



2020-2021

Supplemental Guide for  
SSMCS Distance Education

Welcome to Silver Sands Montessori Charter School! We are delighted that you are a part of our community. From our kindergarteners to our eighth graders, SSMCS is committed to providing a positive environment for all children and their families. The school handbook can be viewed on our school's website at [www.silversandsmcs.org](http://www.silversandsmcs.org). The document was prepared for in-school session and gives you the policies regarding attendance, assessments, dress code and discipline policies, etc. and so we are providing you with this supplemental guide that gives you additional information on the distance education program.

The Montessori Method is all about process. While completion of work (product) is important, especially in the elementary and middle grades, the difference is in the approach to learning. Learning is most effective when it is within a greater context. When subjects and concepts are connected, often through the use of stories, we establish meaning, and foster curiosity and motivation in the children. We want the children to feel connected to their learning, not to simply complete assignments while they are at home.

We will work with families to facilitate activities that foster exploration and discovery on the part of the children. In this way, they assume responsibility for their own learning, and experience the joy of mastering a new task.

It is important to us that we remain connected during the time of distance learning. This will take place in a variety of ways, but you can depend on ongoing communication among teachers, families, and children.

Distance learning is new to all of us, so we will be discovering together what works in this new arena. Our teachers are sharing ideas among themselves, tapping into online and community resources, and training on useful platforms. Our aim is to maintain the best Montessori program possible with the tools available to us. This handbook will provide guidance to families, and outline how staff and administration will offer support throughout these extraordinary times.

## The Prepared Environment at Home

The “prepared environment” is another term for a Montessori classroom, in which materials are thoughtfully chosen and arranged to promote the children's development. Your home can also be “prepared” in ways that support independence, provide meaningful tasks for children to accomplish, and supplement learning.

For kindergarten, your home and neighborhood are the learning environment. For elementary and middle school students it will also be important to establish a quiet space to work, along with expectations and routines for completing specific assignments from teachers.

Consider discussing distance learning with your child, and include him or her in some of the decision-making by:

- ☐ Asking where to set up the workspace.
- ☐ Making a schedule together that works for your family.
- ☐ Gathering ideas for activities and projects.
- ☐ Organizing materials.

Older students will receive instructions from teachers as to how to access, hand in, and receive feedback on assigned work, and it will be important for them to maintain planned routines.

The challenges of distance learning can be approached as opportunities to be flexible, creative, and responsible in new ways, and we are here to help!

*Education is the work of self-organization by which man adapts himself to the conditions of life.*

Maria Montessori

## Practical Life at Home

Practical Life (sometimes known as Everyday Living) is an important element of the Montessori curriculum. It is part of every classroom, and can be easily implemented at home. On the surface these activities help students to develop useful skills, but they also have underlying goals with lifetime benefits. Practical Life activities:

- ☐ Foster order and sequence
- ☐ Develop concentration
- ☐ Foster independence
- ☐ Foster the development of fine motor control
- ☐ Provide opportunities for planning and carrying out tasks
- ☐ Provide practice in grace and courtesy (please, thank you, how to interrupt, etc.)
- ☐ Develop habits of personal care—including the all-important handwashing, nose- blowing, and covering of coughs and sneezes

Practical life tasks provide children with opportunities to contribute to family life. Inherent in these activities is the development of key executive functions: decision-making, organization, problem- solving, impulse control, collaboration, and communication. These skills form the foundation of a child's academic learning.

Examples of Practical Life activities for various age levels include:

- ☐ Setting a table, washing dishes, or loading the dishwasher
- ☐ Watering plants
- ☐ Tidying or organizing a room or play space, making a bed
- ☐ Folding and putting away clothing, matching pairs of socks
- ☐ Planning an outing
- ☐ Taking care of pets
- ☐ Preparing a snack or meal
- ☐ Helping with shopping lists or budgeting
- ☐ Repairing a bicycle
- ☐ Planting or helping with a garden

Practical life is engaging for children of all ages, when tasks are designed according to their level of skill and independence. A job chart or list of family projects can help guide your child's interests.

Participation in practical life work fosters a sense of responsibility and satisfaction. Children feel that they are valuable, contributing members of the family—and they are!

As children get older, practical life activities lead naturally to service, in the form of volunteer and community work. For adolescents, these experiences are the foundation of their sense of self—their feeling of belonging, their place in the world, and their contributions to the greater good.

## **The Uninterrupted Work Cycle**

In a Montessori classroom, children are given large blocks of time in order to explore their work deeply. Every effort should be made to mirror this at home. Create a daily routine that works for your family, but that allows for quiet, uninterrupted work time in a space designated for that purpose. This will lead to greater concentration and enhanced ability to problem-solve on the part of the child.

Montessori learning is child-centered, rather than teacher-directed, and the framework of large unstructured time blocks supports this concept.

