

Kenwood School Newsletter

Principally Speaking

March 30, 2020

Dear Parents,

During this time away from “in class” learning, I would like to reach out to all of our families to let you know that our teachers and our support staff are making every effort to provide “at home” learning opportunities that will assist your child during this time. It is our hope that our students will continue to read, practice math and stay engaged in learning during this time away from school.

We are meeting weekly and remotely as a teaching staff to communicate and share ideas that will benefit our students, as well as to share issues of concern that we can address as a school community. Our office is staffed every day from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Please feel free to call during those hours with any questions or to leave a message for any staff member.

Thanks to everyone for their teamwork and support during this unprecedented break from our regular learning environment.

Main Office: 833-2500

Sincerely,

Bob Bales

Beginning on Monday, April 6th, teachers will have the next set of work packets available for pick up from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in the same fashion as we did for the first pick up procedure. Please remain in your car and a staff member will bring the packet to you. If you don't see anyone come out, please call our school office at 833-2500. Thank you!

On most Monday mornings, our school comes together for a brief assembly to share topics of interest, do the pledge of allegiance together and share some jokes (that some students and teachers enjoy...on occasion). During this “time out” from regular “in class” instruction, I would like to send home a couple of jokes each week to share with your child(ren):

What musical group kills germs?

(The Bleach Boys)

If a pencil and a piece of paper had a race, which would win?

(The pencil, because the paper would always remain stationary (stationery)).

What bow can never be tied?

(a rainbow)

Yearbook Order Deadline Extended: We're extending ordering time to this Friday, April 3rd.

<http://kenwoodcougars19-20.picaboo.com>

Monday, March 30, 2020

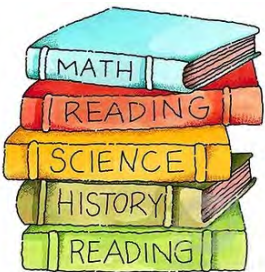
Facing Changes & Unknowns Amidst COVID-19 Pandemic:

Understanding what the mind/body/spirit encounter in times of crisis.

Initial tips for supporting yourselves and your kids.

Dear Parents: This handout is intended to offer information and support about navigating through this potentially stressful and uncertain transition to home school distant learning. I hope to contribute additional information and activities for emotional health in the weeks to come, and will continue to collaborate with teachers and adjunct staff. I also hope to offer opportunities for your kids to share their voices, experiences and observations as a way to stay connected and to record this unique and challenging time in their lives. I welcome input and questions and would be happy to connect with you or your child for additional support. I sincerely miss your kids and witnessing their play, growth and curiosity! My heart is with you all and this amazing Kenwood community. Please be safe and practice all measures of recommended care for yourselves, your families and our local and global community.

Susana "Miss Sani" Post, LMFT
School Counselor, Kenwood Elementary School
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THE MIND

Crisis and stress can send us swinging between experiencing too much (overwhelm) and experiencing too little (numbing). Our minds may want to spin out or shut down. Stress burns down our foundations for calmly sequencing our thoughts and it disrupts our decision-making abilities. Sometimes this is demonstrated through non-verbal cues such as a loss in visual focus (scattered eye contact), changes in facial color or breathing patterns, and redness around the ears. Stress however also allows us to take action, to survive our pain and it can inspire our minds with unexpected and creative ideas.

What can I do?

-Take time to create a **daily structure/schedule** mirroring the familiarity of a typical school day. Block time for specific lessons, with predictable times for breaks and lunch. Include free play and choice time. Pre-select activities that work for you, then offer your child a choice from among them. No schedule needs to be perfect!

-Practice **mindfulness activities** that Ms. Carrie has been teaching! Activities like starfish and anchor breathing, body scans, mindful noticing and listening, gratitudes, appreciations, cultivating kindness, creating community circle center pieces are all tools your kids are already practicing at school. Take a moment to have your kids teach you about them and practice together. Establish consistency.

-**Less is more.** Take more breaks, let go of expectations when things don't go to plan. Stay informed, but place intentional limits on exposure to the news. If possible, pause to notice your own mental grounding and focus before tuning into your child. Use humor; think of something funny and laugh!

THE BODY

High intensity change can leave the body grasping for a sense of familiarity, order and safety. We are often thrust into our more primal selves and one of our first primal responses is self-protection. We protect ourselves in the areas of our greatest vulnerabilities. This may translate into emotional resistance, behavioral regression or hyper-maturity, more intense or frequent break downs. Changes in muscle tone (tensing to flopping), dizziness, stomach aches, or we may just need to cry without knowing why. Remember that tears are important! We are rarely taught this. It is often hard to accept our own tears or tolerate the discomfort of seeing our children cry. But our tears are full of toxic proteins that are being shed by the body for the purpose of bringing our emotional system back into balance.

What can I do?

-Practice **patience and maximum compassion** for yourself and others. This is key! This whole process is a work-in-progress and you are not alone. Nobody is expected to have all the answers. Be open to your child's questions (even if you don't know what to say) and provide reassurance. (i.e. "I don't know, but I'm here for you"). Calmly roll-call the different reliable people in your and your child's life.

-Move and stretch. **Notice the sensations** in your body. When **washing hands**, notice the temperature of the water, the texture and scent of the soap. Breathe. Gently squeeze or rub your arms from shoulder down to wrist and then shake your hands. Heave a sigh! Push your heels, toes and feet into the ground. Carry a small object that brings you a sense of safety and calm. Practice these actions for yourself and with your child!

-Ask for support, please. Connect with your child's teacher, other trusted school staff, myself, family, friends, parents. Listen to your own needs as much as those of your child. When you hit frustration or an obstacle, explore together what is needed to reach a resolution and move on. Be prepared for tears of futility.

AND THE SPIRIT

This COVID-19 pandemic is forcing unfathomable changes to our daily lives, our sense of health and safety, and to the very way we are able to express our human need for connection. It is absolutely an experience of loss and may well bring very valid emotions of grief. It also may trigger previous memories of traumatic interference in our community, such as our experience of the wildfires. Grief challenges us to accept what is happening, feel our pain and confusion, adjust to a new world, and integrate loss into our new way of life. It's okay if this doesn't quite feel possible. Everything takes the time it needs.

What can I do?

-Stay open and practice being soft and soothing. Speak to yourself and your family kindly (i.e. "This hurts and it's scary." "We are good people going through a hard time.") Tell stories to your children about yourself or a loved one. Share what you felt when they were born! Light candles, listen to their dreams.

-Go for walks and collect interesting nature treasures. Wonder with your child about where in the world you'd love to go, and why. Cut pieces of string to represent **heart-string connections** and offer them to the people you and your family love.

-Make art, be silly, dance, play, allow yourself to imagine the details of a healthy future. Pause, breathe, try, fail, try again, let go, trust, stay present.

Additional Articles

"Handling Your Kid's Disappointment When Everything is Canceled"
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/18/parenting/coronavirus-kids-events-cancelled.html>

"10 Ways to Ease Your Coronavirus Anxiety"
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/18/smarter-living/coronavirus-anxiety-tips.html>