

June 5, 2020

Hello GFB Families:

The end of the school year is just days away. For many of us this year the last day, June 17th, feels like nothing more than a date on the calendar. After all we have already been forced to leave our classrooms, report cards will not issue, and we can't close this year out by visiting the classrooms (or school) our students will return to next year. In these ways and others, this year is memorable for all the wrong reasons.

One day however, we will remember this year for the right reasons. We have become more independent and comfortable with technology-based instruction and learning. We have become more resourceful in supporting students and families with unique needs and challenges. And the fear, restriction and frustration we have all experienced will make this year the one we remember for appreciating that we have never had more in common.

In addition to creating and delivering lessons, teachers have gathered student belongings from their cubbies and desks along with work product, learning materials and medications (where appropriate). All items have been placed in bags marked with student's names. Student belongings will be given to families on Saturday, June 13th, using a "you stop/we drop" approach. The following describes what you need to know to retrieve your students' belongings.

- We will return all materials to students using our usual and very familiar loop protocol. If possible, please have your child's name and your child's teacher's name posted on the passenger side of your vehicle. Vehicles will pull into and drive down the loop until requested to stop. At that time you pop your trunk, we will drop the bag in it, and off you go. No time to visit, no chit chat and absolutely NO PERSON SHOULD EXIT THEIR VEHICLE FOR ANY REASON.
- We strongly encourage families to pick up multiple bags of student belongs to minimize exposure and increase efficiency for all. If you can take the bag of a relative or friend, please include that child's name and teacher on the passenger side of your vehicle as well.
- All GFB volunteer staff will wear masks, gloves and practice safe social distancing.
- All persons in vehicles are requested to wear masks.
- Families whose students have materials that belong to our school have been contacted by teachers and will be expected to return the school's belongings on this day. Please be prepared to hand materials that should be returned to our staff prior to them placing your student's bag in your trunk.
- Designated times by grade level are established and must be followed:
9:00-10:00/PK and K you stop, we drop
10:15-11:15/1st grade you stop, we drop
11:30-12:30/2nd grade you stop, we drop

12:30-1:00/alternative you stop, we drop option

Given the number of students receiving materials and everyone's desire that this happen efficiently and safely, it is important that this process be specifically scripted. Please adhere to this schedule as well as the protocols we have established. We will hold on to student materials until Thursday, July 30th. All remaining items will be donated on Friday, July 31st, in preparation for September. Please be sure to let me know if there are circumstances that will prevent you from getting your students belongings.

Teachers are preparing their own activities and approaches for saying good-bye to students and will communicate those to you directly. A collective good-bye in the form of a family/student car parade is scheduled for Thursday, June 11th, so that students and teachers will have an opportunity to close the year together. Families able to participate should plan to meet at the Winthrop High School tennis parking lot area. From there WPD will escort each grade level group to our school. The following schedule has been established for grade levels to drive through the loop so students can wave, show messages or shout good-byes to teachers.

2:00-2:20 for K and PK

2:30-2:45 for 1st grade

2:55-3:10 for 2nd grade

Staff able to attend will be wearing face coverings and line the loop and Kennedy Drive in a socially distanced manner. You can be sure students, teachers and staff will be equally excited and delighted to see one another.

Many questions remain about next year and like you, we are anxious to begin planning in earnest. Based on the restrictions that have been lifted there are a few things we can confidently assume. Protocols that provide for social distancing, minimizing student contact and restricting shared/common contact are just about certain. While we await direction and clarification of mandatory guidelines from the Commissioner, we are engaging in many conversations that contemplate a variety of scenarios. Discussions about classroom placement, managing social distancing with a young student population, modifying the school environment to minimize exposure/contact and approaches to teaching and learning are all waiting to be tackled. It will certainly be a busy summer.

We have been tracking student engagement based on Lexia and i-Ready usage as well as teacher and student contact (emails, zoom participation, work submitted). Unfortunately, about 20% of students at each grade level are showing minimal engagement which is quite disappointing. Our remote learning plans are now covering new content. They offer a specific and well-structured daily schedule that provides cognitive engagement and stretches endurance...all very important habits for students to develop. While our influence on students is marginalized right now, the importance of learning every day is a message that caregivers must convey. Please help us help your student...make daily engagement happen.

The most recent and public demonstration of hate and racism has exposed civil and social injustices that have long plagued our world. There is no doubt that a large number among us have experienced bias at some time in our lives, whether as victim or witness. The horrific murder of George Floyd and the widespread display of outrage associated with his murder begs us all to take responsibility for changing mindsets. It should create a sense of urgency for us all to work together to eliminate all forms of bias. Teaching tolerance is a job we all own and requires no special training or degree. While students learn from home, we are dependent on families to step up to the plate and raise the level of acceptance and understanding in the hearts and minds of children. The extent to which you choose to explain these events is a personal one however the event itself is too significant and has far too much usefulness in changing our world to ignore. This link may be helpful as you consider necessary and appropriate discussions to have with your child: [Click Here For Article](#)

Summer is just weeks away and opportunities for local organized fun may not be quite as plentiful as in previous years. Here's some information on free playgroups that will be offered for toddlers and preschoolers by Winthrop Parents Network [Summer Playgroups](#).

Your Partner in Education,
Mrs. Pearson, Principal