

March 19, 2020

Dear Plaza Community Members,

What a week it has been for all of us as we navigate our way through this uncertain time. I am concerned about the long-term affect this will have on all of us, especially our children who are faced with an extended period without the structure and normalcy they want and, more importantly, need. Governor Newsome indicated in his March 17<sup>th</sup> press conference that it is very possible schools will be closed until after our summer break.

Thinking about children spending five weeks out of school during a regularly scheduled school year is tough for me to comprehend. Five months is unimaginable. Yet, here I am, beginning to prepare for my own school-aged children at home. As their parent, it is imperative I do the best I can to ensure their educational, mental, social, and physical well-being is cared for. It will not be easy for any of us because we've never been faced with these sort of conditions.

Please try your best to create a structured environment for your children each day that keeps them engaged. One that isn't just about academics, but also focuses on their mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing. Although it's easy to understand that younger kids need someone to do that for them, don't forget about the teenagers. They are still kids who crave structure and discipline, even if they say they don't. Set expectations for daily routines that include time for play and physical exercise, as well activities that foster emotional and mental wellbeing.

Teachers will continually work on providing resources and opportunities for your children so continue to reach out to them. Encourage your children to stay in contact with their friends. Limit the amount of time they are using social media or are on TV, cell phones, and video games, especially during learning opportunities. I also recommend thinking about how often they are exposed to current events pertaining to the coronavirus. It's not good for them, or you, to worry or panic, especially when I'm confident we're all going to be ok.

There are meal programs available in Orland, Willows, and Hamilton City for all kids under 18 years old. Call their school districts or visit their websites for times and locations. The teachers and I are actively figuring out ways to provide learning opportunities for those of you who do not have Wi-Fi.

**I have two final requests. First, please share and/or read to your child the letter I've included for them. Second, please, please make sure your kids are reading and are being read to often!**

Hang in there and stay positive. We will all be ok. I will be available throughout this time, so please reach out to me if you need anything.

Sincerely,

Mr. Conklin

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530-865-1250 x33

March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Dear Plaza Pirate,

I hope this letter finds you well and you are enjoying a little break from school. I think of you often; wondering what you're doing to pass the time. I hope that it includes a lot of reading!

I am sure your parents talked to you about why you are not in school for a while. It is important to remember that you are going to be ok because you are not in any danger. Your parents, siblings, and grandparents are safe too so you can relax and do not have to worry about anything. Enjoy this time with your family, even if your brother or sister starts to get a little annoying. It won't last forever and I promise, soon you'll be back to school with your friends!

All of us at Plaza want you to continue to learn while you are home, so please make sure that every day you spend time doing the activities your teacher planned for you. It's ok if you don't understand something. All you have to do is ask an adult to help you. Your teacher and I are only an email away so feel free to reach out to us too.

It's important for you to take care of yourself while you are home. You can do that by waking up early and making sure you don't go to bed too late. Eat healthy meals and snacks, get lots of exercise, and limit time on electronics. Don't forget to brush your teeth twice a day! Also, be a good helper for your parents by doing chores, preparing meals, feeding pets, and being a good listener. Most importantly, have some fun too by building forts, playing board games, solving puzzles, conducting experiments, and getting outside every day.

I've included my email in case you want help with one of the activities your teacher provided, or if you want to send me a message letting me know what you're up too. I promise I'll reply. Have a great few weeks, and I'll see you real soon. And remember to keep washing your hands!

Sincerely,

Mr. Conklin (email address: [pconklin@plazaschool.org](mailto:pconklin@plazaschool.org) )

**P.S. Please, please, please READ, READ, READ!!!! Also, I give you permission to annoy your parents, older brother or sister, grandparents, and babysitters until they read to you (even if you already know how to read).**