

March 26, 2020

Dear SOMSD Families,

We hope that this letter finds you all healthy and safe. Thank you for your continued patience, flexibility and support as we work together as a community to practice social distancing and help our collective communities slow the spread of COVID-19.

We also thank you for your general appreciation for the work done by our staff, honest feedback, and recommendations concerning our distance learning curriculum. We've heard your concerns and as we continue our distance learning we want to provide you with updates and share further guidance, clarification and next steps to support online instruction for students in grades K-12. Pre-K Program instruction will be addressed in a separate communication. As shared in our previous communication, distance learning continuation will officially begin on Wed., April 1 through April 9, 2020 (Spring Break, April 10 – 17, with a tentative back to school date of April 20).

A consistent thread raised by families was the question of technology, connectivity, equity, and access as well as the 'want' for possible direct instruction via video connecting applications. We are pleased to share that we performed multiple telephone '**technology need surveys**' of our community and were able to offer a device to all families that expressed a need to borrow a device. Working with our technology department, principals and their staff at each of our schools led the distribution of our school-based Chromebook inventory to families. We believe this distribution will now allow for our instruction to migrate almost exclusively to a technology platform.

While we will continue to utilize Google Classroom, there will be other platforms also available to facilitate instruction and explanations of new concepts for our students. We believe we have found reasonable compromises on the topic of instructional technology (additional details are listed in the guideline section below):

- All teachers will post 90 minutes of consistent "office hours" where the teacher will be online to answer questions.
- Teachers will now have many options to interact with their students. Some options will include recorded lessons and platforms that do not have images of participants' faces etc. There are more details of these options to follow.

Please remember many teachers have families of their own at home and they may also be juggling work between more than one child. We also do not know the state of health for our teachers and their families, so we ask you to be considerate of their home life as we continue to navigate our new normal. We encourage our staff, families and our students to reach out to their teachers, principals, and the District Office with questions and concerns. If you would like to email us closure-related questions please use info@somsd.k12.nj.us. Again, thank you for your continued flexibility and cooperation during this unprecedented time.

We understand there are questions, concerns, and "what if" situations that will continue to surface. We ask that as needs arise, you stay in close communication with our school district. We will continue to provide routine updates as new information becomes available, via email, robocalls, texts, website, and social media updates so please remain connected with our school community.

The South Orange & Maplewood School District

GUIDELINES, EXPECTATIONS & REMINDERS

Our Curriculum Supervisors have given teachers a condensed, online friendly curriculum/guide to structure their teaching and student learning. Our focus with distance learning is to develop a systemic process to gather and curate instructionally appropriate resources for all SOMSD students. While we are looking for consistency across the district in grade levels/courses, we also want to ensure that our teachers have more freedom to teach under these unusual circumstances.

Teacher Guidelines:

Teachers will be planning for 4 hours maximum per day (This is across all subjects ELA, Social Studies, Math, Science, Physical Education, World Languages and Fine Arts).
Students will be asked to work independently offline daily with their textbooks and other educational materials.
Teachers will plan explicit instruction using resources such as Webex recorded lessons, Whiteboard, Vidyad, Edu Puzzle, ShowMe (These will vary by grade level and teacher experience comfort level).
Teachers will avoid the requirement to print or upload all assignments.
Teachers must maintain and post consistent daily Office Hours (90 minutes per day) for parents/students in need of extra support.
Special education teachers will continue to collaborate with all teachers and case managers, in accordance with students' IEPs to the greatest extent possible. A separate communication has been prepared for families whose children have an IEP.
In the planning process, all teachers will consider the accommodations stipulated in students' Section 504 Plans to the greatest extent possible.

