

## **EMAIL: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8<sup>th</sup>**

Dear Rise Family,

I hope this message finds you and your loved ones healthy and safe, and to the greatest extent possible – **connected**. It is with your continued understanding and support that we are able to overcome the many obstacles we are all faced with at this time. Thank you for your kindness, empathy, and compassion as we lean on one another for support.

I would like to provide you with a few updates as we wrap up the week and head into the three-day weekend (Happy Easter!). I apologize for the length of this message and appreciate your attention, as I know time is limited for many of us. Despite our remote operations, I want to remain as open and transparent as I possibly can. If anything is unclear or if you still have questions, please do not hesitate to call or [email me](#).

### **COVID-19 Response Plan**

I know I speak on behalf of our entire team when I tell you that the Rise community is our top priority – **specifically our families and teachers**. We are working tirelessly, in collaboration with our board of directors, to strike a balance between keeping our families and our teachers as healthy and financially whole as possible. Please trust that everyone's best interests are at the center of every possible solution considered by our financial and operational subcommittees of the board. We continue to reevaluate each solution as information changes and will do everything in our power to get our beloved program and community through this health crisis.

At this time, Governor Greg Abbott has issued a [statewide order](#) through **April 30<sup>th</sup>** that encourages Texans to stay home in an effort to stop the spread of COVID-19. President Trump has also announced that all Americans must continue to avoid nonessential travel, going to work, eating at bars and restaurants, or gather in groups of more than 10 people for at least another month and perhaps until June. It was announced on Friday that [AISD](#) has made the determination to close indefinitely, but we will reassess the opening of our program when shelter orders have been lifted. Our program extends until June and that is certainly a factor in our decision to return to campus when it is deemed safe to do so. As we all know, this situation continues to evolve and **as a team, we will continue to monitor** the CDC and local media outlets for information regarding city- and statewide orders and closures.

### **What does this mean for Rise?**

As outlined in our family handbook, The Rise School of Austin typically follows AISD for school closures and delays. However, we will continue to follow the guidance of our Board of Directors, city officials, and the Department of Family and Protective Services to determine the best course of action for our **specific** students, staff, and families. Please trust that the decision to provide services in an alternative manner is not taken lightly. *As promised, The Rise School of Austin will re-evaluate the option of returning to campus as updates are shared with the Austin community.* Please also know that the administrative team is making all efforts to obtain funding through various outside sources, including but not limited to the [CARES SBA PPP Loan](#). This is an effort that our team takes seriously, as the viability of our program and the security of our staff and families is of utmost importance to us.

### **What does this mean for our teachers?**

Rise teachers are dedicated more than ever to provide you with the best learning experience possible during this health crisis. At this time, all teams are working full days, which include:

- Planning weekly lesson plans and providing differentiated resources for each child (with consideration of individual student interests and needs), with drive-up printing service available (see [Lou](#))
- Meeting daily with their teams to collaborate
- Hosting about 2 – 3 hours of live connection opportunities (office hours, FaceTime) for children and families *daily*.
- Planning, preparing, editing, and providing developmentally appropriate recorded content daily on YouTube
- In addition, while lead teachers continue their professional development in educational technology and remote team management, all teachers and TAs are completing at least 2 – 6 hours of professional development weekly, with the opportunity to log upwards of 15 professional development hours weekly. Some topics this week include: (1) Reviewing materials on Universal Design for Learning (UDL), then, applying their knowledge to

- create a plan for YouTube content with access points for every learner; (2) researching and compiling a list of online applications or resources to share with families; and completing an online course from Vanderbilt University on behavior modification, then creating a video to apply their learning to their practice.
- Coming up, teams will work on (1) preparing supply packets that include various arts and crafts materials; and (2) preparing differentiated skills checklists for each child.
- See attached for full description of RSA Distance Learning MENU 😊

### What does this mean for our administrators?

- Administrators are working closely with the board to monitor the COVID-19 pandemic and create viable options for school operations.
- The financial assistance committee is also reviewing applications for [COVID-19 Tuition Relief](#) as well as financial assistance applications for the 2020 – 2021 school year (due Tuesday, April 14<sup>th</sup>).
  - Please submit applications and letters by **TODAY** to Meg Bethune and Rachel Parr (if submitted to [dmartinson@riseschoolaustin.org](mailto:dmartinson@riseschoolaustin.org) we have access to your letters, no need to resend)
  - Determinations will be made as soon as possible. Thank you for your patience. We will contact applicants soon.
- Enrollment paperwork and supplemental packets are also being reviewed and filed. If you have any questions regarding packets please do not hesitate to [reach out](#).
- Development efforts, events, grants, and other potential funding sources continue to be explored and planned for as appropriate.
- As always, the children are our top priority, and therefore, staff development, support, and coaching are incorporated into our weekly duties. If you have questions or feedback regarding the RSA Distance Learning Program, please feel free to [contact us](#).
- Implications for end-of-year events including but not limited to transition meetings (ARDs), assessments, parent-teacher conferences, and other school events.
- Opportunities to connect to the mission of Rise for families, staff, donors, and children.
- Preparation for 2020 – 2021 school year including but not limited to staffing, enrollment, orientation/professional development, and budget preparation.
- Responding to the needs of our community by being available by phone, email or text to discuss ideas, concerns, and/or questions.
- Launch of the new website and brand distinctives scheduled for fall of 2020.
- **Please note: Danielle is on leave due to an emergency and we are not certain of her return date at this time. For any inquiries regarding enrollment, payments, refunds, etc. please direct them to Rachel Parr and Meg Bethune. Her correspondence was limited following spring break, so if you are awaiting a response from her, please forward us the email. Thank you for your understanding and patience as this was an unanticipated absence.**

Essentially, our business operations are substantially the same, and therefore, we are in full operation remotely. If you have any questions AT ALL, please do not hesitate to reach out to our team. We are here for you.

### Enrollment & Financial Aid Deadlines

Due to this pandemic, many families have found it difficult to complete the health packet supplement for enrollment. We are also aware that the IRS has postponed tax return filing until July. Due to these updates and possible constraints, the enrollment packet deadline has been postponed until **Tuesday, April 14<sup>th</sup>**. If your well check visits have been postponed, please simply notify our office and submit them when you are able. No late fee will be assessed. Financial aid applications are also due on **Tuesday, April 14<sup>th</sup>**, but tax returns can be uploaded to FAST on or before **May 29<sup>th</sup>**. Families will be notified of awards prior to May 29<sup>th</sup>. However, if there are discrepancies between the application and the return, the reward will be adjusted according to the information provided by the tax return. **If you would like to drop off packets in-person, Lou will be on campus on Monday and Tuesday from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m.** Please practice CDC guidelines to the best of your ability and remain six feet away from Lou or any staff on site, wear gloves and a mask if available, and if sick, please wait until you've been symptom free for a minimum of five days before meeting anyone on campus. Before visiting campus, please [email Lou](#) and copy your lead teacher so that they can prepare appropriately. Thank you for your understanding and adherence to these safety procedures.

**Family Resources:**

- Distance Learning MASTER SCHEDULE (attached)
- [RSA Distance Learning Google Drive](#)
- [Classroom Videos](#)
- [Therapy Videos](#)
- **\*COMING SOON: RSA VLOG\***

**Questions?**

Please don't forget to review the attached RSA COVID-19 Response FAQs. Still have questions, give me a call. Happy to provide clarification.

Stay safe, school family.

Well wishes,  
Meg