

March 13, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I would like to begin by thanking everyone who met with us either in person or over the phone this week for parent teacher conferences. With so much information swirling presently about COVID-19, it was nice to know that we could still find time to connect as parents and teachers and share updates and goals for what remains of the school year.

Last evening Dr. Carnemolla shared the news that Avon Schools will be closed for the next two weeks and will reopen (at the moment) on Monday, March 30th. Of course this, as all things, can change as the situation surrounding this event changes. As we approach this new challenge together, I wanted to provide a few thoughts to assist you as we all make plans for our families over the next few weeks. Some of this information has been shared previously but I felt it was a good idea to share it again, knowing we are all trying our best to keep up to date with news, emails, and updates at the moment.

Talking to your children about COVID-19

In my humble opinion, ensuring our children are comfortable and feel safe should be top on our list. Knowing each family chooses to share information in a way they are comfortable with, PGS staff have not had planned discussions with students about COVID-19. Of course children hear things and questions have been asked. Teachers have given basic answers that the adults they know are trying to keep them safe and that taking a break from school is a good way to do so. Found below is a link from the National Association of School Psychologists. These links include some talking points for parents and educators to use should children have questions.

NASP put out this resource for parents:

[https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-\(coronavirus\)-a-parent-resource](https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-(coronavirus)-a-parent-resource)

Maintaining Academic Progress

Sitting in my office last night I thought about how I might have felt as a child to hear school was closed, but I had a long list of “work” to do while I was home. Every family will decide how to best handle the work being shared by our staff. This work is not mandatory, but I would encourage some time each day to read and practice some math. The main reason for this is to hang onto the great progress your children have made so far this year. Teachers will be sending home materials today to assist families with this. **A list of district websites with online resources will be shared next week.** This will be filled with some fun ways to keep children engaged. I am also shared a list of current resources that are always available to PGS families: [LINK](#)

I have received several emails from families sharing online resources from other schools and communities. I so appreciate being part of a community that reaches out at times like this. I do want to make note that here in Avon we do our best to abide by the state’s Student Data Privacy Law. This means we only share online resources from companies we have a signed written agreement with. This helps to ensure they are taking steps to protect our children’s information online. I am sharing the resources you share with me, with our IT department for future consideration.

One School One Book

One School One Book is a big part of our school culture and this year’s book has such a great message, so of course we are disappointed to miss out on finishing it together this year. That said, we participate in OSOB as a way to promote families reading together so being home together is a great opportunity to do just that. We are telling students they can finish the book with their families and that we will reread the final chapter together when we return. We will also do all the contest winners for OSOB at that time.

Returning to School

While the exact day school will reopen remains somewhat uncertain, we do know we will return! When this happens we will continue to follow many of the practices that were in place the past few weeks. I share them with you here.

We will continue to:

- Follow guidance from the State and CDC. Our first line of defense in terms of our students is perhaps the simplest: handwashing. As such, we are having all our students wash their hands when they arrive at school, and then again before and after lunch/recess, daily. We will ensure that every classroom has as much soap and paper towels as they need, refilling our dispensers day and night.
- Have hand-sanitizer dispensers for use by our staff and visitors by the front office area, and in multiple other spots around the building.
- Have our custodial team diligently cleaning-up each evening and morning before students arrive. We will continue to use a special sanitizing spray on high-contact surfaces such as doorknobs, desks, and hand-railings around the building.
- We will look at our calendar for all events that involve either travel, or gatherings that bring together substantially large numbers of students and families. We will be following the most current advice from the governor, CDC, and local health departments to drive decisions about these events.
- Ask families for their assistance following the expected protocol for student health: if they're not feeling well, please keep children home. While COVID-19 is the top concern at the time, keeping all cold and flu viruses out of the building is extremely helpful.

In closing I would like to thank my staff. They have worked to provide a sense of calmness this week to their students. Not an easy task in a week when report cards went home, parent teacher conferences were scheduled, and we asked them to prepare resources for their students to use at home. It speaks to who they are as professionals and the passion they have for their work. Walking the halls of PGS this week, visiting classrooms, and speaking to students, you could forget for a moment about everything we are experiencing with COVID-19 outside of school.

That's my good news!

As always, my door is open for questions, concerns, and feedback.

Stay Well,

Jess Giannini, Principal