## **“Owning” Work and Sharing Learning**

Montessori students take a more active role than students in traditional classrooms in choosing, planning, and sharing their work with others. Students from kindergarten through Middle School have a task list of some kind

(goal sheet, planner, etc.). They exercise at least partial choice in what goes on the list, and how and when items on the list are accomplished.

When introducing new lessons and assigning work, teachers take into consideration both the developmental level of the child and his or her interests. Montessori's dictate to "follow the child" is important here, because a child who is already interested in the work is much more likely to be motivated and attentive to the task at hand. Some elements in lesson planning that contribute to self-direction and independence on the child's part are:

- ☐ Choice
- ☐ Participation in planning and organizing tasks
- ☐ Discussions with the child
- ☐ Finding good resources
- ☐ Sharing of knowledge

The more children are involved in developing their activities, and the more their curiosity is piqued through their studies, the more they can achieve. Teachers will be making assignments and suggestions and offering guidance for the children's work at home, and we encourage you to share in return.

In a Montessori school, it is a regular occurrence for elementary and Middle School students to present their work or projects to the class. This essential part of the learning process requires sound mastery of content to be able to describe, explain, and express thoughts clearly to an audience of peers. You can replicate this process at home by listening as your child presents his or her work to you and family members. One of the skills our Middle School alumni comment on when they come back to visit is their comfort speaking in front of a group. This begins early in Montessori, and we hope you will facilitate the process with your children.

## **Belonging to the Community—Our Montessori “Family”**

Being in a Montessori school is often described by students as being part of a big family. It's a safe place to be, physically and socially, where every student is valued. Belonging to a community also means that there is accountability in our relationships with others. Respect and care for self, others, and the environment (the classroom, the school, and the world at large) are taught and practiced every day.

Parents and extended family are also part of our community, and we have always worked in partnership to best serve the children. The extraordinary circumstances in which we now find ourselves will both test and expand the relationships that have already been established, and place more responsibility on everyone. Teachers are working many hours to transform and communicate their curricula, parents are adapting to the demands of distance learning, and the children are adjusting in multiple ways, both personally and academically. Every single person is coping with a new routine and an altered lifestyle. Your children may ask questions and have fears about the COVID-19 coronavirus. The resource section at the back of this handbook lists two excellent articles that address talking with your children about the virus.

Our view: In challenges we see opportunity. The three sides of our equilateral partnership triangle are strong, and everyone will be working together to ensure that our students reach their fullest potential, despite unprecedented obstacles. We are committed to every child's physical, spiritual, social, and academic well-being, and will do our best to meet their needs.

## **Kindergarten**

### **Children may be expected to:**

- ☐ Enjoy family life with developmentally appropriate contributions.
- ☐ Participate in teacher-generated activities, as developmentally appropriate.

**Parents are invited to:**

- ☐ Be aware of your child's stress or worries during this time of adjustment.
- ☐ Watch for and read communications from your child's teachers.
- ☐ Initiate communication with teachers when you have questions, ideas, or concerns.
- ☐ Support your child's independence in daily life. Do not do something for a child that he or she is capable of doing without help. Allow children to show you their capabilities. You may be surprised!
- ☐ Allow your child to choose "work" from a selection of appropriate activities. Children at this age learn best with concrete, hands-on materials.
- ☐ Allow enough time for your child to accomplish and repeat an activity. At this stage children are motivated by the process, rather than the product, and are building concentration through repetition.
- ☐ Refrain from interrupting or commenting when a child is concentrating.
- ☐ Establish daily routines and expectations. Consistency and order facilitate exploration and discovery.
- ☐ Limit screen time. Substitute interactive or creative play for devices and television.
- ☐ Go outdoors. Allow your child to experience and explore the natural world.
- ☐ Provide opportunities for daily physical activity.
- ☐ Promote language development by conversing with your child. Answer a question with a question: "What do you think?"
- ☐ Read to your child every day. This is the single best precursor to future reading competence.

**Kindergarten Teachers will:**

- ☐ Initiate individual communication based on student needs.
- ☐ Give guidance in setting up a daily routine.
- ☐ Make suggestions for appropriate house chores.
- ☐ Offer guidelines and suggestions for screen time.
- ☐ Provide both general and individualized instruction and suggestions for activities to develop fine and gross motor skills, language, and numeracy.
- ☐ Communicate with parents in a consistent fashion, replying to emails within 24 hours.

**Useful concepts:**

- ☐ Children thrive in environments that promote repetition, routine, and the mastery of purposeful movement.
- ☐ Allow your child to choose activities, and provide periods of time without distractions.
- ☐ The keys to a successful learning environment are order, access to hands-on materials, space to explore, and meaningful activity. "Work" and "play" are interchangeable terms—and are a natural part of life in this period of amazing growth and development.

## **Lower Elementary (Grades 1-3)**

**Students are expected to:**

- ☐ Plan and organize work with guidance from parents.
- ☐ Follow teachers' guidelines and academic expectations.
- ☐ Work with integrity on assigned tasks, and submit their best quality work.

