Oct. 30, 2020

Dear BMS Families,

I have to say that 2020 continues to provide us with challenges - today’s challenge is an October snow event. It is hard to believe tomorrow is Halloween when I look at the window and see the world covered in snow! Speaking of Halloween, I want to encourage you to help your children make smart choices this weekend. Please remind them that mask wearing, social distancing and frequent handwashing are critical. I recognize the disappointment many of the kids will feel this year, but avoiding gatherings and staying safe must be a priority.

**Recent Zoom Intrusion Update**

We have conducted our investigation of the intrusion on one of our zoom classes (see this [letter to the community](#) for my initial description). Our Assistant Principals have determined how this happened, and we have involved the Newton Police. While I am not able to share details regarding all of the investigation, I can share with you that the intrusion was a result of a student sharing the zoom link and password on social media. This resulted in outside individuals coming into the class and using foul and racist language. Please take some time this weekend to remind your children that they are not to share this information with anyone who is not in their classes. It is a violation of our Acceptable Use Policy and there are school consequences when something like this happens. Teachers are monitoring who enters the waiting room and only admitting names of students in the class. We have all double checked our security settings on all of our Zoom meetings to provide everyone with protection.

The impact on our students is my biggest concern. We want BMS students to feel they are safe in school (remote or in-person). We want them to know that there is no place for racist language in our community. I have met with the students in the class that was impacted, but I also want to offer all BMS students an opportunity to come together in solidarity to share their thoughts and concerns. Kathy Lopes, Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion will join us for an optional student Zoom on Thursday, November 5 at 3:15. The link to the zoom meeting is here:

[Join Zoom Meeting](https://newton-k12-ma-us.zoom.us/j/84937939624)

Meeting ID: 849 3793 9624
Passcode: solidarity
**Moving to Hybrid**
We continue to work at planning for the hybrid opening on November 16. David Fleishman sent a communication out regarding the times school will meet when we move to the hybrid model. He also mentioned that on Nov. 12 and 13, our teachers will be having two professional days to prepare for the change over. There will not be school on those days, so please mark your calendars. For those of you who may have missed it here is a link to a video presentation that I made about the hybrid plan. If you would like to spend more time learning about this or accessing any of the links in my presentation, [here is a link to the actual powerpoint](mailto:). 

**New Kid Advisory Discussion Group Option for Students**
As we begin to discuss the book, *New Kid* by Jerry Craft, in our advisories and engage in conversations about racism and discrimination, we recognize that these conversations will elicit different feelings and reactions within our diverse community. For that reason, we would like to offer a space for our students of color to meet and discuss these topics under the guidance of Mr. Turner, Assistant Principal and Ms. Van Delft, Metco Counselor. Students who identify as people of color would have the option to discuss the book in an affinity group instead of their advisory meetings. The affinity groups would meet at the same time as advisory meetings and would be organized by grade level.

Please complete this [Response](mailto:) or contact Mr. Turner ([turnerj@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:)) or Ms. VanDelft ([vandelftg@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:)) to let us know if your child would like to participate in these alternative discussions.

**Extracurricular activities**
Due to the pandemic and limits this puts on activities, our Ski Club will not be running this year. The number of students that can be on a bus is limited which makes the cost prohibitive. If you have questions please contact Michele Shin at [shinm@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:). We realize this may be a disappointment for many, and will continue to provide virtual extra curricular activities as well as some in-person options. [Click here](mailto:) to view options for these activities.

**Chromebook Distribution & School Pictures!**
We are getting very close to being able to distribute Chromebooks. Distribution will be done by grade level and we will be working with the PTO to create a sign up for date and time slots. During the distribution, we will also be having school pictures. Students who were already given a Chromebook during this school year will not need to pick one up, but they are encouraged to come for their school picture. In
addition, all students will be getting a mini whiteboard and some BMS swag from the PTO. Please watch for emails with details in the coming week.

School pictures will all be ordered online. Please read this form and use the link provided there to order your child’s photographs ahead of time.

Wishing you all a good weekend and hope you don’t have to shovel too much snow!

Kim Lysaght
Principal
Charles E. Brown Middle School