March 23, 2020

Dear Parents and Students,

I write to you just hours after Governor Northam made the momentous decision to close schools for the remainder of this school year, as a measure to protect the health of all Virginians during this COVID-19 pandemic. While many had the notion that such an announcement might be coming, it certainly brought a sense of tremendous sadness to hear his statement. We are bound by the governor’s order, and Norfolk Academy is committed to doing everything we can to support the Tidewater community through this unprecedented challenge.

We are remaining nimble, and we will adapt. In recent days, I have been on phone calls and in videoconferences to discuss revisions to our plans for the end of the year, and those resumed with new urgency and clarity after the governor’s press conference today. As you can imagine, nothing is yet finalized.

This much we do know:

• **Mini- and Maymester, and all associated travel**, are canceled. Any fees already paid for travel will be refunded by the Business Office as soon as practicable.
• All spring extracurricular programs, including athletics, are canceled.
• Unfortunately, we are unable to hold Prom this year.
• Field Day is postponed, possibly to the fall. We will work with our volunteer leaders to modify and adapt this event, so that our Bulldog community can come together in the spirit of friendship and renewal.

I am heartbroken for our seniors, the majority of whom I’ve watched grow up here and with whose parents we’ve shared the Academy journey. Likewise, our faculty has come to care so deeply for the seniors, and they in turn have come to respect and love their teachers and coaches. It will take time to find innovative alternatives to our culminating traditions for the Class of 2020, including Vespers and Graduation, but I am confident that we will do so, and we are working as quickly as possible on these plans.

I will provide further updates in the coming days. As always, we will continue to communicate through emails, our website, and our official social media channels. Our distance learning/COVID-19 page and our resource boards are regularly updated as well. We will soon be adding resources to help our students remain physically active and fit, too.

I am deeply impressed and inspired by the commitment of our faculty and students to distance learning. The road ahead may require more endurance than we had expected, but I know that we will, like the Bulldogs we are, show our stamina, ingenuity, and love of learning.

Yours sincerely,

Dennis G. Manning
Headmaster