



WALDRON MERCY ACADEMY

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

03/29/2020 9:56 AM

Email Subject WMA - Distance Learning Updates for Week 3

Dear Parent,

As we begin our third week of distance learning (how crazy does that sound???), I wanted to share the latest updates with you as we partner together and carefully continue to adjust to this new normal.

Calendar Update

In recognition of both that our governor is rolling out his closure decisions gradually and the fact that our Easter/Spring break is rapidly approaching, we have made some calendar decisions that I want to share.

Looking ahead, we planned the calendar by working under the assumption that we will be directed to continue distance learning until at least mid-April. The distance learning process is going very well, but we realize both that it is an increased workload on you and it requires constant reflection and adjustment on the part of the teachers. Therefore, we plan to continue the pattern of four days of learning with one planning day each Friday, which your students can use as a day off or a catch-up day.

This decision will not affect our required number of hours, as we had some snow days, PD days, and holidays ready for us to use. Although we recognize the governor and the PA Department of Education (PDE) have stated maintaining the necessary hours will not be a requirement, we are choosing to maintain the rigorous Waldron program the teachers already had in place.

With this in mind, we realized that we have two weeks in the future that are not already four day weeks, April 27 and May 11. Because of this, and because our families are under the stay at home directive with no vacation plans, we plan to make Spring Break run from Holy Thursday, April 9, through Easter Wednesday, April 15 returning on Thursday, April 16. That gives us all a seven day much needed break, and allows us to use the extra two days to make those two future weeks four day weeks.

Of course, if we go back to in-school learning sooner, we will adjust the plan at that time.

Mercy In Action

After donating masks to PENN and CHOP, we received a request from another of our parents who is an ER doctor at Jefferson asking if we had any others. We do not, but I am reaching out to all of you, in case you might have any. Please email me directly if you do. Also, PLEASE keep all the medical personnel and others on the front lines in your prayers.

The Spirit of Mercy through Waldron's Community Outreach has long helped to support St. Columba – one of Project Home's shelters for the City's most vulnerable male homeless population. Each month during the school year, our Waldron students have donated and served meals to the residents. Unfortunately, the April 3 and May 15 in-person dinner services have been canceled due to the COVID-19 concerns. However, St. Columba still needs our support and WMA Community outreach intends to nonetheless deliver a meal to the residents. To the extent you may be able to donate the cost all or part of a meal, please sign up [here](#). Please email parents [Tracey Hagan](#) or [Sonia Forcino](#) with any questions.

Student Support from MCIU

The MCIU has agreed to continue to offer support from Joanne Riehl and Melissa Helfant. If your student received services from either of these teachers (you would already know it that applies to your child), they will be contacting you via email to coordinate a time to work with him or her. Joanne Riehl plans to maintain her Tuesday and Thursday schedule, adding in some Fridays with the students. Melissa will be working with the students on Wednesday. Our WMA online protocol has been shared with them.

Montessori and Preschool Plus (for Montessori three and four year olds) Updates

Throughout the past two weeks of academic planning we have realized that our younger Montessori students' online learning has been the most challenging to develop. You will see additional changes to our Montessori and Preschool Plus lessons next week as our team continues to strive to recreate our quality Montessori experience through Distance Learning.

Specifically, our Montessori teachers have been working diligently to modify the Montessori curriculum to emphasize the academic pieces more heavily and use more individualized progress monitoring. Also this week the Montessori teachers will begin using Zoom for their three and four year old students! Our Preschool Plus teachers will be sharing a weekly theme with associated daily learning activities with the Montessori three and four year old full day students.

As always, I will end with a reminder that we turn to God in this time of uncertainty, and you all remain in our prayers. Please remember our call to prayer at 6:30 and participate as often as you are able.

Stay safe and healthy!

In Mercy and Prayer,
Ann Marie