March 31, 2020

Hello Parents of our Kindergarten through 8th Grade Students,

While we don’t want to inundate you with communications during spring break, we do want to keep you informed as we know COVID-19 is presenting all of us with challenges we need to plan for sooner rather than later. **This note is to provide an update on where we’re heading in educating your students come Monday, April 13**.

As we shared in the March 25 parent letter, **we will employ distance learning beginning April 13. We are anticipating that distance learning will continue until the end of April.** Thank you, again, for responding so quickly with information regarding your home wifi connectivity and availability of devices.

First, to hopefully help put your minds at ease, **students will *not* be required to spend countless hours a day on a device, and their lessons will *not* be “live.”** In other words, your family should not need multiple devices in the home in order for your students to “attend school.” As a result, we will not need to provide a device for each student. However, for those who have shared that they have no devices at home, one will be provided. Our teachers are working incredibly hard preparing video lessons that can be watched at a times that work well for your family and takes into account more than one student in the home, and breaks them up in such a way that no student is sitting through lengthy lessons. Much like their regular classroom, your students at-home learning will be broken up into short, learning chunks.

All total, **K-8 students will have no more than 1-hour of videos to view per day.** The videos will be coupled with assignments and homework that can be completed either on a device, or off it. For those who have shared with us that they have no wifi connectivity, you will be contacted (if you haven’t already) to arrange an alternative educational approach. Some grades might have take-home packets with lessons and activities. If take-home packets are used, please know extra precautions in preparing them will be in place, including gloves being used to assemble the packets and separation of the packets for at least 48 hours when they are returned, among other safety measures.

**Generally, for grades K-8, a distance learning day will look like this:** Video lessons for math, language, reading, and science (videos for math lessons will be posted Monday-Thursday; language, reading and science videos will be posted one day per week); assignments/homework similar to what they already do; a weekly assessment in math on Friday; and *optional, additional* learning activities for those families interested. The beautiful thing about posting videos, rather than hosting “live” learning sessions, is your students can watch their videos and review them as they’d like, or as needed. This approach takes our philosophy of, “If you don’t get it today, you’ll get it tomorrow; if not tomorrow, then the next day, and so on…” and puts it into play in this distance learning format. We know you’ll be surprised, if not amazed, watching your child’s ability to continue to learn in the manner to which they’re accustomed (direct instruction/choral response), even in this video format. In fact, please encourage them to respond as they would if they were in class with their peers. We have no doubt you will be impressed at the pace of each lesson and the way in which your students respond. We hope it will provide you with what many parents say to us so often: that they wish they had a front-row seat to their child’s school day. Come April 13, you will be involved in way that perhaps you haven’t before by “attending” the videos with your children and being right there to encourage them as they work through a lesson.

**Important things to know:**

* One of the most important things we want you to know is y**ou will not have to present the lessons yourselves, or know the content before your children view their videos or work on their assignments/homework.** In fact, in the videos teachers will use the “Think Aloud” method whereby they will think out loud the concept being taught from start to finish so that their students can follow along with them as they work it through to completion. The teachers are going to great lengths to plan and present an at-home learning experience that is as close to their students’ regular school day, but also manageable for a family.
* **Technology will be less than perfect.** We understand and know that there will be technology glitches. Your home connectivity might be fine one day and struggle the next. The learning platform we’ll be using might be slow one day, no response on another day, and fine the next. **Please know we will work with you on technology issues.** The numbers of school districts globally now forced to use an online form of education is staggering, so all schools and students will have issues at some point.
* **On April 8, you will receive an email from your child’s teacher** (if you have multiple students attending our school, you will receive an email from each of your children’s teachers), sharing their expectations for their students, and detailing their educational plans for their class while providing you with your students’ log-in information into Schoology, the learning platform to be used. While a fairly straight-forward, simple platform, the teachers will include in their letters a link to an online tutorial for you to view to familiarize yourselves with Schoology, if you’re not already. Additionally, teachers will share the process for contacting them if you or your student is experiencing technical issues, how attendance will be taken, what will be graded, how to turn in homework and assignments, their teacher contact hours should you need to reach them, and how they will contact you if/when necessary.
* **Our school district has been approved as a site for picking up free meals beginning April 13.** Free, cold breakfast and lunch combo meals for students and their siblings, ages 1-18, will be available daily for curbside pickup at the school between 10:30 am –Noon while supplies last. The meals are to be taken and not consumed on site.
* **The first day back to school, but in this distance learning format, is Monday, April 13.**

We continue to thank you for your support and willingness, using a phrase that works well with Harbor, to venture through these unchartered waters with us. As a Harbor school, your students have already been learning and achieving at an incredible pace in an educational environment that provides above-grade learning in a safe and kind culture. We know their learning will continue and that they will do their best to adapt to this temporary school format.

We can’t wait to be back with your students in the school building. Until then, thank you for partnering with us to help ensure that they continue to excel. We will, in the days and weeks ahead, do our best to be our very best for your students, and we’ll address issues that might come up with flexibility and positivity so we can model to them how to face tough situations well.

Above everything, please take care of yourselves, your children, and all those around you. We look forward to hearing your students’ stories of success once we’re back together.

All our best to you and your students,

Mrs. Rebecca Stallcop

Administrator

Liberty Charter School District #458