**Parents are invited to:**

- ☐ Guide your child to set up a prepared environment at home.
- ☐ Collaborate with your child to set up a consistent routine and work schedule.
- ☐ Follow along with the teachers' instructions and suggested activities to maintain skills and concepts, and provide support where required.
- ☐ Be aware of the introduction of new materials and concepts.
- ☐ Provide opportunities for your child to share or present work to you.

**Lower Elementary teachers will:**

- ☐ Prepare a variety of appropriate tasks and activities for children to complete at home, in order to maintain and move their learning forward.
- ☐ Communicate with parents in a consistent fashion, replying to emails within 24 hours.
- ☐ Offer parent education resources.
- ☐ Provide feedback to students.
- ☐ Collaborate with Specials staff (art, music, physical education, etc.) to provide activities and suggestions for specials classes. These will be included in Seesaw feeds for each Montessori class.

**Important Concepts:**

- ☐ Respect each child's stage of development. Many lower elementary students are still working at a concrete (hands-on) level. They have not yet progressed developmentally to abstract work, and require the Montessori materials to complete some tasks. Teachers will guide you as to what approach makes sense for your child.
- ☐ Develop ideas that allow lower el students to build upon their interests. Some examples are projects, journals, creative writing, geometry constructions, and practical life at home.

## **Upper Elementary (9-12 years, Grades 4-5)**

**Students will be expected to:**

- ☐ Plan and organize work as independently as possible.
- ☐ Follow teachers' guidelines and expectations.
- ☐ Be their own advocate when assistance or further clarification is required.
- ☐ Communicate directly with teachers.

**Parents are invited to:**

- ☐ Collaborate with your child to create a "prepared environment" at home.
- ☐ Establish a routine and work schedule.
- ☐ Be aware of teachers' assigned and suggested activities to maintain skills and concepts, and provide support when appropriate.
- ☐ Provide opportunities for your child to share/present work to you.

**Upper Elementary teachers will:**

- ☐ Prepare a variety of appropriate tasks and activities for children to complete at home.
- ☐ Communicate with parents in a consistent fashion, replying to emails within 24 hours.
- ☐ Provide feedback to students.
- ☐ Collaborate with Specials staff (art, music, physical education, etc.) to provide activities and suggestions for specials classes. These will be included in Google Classroom feeds for each Montessori class.

**Important concepts:**

- ☐ Respect your child's stage of development. Some students may still be at a concrete operational level, and require the Montessori materials to complete certain tasks.
- ☐ Generate ideas that allow children the opportunity to build upon their interests. These may include projects, journals, creative writing, or practical life at home. Ask your child for suggestions!
- ☐ Through Google Classroom, support the upper elementary students' need for group work.

## **Middle School**

**Students are expected to:**

- ☐ Use their time management and organization skills.
- ☐ Honor Middle School expectations for all work.
- ☐ Work solidly using the Remote Class Schedule as a guide.

- ❑ Honor due dates for assignments.
- ❑ Sign in to Infinite Campus and Check themselves in for each course they are participating in on that day

**Parents are invited to:**

- ❑ Check with your child each morning to plan schoolwork time and work space.
- ❑ Maintain daily conversations about work progress.
- ❑ Invite your child to assist in preparing a meal for the family once per week.
- ❑ Invite your child to contribute more than usual to household chores.

**Middle School teachers will:**

- ❑ Provide instruction via Google Classroom.
- ❑ Review assignments daily.
- ❑ Be available for meetings and conferences with students according to the Remote Class Schedule.
- ❑ Answer student or parent emails within 24 hours.

**Important Concepts:**

- ❑ In general, we expect Middle School students to take responsibility for completing their work within the timelines provided.
- ❑ This is an opportunity for parents and students to discuss topics of inquiry from their studies.
- ❑ Watching or reading the news together, and otherwise having adult-style conversations, is very important.
- ❑ While we don't expect parents to review assignments, please do support work completion.

## Elementary Specials

**Music Class Goals:** All music students will explore and expand their understanding about:

- How to actively listen to the sounds around them
- Musical composers and history
- Music appreciation
- Expressing themselves through creative movement and sound
- Communication through music

Upper Elementary will:

- Begin to read musical notes
- Play simple songs on the recorder

**Art Class Goals:** Students will explore and begin to understand:

- Principles and elements of art
- Express themselves and their emotions through artwork
- Creative problem solvers
- Continue to develop fine motor skills
- Gain understanding and appreciation for artist and their work
- Different materials, tools and techniques
- Becoming comfortable presenting and discussing their own work with teachers and peers

**Expectations for Music and Art:** Students are expected to:

- When participating in virtual class meetings, be on time and be prepared to work with the required materials.
- Be respectful of ALL people in the virtual classroom. Each student will be respectful of the teacher and will not impede instruction through disruptive behavior or tardy entry to class. Be respectful of other students, and treat others in a mature and thoughtful manner. Listen and follow directions from the teacher and/or other adults.
- Effort- Students are expected to participate fully in all class activities to the best of their ability. The expectation is that the student will develop skills, through practice, during the semester.

