

Dear Elementary Families,

Let me begin by thanking everyone for all your diligent work in supporting the transition to remote learning. Due to the nature of the current pandemic, we at MCS have been tirelessly implementing new learning models, evolving what remote learning looks like, and, of course troubleshooting the obvious roadblocks we have experienced in this process. The current reality comes with a technology learning curve that is extremely fluid and taking shape. I am sure you all are well aware that we have encountered issues we could not have anticipated ahead of time. As those issues arise, we are committed to resolving them in a timely and effective manner. As always, we appreciate your patience and know that together we can overcome anything with our focus, community and shared love of Christ.

We are finding parent partnership increasingly important particularly in terms of how students are connecting and how students are using school provided devices and platforms to do so. Understandably, students are missing their peers and needing social connection. Many are finding creative ways to socialize online with their peers, (using personal chat windows and personal Zoom sessions) which has presented a reason for us to establish some expectations and request increased parent support. We ask for your help in monitoring their screen time and with whom they are socializing. We do not have the tools or safeguards to control devices nor put provisions on personal screen social time usage, yet we understand the importance of connecting and socializing with each other. We feel it is important to set up these expectations as a family and determine what is appropriate for your child.

As for school expectations, it is imperative to have set routines in place. Doing school on-line is different and students' screen time has increased. Building in brain breaks and limiting devices is valuable and necessary. With this in mind, during designated break times, we encourage students not to be on devices. Additionally, it is important to protect and preserve academic learning and minimize distractions during the designated learning times. Though we encourage students to socialize and connect, we need to support all of our students and their learning. Classes have staggered small group times, one-to-one meetings, and flexibility for students to complete their work independently and watch flipped lessons. This creates varied schedules where students may be learning at different times or on breaks at different times. The learning time needs to be protected to ensure all of our students have uninterrupted time with teachers and studying to learn as best as possible during remote school time. We ask that parents support our endeavor to not use personal devices during designated learning time and not use Zoom for personal uses during these times either.

We recognize our students need more social connection and we want to support that. Outside of the designated learning times, it is to the discretion and monitoring of the family to facilitate online connection no matter what platform is used. Students should still be monitored, even outside of school hours as we have been made aware of some misuses of the programs. You may also be excited to know we are working on more opportunities for MCS to facilitate social time for students. Teachers have started to build in opportunities for students to come to office hours or drop-in sessions for students to see friends and ask questions. Zoom sessions and classroom meetings are supporting more social learning and building community.

In addition to teachers, we are working on a plan to have MCS Staff support classrooms by offering a "Remote Recess." This opportunity will provide another virtual touch point with classmates to connect with friends at school. Our goal is to start some of these after Easter or maybe sooner.

In the meantime, I ask for you to partner with us in finding a balance between the academic environment and your child's social time. We encourage a connected community with parameters that support learning and encourage your family to continue supporting social connection but prioritize it outside of the learning time. Thank you for all your support. We miss seeing the students and parents on campus. The hugs and joyful smiles are treasures we look forward to seeing soon. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Thank you for your support! Missing you all.

1 Corinthians 12:14

The body of Christ, or the people that are the whole of humanity, are a team. The body is not supported by one person, but by all of us. We are one, we are strongest **working together** in unity. **Teamwork** is the key to living life in harmony, so that we can do God's will.

Blessings,  
Brandy Sick, Elementary Principal