

03.27.2020

Dear McAlister Families,

We hope this update finds you well. This week we have been busy preparing for the March 30th launch into our Google Classroom digital learning platform. Starting on Monday, March 30, our teachers will be posting each day's lessons on their Google Classroom by 8:00 a.m. We anticipate each lesson to be about 25 minutes in length and the lessons can be completed in any order. We have attached a sample schedule to this message; this schedule represents one possibility of how the students' days could be structured. It is important to do what is best for you and your family.

As with any new venture, we are working to start the students off in manageable lessons that will build their skills and efficacy with online learning. Know that we will continue to build off of each days' lesson relative to student work and responses. Also, to help ensure everyone's success, do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher if you have questions or concerns; remembering that open communication is one of one the keys to our success. With that in mind, our teachers will be available from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. each day to answer questions via email and provide feedback to students.

Information included below this letter re-introduces our Student Support Staff to you and offers some very timely resources. Please be sure to take a close read and know that all of our staff is here to support students and work for their success.

We look forward to the days ahead; working together to continue student learning through this unexpected time. Please be sure to share this "[Welcome Video](#)" with your child as they prepare for Monday's learning and look forward to an email from their homeroom teacher as well.

Take care and be well

Karen Carpenter-Snow and Jack Ferraro



News from Our Student Support Staff--We would like to open the lines of communication with you and the McAlister Intermediate Support Staff and have this be our official introduction letter to the Continuation of Learning. It is our hope that we can provide resources for our families to continue to support the mental

health and social and emotional learning of our students. We will be sharing information weekly through the McAlister Family updates, however, we are also available through email to help support individual student needs.

We look forward to collaborating and supporting McAlister families to the best of our ability during these challenging, and unprecedented moments, and we look forward to learning and growing together as a community.

McAlister Intermediate Support Staff

- Karen Lawrence, School Social Worker klawrence@suffield.org
- Erica Burke, School Psychologist eburke@suffield.org
- Mandy Correa, Occupational Therapist mcorrea@suffield.org
- Manda Dingley, School Nurse mdingley@suffield.org

Resources to talk to your family about COVID-19:

- [Talking to children about COVID-19, NASP](#) (National Association of School Psychologists)
- [Talking to kids about the Coronavirus](#) (Child Mind Institute)
- [Helping kids manage anxiety and worry about COVID-19 3 Expert Videos](#)

Emergency Mental Health Services:

- Local Emergency Mobile Crisis, open 24/7: Dial 211
- National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-8255
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746. (TTY 1-800-846-8517)
- Your child's Pediatrician's Office

Finally, on a brighter note, we want to keep spirits high for our McAlister families and teachers. Each week, if you would like to participate, we ask that you send in pictures of your family doing different things. For next week's update, we would love to see what you and your family are doing to spend time together at home. Send an email to Ms. Correa, Ms. Lawrence, Ms. Burke, or Mrs. Dingley (emails above) with a picture of your new work from home (WFH) workspace! We can't wait to see all of the creative and cozy workspaces that you now call your classroom and know that we will even share a few with your permission!



A Note from the Nurse--Hello MIS Families--I hope this finds you all doing well. I know this time can be a bit challenging and full of questions. I have included a link below that may help you talk with your children during this time. I strongly recommend avoiding newscasts and social media access with your children. The shared article provides some great reminders of things we can all be doing. Below are some of the important highlights, along with a few of my own suggestions.

- Keep kids on track with good nutrition, plenty of exercise and a regular sleep schedule. Try to provide healthy snacks and encourage regular eating and snack times. Encourage water breaks and hydration in general.
- Limit screen times for gaming and social media.
- Encourage creative activities...See what extras you have laying around the house and encourage the kids to build something fun. Creating cards for neighbors or friends could be fun to make and deliver/mail.
- Have kids make a check off chart. It may help them to see their achievements and sense of completion of tasks.
- Practice social distancing. You can still take walks or ride bikes with friends, as long as you remain vigilant with distancing. Please do not have indoor playdates.
- Hand washing is still the # 1 preventive measure. This is still important, even if you do not leave your home.
- Have your children change from PJ's to regular daytime clothes. It helps with routines and it's also important to keep laundering on a regular basis. Keep kids on track with showering and personal hygiene.
- Open windows in your home on nice days. It may be a little chilly, but fresh air and circulation is important.
- Clean high touch surfaces, like door knobs, Chromebooks, phones, TV remotes.
- Keep informed--Click [here](#) to go to the CDC webpage as they have relevant information about keeping children healthy during this time.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your child's health, please contact your pediatrician for advice and treatment. I wish you all good health. Try to get outside on the good days and enjoy! Mrs. Dingley