

Kathleen Elementary School

Greetings Parents, Families, and Caregivers!

I hope our KES students and their families are staying safe, healthy and are doing well. As we approach a whole new world of distance learning, I wanted to share a list of some important aspects that can make a huge difference in this change of our daily lives. Being pulled from your usual routine, friends, family and extracurriculars are incredibly confusing for all of us. Even though school is important, please remember that we will all need to have very flexible expectations for time and tasks for distance learning. I want to be a resource for all of you as we navigate these waters together.

Let's start with:

Curiosity - Your student(s) may be getting curious about what's going on and asking some tough questions regarding what COVID-19 is all about. The CDC provided an excellent video directed to children with information on the virus [here](#). I also have a video that you may find helpful regarding ways you can talk to your child about the Coronavirus. To view this video [click here](#).

Harmony Toolkit for Home – Social and Emotional Learning – During this school year you may have heard your child talking about Harmony, a new social emotional learning program for our elementary schools. We are excited that Harmony has released a free online Harmony Toolkit that provides resources and lessons to help you navigate the social and emotional needs of children during this challenging time. To register and get started using these learning resource [click here](#).

Anxiety/Worry - The confusion mentioned above can lead to some more difficult days ahead. In the face of anxious feelings and/or worry, please find a valuable 2-pager with conversation points and strategies [here](#).

Help Your Child Build a Schedule

Parent involvement is key to success in learning. With the help of parents and caregivers, students need a routine to follow daily in order to effectively manage their time and to stay on track. Having a well-thought-out, specific daily schedule is key, and parents can be a huge help not only in building such a plan, but also in making sure that it is followed.

[Click here](#) for an example of a schedule template (You can download template and edit to fit your own routine).

Before your child's learning begins, sit down together and think through what he or she is responsible for accomplishing in his or her virtual courses on a daily or weekly basis, how much time those tasks will realistically take, and what other commitments (chores, personal time, activities, etc.) he or she needs to consider. Be sure to hang up the schedule in a noticeable place, like on the refrigerator or next to any other family master calendars, to help keep your child accountable and establish an effective routine.

Set Up a Designated Workspace

For everyone, surroundings make a huge difference in one's mindset and ability to focus. One of the best ways to encourage your child to complete their assignments is to create a homework/class space that's all their own. First, consider your child's study style. If they are easily distracted, a secluded, quiet spot is best, but if she's more comfortable working with other people around, choose a corner of the

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living room or kitchen. Make sure the area is free of clutter and that other family members respect "homework time." While music may be okay at low levels, TVs should be turned off — very few people can resist becoming distracted by TV. But no matter where your child does her homework, the U.S. Department of Education recommends that the space has bright lighting, relatively quiet, and close-at-hand supplies. Finally, let your child take part in creating his/her study space so they will feel more comfortable and be less likely to think of homework/class as a chore. They may prefer a certain chair to sit on or your child might feel less intimidated if they have a favorite stuffed animal sitting beside them to "help" study spelling words, or if they have a "magic thinking hat" to wear when stumped by a math problem.

Build a Relationship with Your Child's Teachers

Appreciatively, we have parents that are very involved with the teachers in our classrooms, so you have already formed a strong team dedicated to the success of your student(s). Communication is even more essential in a virtual learning environment so be sure to let them know what type of communication works best for you and your current situation during the school closure (access to technology, etc.) If you have questions about the course or concerns about your child's progress, reach out and discuss them with his or her teacher. Finally, when you see your child reaching goals, making productive changes, or hitting important milestones, tell the teacher about it—it's guaranteed that your child will appreciate the positive feedback coming from multiple perspectives.

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I hope to be a resource for you and your family throughout this journey. Please do not hesitate to reach out.

Take Care and Stay Healthy,

Tommy Pollock

School Counselor