

## **F.A. Day Middle School Newsletter**

**November 16, 2020**

**PINK WEEK**

### **Quote of the Week**

“Enjoy the little things, for one day you may look back and realize they were the big things.” ----Robert Brault

### **THIS WEEK’S QUOTE**

I, like all of you, am buried right now in a million details and a bunch of worries about what needs to work when we greet your children tomorrow and restart the school year in the hybrid schedule with both hybrid and distance only students. I know that some of our hybrid families may be worried about safety. Other families whose children are learning remotely might be worried about their children connecting with teachers and peers. Some of you may just be overwhelmed with how to figure out all of the logistics and information flooding your inbox, afraid you will miss an important detail.

So, let me take away the anticipation.... There will be mistakes. There will be things that we need to fix; things that we need to do better. We will get an opportunity to fix those in the coming days, and like with distance learning, we will get better at it because our Day parents are incredible and our Day faculty are gifted and talented educational professionals, and both care deeply about the children of Day Middle School.

What we will not get back... what we will easily lose sight of if we do not focus on it are our connections with the children in our school. I know it is a leap of faith, but you have to believe me when I say that our children are less worried about the links working or figuring out their schedules and are more excited to see their peers and faculty both online and in person.

The welcoming of our students on what is the second first day of school of the year, seems like a little thing -something that we are “of course going to

do” and so it makes it seems a bit less important than all of the logistics and structures we have been working on. I know, however, that we will look back on this moment, in context of a public pandemic, and see clearly and fully, that what our children needed most on this first day was to connect with the adults in their lives. If we focus on that, we will do all kind of right tomorrow.

Thank you for all of support during yet another transition. On the eve of this beginning to the new hybrid schedule, I know it has not been easy, and I also know that you will be able to look proudly back on this time and know that we all made a difference at a critical moment of need for the children of Day. On behalf of the Day faculty, please know that we are grateful to you all for your partnership.

### **UPCOMING DATES:**

Wednesday, November 11, 2020: **No School** – Veterans Day

Thursday, November 12<sup>th</sup> and Friday, November 13<sup>th</sup> – **No School** for Faculty PD

Friday, November 13, 2020: End of Term 1

Monday, November 16, 2020: Beginning of Term 2 , Transition to Hybrid

Model at the middle school level, First Day of

In-person learning for Cohort A students

Thursday, November 19, 2020: First Day of School for Cohort B Students

Wednesday, November 25, 2020: Early Release at 11:30 a.m. for Thanksgiving Break

Wednesday, November 25, 2020: Term 1 Report Cards are Posted

Thursday, November 26 – Sunday, November 29, 2020: Thanksgiving Recess

Monday, November 30, 2020: Classes resume

Wednesday, December 16, 2020: First Day of Parent Conferences

Thursday December 24, 2020 – Friday, January 1, 2021 Winter Recess

Monday, January 4, 2021- Classes Resumes

## **A FEW REMINDERS FOR HYBRID STUDENTS TOMORROW**

- The morning session on Mon., Tues, Thurs, and Fri, is from 8:05 – 11:20 a.m. – It is in person for hybrid students (Cohort A on Mon/Tues, Cohort B on Thurs./Fri) and remote for distance only students.
- The afternoon session on Mon., Tues, Thurs, and Friday is from 12:35 – 2:40 p.m. It is all remote for both cohorts and both distance only and hybrid.
- Wednesdays are remote only for most of our students. The hours are 8:05 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Dismissal is earlier on Wednesday to accommodate faculty professional development time.
- Please have your child review the student checklist linked below:

### **[Student Check List](#)**

- Review your child's cohort- make sure they are aware if they are Cohort A (in school Monday/Tuesday) or Cohort B (in School Thursday/Friday)
- Make sure that your child knows how they are getting to school and getting home.
- If your child is taking a bus, please follow the directions below to print out a bus pass from the ASPEN portal by following the directions below. **\*\* We cannot allow children to board a bus without a pass due to space and safety considerations. Each bus pass has a seat assignment for your child:**

### **[NPS Bus Information](#)**

- Review the orientation linked below so that your child knows what door to use to enter the school:

Door 7 – Bus Students, Door 11 – Albemarle Side Walkers, Door 22 – Minot Walkers

[Narrated Family Orientation to Hybrid and Distance Learning at Day](#)

[Family and Student Orientation to Hybrid and Distant Learning at Day \(Slide deck\)](#)

