

RBS DIGITAL DISTANCE LEARNING

DIGITAL CHALK TALK NO. 7

THE GOVERNOR MAKES AN EARLY CALL – AND IT'S NOT THE ONE WE WANTED

May 4, 2020

Dear Rock Brook Families,

Governor Murphy promised us that a decision regarding the remainder of the school year would come on May 15, but he made the call earlier than expected and it was definitely not the news we wanted to hear. During today's COVID-19 press briefing the Governor announced that all New Jersey schools would remain closed for the rest of the 2019-20 school year. While this is not the news we wanted to hear, I am confident that we will soon come to accept it as the news that we needed to hear. While we are all anxious for a return to normalcy and a return to Rock Brook School, the numbers simply dictate that we are unable to do that just yet.

The Governor did offer us some hope that summer programs, such as our ESY program, might be a possibility, but that decision is still weeks away. In the meantime, our staff will continue to do its best to meet the needs of our students and the needs of our families. We have made a number of schedule adjustments based on your feedback and we will continue to be open to hearing from you in regard to what works best. Please reach out to your child's teacher or therapist directly if changes are needed. Also, we have kept the link to our DDLP family survey active. If you have not yet provided your input, please do so today: [RBS DDLP Family Survey](#).

The learning from home challenge continues, but together we can make the best of this situation. Hang in there and let us know how we can help! We truly hope to see you soon!

Glenn Famous

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*~From The Principal~*

Welcome to Week #7! You are all doing an amazing job- thank you for your continued support as we are all learning together!

I wanted to share a special note with you this week to let you know that May 4th to May 8th is when we would have celebrated our **Staff Appreciation Week**. Typically we ask you to help us celebrate by sending in treats, notes, flowers, etc. Although we cannot do that this year, I hope that you will still be able to send virtual notes of appreciation to our staff for all the fantastic work they do with your children!

Also, I am sad that we will miss our Annual Mother's Day Tea celebration which was scheduled for Friday, May 8th. I wish everyone a wonderful Mother's Day and hopefully we can all celebrate together again soon!

A few friendly reminders about our virtual learning:

~Please complete the daily attendance link and email the teachers directly if your child is going to be absent for the day

~Contact your child's teaching team/ therapists if you have any questions or need any support with the assignments or schedule

~We will keep everyone informed on re-opening plans as soon as we receive them from the Governor

A few resources to check out:

I received these from the Learning Disabilities Association of NJ and hope you find them helpful!

**NJPC (NJ Parent Caucus)**

**VIRTUAL PARENT PEER SUPPORT GROUP: 1-888-548-NJPC (6572) - English, Ukrainian, Spanish**

NJPC hosts a Virtual Parent Peer Support Group every second and fourth Thursday of the month, to support parents, caregivers and family members who are in search of resources, feeling stressed or need to reach out to a peer. The next session dates are: April 9th, April 23rd, May 14th, May 28th, June 11th, and June 25th. Please join NJPC between 10am-12pm for Ukrainian/українсько/Українська, 10am-9pm for Spanish/español/Іспанська, and 10am-9pm for English/ingles/Англійська, 888-548-NJPC (6572).

**NJPC WarmLine: 1-888-548-NJPC (6572) SELECT OPTION 5**

NJPC hosts a Warmline on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays from 3pm-9pm. If you are feeling stressed, struggling with an issue or need to talk to someone, please call 888-548-NJPC (6572) for person to person help and support.

Full blog post on Coronavirus, visit [New Jersey Parents' Caucus CoronaVirus Statement Understood Parental Guidance](#) is a free podcast for parents whose children have IEPs or 504 Plans. A new podcast is "In It" [BLOGS](#)

[Child Mind Institute](#) has shifted to providing evaluations, treatment and testing remotely. They have also been updating their webpage

[Supporting Families During COVID-19](#) with content and articles for parents and caregivers and hosting twice daily Facebook Lives to offer guidance and answer questions.

### **New Frontiers** - Executive Function Coaching

Weekly Parent Forum runs Thursdays 5:30-6:00: Parents are welcome to join with any questions, comments, or concerns they have. The goals are to help build community, discuss issues we may all be facing, and support each other through the dynamic world we are living in.

Professional Round Table runs Tuesdays 1:00-2:00. Professionals are welcome to join to discuss current issues and develop community through a collaborative approach. Participation can be through listening in, asking questions, or answering questions. Each week includes various facilitators from different disciplines.

Email [info@nfil.net](mailto:info@nfil.net) for more information. Both forums are FREE to join.

Continue to stay strong, stay healthy, and stay safe!

Please reach out to the RBS Leadership Team with any questions or concerns.

***Katie Hardgrove***

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~Tech Coordinator Update~

A mind shift is defined as a change of focus and perception. It is further described as an “ah ha” moment that can allow you to open up your mind to entirely new ways of thinking.

I came across an informative article geared towards educators, that discusses teaching through a pandemic and the need to adjust one’s mindset (<https://www.edutopia.org/article/teaching-through-pandemic-mindset-moment>). Parents are a child’s greatest teachers and therefore, I would like to share a few notable and recommended mind shifts as they are applicable to all of us. I have found the ideas to be very comforting and reassuring during this most uncertain time:

- Expect trial....and plenty of error - do your best to make peace with this reality.
- Acknowledge the extraordinary - expecting business to be as usual is unrealistic.
- No person is an island - stay connected with others!
- Everyone thinks they can’t.....before they can - patience and confidence go a long way.

