

August 17, 2020

Dear OOJH Families,

Enclosed in this envelope you will find your student's academic schedule for the beginning of the school year as well as the bell schedule we will be using to structure our days of remote learning this Fall.

Before reading through additional information below, I would encourage you to watch a YouTube video that provides a general overview of what Fall 2020 Remote Learning will look like. I sent this link out previously via email, and am only including it again here for individuals who may not have watched the video when it was initially shared:



First Day of School — Thursday, August 27th, 2020

The first day of remote learning in District 68 will be Thursday, August 27th. Students will start in their Advisory class at 9:00 AM.

During the first day, students will have the opportunity to meet their teachers, become acquainted with their remote learning schedule, and begin to develop their understanding of the expectations for learning and student engagement for remote learning during the Fall.

Days Two and Three of the 2020 School Year

We are dedicated to making remote learning a successful experience for all students and families. In order to ensure student success with remote learning we will be spending the first three days of school focusing on the following topics:

- The Student's "Best Self"
 - Who do you want to be by the end of this year, 20 years from now, etc.? What does your "best self" look like?
- The Student as an "Independent Learner"
 - How does becoming your "best self" involve you becoming an independent learner (that is, someone who can take charge of their own learning)?
- The Student as a "Dependent Learner"
 - How will teachers support you in becoming an independent learner and your best self?

These questions may seem very philosophical and not connected to the learning of Math, Reading, Social Studies, Science, World Language, and the Arts that you are expecting us to provide your child. I want to assure you that by investing time in considering these topics at the beginning of the year, and building your student's capacity to be independent right away, that the learning of the above subjects will be greatly improved.

Also, please note that a student becoming an independent learner does not mean your child does not need a teacher to guide their learning. Rather, all learners need a guide who they are dependent on to frame knowledge and skills in a way that emphasizes key learning while also encouraging independence and growth.

Open House

At this time we are working through the difficulties of 1) providing families the opportunity to meet teachers and engage in their child's education through an Open House event and 2) transitioning Open House to a virtual format. Please bear with us as we try to develop a remote Open House experience. I will keep you updated on this topic as decisions are made. For now, please know all of the staff at OOJH are making videos to introduce themselves to your students, and we will likely make those videos available to families as well.

Health Notice: Mandatory Forms

The state requires a new physical and dental exam for all incoming 6th graders. Student physical and dental forms were sent in May and need to be returned as soon as possible. Parents may drop the forms off to the OOJH Main Office at any time. This information must be submitted to the school by October 15th at the latest in order for a student to remain enrolled.

Students who are in 7th and 8th grade but are new to District 68 and OOJH must also provide current physical and dental exam information to the school nurse by October 15th at the latest.

Technology Assistance

Our District 68 Tech Team is currently checking student iPads to make sure they are working properly so all students are ready to go for the first day of school. The Tech Team is able to run diagnostic tests from the district office so families do not need to bring iPads in to be checked. Parents and guardians will be

contacted when an issue with a student iPad is discovered. However, if your student experiences any difficulty using their iPad please have your student go to the remote learning portal on their iPad and click the help button on their screen to submit a help ticket.

Regular School Hours

Beginning Thursday, August 27th, school will be in session and students will follow a consistent daily schedule that begins at 9:00 AM. On Mondays, instruction from teachers will end at 11:45 AM. Students will have Monday afternoons to work on tasks introduced Monday morning or a previous task the teacher will direct them to. The instructional day will end at 3:00 PM Tuesday through Friday.

Please see the enclosed bell schedule for a detailed overview of the daily schedules.

Attendance

Student attendance will be entered into PowerSchool this Fall. Attendance will be taken “live” at the beginning of the school day during Advisory. After Advisory, teachers will enter attendance once the class Zoom session is complete.

Absence Procedure

Starting on the first day of school, August 27th, we ask parents and guardians to communicate with our office staff using the following channels for different absence reporting procedures:

- If your child is absent from school due to illness or another reason that will result in their missing the entire school day, call the school absence hotline at (847) 568-7596. Please call in absences by 8:30 AM and include the child’s first and last name, grade, the date of absence, and a reason for the absence. An automated call will be made at 9:30 AM for all students marked Absent Unexcused during Advisory.
- If your child will be consistently absent for a part of the day (but not the entire day), call and speak with Denise Negron at (847) 568-7501. Ms. Negron will take down the details of when your student will not be present and relay that information to their teacher(s).

We have set up the two above absence-related procedures to account for the complexities of family life during remote learning. We recognize there may be a need for a student to support younger siblings or play another supportive role at home during the Fall. We also recognize students may need to miss a day of school due to illness. We ask you to use the above procedures to streamline communication between families and the school. As always, please feel free to communicate with teachers when you feel it is necessary to do so.

School Supplies

We are currently developing a list of materials students will need for each class during remote learning. Once the materials are gathered and ready for pick-up we will establish a materials pick-up date, time, and process. Material pick-up will include the pre-pack supply boxes many families purchased. More information will follow regarding material pickup.

Parent Handbook

Teachers will spend time reviewing OOH rules and procedures with students during the first week of school. Students will have access to the Student Handbook on their iPads. For reference throughout the year, a copy of the Parent Handbook is available on our District website at www.skokie68.org.

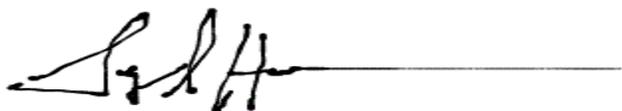
Y.O.U. Program

Y.O. U. is an after school program that is designed to unite youth with opportunities and a holistic continuum of care that ensures bright futures. I have been in contact with the Y.O.U. program and will be communicating opportunities connected to the program once their Fall plan has been finalized.

Ending Remark

For the faculty, staff, and administration of Old Orchard Junior High, the continuation of virtual learning into the Fall is in no way ideal or what we would want for our students, their families, and ourselves. We share a feeling of “wanting students to be back in school” that is more or less connected to what I know many families are feeling at this time. Similarly, many of the adults who work at OOHJ are facing some of the same impossible decisions that many of you are facing relative to the demands of a pandemic-defined environment. Concerns about child care or balancing work with family and family health needs are only a few of a number of issues we *all* share. With that said, I want you to know that the concern we take as being distinctly our own – to own – is how to take the normal aspects of what makes an education of the highest quality – both academically and social-emotionally – and make sure those things continue during this abnormal time. I can’t repeat it enough: this Fall is going to be a whole new virtual experience as compared to the Spring... and we are dedicated to making it a powerful experience that works for all students and all families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Hanson', followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Greg Hanson
Principal

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