

Knightly News Special Edition

March 22, 2020

Dear Nottingham Families,

I hope you and your families are safe and healthy. Now that we have completed our first week of school closure, I wanted to send you some related information and take a minute to say hello and thanks. Please remember that **this a marathon, not a sprint**. My son's principal shared this link and I thought it was interesting. Peek at these [Ted Talks](#).

First, I want to thank our fabulous teachers and staff for going above and beyond to ensure our students have quality materials and activities to stay engaged while at home. I cannot begin to describe how impressed I am with their creativity, connectivity and caring over the week. I've strongly encouraged our entire staff to slow down and carefully decide what and how much is pushed out to families. The pace at which we began on Monday is not sustainable and we need our staff, students and families to remain healthy, both physically and mentally.

Secondly, I want to thank all of you for your patience and flexibility as we navigate these changes. Some of you have asked for more and some have been overwhelmed by what's been shared. This week, I encourage all of you to pace yourselves during this closure as well. Please take care of yourselves and your families first. Do what you can manage, and know we are happy to support all of you through this. Our goal now is to establish a balance that will minimize stress and keep our students engaged.

Last Thursday, I was on a conference call with the other elementary principals discussing the state of everything across Arlington. Current priorities include making sure that families with limited resources are not negatively impacted by loss of jobs, and that they have access to food and supports for other basic needs. There are now 5 sites for breakfast and lunch pickups for families who need it. From there, APS is trying to help provide equal access to online resources through mifi accounts, getting technology to these families and ensuring the technology works.

At this time, we cannot provide live lessons and Nottingham teachers will not be providing new material until further notice. Parents should have access now to 10+ days of quality material from both APS and your teachers. Use these materials for your students throughout the week, recognizing that we do not expect students to engage for the entire day in academic work. Please remember that the activities that are posted by our teachers and in [ParentVue](#) by APS are **optional, non-graded and not turned in to teachers**. I encourage you to balance academic activities with lots of time exploring outside and enjoying some creative time (building legos, baking, making something out of recycling, etc). Should we end up with a longer-term absence from school, APS is

working on ways in which we can improve connectivity and distance learning with families that doesn't breach privacy and confidentiality requirements. I will certainly keep our community updated should this become the reality. It is critical that we maintain consistency across the grade levels and that we are ever mindful of keeping our students safe when they are engaged online.

If you are looking for a way to help the Arlington community, please consider food or monetary donations to [AFAC](#), which is supporting many families during this time. You can donate in person or online and they are looking for additional support.

Should you have more questions or need additional assistance, visit the APS Coronavirus page at <https://www.apsva.us/coronavirus-covid-19-updates/> or <https://www.apsva.us/engage/> or email APS at engage@apsva.us . And, as always, reach out directly if we can help in any way.

Thanks,

Eileen