- Share work weekly in your virtual classroom (Seesaw or Google classroom).
- Follow the policies outlined in the SSMCS Parent and Student Handbook.

**Grading:** Grades are earned through positive participation, citizenship (following procedures, use of class time, discussions) and submitted work. Students will be asked to submit work weekly to show progress. Work that is not yet finished and is in progress may be submitted to document weekly work.

**Assignments:** Students will have weekly assignments. Assignments and information regarding virtual class meetings will be posted weekly in virtual classrooms (Seesaw or Google Classroom)

**Virtual Class Meetings:** Students are strongly encouraged to attend and participate in weekly meetings. Virtual class meetings will be recorded for those who cannot attend during normally scheduled times. Students are expected to behave as if they were in school.

**Class Materials:** Please refer to the class material list that was sent home. If additional materials are needed for future lessons, materials or material lists will be sent home in advance.

## SSMCS Distance Learning FAQs 2020-2021

### Kindergarten

- 1. Will there be an Open House Night?** Our Meet and Greet Open house will be held on Thursday, August 20, 2020 from 12:00 noon - 1:00pm. There will be several brief recorded informational sessions on See Saw to aide in your understanding of our classroom procedures and expectations. Our kindergarten team will also be hosting individual family meetings at a later date.
- 2. What to expect on the first day?** A lot of fun! We will start to get to know each other in video chats that will also inform you of our virtual classroom expectations - basically, we'll meet our new friends and learn about what it means to be in Kindergarten
- 3. What will the school-day look like?**
  - Daily Scheduled Morning and Afternoon Office Hours (parent communication)
  - Daily Scheduled Live Whole Group, Small Group, One-to-One instruction will take place several times a day
  - Daily Scheduled Recommended snack break, Brain Break
  - Daily Scheduled Live Lunch (social time for the class)
  - Daily Scheduled Recommended Outside Playtime and Rest Period
  - Daily Scheduled Afternoon Specials
  - Daily Scheduled Independent Work Cycle (work packet, Raz-Kids, or Khan Academy)
- 4. Will the teachers hold office hours?** Yes, Kindergarten teachers will hold the same office hours, from 8:00 – 8:30 AM M-F. If you are unable to meet during these times, please feel free to email your teacher with any questions or concerns.
- 5. Will there be packets and what will be in them? Where do I get the materials to complete classwork?** Weekly packets will consist of letter formation and sound practice, numeral formation and identification, shape recognition, cutting practice, pattern development, as well as beginning reading skill development.  
  
We are providing you with a basic starter kit of supplies but you may need to purchase additional supplies such as crayons, pencils, glue sticks, etc. as needed. We have also provided you with a bag of 45 items for use in mathematics. We will send materials home to use with the lessons presented however, there are some supplies such as bowls, plates, etc. that you may need access to from home.



6. **Will there be a day to pick up and drop off?** Weekly packets will be provided on Wednesday's with the expectation that materials are returned the following week for grading and a new packet for the upcoming week provided.
7. **What if I can't be there to pick up or drop off on the day assigned to kindergarten?** If you are unable to pick up your packet on Wednesday, alternate arrangements can be made on a case by case basis with the individual teacher.
8. **Will there be a supply list?** Yes, a list of items pertinent to home and our classroom work will be delivered to families in time for the first day and these are to be kept at home.
9. **Will there be all of the specials?** Weekly Specials-Outdoor Classroom-Gardening, PE, & Spanish (lessons will be live and recorded with Ms. Alyssa) Ms. Rebecca will be doing art and Ms. Alessandra will be doing music once a week as well, with lessons either live or recorded.
10. **How will Library work?** While we will not be physically checking out library books, we invite you to visit Ms. Erin at the Whitney Ranch Library where you will be able to check out books. You will also have access to many digital resources for pleasure reading through Raz-Kids, Storyline, recorded read-alouds, etc. Our plan to encourage reading and build your home library includes sending paper copies of books home.
11. **Will there be homework?** Yes, homework is an important part of establishing a routine for our littlest learners. Kindergarteners should be reading or be read to each night. Please record this reading on the provided reading log. This will be turned in at the end of each month. In addition, we may have special family projects in which your scholar will get to present to their classmates.
12. **Will the classrooms have support teachers?** One special facet to our distance learning program is the fact that we not only continue to have a support teacher, but two classes will have the same support! This will give great continuity to our department and offer essential collaboration opportunities among us, to provide an optimal educational experience for your student. Ms. Alyssa will be the support teacher for kindergarten.
13. **What are the email addresses of the kindergarten teachers?** We are looking forward to a wonderful school year. We will have office hours daily from 8:00-8:30 morning and each afternoon as needed. We ask you to please copy Ms. Alyssa on all correspondence with both Ms. Katie and Ms. Stephanie. Please understand that we ask for your patience when responding; while we try and respond quickly, we do allow ourselves a grace period of 24 hours. Our email addresses are as follows:  
[ms.katie@silversandsmcs.org](mailto:ms.katie@silversandsmcs.org) Lead Teacher, Jackrabbit Classroom  
[ms.stephanie@silversandsmcs.org](mailto:ms.stephanie@silversandsmcs.org) Lead Teacher, Desert Tortoise Classroom  
[ms.alysa@silversandsmcs.org](mailto:ms.alysa@silversandsmcs.org) Support Teacher, Jackrabbit/Desert Tortoise
14. **How will attendance be taken?** Attendance will be taken directly in Infinite Campus and parents, you will have the ability to check your student in. You can do this by logging into Infinite Campus and clicking a simple box. If this sounds stressful (as yet one more thing to do in an already busy day) please don't worry -- teachers will have their usual capability of taking attendance in Infinite Campus. All families are expected to check in with their scholars Lead Educator to verify work being completed. This is done through attending live whole group, small group, or one-to-one sessions. If you are unable to attend live sessions, verification of work completed and participation in lessons presented/recorded will consist of families submitting a brief synopsis and photo of work completed.
15. **How will parents communicate with the teacher? With the students?** Communication between home and school can increase your child's interest and achievement in learning. The kindergarten team will work closely with one another to ensure that all of our students feel safe and are given the optimal environment in which to succeed. If you have questions and/or concerns as the year gets underway, please contact any one of us. The most efficient way to reach us is via email. We will try to respond within 24 hours. Our schedule has office hours to meet with parents and/or students at the beginning of the school day via Zoom.

