

March 15, 2020

Dear Rheem Team Families,

As you've heard, Rheem School and the rest of the Moraga School District will be closed starting Monday, March 16th through Friday, April 3rd.

It is important for us at Rheem to continue to support all of the students and families as we navigate these uncertain times. To ensure students and families stay connected to learning and the school community as much as possible, Rheem classroom teachers and I will be in communication with you and will be sharing recommended activities in the coming day(s). *(If your family does not have access to an internet connected device please email me at [bsullivan@moraga.k12.ca.us](mailto:bsullivan@moraga.k12.ca.us))*

MSD is planning its next update on 3/16 via email, the [MSD website](#), [Twitter](#), [NextDoor](#) and the [MSD Facebook](#) page. Thank you for all that you do for your children, as well as for your patience and understanding during these extraordinary times.

## The Last Word...

It has been a whirlwind of announcements and updates these past several days and weeks. For this week's Last Word, I'd like to focus on a few things we can do to support one another.

Stress is defined as, "a state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or very demanding circumstances." Recent events have undoubtedly caused stress throughout our community and the world. Dealing with our own stress is essential before helping others manage theirs. Below are some helpful tips the CDC recommends for adults managing stress: ([Taking Care of Your Emotional Health](#))

- **Take care of your body:** try to eat healthy well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, and get plenty of sleep. Avoid alcohol, and other drugs.
- **Connect with others:** share your concerns and how you are feeling with a friend or family member. Maintain healthy relationships, and build a strong support system.
- **Stay informed:** when you feel that you are missing information, you may become more stressed or nervous. Watch, listen to, or read the news for updates from officials. Be aware that there may be rumors during a crisis, especially on social media. Always check your sources and turn to reliable sources of information like your local government authorities.

- **Avoid too much exposure to news:** Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories. It can be upsetting to hear about the crisis and see images repeatedly. Try to do enjoyable activities and return to normal life as much as possible and check for updates between breaks
- **Seek help when needed:** If distress impacts activities of your daily life for several days or weeks, talk to a clergy member, counselor, or doctor, or contact the SAMHSA helpline at **1-800-985-5990**

As parents and guardians, part of our work in the coming weeks will also be to help children deal with their stress. Here is a link to the CDC site for ([Helping Children Cope with Emergencies](#)) Some of their recommendations include:

- Before
  - Talk to your children so that they know you are prepared to keep them safe.
  - Review safety plans before an emergency happens. Having a plan will increase your children's confidence and help give them a sense of control.
- During
  - Stay calm and reassure your children.
  - Talk to children about what is happening in a way that they can understand. Keep it simple and appropriate for each child's age.
- After
  - Provide children with opportunities to talk about what they went through or what they think about it. Encourage them to share concerns and ask questions.
  - It is difficult to predict how some children will respond to emergencies and traumatic events. Because parents, teachers, and other adults see children in different situations, it is important for them to work together to share information about how each child is coping after a traumatic event.

Aside from washing hands regularly, staying home when feeling sick, covering coughs and sneezes, and cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces, another recommendation the CDC has provided for us to take part in is social distancing. The CDC defines [social distancing](#) as it applies to COVID-19 as "remaining out of congregate settings, avoiding mass gatherings, and maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet) from others when possible.

With so much information coming out by the hour, I encourage everyone to remain calm, do your best to follow the recommendations of the CDC, practice selfcare, and share your love with your children.

As always, thank you for the amazing care and support you provide your child(ren), they are the direct byproduct of your hard work. I will dearly miss seeing you and them in the coming days and weeks, but in the event you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me.

There is no place like Rheem,

Mr. Sullivan