



March 21, 2020 - update #4

To our Emerson families -

I hope that this note finds you well! First, I want to thank you all for the incredible notes of support and care, as we have all bravely stepped into this new world of remote and online learning. Your kindness has shone through all your emails and calls, and on behalf of everyone here at Emerson, I thank you.

In the midst of challenging circumstances, I do want to encourage you to take time for yourself. Please do not feel pressured to keep up with all the helpful notes and resources that may be flooding your inbox at this time! And as you and your children receive lesson plans and activities from the faculty, please complete only what makes sense in your situation. We are all in the process of fine-tuning our remote instruction (and remote learning), and it will take a little while to get it just right for each student. In the meanwhile, please keep communicating with your child's teachers, as it's the best way for us to gauge how this is going for you. As a reminder, our faculty will be providing lessons through Wednesday, March 25, after which we will have the start of our Spring Break, which runs through Sunday, April 5.

Looking to the future, I've quit trying to make predictions about what will come. I'm highly doubtful that we'll be back in school come April 6, based upon what other states are announcing and what the latest information is regarding the spread of this coronavirus. And, any plan that we might make independently will likely be superseded by a state directive. For that reason, I'm holding off on an announcement about a return to campus for the time being, and I will stay attuned to the latest news. That said, I have directed our faculty to plan for a continuation of remote and online learning into April, and possibly beyond.

Assuming that we will need to continue with remote learning for the foreseeable future, we will look for ways to stay connected with one another. I have already sent out an email to you to share with your children - please encourage them to send me notes and art for my office door. I promise to write back to any student who does so! Additionally, we will look to hold grade level Virtual Coffees with the Head and Division Heads this coming April.

Please note, we will not be holding another packet pickup on-campus, nor (sadly) a book borrow event. We are eliminating these activities so that we may reduce the need for you to leave your residences.

Health updates and notifications

At the time of this writing, the Emerson community has not received any information of a student, family member, or employee who has been diagnosed with COVID-19. That said, the Washtenaw County Health Department now reports evidence of community spread.

To that end, should anyone in your household receive a positive diagnosis of COVID-19, I ask that you share this information with me directly. The community member's name will not be

shared publicly, unless the individual wishes me to share it. Your privacy and confidentiality will be respected.

In the event that I receive news of any community member (employee, student, family member) who has been positively diagnosed, I will notify the community with a general alert, providing qualifications that may help your family determine potential contact, but not providing the person's identity (unless otherwise permitted by the individual).

I have questions...

- **What's this I hear about the Michigan Department of Education no longer accepting online learning for yearly requirements?** This announcement from MDE affects only public schools. As an independent school, we are not bound by this announcement, and we will continue to provide remote and online learning as before.
- **What about our April and May events? Or our year-end field trips?** We are exploring options and considering alternatives, and will keep you up to date as we make decisions. In some cases, it is advantageous for us to wait until host sites close before making our own closure announcements.
- **What about graduation?** We will have a graduation for our 8th graders, one way or the other. We may need to change the date or the format, but all of our 8th graders should plan for a graduation exercise.

Reminders (summarized from prior communications):

Information sources. We encourage you to use the following resources to gain the latest information.

- Emerson past and present updates, including this letter - [link](#)
- Centers for Disease Control (CDC) COVID-19 information page - [link](#)
- Michigan Department of Health and Human Services COVID-19 information page - [link](#)
- Washtenaw County Health Department (WCHD) - [link](#)

Good hygiene practices. As a reminder, good hygiene practices include the following:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick, and stay home when you are sick.
- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after using the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with either a tissue or upper sleeve.

Questions from last time

- **What about our families in need?** Counselor Carrie Berkley is serving as point person to help direct attention to those in need. If you, or someone you know, needs help with continuation of meals, general accessibility to the internet and materials, community support, etc., please email Carrie at cberkley@emerson-school.org.

- **What if I have technical difficulties?** Please email Technology Coordinator Renee Durrant at rdurrant@emerson-school.org. Additionally, you can leave a voicemail with Renee at 734-665-5662, ext. 346.
- **What if my student is sick and can't complete what is assigned?** In the Lower School, please let the teacher know. In the Middle School, please let either the advisor or teacher know.
- **What if we lose access to internet connectivity?** You can leave a voicemail with Lower School Office Manager Christy Loewen at 734-665-5662, ext. 307, or Middle School Office Manager Beth Muszkiewicz at ext. 301.
- **What if a teacher is sick, or he/she can't access electronic communications due to outages etc.?** Our faculty have been advised to contact the appropriate Division Director, who will then seek to let families know. Should we have broader internet access difficulties, I will use the RenWeb alert system.
- **Will our Counselor be available?** Yes, our Counselor Carrie Berkley is available to answer your and your child's questions and concerns. She can be reached at cberkley@emerson-school.org.
- **Will we be rescheduling Parent/Teacher Conferences?** Yes, our goal is to reschedule these later in the school year, in some fashion or another. Please stay tuned.
- **When will report cards come out?** Please read Jen's and Andy's updates for specific information.
- **What about ERB scores?** We will be sending your child's ERB scores with you on March 23rd, as previously scheduled. Please note that faculty have not had the opportunity yet to review these as we typically do. Please allow some time before asking questions specific to your child's scores.
- **Can teachers meet with students and families, just outside of school?** No. We will not be leading, holding, or scheduling student group practices of any sort.
- **Is the school still running admissions activities?** Director of Admissions Lisa Psarouthakis will be providing inquiring families with specific information as to how we plan to continue with admissions.

You have made it to the end of a busy and unusual week. Again, I thank you for your kindness and patience. Please pass along our love to all our Emerson students!

Be well,

John Huber
Head of School