

March 19, 2020

Dear Weston Middle School Families and Students:

Welcome to WMS Distance Learning! We miss seeing everyone in person and hope that you and your families are doing well. These past several days have been challenging for all of us. We hope that the Extended Learning Opportunities (ELOs) were a useful tool to keep students engaged in the learning process and perhaps even provided some fun activities during our school closure. Our first day “back” at school will be Monday, March 23 and it will be somewhat different since students will be accessing the curriculum from home.

March 23 is a Monday so students will follow their “A” day schedule. Students will access the curriculum by logging into the Google Classroom for each of the classes that they are scheduled to attend each day. They should also check their email for any communications from their teachers. They do not need to follow the period by period order. Students should use their school-issued Chromebook. If they are using a different device from home, they must be logged into their Google account so that they can access the necessary programs. Each school day students will login to their Google Classrooms for each course that meets that day. Typical distance learning lessons will contain a short instructional video and assignments for students to complete.

Successful implementation of our distance learning will require excellent communication and patience. Our instructional strategies and tools will most likely evolve as we all become more familiar with this new environment. Students should email their teachers if they get stuck on an assignment. WMS teachers will also post extra help times when they will be available to help students via Google Meet. Parents should also email teachers with questions or concerns.

Students will not have assignments for ELT, however, enrichment and intervention classes such as math lab, OST, project challenge, learning strategies, passion project, etc. will continue in a distance learning format.

If your child is ill and unable to engage in distance learning on a given day, please follow our standard procedure and **call the WMS attendance line at 203-221-6361**.

Our district technology help desk is available to support your technology needs. Email helpdesk@westonps.org, and they will respond as soon as possible. If you are in need of a Chromebook, please contact them immediately.

Parents/Guardians can support their middle school children by:

- Explaining to them that during our distance learning days they are required to participate in school by completing every assignment provided every day
- Helping them create a daily schedule that serves as a non-negotiable routine for preparing and completing school work. Parents should do this WITH their middle school child and not FOR them. Having your child’s input in developing a daily routine will increase “buy-in” and lead to greater success. Middle schoolers are programmed to push back against boundaries, however they not only need them, they thrive with boundaries
- Helping them determine a space in your home the will be dedicated to each day’s learning activities (preferably one that has limited distraction)

- Encouraging them to engage in activities throughout the day that do not require screen time: playing outside, reading a book, helping with chores around the house, etc.
- Reminding them to adhere to the acceptable use policy for online activity, practicing good digital citizenship and internet safety.
- Encouraging social interaction when possible. With social distancing and online learning students may begin to feel isolated. Family game nights and family meals are more important now than ever.

Here is a sample WMS student schedule:

Weston Middle School Distance Learning Schedule	
8:00 - 8:30 a.m.	Prepare and plan your day. (Set up work space, log-in to Google Classroom, check email, record assignments, plan your approach to completing assignments.)
8:30 - 10:30 a.m.	Begin work on assignments in the order of your choosing. If you have a question or are stuck, check your teacher's instructions for getting clarification or assistance (this could include a resources page, helpful links, tutorial videos, or sending your teacher an email). During this time you should complete three classes worth of work.
10:30 - 11:00 a.m.	Take a break for movement and snack. If possible get some fresh air, or do something fun or relaxing.
11:00 - 12:30 p.m.	Continue working on assignments in order of your choosing. If you have questions, follow the same process as outlined above. During this time you should complete 2-3 classes worth of work.
12:30 - 1:00 p.m.	Lunch and movement break. If possible get some fresh air, or do something fun or relaxing.
1:00 - 2:30 p.m.	Finish working on assignments in order of your choosing. If you have questions with these tasks, follow the same procedures as outlined above. During this time you should complete 2-3 classes of work.
2:30 - 2:45 p.m.	Go back to your daily planning document that you created at the beginning of the day. Check off all assignments that you completed. If you need to comment on a classmate's work or post a comment on a class discussion as part of your daily assignment, be sure to do so by 2:45 p.m. Check to make sure that all assignments are "submitted" in the format that your teacher requires. Pack up your materials and clean up your workspace. Plug-in/charge your Chromebook.
2:45 p.m. onward	Teacher-Assigned Tasks, Read For Pleasure, Practice Your Instrument, Go Outside, Get Some Exercise, Chat with Friends, etc.

I am so proud of the WMS faculty and staff and how they have come together to develop a plan to support the academic and social-emotional needs of our students during this time. Please let us know if you need further assistance.

Sincerely,

Daniel Doak
Principal