

April 24, 2020

Dear Parents,

Welcome to our new normal of remote learning. We were all sent into this world of remote learning without any preparation. There was no time to make decisions about how remote learning would work in our homes. In concert with your child's teachers and service providers, you are now a proctor, trying to insure your child is completing their assigned schoolwork.

After five weeks of remote learning, we are starting to see some obstacles and pitfalls. Letting kids sleep later than usual, setting minimal expectations, allowing video games to be prioritized over schooling, and so many other lessons. Kids are more comfortable on the computer than the parents, and parents have no idea if homework is getting done. It is not too late to make a few adjustments to help our kids with this new way of life. Not only are you stressed, but our little ones see and feel this stress. We recommend more attention, more patience and forgiveness (for you, too!).



There are several themes that our Spaulding team have identified to help you with home schooling. Later in this letter, you will find the first installment: Environmental Set Up. This information presents several tips on how to set the stage for learning. Upcoming topics include scheduling and setting you and your child up for success.

Remote learning will be an integral part of education for the foreseeable future. Therefore, it is never too late to begin implementing changes now. We hope to offer additional tips along the way through regular emails. If you wish to be removed from our email list, please reply to this email or let your classroom teacher know.

Environmental Set Up

Your experiences and successes from the past five weeks can help you make decisions on how to change and update your children's learning spaces. If you have more than one child at home, do they learn or complete work better if they are in the same room or is it best for them to be separated?

When reestablishing these work environments, include your child in the process. When possible make it as fun! Personalize their space to establish the new beginning you want to establish. Desks can be made out of things you already have, such as two file cabinets, two TV tables, or folding tables as a base with a piece of plywood across to create a desk surface. Using a couch or bed for learning is not a good practice. Children will be more successful sitting at a table and with a straight chair.



Workstations should be clear from distractions. The television and gaming systems should be turned off and toys should not be available. If their designated space needs to be near where the toys are stored, then the child should be facing away from the distractions to avoid the visible impulse to go pick a toy up.

Workstations should be organized and neat. The lighting should be appropriate for best visibility and paper and pencils should be within reach. Chromebook and laptop stations should have available charging when needed. File folders can be color coded for paper learning. You can use a two-folder system: one for work to do and one for completed work. A more complex folder system might have a folder for each subject. If your child is successfully working independently in Google classroom, you can ask them to write down each assignment as they are completed. You can review this piece of paper and praise them how much they have completed.

Another organizational technique is to use a whiteboard to keep track of Zoom and Google Hangouts scheduled with school staff. Most meetings are on a reoccurring schedule, which can also be programmed into many smartphones. Set a reminder for ten minutes prior to the next meeting to provide time for preparations.

After each class, let your student clean up assignments, and then close the computer to take a break. If the child uses the computer for fun online activities, they should separate from the computer for a period of time after completing their schoolwork. Options for this break time could be stretching or exercising to give the brain a break. When they return to the computer for other activities, they can use in a more relaxed setting, such as on the couch or another area of your home with your permission. This will reinforce the designated area as their school location and the other areas as more recreational.

Remember, we are in this together. Please let the teachers know your struggles so that we can work together to find solutions. It is not imperative that your child get all of their schoolwork correct. The teachers will grade the schoolwork and support the learning process. The learning will come eventually. Right now, your children need your love and support through this tough time. They are also overwhelmed with anxiety and uncertainty.

We have a team of staff available and eager to help you. Whether you need someone with whom to talk, vent or even laugh, please do not hesitate to reach out. You can call or email your child's teacher, call school counselors Melissa (Ext.416) or Doris (Ext. 403), call behavioral specialist Jeanne (Ext. 415). We are here for you.

Stay Safe
Stay Positive
Stay Spaulding Strong.

The Leadership and Staff at Spaulding