



Established 1963

# Lake Castle Private School

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April 3, 2020

Dear Parents,

Thank you so much for all you have been doing to support your child's distance learning. We have been working very hard to ensure that all of the students cover the important curriculum standards that we have set at each grade level. School is the norm for children, and we are trying to keep that in place for them. Teachers have been utilizing many ways to maintain the personal instruction that our students are accustomed to whether via audio lectures, videos, or phone calls and texts. It is very important to me that the children know their teachers are here and at work every day as usual, and any question or assistance they may need will not go unanswered. The teachers at Lake Castle do not have "office hours"; they are available from 8:00 – 3:00 on Monday through Friday just like on campus.

Since the President's and governor's orders have come through, mandating social distancing until April 30, we will be continuing to teach via distance learning. There are a couple of points to address regarding this.

One is that I have decided to give the students a modified "spring break" for Wednesday, April 8, through Friday, April 10. I have talked to many, many students and parents and feel confident that the students (and parents) could use a breather. Also, many students had a late start with work or have had to be away from assignments and have fallen a bit behind; thus, these days could serve as a catch-up period for those students. When we return on Monday, April 13, everyone should be ready and on the same page so that we can move forward.

Another important news item is that the teachers will be sending you a username and password for your child to set up an IXL account. If you are unfamiliar with IXL, it is a tremendous resource that allows assignments, practice, and assessing in real time for teachers and students. IXL provides a dynamic and interactive experience that will help to engage students in a time when their teachers cannot be standing in front of them in the classroom. In addition, my hope is that it will reduce the need for parents to be monitoring work and corrections as much because this platform will let the student know if his or her answer is correct, offer explanation, and provide an additional question or problem on that same concept. Finally, the teacher will have real-time feedback that students are completing the assignment or designated practice time and see where each student may need additional instruction or practice.

The last item is that we are working to streamline the information flow in upper elementary. Unlike lower elementary, in which one teacher communicates, assigns work, and gives instruction with parents, upper elementary has multiple teachers doing this. While I appreciate the teachers' efforts to keep each subject's curriculum on pace, I also recognize it is too much for parents to keep track of and then relay to students. Effective Monday, April 13, each class will have a tab on the school website that serves as an academic hub for that class. There, students can find one spreadsheet for the week listing all assignments for all classes, as well as links to video or audio lectures and any pdf's that go along with those assignments. Hopefully, since it is our own website and will be primarily visited by our families, there will be less a chance of the site being affected by the millions of people inundating academic platforms. Ms. Jonica has been working diligently on this (and many other things!), and it looks like this will be a great improvement for upper elementary families.

Finally, thank you for sending the great photos of your students hard at work (and play). It is a great morale boost for us all to have any kind of connection we can have with our students and for the students to see their friends and classmates. These are trying times we are experiencing; and for children, who crave the security and comfort that routine and normalcy provide, it is particularly difficult. Above all, focus on their health, safety, and happiness. We will do all we can to keep their education on track! Thank you for all you do. Be safe and well.

Sincerely in education,

Jane B. McGovern