Forms with the opportunity to update your correct email addresses and phone numbers will be coming home to you soon (before the school year starts). If you share custody of a student, please help us by ensuring we have your most recent contact information and that both custodial parents are listed on that form. Thank you!

- 16. If my child cannot attend a scheduled Zoom meeting, what can we do?** Your child will be expected to participate in live lessons as much as possible. Participation will help to ensure a good learning foundation is created as well as help to establish a consistent routine for learning. This will be particularly important for small group instruction. Families, please note that the expectation is for your scholar to work as independently as possible. This means that you will need to encourage their academic development from a distance to allow them sufficient time for practice and reflection.

A recording of lessons will be posted to Seesaw. In the event that the lesson has an extended time, a link will be provided for safe and easy access. Students should watch the recording and complete any work on their own time.

- 17. How long might an assignment take for my child to complete?** An estimate of minutes that students should be spending on each activity may be given to help students and parents gauge their experience. However, because we are not a one size fits all program, please provide your scholar with the grace and courtesy to complete work at their own pace with multiple opportunities for practice.

- 18. How will we know what to do each week?** We'll use a suggested daily schedule for students in a "Week at a Glance Schedule" that will be posted on Seesaw.

- 19. What will we be learning at the beginning of the year?**

- Practical Life activities (scooping, pouring, pincer, folding, sweeping)
- Sensorial Activities (cutting, textures, smelling jars)
- Mathematics Activities (daily calendar, shapes, counting, worksheets-number identification, ten-frames, etc.)
- Reading/ELA (letter tracing, ABC Bootcamp, letter sound practice, read-alouds (recorded and live), circle maps, etc.)
- Writing (name practice, nursery rhymes, subject area journal entries/pictures, etc.)

## Lower Elementary

- 1. Will there be an Open House?** Yes, Open House will be a Virtual Meet and Greet this year. It will be on Thursday, August 20. Parents will be invited to a Zoom meeting.

Coyotes and Roadrunners - 1:00 - 2:00 pm

Pumas and Mountain Bluebirds - 2:00 - 3:00 pm

- 2. What to expect on the first day?** A lot of fun! We will start to get to know each other in video chats that will also inform you of our virtual classroom expectations - basically, we'll meet our new friends and learn about what it means to be in Lower El!!

- 3. What will the school-day look like?** Teachers will provide instruction on core concepts; either by lessons uploaded onto Seesaw or live, via a scheduled Zoom Meeting. On Wednesdays, teachers and students will engage in a "Social Time" to meet their social-emotional needs. Instruction will occur in both small and large groups. Children are expected to attend Zoom Meetings scheduled for them. Our school day will run from 8:00 am - 2:30 pm

- 4. Will the teachers hold office hours?** Yes, the lower elementary teachers will hold the same office hours, from 8:00 – 8:30 AM M-F. If you are unable to meet during these times, please feel free to email your teacher with any questions or concerns.

