



March 22, 2020

Dear Link parents and guardians,

We are in the midst of an unprecedented public health emergency and send you prayers and thoughts for your safety and health. The Link community is strong and will persevere if we work together to support our students. Thank you for partnering with us on this new journey.

We will provide regular updates so that our communication remains strong. Please look out for *Link to Home*, our usual parent newsletter, to resume this week. We will email it to you and post it on the Parent Page of Link's website on the last instructional day of each week. Since communication is more important than ever, please let us know if your phone numbers or email addresses change and please check the website regularly.

Here are this weekend's updates.

School Closure:

- Link initially announced a closure starting Tuesday, March 17th through Friday, March 27th in line with the Commissioner of Education's guidance at the time. With the evolving nature of this situation and the Governor's recent proclamation, please note that **Link's school closure is ongoing and indefinite**. We will communicate a return date when one is determined.
- Link's spring break, from April 9th through 17th will take place as planned. Teachers, students, and families will need the break to refresh for the remainder of the school year.

Instructional Program during Closure:

- We have created a plan for robust, engaging distance learning instruction that includes ELA, math, science, social studies, the arts, Spanish, technology, advisory, physical education, and health. We will also provide additional elements of our Link program throughout the closure--keep an eye out for fun items. We are primarily using Google Classroom to share out videos and assignments and Google Hangout and Google Meet for interactive sessions. You will see more creative approaches and teacher created videos as we move forward and everyone becomes more comfortable with the technology. We are very proud of our community for the level of engagement we have seen across the board this past week as we implemented week one of distance learning.
- At this time, all students have received their materials and all families who let us know they needed computers have been contacted. The order we placed over a week and a half ago for mobile hotspots for families without internet is still on backorder but we continue to press our provider for information and will share it with families as soon as the hotspots are shipped. Any families who have not responded to calls regarding technology or have new needs should contact us at Linktech@linkschool.org or 973-568-8391. With the school building now closed, we will respond to these new requests as quickly as we can.
- Please note that this **Friday, March 27th**, there will be no instruction. This is a pre-scheduled professional development day. Staff will use this day to plan and prepare as we continue to increase

levels of engagement and plan for strong lessons. Teachers will use the entire day to work on instructional lessons so they will not be responding to emails on Friday. **We will be back on Monday, March 30th to resume distance learning.**

Expectations for Use of Technology Platforms:

As teachers continue to creatively approach instruction so that students are engaged they will be using more resources and developing videos. Please note that the Google Classroom platform will be our main vehicle for instruction. Teachers may upload videos to Google Classroom. Everything posted to Google Classroom by our teachers and all interaction between teachers and students is governed by school policies. Parents should be mindful of privacy, confidentiality and copyright issues. Nothing should be recorded or copied. Students should be individually engaged during sessions without siblings, parents or other family/friends.

Navigating the Transition to a New Structure:

- Our teachers are navigating this new structure and have families with young children at home. Please know they are working hard to plan and deliver high quality instruction but need to find a balance between home and school. We are in this together and we are collaborating with families.
- We also know that our school families are also looking for balance and we have posted a few resources to help you. You can find them on the parent page and on the COVID-19 page, both on the school's website, www.linkschool.org.
- Please share feedback on instruction by emailing us at Linkinstruction@linkschool.org.

School Meals:

School breakfast and lunch are available for pick up at Link from 9 am to 1 pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. You can pick up meals for multiple days each time you come. We are working to identify sites in Irvington and the Oranges for families who cannot travel into Newark for school meals.

Facility Access:

We have closed the school building to all but the most essential operations, including breakfast and lunch meal pick up. Nearly everything else is happening from remote locations.

Communications on Major Areas of School Operations:

- Main Office 973-642-0529 will be rerouted so continue to use that number for general questions or needs
- Technology Resources: linktech@linkschool.org
- Admissions and High School Placement: gsilver@linkschool.org
- Instructional Program: Linkinstruction@linkschool.org
- Meals: Linkmeals@linkschool.org

Each of these numbers/emails will be responded to during the typical school day hours. Please be patient as we restructure school operations. There may be slight delays in responding but we are working hard to address all inquiries and concerns.

We hope that you stay safe and healthy!

Sincerely,

Maria Pilar Paradiso
Head of School