

PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FOR VIRTUAL REOPENING

July 23, 2020

Dear Parents,

I hope that all of you are doing well and staying safe this summer. We have been busy making plans for our virtual reopening with students on September 8, 2020. This past spring our teachers offered distance learning for all of our students. I continue to be amazed at how quickly they planned and executed virtual lessons. Every grade level and program met weekly with the administrative team to provide guidance for each other and gain support. We have considered guidelines from the Houston Independent School District, along with input from our teaching staff and parents, to make preliminary plans to reopen virtually. The information below will provide you with a basic roadmap as we move forward. We all know the importance of being flexible and accepting change. Our goal remains to provide your children with quality instruction and to request your assistance at home to be sure that your children fully participate each day by being present, participating, cooperating, using acceptable digital citizenship, and submitting all assignments on time.

As we move forward this year, I would like for all of us to think about the Mandarin Immersion Magnet School as one school, with students from PK through grade 8, instead of two separate schools under one roof. I want to strengthen our family atmosphere by having our students and parents feel that when you enter our doors as a PK student, you remain, and leave at the end of grade 8. This continuity will allow our students to be proficient in Mandarin Chinese and gain life-long learning skills.

Parents, I understand that the past few months have been stressful in many ways for our families. Our teachers are fully committed to working with your children during this time to increase and maintain their learning. We certainly don't have all of the answers, but we are fortunate to have a staff that is willing to work together and do their best every day. Your support and encouragement will continue to invigorate them as we move forward.

Please stay safe and well.

Regards,

Chung Ying, Principal
Mandarin Immersion Magnet School

- In the next two weeks you will receive a technology survey to indicate your current technology needs. The survey will be sent via email. Please respond immediately so we can submit the information to the school district.
- Your child will receive their classroom assignment and personalized daily schedule during the week of September 1-4, 2020. This information will be sent via email. This past spring, I worked with teachers to assign students to classes. Together, we used data to be sure our classes were balanced based on achievement levels, gender, and ethnicity. All class assignments are final, and no changes will be made.
- As stipulated by the Houston Independent School District, teachers will utilize Microsoft Teams and the HUB to present daily live lessons that will also be recorded, monitor attendance, post and accept class assignments, access textbooks, and provide assistance with social and emotional learning. Teachers will receive on-going professional development in the use of these platforms. By standardizing how teaching and learning is delivered, the school district will be able to offer teachers and parents technical support and guidance. More information is available on HISD@H.O.M.E.
- Elementary (PK-5) instruction will begin daily at 8:30 am with live instruction in timed instructional blocks to include not only live instruction, but small group interaction, active engagement with activities, and a chance for students to complete daily assignments. Ancillary classes will also be held for art, music, and physical education. We have also added time for social and emotional learning. Daily, morning instructional blocks are 3 hours for PK/K and 4 hours for grades 1-5. Students will not be required to spend the entire time on-line. A set 30-minute lunch period is included. During the afternoon, teachers will reach out for additional small group “teacher-time” and open office hours for parent/student/teacher conferences.
- Middle School (6-8) instruction will begin at 8:30 am with live instruction. Students will follow their regular daily schedule with a set 5 period, 50-minute instructional block using an A/B day format. At least one period per day is for a study hall at which time students will complete their daily assignments. Students will not be required to spend the entire time on-line but are required to participate in every class period. During the live instructional block teachers will be able to work with whole groups and small groups as needed. The period will include meaningful activities and active student involvement. A set 30-minute lunch period is included. Instructional blocks will continue after lunch. During the late afternoon, teachers will reach out, as needed, for additional small group “teacher-time” and open office hours for parent/student/teacher conferences.

- During virtual learning, teachers will not provide weekly packets or access to assignments for every day of the week at one time. The school district is requiring that all students log-on and participate daily and submit assignments by 3:30 pm. Their daily attendance will be used to generate school funding at the district and school level.
- **Unlike the spring semester, all grades will count.** All grade levels will follow a 6-week grading cycle. Two grades per subject will be taken each week and entered into the gradebook for a total of 12 grades per subject per grading cycle. While daily class assignments will be given, not all assignments will necessarily count for a grade. A class “exit ticket” after each lesson will be used to monitor student’s understanding of the lesson and to fulfill the daily participation requirement established by the Houston Independent School District and recorded in the HUB. A new on-line grading system will be available in September. GradeSpeed has been retired. The school district is requiring all students to be assessed at various times using digital resources and other district-approved platforms. As decisions are made, you will be notified.
- We understand that many families may have more than one child enrolled and may not have a device for each child, and therefore, children may need to share. The purpose of us sending you a daily schedule in September will allow you, as a family, to develop a device-sharing schedule with your children. They can alternate accessing live and recorded instructional sessions. There will be times to contact a particular teacher during their office hours or student support time to seek assistance with a lesson. Assignments submitted through the HUB by 11:59 pm each day will allow the student to be counted present for the day. Information on how to obtain additional technology will be part of a survey you will receive in August.
- Some families have ordered pre-packaged school supplies. While they will be delivered to the school next month, at this time all facilities remain closed with no employees or visitors allowed inside the building. These supplies will be delivered to your child’s classroom and made available once face-to-face instruction resumes. All packets are individualized with name and grade. Since school supply packets are not designed to last for the entire school year, it might be helpful for you to consider purchasing basic supplies such as pencils, pens, ruler, scissors, crayons, colored pencils, grade-level notebooks and paper, white paper with no lines, glue, mixed color packets of construction paper for home use, if able.

- Our teachers will be on-line and available during their workday hours of 7:45 am – 3:30 pm with specific time slots designated for office hours. Each teacher will also have designated times for student support and parent/student/teacher conferences. All communication to teachers shall be done using their HISD email account and/or through Microsoft Teams. These are secure platforms to ensure security and privacy. The use of third-party websites and apps shall not be considered. In order to provide our teachers and staff with a balanced home/work experience, they shall not be required to answer emails, phone calls, etc. after their workday has ended. Plan ahead with your communication needs and understand the teacher's busy schedule.
- There are many useful resources available from the Houston Independent School District at HISD@H.O.M.E. I encourage you to access this site to assist you with understanding virtual learning, available resources, and the requirements for the upcoming school year. You will receive one or more surveys in late August from the school and HISD.
- I invite you to participate in a required training, "Parent Introduction to Virtual Learning On-Line" that will be available on July 31, 2020 at HISD@H.O.M.E.

As we receive additional information from Superintendent Lathan, you will receive updates in the weekly parent newsletter.

Upcoming Virtual Meetings for MIMS

These events will be recorded and made available on Microsoft Teams if you are unable to join the live session.

- **Teacher Meet and Greet** – Thursday, September 3, 2020 from 1:00 – 2:30 pm

Introductory video from Mr. Ying followed by three 15-minute sessions to allow teachers to introduce themselves.

- **Open House** – Tuesday, September 15, 2020 from 2:30 pm – 4:15 pm

Individual teachers will host a class meeting to discuss their virtual classroom procedures and learning expectations in a 30-minute time block. Each teacher will repeat their presentation three times.

A specific schedule with participation procedures will be provided at the end of August via email