5. **Will there be packets and what will be in them?** Instructional packets will be picked up and dropped off each week. It may include paper-based practice for: Montessori Materials to be made in the home, Mathematics, Reading, Language Arts, and Handwriting.
6. **Will students still work through programs like Math-U-See at their own pace?** Yes, Math, Reading, and Spelling will be assessed to form small groups. We will do these a little differently as we'll be online. Please expect to receive a Math-U-See assessment, for example, prior to beginning school. Reading and spelling assessments will happen online in a whole group. We will work to our best efforts to maintain this important academic feature.
7. **Will there be a day to pick up and drop off packets?** Yes, Lower El students will pick up new packets and drop off prior week's work on Wednesday. Times to be determined shortly.
8. **What if I can't be there to pick up or drop off on the day assigned to LE?** Please discuss your needs with your child's classroom teacher.
9. **Will there be a supply list?** Yes, a list of items pertinent to home and our classroom were emailed out to families via Infinite Campus and will also be posted on the website. Please plan to drop off the two supplies requested for the classroom (two folders and binder) when you pick up your child's packet on Wednesday, August 26.
10. **Will there be all of the specials?** Physical Education, Gardening, and Spanish will be taught by our Classroom Support Teachers, Ms. Diane and Ms. Faith. Music will be taught by Ms. Alessandra and Art will be taught by Ms. Rebecca.
11. **How will Library work?** Teachers will send home a book list. Students will choose a book for the week. Students will only be allowed to choose new books if the previous book is returned.
12. **Will there be homework?** Lower Elementary teachers request that children read independently at least 20 minutes each day.
13. **Will the classrooms have support teachers?** One special facet to our distance learning program is the fact that we not only continue to have a support teacher, but two classes will have the same support! This will give great continuity to our department and offer essential collaboration opportunities among us, to provide an optimal educational experience for your student. Ms. Faith will be the support teacher for Ms. Candace and Ms. Kiruba (Ms. K) and Ms. Diane will be the support teacher for Ms. Amy and Ms. Kristen.
14. **What are the email addresses of the upper elementary teachers?**  
Pumas - [ms.kristen@silversandsmcs.org](mailto:ms.kristen@silversandsmcs.org) [ms.diane@silversandsmcs.org](mailto:ms.diane@silversandsmcs.org)  
Coyotes - [ms.amy@silversandsmcs.org](mailto:ms.amy@silversandsmcs.org) [ms.diane@silversandsmcs.org](mailto:ms.diane@silversandsmcs.org)  
Roadrunners - [ms.candace@silversandsmcs.org](mailto:ms.candace@silversandsmcs.org) [ms.faith@silversands.org](mailto:ms.faith@silversands.org)  
Mountain Bluebirds - [ms.kiruba@silverdandsmcs.org](mailto:ms.kiruba@silverdandsmcs.org) [ms.faith@silversands.org](mailto:ms.faith@silversands.org)
15. **How will attendance be taken?** Attendance will be taken directly in Infinite Campus and parents; you will have the ability to check your student in. You can do this by logging into Infinite Campus and clicking a simple box. If this sounds stressful (as yet one more thing to do in an already busy day) please don't worry -- teachers will have their usual capability of taking attendance in Infinite Campus. We will use student participation in zooms to justify the "present". More information will be provided to you shortly. If you have any concerns, please contact us through email.
16. **How will parents communicate with the teacher? With the students?** Communication between home and school can increase your child's interest and achievement in learning. The lower el team will work closely with one another to ensure that all of our students feel safe and are given the optimal environment in which to succeed. If you have questions and/or concerns as the year gets underway, please contact any one of us. The most efficient way to reach us is via email. We will try to respond within 24 hours. Our schedule has office hours to meet with parents and/or students at the beginning of the school day via Zoom. Forms with the opportunity to update your correct email addresses and phone numbers will be coming home to you

soon (before the school year starts). If you share custody of a student, please help us by ensuring your most recent contact information and that both custodial parents are listed on that form. Thank you!

17. **If my child cannot attend a scheduled Zoom meeting, what can we do?** A recording of lessons will be posted to Seesaw. Students should watch the recording and complete any work on their own time.
18. **How long might an assignment take for my child to complete?** An estimate of minutes that students should be spending on each activity may be given to help students and parents gauge their experience.
19. **How will we know what to do each week?** We'll use a suggested daily schedule for students in a "Week at a Glance Schedule" that will be posted on Seesaw.

## Upper Elementary

1. **Will there be an Open House Night?** Yes, SSMCS will hold a virtual Meet and Greet on Thursday from 3:00 - 4:00 where families will be able to see classrooms and meet their teachers.
2. **What to expect on the first day?** A lot of fun! We will start to get to know each other in video chats that will also inform you of our virtual classroom expectations - basically, we'll meet our new friends and learn about what it means to be in Upper El!!
3. **What will the school-day look like?** As we try our best to uphold our usual classroom routines and experiences, the school day will be organized to include scheduled, consistent times for live video lessons and demonstrations from the classroom. Both classrooms will follow the same schedule. At this time, our schedule will have 3 set blocks for zoom instruction (beginning, mid-day, and end of school day). All UE teachers will hold daily office hours prior to our first video conference of the day. Teachers will be available for one/ones, small groups and parent/student questions between the scheduled zooms.

