Important Details of How Newport High School Will Implement Learning at Home

Six Actions to Tackle at Home This Week
I’m sorry! Principals were instructed to go radio silent last week so that our district could provide consistent information to all families. I realize now that I could have let you know that on Friday. As I try to remind our students, live and learn!

I’m reaching out today to get us started working together to keep your students learning at home. And to succeed, I really do need families as strong and informed partners. Especially in the beginning. Students will face a learning curve for both the technology and independence of learning outside the classroom. They will need you to help with structure, focus, and keeping a healthy perspective as they adapt.

Please remind your students that “progress, not perfection” must guide all of us now. Normally, students can expect teachers to have all the necessary expertise for learning. To accomplish the blended-learning model using Microsoft Teams, we’ll all learn and practice together. Students’ experiences using teams will require some initial fumbling, problem solving, and adjustment. Remind them to give themselves time.

Information to Expect Over Coming Weeks:
I will send our regular newsletter on Fridays, but I plan to pare it to these essentials:

- I will keep you informed about what we are doing here at school to support your student (and you) at home. I won’t kid you that I have all the answers, but I will share what I know and what we are working on each week.

- With the added stress of these unprecedented disruptions in our routines, our relationships, our ability to plan ahead, etc., I want to continue sharing what we know about helping your student manage stress and develop strong mental-health skills.

- Expect details for any resources that can help families navigate learning at home. I’ll also include both district and community support for families that need food, clothing, or other necessities.

What to Do Now & This Week:
Encourage your student to spend a little time with Microsoft Teams.
There is a Microsoft Teams app for most any device. Your student has one on their district-issued laptop. Students can set up a group with other students, siblings, extended family, or you. Help them feel more comfortable with the interface and options by investing in a little practice. That way, when lessons start, they can focus on learning.
Your student will need **quiet and a space with as few distractions as possible**. Let them know now that cell phones must be off. **Multitasking does NOT work.** Especially in the beginning, they will need complete focus to adjust to learning through Teams.

If they will work at a common table with siblings, find a **pair of headphones/earbuds**.

**Build your student’s mindset.**
We’ll talk more in coming weeks about the difference between Threat-Response Stress and Challenge-Response Stress. For now, **help your student to seize a sense of control**. Yes, much is out of our individual command right now, but we are not helpless to manage the situation.

I’ll detail below what they can do to take charge of their learning. Also help them take personal command of staying healthy with all the guidance from the Washington State Department of Health.

**Review notes and concepts from each class.**
Students should spend time this week **going over their notes for each class**. That time will help them keep some normalcy and structure to their days.

An important **independent learning skill for life** includes surveying what you know about a topic, deepening your understanding by giving that knowledge some deeper thought, and making note of gaps with a plan to fix them.

**Watch for a school schedule.**
The district will provide a **schedule this week of the hours when students should sit down with their laptops and “attend” class** through the Teams software they learned late last week. It will include a morning session, lunch break, and afternoon time as well.

**Review outlines of teacher plans for each class next week.**
Watch Friday for an **email from each teacher**. Both the **student and parent** will receive the message through Synergy (our district communication and student-data system). It will include **what your student can expect in each class** (i.e., topic, primary takeaway learning, location of related resources, and any appropriate assignment detail).

**We start home learning on Monday, 03/23/2020.** All students should attend (we will take attendance and expect interaction). This work counts toward student grades and course credit.

**Reassure your student.**
Let your student know that there is much that we don’t know yet. **We do know that we will work with you and them on the challenges** before us. AP exams, graduation, registration, tutorial support, etc. all will take shape when we have tackled the priorities above them.

I am proud of our Newport community’s response to this emergency. Our teachers and your students worked together last week to prepare to learn from home. Now they **need us to join their efforts**.

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**With gratitude for your partnership,**

*Dion Yahoudy,* Principal  
Newport High School
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