Student/Family Reminders:

Any assignments that have been completed during the first two weeks can be uploaded to Google Classroom or can be emailed to your teacher by April 3rd. These can be scanned documents or pictures of the work. You can also hand them in when we return to school if you do not have the ability to upload documents.
Virtual School Suggested Dress and Online Conduct Code: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recommended Dress Code: While there is no official dress code for SOMSD, students are expected to be respectful of the virtual classroom environment in online classes with suggested dress similar to the following guidelines for casual dress.• Online Code of Conduct: In addition to the formal Honor and Discipline Codes, SOMSD encourages students to follow the following online code of conduct. Respectful Communication. Follow all SOMSD acceptable use policies for technology resources. Be respectful of your class and teachers!
Hold students to appropriate Google Classroom use. The comments that are made should be appropriate for class. Keep in mind students know how to use social media for personal connection, for self-expression, and for exploration. They may not know how to use social media to communicate while learning outside of school. We want to be certain we create safe spaces!

Teachers/administrators may only record classes to facilitate the review of direct instruction for students who are absent or who need reinforcement. For the privacy of teachers and fellow students, families and/or students should NOT record classes or meetings.
Teachers will post their office hours in order to answer student questions via email or online platforms during their predetermined 90 minutes per day of office hours.
Teachers will provide instruction on each Google Classroom class page about how to access office hours.
Students should check school emails at least one time per day.
Teachers will associate grades with each of your posted Work Modules and perhaps with collaborative activities that occur in the online classes. We've asked teachers to provide at least weekly grade/feedback updates to allow you the information you need in improving your understanding of material or skill mastery.
We are keeping in mind parents are responsible for ensuring their child is on track with assignments and coursework as well as communicating with their teachers throughout the remainder of this distance learning period.
It has been determined by the New Jersey Department of Education that NJSLA testing has been cancelled for the 2019-2020 school year.
AP CLASSES - Although the College Board has not yet made a definitive final determination about AP exams, they are currently offering to extend the testing window and investigate online testing for students later in May or June. We won't know the final schedule of testing for some time so we are making things more flexible for you and your AP teachers by waiving the requirement of students in AP classes to take the AP exam. While it will still be an option for you, this allows your AP teachers to be more creative in their lesson design while still offering you additional AP test prep if you want it. AP Science teachers are not required to host double blocks during this online schedule and they will communicate directly with those in the class if they prefer to do so.
<p>Daily schedules have been provided for all K-12 grade levels (pages 5 - 7):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elementary parents and students - sample schedule (see below, pg. 6 - 7) • Middle Schools have their own modified schedules, periods for the day must be followed, but times are flexible (see below, pg. 5 - 6) • CHS has its own modified schedule, periods for the day must be followed, but times are flexible (a condensed schedule can be found on, pg. 5, however, a more detailed schedule will be emailed to CHS parents and students; in addition CHS schedules will be uploaded into CHS google classrooms and on the CHS website)
<p>Attendance Protocols:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K-8 Continue the same protocols you have been using since the start of distance learning • NEW - Grades 9-12 every student must sign in to each class on the dates shown between 10 am to 1 pm. Attendance will be recorded by teachers in PowerSchool.

Technology Resources & Platforms

Online Learning Platforms by Grade-Level:

Grade Level	Learning Platform	Platform for Recording Message	*Meeting Platform <i>(recommendations)</i>	Explicit Instructional Resources <i>(suggested)</i>
K-2	Google Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google Meet • WebEx • Phone 	n/a	
3 - 5	Google Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google Meet • WebEx • Phone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google Meet • Hangout • WebEx 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screencast-o-matic.com • Flipgrid(ShowMe) • Webex recordings
6 - 8	Google Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google Meet • WebEx • Phone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google Meet • Hangout • WebEx 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screencast-o-matic.com • Flipgrid(ShowMe) • Webex recordings
9 - 12	Google Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google Meet • WebEx • Phone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google Meet • Hangout • WebEx 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screencast-o-matic.com • Flipgrid(ShowMe) • Webex recordings

**Use with caution*

CLASS SCHEDULES (by Grade Level)

Columbia High School 3-Day Class Rotation:

Rotation begins on Wednesday, April 1, 2020 (with "A" Day)

[A more detailed schedule with dates, times, new attendance protocols and additional guidelines will be emailed to all CHS families/students. Schedules will also be available on CHS google classrooms and the CHS website]

Day A	Day B	Day C
Period 1: 10am - 10:55am	Period 2 - 10am - 10:55am	Period 7 - 10am - 10:55am
Period 3 - 11am - 11:55am	Period 4 - 11am - 11:55am	Period 8 - 11am - 11:55am
Period 5 - 12pm - 12:55pm	Period 6 - 12pm - 12:55pm	Period 9 - 12pm - 12:55pm

Maplewood Middle School Schedule:

½ Day Schedule (30 minute periods) | *Rotation begins on Wednesday, April 1, 2020 (with "A" Day)*

	Day A	Day B
Grade Level		
6	Period 1 Period 2 - Related Arts Period 3 Period 4- Related Arts Period 6 Period 7 Period 8 Rotation	Period 1 Period 2 - Related Arts Period 3 Period 4- Related Arts Period 6 Period 7 Period 8 Rotation
7	Period 1 Period 2 Period 3 - Related Arts Period 4 Period 5 Period 7 - Related Arts Period 8 Rotation	Period 1 Period 2 Period 3 - Related Arts Period 4 Period 5 Period 7 - Related Arts Period 8 Rotation
8	Period 1 Period 2 Period 3 Period 5 Period 6 - Related Arts Period 7 Period 8 - Related Arts	Period 1 Period 2 Period 3 Period 5 Period 6 - Related Arts Period 7 Period 8 - Related Arts

South Orange Middle School Schedule:

½ Day Schedule (30 minute periods) | Rotation begins on Wednesday, April 1, 2020 (with “A” Day)

	Day A	Day B
Grade Level		
6	Period 1 Period 2 Period 3 Period 4- Related Arts Period 6 Period 7 - Related Arts Period 8 Rotation	Period 1 Period 2 Period 3 Period 4- Related Arts Period 6 Period 7 - Related Arts Period 8 Rotation
7	Period 1 Period 2 - Related Arts Period 3 Period 5 Period 6 - Related Arts Period 7 Period 8 Rotation	Period 1 Period 2 - Related Arts Period 3 Period 5 Period 6 - Related Arts Period 7 Period 8 Rotation
8	Period 1 - Related Arts Period 2 Period 3 - Related Arts Period 4 Period 5 Period 7 Period 8	Period 1 - Related Arts Period 2 Period 3 - Related Arts Period 4 Period 5 Period 7 Period 8

Grades 3-5 - Sample Schedule for Families:

Begins on Wednesday, April 1, 2020

9:00 - 9:15	Morning Round-up - Meeting
9:15 – 10:00	Math - Instruction and Practice
10:00 - 10:15	Brain Break - GoNoodle
10:15 - 11:00	Reading - Mini lesson and Independent practice and responses
11:00 - 11:15	Snack
11:15 - 12:00	Writing - Mini lesson and Independent Writing
12:00 - 12:30	Science
12:30 - 1:00	Social Studies

1:00 - 1:30	Art, Music, PE, Spanish
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Grades K-2 - Sample Schedule for Families:

Begins on Wednesday, April 1, 2020

9:00 - 9:15	Morning Meeting/Phonics/Word Study/Handwriting
9:15 - 9:45	Reading – Mini Lesson and Independent Practice
9:45 - 10:00	Brain or Movement Break
10:00 - 10:30	Writing – Mini Lesson and Independent Writing
10:30 - 10:45	Snack
10:45 - 11:15	Math – Instruction and Practice/Math Games
11:15 - 11:30	Brain and Movement Break
11:30 - 12:00	Art, Music, and PE
12:00 - 12:30	Science and Social Studies Exploratory activities – imagination, fine motor, creativity, virtual field trips