On Wednesdays, students will not have the regularly scheduled lessons. Instead, all can use this time to work independently, conference with teachers for further needs and guidance; basically, to have a day to focus on assignments without a rigorous virtual schedule. The only video item on this day is a "Social Hour" to be held in the afternoon. During this, teachers and classes will just spend time together having fun.

We will end each week (Friday afternoons) with a virtual class meeting to check-in about what went well in the week, what was tough, and answer any burning questions anyone may have about the work before we head off for the weekend.

4. **Will the teachers hold office hours?** Yes, the upper elementary teachers will hold the same office hours, from 8:30 - 9:00 AM M-F. If you are unable to meet during these times, please feel free to email your teacher with any questions or concerns.
5. **Will there be packets and what will be in them?** Yes, there will be packets and they may offer different or additional items / materials as lessons progress (so each week will not be exactly the same). Essentially however, packets will include the following:
  - Math-U-See work / Math Command Cards
  - VocabuLit
  - Words Their Way Spelling sorts
  - Scholastic Science Newspaper
  - Scholastic History Newspaper / Scholastic News
  - Junior Great Reading work
  - Math HW packet and Reading Log
6. **Will students still work through programs like M-U-S at their own pace?** Yes, Math, Reading, and Spelling will be assessed to form small groups. We will do these a little differently as we'll be online. Please expect to receive a M-U-S assessment, for example, prior to beginning school. Reading and spelling assessments will

happen online in a whole group. We will work to our best efforts to maintain this important academic feature.

7. **Will there be a day to pick up and drop off?** Yes, Upper El students will have a specific day to pick up new packets and drop off prior week's work. Details to be determined shortly.
8. **What if I can't be there to pick up or drop off on the day assigned to UE?** Please discuss your needs with your child's classroom teacher.
9. **Will there be a supply list?** Yes, a list of items pertinent to home and our classroom work will be delivered to families in time for the first day and these are to be kept at home.
10. **Will there be paper and online work?** Yes, there will be both but at the start of the year, as we ease into virtual learning, we will predominantly work on paper-delivered packets. The many works in these packets (Scholastic, Jr. Great..) have virtual access but, as we do not want to be overwhelmed with too many logins/passwords, we will keep things simple (paper packets) now.
11. **Will there be all of the specials?** Yes! Ms. Rebecca and Ms. Alessandra will still teach Art and Music and Mr. Dennis will instruct PE, Spanish, Gardening/Botany, and Library.
12. **How will Library work?** We really just want to make sure our UE students are reading. Whether this is virtually through programs like RAZkids or with a book they have available to them at home, the students will be asked to read for the time allotted in the special (40 min.). More info will come from your teachers as the year progresses.
13. **Will there be homework?** Yes. Students will receive an additional math lesson introducing the homework at the beginning of the week. They will return HW to the school when they pick up the next week's packet. Math HW provides essential SBAC practice all year long.

Additionally, students will receive a weekly reading log. They are highly encouraged to read at least 20 minutes daily. They must fill out the log, have a parent sign, and return it to school when they pick up the next week's packet.

\*Please know that homework will not be assigned immediately. We anticipate starting to collect and deliver homework about the 3rd week of school.

14. **Will the classrooms have support teachers?** One special facet to our distance learning program is the fact that we not only continue to have a support teacher, but both classes will have the same support! This will give great continuity to our department and offer essential collaboration opportunities among us, to provide an optimal educational experience for your student. We are especially delighted to not only provide consistency & excellence, but also comfort as your student may have worked with our wonderful support, Mr. Dennis, in Lower El.

15. **What are the email addresses of the upper elementary teachers?**

Kimberly Kirner <[ms.kim\\_k@silversandsmcs.org](mailto:ms.kim_k@silversandsmcs.org)> - Rattlesnakes

Mara Tattner <[ms.mara@silversandsmcs.org](mailto:ms.mara@silversandsmcs.org)> - Scorpions

Dennis Burke <[mr.dennis@silversandsmcs.org](mailto:mr.dennis@silversandsmcs.org)> - Support Teacher

16. **How will attendance be taken?** Attendance will be taken directly in Infinite Campus and parents, you will have the ability to check your student in. You can do this by logging into Infinite Campus and clicking a simple box. If this sounds stressful (as yet one more thing to do in an already busy day) please don't worry -- teachers will have their usual capability of taking attendance in Infinite Campus. We will use student participation in zooms and on Google Classroom to justify the "present". More information will be provided to you shortly. If you have any concerns, please contact us through email.
17. **How will parents communicate with the teacher? With the students?** Communication between home and school can increase your child's interest and achievement in learning. The three of us will work closely with

one another to ensure that all of our students feel safe and are given the optimal environment in which to succeed. If you have questions and/or concerns as the year gets underway, please contact any one of us. The most efficient way to reach us is via email or Google Classroom. We will try to respond within 24 hours. Our schedule has office hours to meet with parents and/or students at the beginning of the school day via Zoom. Forms with the opportunity to update your correct email addresses and phone numbers will be coming home to you soon (before the school year starts). If you share custody of a 4th/ 5th grader, please help us by ensuring your most recent contact information and that both custodial parents are listed on that form. Thank you!

