



**F. A. Day Middle School**  
**Newsletter**  
*April 11, 2020*

**Quotes of the Week**

“How can we be present in a moment that does not allow us to be present.”  
--- Father Joseph McShane – President of Fordham University

“In times of stress, the best thing we can do for each other is to listen with our ears and our hearts and to be assured that our questions are just as important as our answers.”  
-- Fred Rogers (a.k.a. “Mr. Rogers”)

**THIS WEEK’S QUOTES**

As we enter our second week of distance learning, and our fourth week of school closure, I looked for a quote or quotes that might capture our shared experience. As I listened to parent questions during my principal office hours on Thursday, sat in our teacher meetings and heard from students during live sessions this week, what consistently stood out was the importance of our communication and connections.

As educators, particularly at the middle school level, we know instinctively that our children will not engage in learning if they do not feel connected and cared for. Those connections become even more important in moments of crisis. We long for the voices and faces of those with whom we are familiar to offer us comfort and show us the way forward through routines and engagement. And so, the Day Faculty has and will continue to look for ways to be present in the lives of your children in a moment, as Father McShane, the President of Fordham University describes, when circumstances are working against us. Every day we look to find new tools, new strategies and new ideas to be even more present in a world in which our health relies on our distance.

As the principal I too am working to be even more present with all of you, the families of our students who are on the front lines of this crisis as you work every day to create routines and consistency at a time when your children's lives have been turned upside down. This week's newsletter contains several examples of the layers of communication that are needed in times of uncertainty. Included are answers to your most recent questions, guidance for your children as they take on this new week, and a scheduled time for us to communicate again this week in office hours. I have learned from your questions about the nature of your concerns and gained a clearer understanding of how we can support your efforts at home.

You may choose to participate in as much or as little of our communication as you might find helpful, but no matter what, know that as Fred Rodgers once said, we are listening to you with both our ears and our hearts, and we will get through this crisis together.

**Although as a community we are challenged by the crisis around us, I hope those who celebrated the holidays this past weekend, were able to find a way to connect with families and loved one. The connections are the most important. I would like to extend my gratitude and that of the Day Community to those who are on the front lines of this public health battle - our health care workers, first responders and those in essential service industries such as grocery stores and gas stations. We are all in your debt.**

### **MORNING ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Beginning this week, we will be posting "morning announcements" on the distance learning page of our Day Middle School website. I will send out the link every day until everyone becomes familiar with where to find it. Morning announcements were a big part of our routines when in school, and I think this is a good way to maintain your child's connections with the school community and also create a formal start to their day in a distance learning environment.

### **WEEK #2 DISTANCE LEARNING TIPS**

Although we have only experienced one short week under the distance learning model together, I have learned from your feedback and that of the teachers. As a result, I put together some resources to support students in organizing their schedule in the form of a Monday morning message to help re-engage our students in learning after a long weekend.

Below is the presentation in a variety of different formats to present to your child: Google Meet Video and Google Slides. See the links below:

### **Google Meet Video:**

[Ms. Mann's Monday Morning Week 2 Message](#)

### **Slides:**

[Ms. Mann's Monday Morning Week 2 Message](#)

I have also pulled examples of grade level student schedule planners out of the presentation and linked them below. Although I present three different ways to organize time and manage tasks in my presentation, the templates below may work best for students as they most replicate the schedule that we utilize in our school. The templates were created by Ms. Fiske Murphy in collaboration with her guidance colleagues. I hope you find them helpful:

[Grade 8 Schedule Planner Template](#)

[Grade 7 Schedule Planner Template](#)

[Grade 6 Schedule Planner Template](#)

### **PRINCIPAL HOURS**

We had over 120 parents participate in principal office hours this past Thursday. In the interest of keeping open the lines of communication and supporting families in their efforts to support children at home, I will be continuing in my weekly Principal Office Hours. This week my office hours will again be held by grade based upon the schedule below:

### **Friday, April 17, 2020:**

6<sup>th</sup> grade Parents: 3:00 – 3:30 p.m.

7<sup>th</sup> grade Parents: 3:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

8<sup>th</sup> grade Parents: 4:00 – 4:30 p.m.