As we all work together during this unprecedented shift from “school-based” learning to “home-based” learning, we can work to adjust our mindsets and embrace one reality. No matter where we are, together we can provide our students and children exactly what they need. Whether we are supporting them through a Google Meet, teaching them how to make a sandwich or facilitating their ability to make a choice, we are capitalizing on “teachable moments” and that is what counts the most!

As always, I hope this finds you all well. Please feel free to reach out to me with any technology or therapeutic services needs.

Fondly,
Miss Maggie

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### ***~School Counselor Update~***

Dear Rock Brook Family,

I hope that you got to enjoy some calm, unstructured time with your families. Thank you for sharing pics in the RBS Kindness Google Classroom- it is a great way for our students to stay connected and see what others are doing! This is the last week of the Kindness Challenge, but the Google classroom will remain. Be on the lookout for different resources weekly and as always feel free to share pics ! Google classroom is a great way to share information and resources quickly, and I would like to keep it for this purpose. As always, you can email me or reach me using my google voice number with questions, concerns, or ideas.

This week I wanted to share a few resources for YOU, as caregivers, on the topic of mindfulness. Injecting some mindfulness into our day has been proven to reduce stress and anxiety, and even improve the body's ability to combat illness according to some studies. This topic could be an entire book in itself! I personally began meditating a few years back, and for me it will forever be a part of my morning routine. But meditation is just one aspect of mindfulness. Taking a few minutes for a few deep breaths or making time for some stretches throughout your day are other ways to be mindful. Starting a new habit can be the toughest part, and technology can help a lot with this! See below for some of my favorite apps and sites about mindfulness.

- Breathing- Try box breathing, 4-7-8 breathing, and alternate nostril breathing! Also even just setting a timer every day to take ten deep breaths is a wonderfully calming step toward being more mindful. The app Insight Timer has courses on breathing as well as guided practices. Youtube also has many to share!

<https://www.healthline.com/health/breathing-exercises-for-sleep>

- Meditate- Meditation is all about coming back to the present moment- our minds will wander- it's their nature! The practice of bringing it back to some type of anchor- your breath, your body sensations, a mantra- is what it's all about. There is no PERFECT way to meditate.

<https://insighttimer.com/>

<https://www.headspace.com/>

<https://www.calm.com/>

- Stretch- I am a creature of habit, so I have Alexa remind me every day at noon to take some deep breaths and to get up and stretch for five minutes.. Especially with being at

home and sitting at the laptop all day, this is even more important!

<https://www.easytechtrick.org/free-stretching-apps/>

<https://www.downdogapp.com/> (Completely free until May 1st!)- This is my new go to when I have a few minutes to stretch or do yoga. You can customize your on demand class and also do a yoga practice in 6 minutes if that is all you have!! All experience levels are included.

I would love to hear your mindfulness tips and ideas! Feel free to email me with anything you would like to share. And ask your child! Many Rock Brook students are SO great at calming and being mindful, and they can teach us a thing or two!

Be well.

***Miss Jessica aka Miss G***

School Counselor

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~ From the Nurses Office ~

Spring has Sprung.

The flowers are blooming, leaves are on the trees, and the grass is green and growing. Take some time to go outside and enjoy the beautiful weather with your family. Exercise, fresh air and a little sunlight are all great body and mood boosters. Just remember to plan and think about what activities you are going to do and what safety items may be needed. Below are a few outdoor safety reminders:

- Use a helmet when riding bikes, skateboards, and scooters. Knee pads and elbow pads are easy to wear for more protection.
- Outdoor exposure; when pollen or mold counts are high limit your exposure if you are sensitive. You can check pollen and mold counts on the news and weather channels.
- Poison Ivy, Oak, and Sumac. These plants contain an oil that can cause allergic skin reactions. It makes the area affected have itchy red bumps and sometimes blisters. Check the areas around your yard and teach your children to avoid it.
- Bugs that Sting – If you are stung, remove the stinger as soon as possible with a scraping motion. Wash with soap and water and apply a cold compress. If trouble breathing, severe swelling or fainting occurs, call 911 and get help right away.
- Ticks are already a problem in our area – use tweezers or fingers to grasp as close to the head as possible and pull the tick away from where it is attached. Call the pediatrician for symptoms of a rash or fever.

Enjoy the Great Outdoors!

Nurse Lisa

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~ From the Office ~



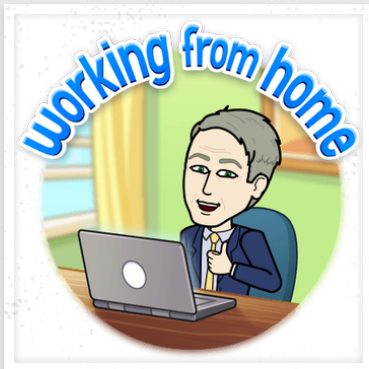
Please send me pictures.....

The feedback from the Autism Day Photos and the Message from the RBS Staff Photos, which included pictures of the staff, was fantastic. We heard from families that it was fun to see pictures of school staff not in their immediate classroom. It would be great if we could get some more WFH pictures to share. Perhaps a screen shot of your child working with their teachers? Maybe of one particular assignment?

(Please remember that the update will be shared with all of the RBS Families, Staff and Board members. If you are not comfortable with sharing with **everyone** please do not send it in.)

Thank you and I miss you all!

Christy Tracey [christy.tracey@rock-brook.org](mailto:christy.tracey@rock-brook.org)



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