



March 28, 2020 - update #5

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To our Emerson families -

First, I want to thank everyone for your trust as we have embarked on a journey together of remote and online learning! You have shared many kind notes and stories of success as we look to new ways to deliver on our mission. Your support is so greatly appreciated!

Reflections

I believe that as a school, we are too good not to strive to be even better. As we look back on these past eight days of remote and online learning, the academic team and I are giving particular thoughts as to how we may further fine-tune our lessons, as we look to continuing to provide your children their lessons. In particular, we are examining the following:

- ***Face-to-face time between teachers and students.*** It's not surprising that this is of the greatest demand, because our teachers are the most valuable resource! We want to make sure that all of our students feel connected with their teachers, but we also need to do so in a sustainable way for our faculty. We also need to give thought to the amount of screen time appropriate for children at each age and stage.
- ***Classroom expectations.*** We know that everyone is in a different place right now, based on both the child's needs and the family's situation. Some students may be feeling overwhelmed, others are hungry for more. Additionally, all of our teachers are working hard to offer multiple resources, but the net result may be overwhelming for some. Given all this, we are considering how best to manage our communications with you, as well as offer clarity on prioritization of classwork to be completed.

We will be using these days of our scheduled Spring Break for planning for continuation of remote and online learning into April and beyond.

Looking ahead

As we look to the future, we're also planning for the following:

- ***Grade Level Virtual Coffees with the Head and Division Head*** - we will be using Zoom, and we'll send out instructions on how to install and use this tool.

- **Q&A with School Counselor Carrie Berkley** - she will answer questions and share how best to support your child and your families in these emotionally turbulent times.

Virtual Spring Break Camp

We are excited to offer something new for families - a [Virtual Spring Break Camp](#)! Families may register their children for the week of March 30-April 3. Spots are limited, so sign up soon!

Reminder to our students

As a reminder, please also encourage your children to write to me directly and send their notes and drawings. I have received so many wonderful letters already, and I'm writing back to everyone who sends me a note. My office door will be well-decorated when we return! Please send them to the address shared earlier, or look me up in the RenWeb family directory.

Extension of disenrollment deadline.

As shared separately, in an effort to provide peace of mind to all our families, we will be offering the option to extend your disenrollment deadline to Monday, June 1st @ 3 pm. For families planning to return, no action is required. For those who wish to extend their disenrollment deadline, please email me directly by **Friday, April 10**. We hope that this extension can provide comfort in these discomfiting times!

Middle School field trips

Middle School Director Andy Zimmer has written to our middle school families separately that we have decided to cancel our year-end Middle School field trips. Given the challenges in trying to maintain these in the face of uncertainty, as well as the school's ability to obtain refunds for our families, we thought it best to make this decision now. While this will no doubt be a disappointment, we are already at work to think through how best to plan for other outstanding experiences for our students, including our 8th graders.

Reminders (summarized from prior communications):

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

- Emerson 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](#)

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 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).

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, 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.
- **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.
- **Does the Michigan Department of Education's announcement about not accepting online learning for yearly requirements affect us?** No.
- **What about other 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.

- **What about graduation?** We will have a graduation for our 8th graders. We may need to change the date or the format, but all of our 8th graders should plan for graduation.

Once again, I thank you for your kindness and patience. Please pass along our love and best wishes to all our Emerson students!

Be well,

John Huber
Head of School