**Norms:**

- To join, please click on the Zoom meeting link below at the designated time.
- You need to use the chat feature to write questions.
- This is not a “drop in office hours”. It is disruptive to add members while the session is going on, so I will only admit participants up to 3 minutes past the start time of the meeting.
- Please join at the designated grade level time to allow for smaller groups. We will use the same link to join. See below:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/247219653?pwd=ajZqbTdlUmJiVnZpeFJGR2lGbGVOQT09>

Meeting ID: 247 219 653

Password: 066519

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWER PARKING LOT**

We made the choice not to record the Principal Office Hours to encourage an open dialogue, but in return I have captured the questions that parents shared during the three grade level sessions and recorded my answers in the ongoing Q&A Parking Lot that we have created to track ongoing questions about distance learning at Day. See that link to those questions and answers below:

[Parking Lot for Family Questions](#)

**Please note that this document will remain live, and you can also use it to add your own questions. I will check it periodically to respond. The benefit of using this format is that many parents have similar questions, and you are able to view all of the responses.**

**SCHEDULE FOR LIVE SESSIONS**

In our discussions during principal office hours, parents asked if live sessions will be scheduled at the same time every week. The sessions will be on the same days of the week and during the same 2- 2.5 hour block, but the actual structure of the sessions may change each week depending on student needs. For example, one week a teacher may choose to schedule shorter live sessions with smaller groups and another week they might schedule whole class or even team sessions. Below is a schedule of the general block of time in which each live session are be scheduled:

6<sup>th</sup> Grade Team Teachers: Live Sessions: Tuesday and Thursday 9:00 – 11:30 a.m.  
7<sup>th</sup> Grade Team Teachers: Live Sessions: Tuesday and Thursday: 10:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.  
8<sup>th</sup> Grade Team Teachers: Live Sessions: Tuesday and Thursday: 12:00 – 2:30 p.m.  
On Team Special Ed. Teachers: Live Sessions: (same as the grade level schedule above)  
World Language Teachers: Live Sessions: Wednesday and Friday: 9:00 -11:00 a.m.  
Arts Rotation Teachers: Live Sessions: Wednesday and Friday: 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.  
PE/Wellness: Live Sessions: Wednesday and Friday: 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.  
Lit Lab and Math Lab Live Sessions: 6<sup>th</sup> gr: 1- 3 p.m., 7<sup>th</sup> gr: 9 – 11 a.m., 8<sup>th</sup> gr.11 –1 pm  
Exploratory Classes: Live Sessions may be Monday if available.

## **TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES**

I would like to begin by thanking our technology department for their efforts to support families and faculty in this new distance learning environment. I know that the difficulties in accessing Schoology and other platforms last week led to a great deal of frustration on our first day of live sessions. In response, our technology department has created a **direct email** for parents to use when they have specific technology issues. See below:

### **Tech Support Email for Families:**

[familytechsupport@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:familytechsupport@newton.k12.ma.us)

Additionally, technology updates and resources will be shared on the website page linked below:

### **Technology Support Website**

<https://www.newton.k12.ma.us/Page/3639>

## **Chromebook Distribution**

### **Requesting an NPS Device for Home Use during School Closures**

We are committed to helping families that may need access to devices at home in order to engage in online learning opportunities. **If you do not have a web-capable device at home other than a cell phone** (such as an iPad, Chromebook, PC, or Mac) **please complete this [request](#)**

**form** (<https://forms.gle/K3SgotNY38V1ncNe9>) Our technology support team will be in touch with you to discuss next steps.

**Please note that we are now determining if we can support families who have more than three children by creating access to additional Chromebooks. Fill out the link below if that situation applies to you family.**

Please fill out the form below if you need to request additional devices. If you do not need any additional devices, no further action is required on your part.

Form: <https://forms.gle/YCZZ2NaB4kcrbyKy9>

### **Student Gmail**

As you have been notified by our Technology Director, Steven Rattendi, last week, NPS students now have access to a student Gmail account. As teachers and students learn how to access these accounts, we will explore more direct communication with students about distance learning resources. In the interim, please have your child become familiar with their Gmail account. Instructions for doing so are linked below:

### [Gmail Instructions](#)

The links have been added to the district [COVID-19 Technology Support](#) page, and to the district [Student Resources](#) page.

### **SPRING BOOK CHALLENGE**

The Newton Free Library is hosting a spring book challenge. Families or classes can sign up. See the link below:

<https://newtonfreelibrary.beanstack.org/reader365>

### **BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP**

In order to maintain connectedness among our parent and faculty communities, we will be launching a book discussion group on the book, ***Middle School Matters: The 10 Key Skills Kids Need to Thrive in Middle School and Beyond—and***

***How Parents Can Help by Phyllis Fagell.*** Phyllis, as I have mentioned before, is a Day graduate and a practicing school-based clinician in the Maryland area as well as a writer for the *Washington Post*.

