

March 25, 2020

Dear students and families:

Main points in this email:

- Launching “Community Connections” Wednesday emails and [VIDEO!](#)
- Importance of establishing routines
- Prioritize physical activity and self-care
- Communicate!
- Ongoing adjustments to Home Learning

Community Connections and Video!

Today (a little later than we thought!) we launch our Wednesday “Community Connections” routine. Parker’s Wednesday communication will focus on community sharing and community building – and we would love to have your ideas and contributions. This will evolve over time, based in part on the requests and contributions and good ideas we hope you send us! If you have thoughts about what you would like us to share on Wednesdays (or anything else!!), please email homelearning@theparkerschool.org. Today we are also launching a [video](#) with our Monday, Wednesday and Friday emails. The video is always optional, as we will summarize main points in the text of the email, but we know how critical social connection is – hearing each other’s voices and seeing each other’s faces is so important. Plus, we have heard from so many of you about how much you like it when your teachers post videos. So, videos! We hope you enjoy them. Going forward, Wednesdays will feature rotating guest hosts, but today’s video features lots of pictures of Parker staff at their home work stations, with their pets and kids, and modeling physical activity/taking a break!

Routines

Many of you have shared your routines and other feedback on Home Learning with us – thank you for doing so. We know that everyone is adjusting to this new normal, and we want to highlight how important it is for you to create customized routines that work for you and your household/situation. We will share examples soon, but what seems to be universally true so far in your comments is that a routine of some kind is hugely important. Some people start at 8am and others at noon. Some set up work stations near others and some intentionally set up work stations away from others. Most people talk about the importance of making a daily to-do list. And, you have to schedule in breaks and chats with friends and physical activity! Almost everyone so far has talked about how important going outside is – please do!!

Physical Activity and Self-Care

Speaking of which, while we really, really want you to engage with school, what we most want to emphasize is that you have to figure out how to take care of yourself. If you do nothing else, we want you to move and connect with others. Go to your advisory meetings! Check out the ideas Wellness is putting out. See Sheila’s suggestions for self-care [here](#). This is another area where we would love you to share your ideas, resources, and solutions.

Communicate!

Some of you are loving the structure of having school work each day (though you might not admit it!). Some of you are overwhelmed by the school work. Everyone is different. So, your teachers/advisors are really, really hoping you will reach out if you feel stuck or need help or have a question. They have told you the best way to reach them in their communications with you, but email is always a good start. You don’t have to figure this out alone, and if you don’t know where to start, we can help. If you haven’t

really started yet, each day is a new day! Just reach out, we beg you! If you receive Academic Support services, you should be sure to use your Academic Support teacher to help you process and structure your work, just like you would in school each day.

Ongoing Adjustments

Our teachers made their initial plans for Weeks One and Two of Home Learning back when we thought school might be out for just two weeks. While the state has not yet made an official announcement, we anticipate that we will all be doing Home Learning for quite a while. Both the federal and state Departments of Education are very clear that schools should be actively engaging students in ongoing learning, and that is what we are doing. We are all learning how to do this as we go, and we appreciate both the gratitude and the feedback you have sent our way. In particular, we know that you want more videos and more interaction. One parent sent an email saying, “the process of remote learning has further reinforced for me the fundamental principle that learning is a social process.” We totally agree, and we are trying to figure out how to do school in as Parker-like a way as we can. Each week, we will add and adjust our lessons in response to what we are hearing from you all and the new technologies we are learning as fast as we can. On Monday, we will share more information about adjustments beyond Week Two.

We hope you like the addition of video to our Parker communications – today’s is definitely a newbie attempt on my part, but we always like to model authentic learning for our students – so here’s the very amateur video, including my mistakes **for instance, ooops, in the video I accidentally misspoke and said Molly was in Div3MST, but she’s AH, of course! 😊 ([here’s the link again to watch today’s video](#)). Our next email/video will come from Todd on Friday!