- **Make sure your child knows who their “home base teacher is” and the teacher’s room number** (you can email your child’s teacher and they can tell you if they have not done so). **\*\* Please let your child know that home base sections have changed and are NO LONGER the same as their advisory teacher.**
- Student schedules will not be adjusted to the hybrid model in ASPEN until Monday, November 23, 2020. Until that time, students should continue to follow the links in their Google Calendar.
- Drop 6<sup>th</sup> Grade students off on Albemarle – there will be signs held up by each 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher.
- 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade students should report to their home base class as soon as they enter the building. There are maps of the building linked below. We also will hand out maps at each door, and there will be many adults helping to guide you.
- The first class begins at 8:05 a.m. Student walking to school **WILL NOT BE ADMITTED TO THE BUILDING BEFORE 7:55 a.m.** Please plan accordingly as students also should not wait outside of the building.
- Students taking the bus will be greeted and escorted into designated waiting areas before school begins.

- Grab and Go Breakfast is available for ALL students at no cost. Students choosing breakfast must enter through the Cafeteria Door #6 on the left of the building.
- Grab and Go Lunches are also available for all students, even those leaving for the day, but food cannot be eaten on the bus.
- Please send your child with two masks. A mask should be worn at all times.
- Make sure your child brings their NPS Chromebook to school with a charger. They should charge their computer the night before. \*\*  
***8<sup>th</sup> grade students do not have their NPS device as of yet. They will be allowed to bring in their own computers to school until they receive the NPS Chromebooks***
- Hybrid Students in Both Cohort A and B should have already received Google Calendar links to ALL Classes.

## **DISTANCE ONLY STUDENTS**

- Most Distance Only students will have all of their classes with their team teachers from 8:05 – 11:20 a.m. similar to hybrid students.
- Some on-team distance only sections (for Ruby, Mint, and Emerald Teams) will be held from 11:20 – 12:35.
- Distance only will join their hybrid classmates for all multi-team classes by “remoting in” via Zoom.
- Teachers should have already sent out the Google Calendar links for all of the classes.

## **COHORT B STUDENTS**

- Cohort B hybrid students will begin their week with asynchronous work. Teachers should have sent out Google Calendar invitations with information in the “Note” section of the invitation on what the asynchronous assignment is.

## **GOOGLE CALENDAR LINKS**

All Day students should have been deleted from the Distance Learning Google Calendar links and received new links for the hybrid schedule. There will be Google Calendar invites for the following:

- In person classes with a room number (just event invite- some with Zoom links)
- Asynchronous work (just event invite – some with Zoom links)
- Virtual classes in the afternoon (calendar invites with Zoom links)

FOR THE FIRST WEEK OF SCHOOL ONLY, your child will begin the day in their team extension class for orientation to hybrid learning. Their Google Calendar links should indicate this, but if there are two links, please make sure they go to their team extension class first period OR email their teacher.

## HELP DESK

One Help Desk will be available for all three grades for the first week of school. If your child is having difficulty with links or you have questions about your child's calendar, please join the Zoom link below:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://newton-k12-ma-us.zoom.us/j/87877368342>

Meeting ID: 878 7736 8342

Passcode: 628336

## CHROMEBOOKS

- **8th Grade:** 8<sup>th</sup> Graders should receive their NPS Chromebooks by the week of November 23<sup>rd</sup>. In the interim, we ask that any 8<sup>th</sup> graders with a device at home bring it to school for use. Students without a device will be provided with them.

- **6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Grade:** All 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students should have already received their NPS Chromebooks. We have some that have yet to be picked up. If you have not picked up your child's device, please email Ms. Vitone at : [vitonem@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:vitonem@newton.k12.ma.us)

## **PRINCIPAL OFFICE HOURS**

In anticipation of the questions that you might have during this first week of the hybrid schedule, I will resume our Principal Office Hours this week on **Monday, November 16, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.** Please use the link below:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://newton-k12-ma-us.zoom.us/j/86489739719>

Meeting ID: 864 8973 9719

Passcode: 388572

**Questions can continue to be added to our Parent Questions Parking Lot linked below:**

[Parent Hybrid and Distance Only Questions](#)

### ***Norms for virtual Principal Office Hours:***

- To join, please click on the Zoom meeting linked above at your designated time.
- When you enter, you will be muted so that we can hear all participants one at a time. Please keep your microphone muted unless called on for a question.
- The video sessions will be recorded for those who cannot attend at the designated time.

- You need to use the chat feature to write questions.
- Please post your name on your screen in your Zoom settings as I will ask you to unmute so that we can have a dialogue about your question.
- 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 refrain from asking specific questions about your child or a faculty member out of respect for confidentiality. Any questions of that nature should be directed to me via an email so that a personal conversation can be scheduled.

