



Oradell Public School District

Our children, our hope, our future

March 26, 2020

Dear OPS Community,

Okay, I need to say it. I miss the lunchroom. I miss the energy and the chance to just talk to kids. I miss trying to stick the straw into those Honest juice packs. I miss juggling oranges and throwing footballs. You know what else I miss? Staring across the lunchroom with the principal glare to correct a behavior and giving a wink or a nod of my head when the behavior improves. You know that look . . . you've used it yourself with your own children! You use that look to teach your child what is acceptable, and right now that's my job as we transition to a new routine. We need to create common expectations and guidelines for what is acceptable in our community.

Appropriate Use of Technology

- Please think about what your children are wearing if they are participating in a Google Meet or a Zoom meeting. For example, while we don't mind pajamas, when your child is wearing a nightgown and crosses her legs, showing her underwear, it puts everyone in an awkward situation.
- Student Google accounts can only be used for school work. The only time the entire class should be on at once is when the teacher initiates the conversation. If your child has a question and wants to discuss it with a small group of classmates, the teacher should be aware that the meet is occurring. Conversations must be appropriate and video conferences should not exclude classmates. (If you are finding that Zoom and Google Meet are helping with social isolation, then you need to create a non-school Gmail account for your child. It's free!)
- If your child is using a school computer, he or she is not permitted to play non-school based games, such as Fortnite or Roblox, on it.
- If your child would like to use FaceTime to work through a problem with a peer, he or she should have parental permission.
- If your child is doing a Flipgrid or participating in video-conferencing please have them only use his/her first name. (If first names make you uncomfortable, you can use initials.)

The Home/School Connection

- Normally, when you drop your child off at school, we do our thing. At dismissal, they go home, and you do your thing. We talk and communicate but we have our own domains. Now . . . you are in the homes of teachers, and they are in your homes as they conduct live instruction. We all need to realize it will take some time to get used to this new dynamic. Just as I encouraged teachers to find a place to work, help your child find a place alone where they can work. Create boundaries to allow school to end -- just like it does during a traditional school day. Don't email teachers after 3:30 and expect a response that night or expect a phone call at 8 PM. Everything I read about working from home says we have to create boundaries to separate our home and school/work lives. Your families need that and so do our teachers.
- We are all in tight quarters with our families, and understandably, you want to help. However, there is a fine line between helping and enabling in grades 4-6. We have worked all year on teaching students how to advocate, to problem-solve, and to be self-directed. If you sit next to them and guide them through every video-lesson, through every assignment, or write your own comments in the Google Classroom, in the end, you will do your child a disservice.
- I know your child's classroom teacher is your lifeline. However, please remember they don't teach art, music, physical education, etc. If you have a question about a special area assignment, please direct it as follows:
 - Art - Mrs. Boccanfuso: boccanfusoa@oradellschool.org
 - Music (Grade K, 2-5) - Ms. Richardi: richardic@oradellschool.org
 - Music (Grade 1 & 6) - Mr. Butcher: butcherj@oradellschool.org
 - World Language - Mrs. Garcia: garciam@oradellschool.org
 - Technology - Mrs. Lynch: lynchc@oradellschool.org
 - Library - Mr. Mangol: mangole@oradellschool.org
 - Physical Education - Mrs. Maiella: maiellal@oradellschool.org
 - Physical Education - Mr. Kelly: kellys@oradellschool.org

We are navigating a new world, and just like we are learning new tools to help us, we are learning a new set of protocols. This is happening not just at OPS. Companies around the nation are sending out "Zoom Meeting Guidelines," such as how to dress, what not to say, and, yes, MUTE your microphone. Right now, we can find comfort in the fact that we are not alone. We are all learning together.

Megan N. Bozios