## Middle School

1. **Will there be an Open House Night?** There will be an open house for middle school on Thursday, August 20. The open house will be held virtually via Google Meet.

### Thursday, 8/20: Meet & Greet

6th Grade: 1 – 2 PM

7<sup>th</sup> Grade: 2 – 3 PM

8th Grade: 3 – 4 PM

2. **What to expect on the first day?** A lot of fun! We will start to get to know each other in video chats that will also inform you of our virtual classroom expectations - basically, we'll meet our new friends and learn about what it means to be in Middle School!!
3. **What will the school-day look like?** Teachers will be facilitating Google Meet meetings twice a week per subject. These whole class meetings will be mandatory for all students, unless extenuating circumstances prevent attendance. The middle school schedule has each student visiting three of their subjects four days a week, with one day a week designated for additional student support. Schedules will be inside student handbags. Handbag distribution date is on Wednesday, August 19th.
4. **Will the teachers hold office hours?** Yes, the middle school teachers will hold the same office hours, from 8:30 – 9:00 AM M-F. If you are unable to meet during these times, please feel free to email your teacher with any questions or concerns.
5. **Will there be packets and what will be in them?** Packets will vary from week to week but will include written handouts depending on each week's lessons. Most assignments will be found in Google Classroom and can be automatically uploaded and turned in using this platform.
6. **What platform will my child be using for their classes?** Middle school will be using Google Classroom for each class. Grades will be updated on Infinite Campus every Friday by the end of day.
7. **Will there be a day to pick up and drop off? How will my child see their results?** Student pick-up and drop off will be on Wednesdays each week. Class grades will be accessible through Infinite Campus for both parents and students.
8. **What if I can't be there to pick up or drop off on the day assigned to Middle School?** Please discuss your needs with your child's classroom teacher. Student assignments will also be available to complete via Google classroom.
9. **Will there be a supply list?** Yes, a list of items pertinent to home and our classroom work will be delivered to families in time for the first day and these are to be kept at home.
10. **How will my child access Google Classroom?** All middle school students will be assigned an SSMCS Gmail account, which will be used to sign into their Google classrooms. We will be having a virtual check-in week (8/17-8/21) to make sure all students and families are receiving notifications and feel comfortable with the learning platform.

- 11. When can parents talk with the Middle School Teachers?** Daily Scheduled Morning and Afternoon Office Hours for parent communication will be available. There will also be a separate Google classroom for parents with frequently asked questions, tutorials, and updates.
- 12. Will there be homework?** Yes, students will be given assignments with weekly due dates for each class. Students are expected to complete these assignments by their due dates.
- 13. Do we need to have printers?** Printers are not necessary. Packets will be printed for students at school and available for parents to pick up on Wednesday. Students will also have access to assignments via Google Classroom.
- 14. What are the Middle School teachers email addresses?**  
[ms.dawn@silversandsmcs.org](mailto:ms.dawn@silversandsmcs.org)  
[mr.johnny@silversandsmcs.org](mailto:mr.johnny@silversandsmcs.org)  
[ms.keya@silversandsmcs.org](mailto:ms.keya@silversandsmcs.org)  
[ms.lindsey@silversandsmcs.org](mailto:ms.lindsey@silversandsmcs.org)  
[ms.rebecca@silversandsmcs.org](mailto:ms.rebecca@silversandsmcs.org)
- 15. How will attendance be taken?** Attendance will be taken directly in Infinite Campus. Parents and students will have the ability to check in by logging into Infinite Campus and clicking a simple box. If this sounds stressful (as yet one more thing to do in an already busy day) please don't worry -- teachers will have their usual capability of taking attendance in Infinite Campus. We will use student participation in zooms and on Google Classroom to justify the "present". More information will be provided to you shortly. If you have any concerns, please contact us through email.
- 16. How will parents communicate with the teacher? With the students?** Communication between home and school can increase your child's interest and achievement in learning. The five of us will work closely with one another to ensure that all of our students feel safe and are given the optimal environment in which to succeed. If you have questions and/or concerns as the year gets underway, please contact any one of us. The most efficient way to reach us is via email or Google Classroom. We will try to respond within 24 hours. Our schedule has office hours to meet with parents and/or students at the beginning of the school day via Google Meet. Forms with the opportunity to update your correct email addresses and phone numbers will be coming home to you soon (before the school year starts). If you share custody of a student, please help us by ensuring your most recent contact information and that both custodial parents are listed on that form. Thank you!

Thank you to the Montessori School of Tokyo and Dearborn Heights Montessori for providing a model for this resource.