## **QUESTIONS ABOUT FACULTY TEACHING REMOTELY**

I have heard from a few parents who are concerned about their children being taught by faculty who are remote while they are in school. In this situation, when your student is scheduled to be in class on their live in-person days, your student will be in the classroom with their peers and their teacher will teach from a remote location. One of our Instructional Support Staff (ISS) teachers will be in the class to set up the live stream of teaching and to facilitate classwork. We anticipate this process to be seamless. While this set-up is not ideal, but I wanted to share a bit about how we landed here, and how we will support our students in this model:

### **Why is this happening?**

Some faculty members are in need of an accommodation to teach remotely for personal reasons, such as a medical risk factor. This is similar to families who need their children to be distance-only due to medical risk factors.

### **Why do some teams or grades have more teachers who are remote than others?**

Prior to the beginning of the school year in September, we adjusted teacher assignments based upon the information we had regarding faculty who would be teaching remotely. Our goal was to balance the number of teachers who were remote on each team, while keeping faculty in the same grade and content area for which they were trained and certified.



Prior to the transition to hybrid on November 16, there was a second evaluation process for teachers to determine who could teach in the classroom and who needed to teach remotely. This was similar to the process in which families re-evaluated their selection of hybrid or full distance learning. This second evaluation process resulted in some changes to faculty remote assignments. However, teams could not be rebalanced at this point without changing the teams and teachers for all of our students.

### **Why couldn't I have this information before I chose hybrid learning for my child.**

The faculty accommodation process was completed through the NPS Human Resources department at the same time as the family surveys were completed, as both processes were contingent upon the fluid public health situation.

### **Will my child miss out on instruction because some of the teachers are remote?**

No. Keep in mind that each full class meets for 4 times a week with a teacher. Three of those times are virtual meetings in the afternoon. Only one meeting time is in person. For this one in-person meeting time, your child will still be taught by their assigned teacher and will be supported in-person by one of our qualified Instructional Support Staff (ISS) teachers. This in-person staff will ensure that the remote teacher is projected in the classroom for instruction and the students are accessing the teacher's remote instruction. The ISS will also supervise and support students and distribute classroom materials.

### **I am worried that my child is going to school for no reason now because some of the teachers are remote.**

We know this situation is not ideal, especially for students on teams for which the number of teachers in the classroom and those teaching remote is not balanced anymore. However, the most important impetus for the transition to the hybrid model is to create safe opportunities for our students to connect with their school community in person -- particularly their peers. Based upon feedback from other schools in our area that have already begun using a hybrid, this is the most important benefit of in-person learning during the pandemic. Our middle school students are feeling more and more isolated at home. Attending school in the building

for two mornings a week provides students with the opportunity for social connection and emotional support during this very difficult time.

## **HOLIDAY AND VACATION TRAVEL**

We have heard from some hybrid families that you would like your child to change to “distance only” because you are traveling for the holidays. As indicated earlier, we cannot make this change as it creates class sizes for distance only cohorts that are not manageable.

We can ONLY transfer a child to distance only from hybrid if your child is ill and needing to quarantine. This is true across the district because of the planning went into creating both distance only and hybrid sections that are safe and manageable.

Also, I ask that you please review the guidelines sent out earlier by our public health nurses:

[MA COVID-19 TRAVEL ORDER](#)

## **THANK YOU TO OUR PTO AND MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY**

As many of you are aware, a family who has children at Day, NNHS and Franklin, experienced the loss of their home in a fire this past week. Thanks to the efforts of the Day, Franklin and NNHS PTOs, the family will receive well of \$20,000 in food and donations to help them restart their lives. I am quite proud to be part of such a generous community. Thank you all for your generosity in this family’s time of need.

If you are still interested in making a donation, our PTO has a link on its website for a Go Fund Me site.

## **PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED INFORMATION**

## **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AT DAY WEBSITE**

We are in the process of updating our club and after school activities website. On the link below you can find a list of our current in person and virtual clubs as well as the link to paying your club fees or apply for financial assistance. The club fees are \$60 for the school year which covers unlimited participation in Day clubs. The drama fee is \$100 but also includes unlimited participating in any clubs at Day for the year. The information on how to enroll is included in the above-linked slideshow.

[Extracurricular Activities at Day](#)

How does your child sign up for a club? They should email the club adviser listed on the slides linked below. The adviser will share a Schoology Group link with your child to join the club.

[Day Middle School Clubs Fall 2020](#)

### **BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB:**

The Newton Boys' and Girls' Club is offering a program called "Out of School Time Program" which offers enrichment programs for middle school students and compliments the schedule of NPS middle schools. See the link below:

<https://www.newtonbgc.com/outofschooltimprogram>

Best,

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