topics are covered as a part of a classroom curriculum, the political topics will look at the foundations, how to vet both sides of an argument, the historical context, the Catholic Church's perspective and why it has that perspective but there will be no encouraging or endorsing of one candidate, party or side of an issue. That is a conversation for families to have at home.

Do the teachers have Social Media accounts? If so, how do we access those?

Here is an excerpt from the VCS faculty handbook on this matter: "VCS employees may not "friend" or "follow" any current student or parent of Valley Catholic School on social media (including, but not limited to Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn), regardless of who initiates the contact. If a student or parent attempts such a contact, the student and parent should be advised that participating in social networking by employees with students and parents is prohibited. Any employee who included a current student in his/her social network prior to the employment at VCS is expected to sever the connection immediately. Any employee who included a current VCS parent in his/her social network prior to the employment at VCS is expected to establish a clear line of delimitation between social conversations and conversations about any information the employee only knows because of their employment at VCS. Exceptions to the prohibition against social networking may be considered on a case-by-case basis and must be approved by the principal under whom the employee works."

Want more information? The best source of information is the VCMS Parent's Guide: <https://www.valleycatholic.org/vcms-parents-guide/>