We know middle school can be a challenging time for students and families. Ms. Fagell's insight and expertise, coupled with her engaging delivery, will provide you with helpful information to support your student (and your family!)

The first meeting of the book discussion group will be Monday, April 20, 2020 at **4:00 p.m. (Note- this is a new time!)** We will plan on discussing Chapters 1-5, "Values and Integrity". Day Parents and Faculty are welcome to join.

**We have changed the link to Zoom for the book group. See the link below:**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/378647716?pwd=eTlnW13T1dFV3VuQoN3K29lWkFodz09>

## **PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED INFORMATION**

### **ROUNDTABLE ADVISORY AT HOME**

Our Roundtable Advisory Planning Group has created a website with resources for families to access activities from home including team building, fun challenges, conversation starters at the dinner table and wellness activities that all foster a sense of connection, community and social emotional and physical wellness. The web site is linked through the Day Middle School site, or can be found below:

<https://sites.google.com/newton.k12.ma.us/roundtablehome/home>

### **DAY LIBRARY RESOURCES**

**Ms. Lightfoot will be offering Live Sessions in the library based upon the following schedule:**

9-9:30- Grade 6  
9:30-10- Grade 7  
10-10:30 Grade 8

See the update below from our school librarian, Ms. Lightfoot:

Hello Day Students,

I hope you are all doing well during these difficult and uncertain times. I really miss seeing you and having conversations with you each day. Our Library website offers many great resources; one page that will be particularly helpful to you is our Ebooks & Audiobooks Page. This can be found on the library's website under the top navigation bar.

I have created and will update a Library Schoology group for each grade where you can find links to optional activities that you may enjoy exploring/contributing to. I will also communicate ways that we can continue to build community and connection through these groups. If you have never attended one of our Lit Lunch groups, now is the time! You can expect a video of me reading a few chapters every few days on the Schoology group. Feel free to listen during your lunch time, or whenever.

Grade 6 Schoology Code M2QC-RTPG-MXWPF

Grade 7 Schoology Code QMZG-QM4Q-HKF7Z

Grade 8 Schoology Code 6GPM-J4F6-96DXR

I update the Library's Instagram daily ([\\_daymiddleschoollibrary\\_](#)) and my professional Twitter account ([LightsInTheLibs](#)) with what I am reading, fun activities I come across and, of course, cute pictures of my cats! The stream for these accounts is also available on the library's website. If you need anything, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Reach out if you need anything,

Ms. Lightfoot

## **GUIDANCE SCHOOLOGY COMMUNITIES**

Each of your students should have received access to a grade level community created by the guidance counselors. This community includes resources for students on self-

care topics from mindfulness to nutrition and stress reduction. Please reach out to your child's guidance counselor with any questions or if you are in need of any support.

### **VIRTUAL CLUBS**

Over the next week your child may be hearing from club advisors about creating a virtual version of their afterschool club. The Diversity Club, the GSA Club and the Math Team will be the first to be piloted. Stay tuned for more information.

### **COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITY**

Today I met virtually with Team IV student, Alexander Elvin, who is sponsoring an amazing community service project that I hope you will support. Alexander's family works in the medical field, and he is asking that our Day students and faculty write cards and encouraging words to the health care workers and their patients who are hospitalized with COVID19 and unable to see family or friends. Here is the information from Alexander that I will also be sharing with Day parents:

*Hello students, faculty and parents of our community, my name is Alexander. Our doctors in Cambridge Health Alliance are working hard to get rid of this virus one step at a time, during this hard journey our doctors and the patients in these annex wards would appreciate a card or a craft that could bring them joy, confidence, and hope. We only ask if you would like to send cards to the doctors and to the sick. We remind you that this is not something that you must do but if you could make someone happy or hopeful by sending a card. Would you?*

***If so, write a card and drop it off at 125 Beaumont Ave Newton, MA.***

### **WASHINGTON D.C. TRIP**

Please see the letter to 8<sup>th</sup> grade parents about the trip to Washington D.C. linked below and attached at the end of this email. **I will be updating 8<sup>th</sup> grade families this week after I am in contact with EF Education.**

[8th Grade Parent Washington D.C. Letter](#)

Let us know if you have any questions as we begin our second week of distance learning.

My best to you and your families,

Jackie Mann  
F. A. Day Principal

[jacqueline\\_mann@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:jacqueline_mann@newton.k12.ma.us)  
(617) 559-9100

On Twitter: @JMannNPS