



April 3, 2020

Dear Washington Township School Community,

First and foremost, we hope that all of our Washington Township families are safe and healthy! It is hard to fathom that our students have been out of the schools for three weeks already. While remote education programs have been in place, nothing can replicate the learning experiences that occur on a daily basis in a classroom. We miss our students dearly! Though we miss them, we know that they must be kept safe by practicing appropriate social distancing measures at this time. While at home, following are a few reminders and tips:

- Family health and safety are the priority. When at home, please make sure family members' health and safety needs come first. If you are experiencing medical situations in the household, please take care of those needs, before stressing about the completion of an assignment. School assignment due dates can be adjusted by staff members to accommodate individual circumstances. Reach out to your child's teacher or administration if you need support in this area. To every extent possible, work should be completed, but should not come at the expense of family members' health.
- When trying to work with students at home, try to create a consistent routine. Have students wake up, eat meals, complete schoolwork, participate in family chores around the house and go to sleep at the same time each night. It is very easy for students to get into the habit of sleeping late, eating whenever they want and staying up extremely late. Surprisingly, children respond well to routines (they will never admit this and will argue to the contrary) and need them. Keeping routines will give them consistency and set expectations in these uncertain times.
- As mentioned, give students chores to complete at home. While children are restricted in the activities they can participate in with friends and extended family, take time to have students learn life skills. This is a great time to show children how to make their own beds, make simple meals for the family, wash & fold their own laundry or wash dishes. Children will often balk at the idea of completing chores, but when the task is complete, it will provide them a sense of accomplishment for a task well done. They will also realize that they are doing their part as a member of the family. Children realize this is a very uncertain time and these are tasks they can complete to help their family.
- Set aside a time for schoolwork. Students should be participating in video conferencing lessons, completing assignments and reading each day (as family situation allows). The work should be done as independently as possible (this is the student's work, not the parents). Of course, parental support may be needed to guide the student and set up routines, but ultimately students should be completing the work. Assignments are designed for the student to complete in large part independently. If your student needs additional support, have them email the teacher and ask questions. When videoconference lessons are available, please make sure they participate. The videoconference lessons are a great way to see their friends and ask questions of their teacher.
- If your child is experiencing social / emotional issues, please email staff members to help connect you with supports that may be available. In addition to your child's teacher, you may contact administration, members of the child study team or the guidance counselor.





- Get physical activity every day! Children need physical activity...it is not only good for their body but is good for their mental health. Have your child play outside (remembering social distancing), complete an exercise routine, yoga, stretching, and just walking are all great ways to keep healthy. If possible, make these family activities!
- Have family game nights. Playing board games is an excellent way to spend time together, while teaching many educational and social skills. Games help student practice counting, reading and following directions, while also teaching social skills such as taking turns, learning how to win / lose and have face-to-face conversations.

Governor Murphy has directed all schools closed until further notice. Based on this directive, we do not know when school will re-open. Governor Murphy indicated in a notice to school districts that he will not provide additional information on the re-opening of school until April 17th. With this in mind, please make plans for school to be closed after Spring Break is completed. Home instruction programming will continue until April 9th. April 10th through April 19th schools will be closed (no home instruction lessons) for Spring Break. School will resume on April 20, 2020. We anticipate that when school starts again on April 20, 2020, that it will be through home instruction. The District will update families as soon as we have notification from the Governor.

Students in grades K-3 will receive report cards for the 3rd marking period during the Spring Break period. Report cards for K-3 students will be mailed home by Wednesday, April 8th. Please allow extra time for mail deliveries. Students in grade 4-6 will have their report cards posted in the OnCourse Connect portal. Families can connect to the portal and review report cards on Wednesday, April 8th. If you are having difficulty logging into the OnCourse Connect portal, please email rrhinehart@washtwpsd.org or jgarcia@washtwpsd.org. If you have a concern regarding a grade, please contact your child's teacher first and if the issue cannot be resolved then contact your child's principal. As a reminder, it is important students maintain work completion and submission during home instruction, to every extent possible. Student work is graded. Don't forget to check Special Areas (music, art, world language, etc.) teacher sites or Teams for weekly assignments.

If your financial situation has changed due to recent events, please complete the Free & Reduced Application for Breakfast and Lunch. This application can be found on the Cafeteria page of our website. Please return the application using one of the following methods: email jflynn@washtwpsd.org, fax 908-689-2356 or via mail to Brass Castle School, 16 Castle Street, Washington, NJ 07882. Please note, meals will not be available during Spring Break.

We wish your family the best as we work through these challenging circumstances!

Additional information and resources can be found on our District website and Facebook page.

Respectfully,

Keith T. Neuhs
Superintendent

