



April 2, 2020

Dear DWS Community,

We all continue to find ourselves doing what would have seemed near impossible a few short weeks ago. Each of us is called upon to continue digging deep and to take on the difficult tasks that are put before us. Although I haven't seen the majority of you, I know you are out there as part of our greater community doing what you can to continue our meaningful school connections.

Indeed, each of us has almost conquered or survived two weeks of remote schooling and three weeks home with our families. Is time flying? Maybe not so much. Undoubtedly, we have all practiced terrific grace and we have all succumbed to frustration depending on the day or even the hour. Mostly, we seem to embrace a *this is what has to be done* approach in order to get by. As we approach each challenge presented by this unprecedented time, it is important to remember that we are all in this together as a nation and a world, and we must continue allowing ourselves to experience our human emotions, never minimizing the hardships uncertainty can bring.

Remote Learning Plan

I wish I knew exactly what the future of the 2019-2020 school year will look like. I recognize that the big question is *will we return to the school building this year?* While recognizing that the stay-in-place directives and school closures are officially ordered through April 30th, we are making plans to be out of school for the remainder of the school-year. We can be hopeful that clarity with the trajectory of the virus along with determining factors that would allow us to return to our physical classrooms will be understood by the end of April, however, I am not expecting this. That said, I am still optimistic that we will find a way to be together for meaningful end-of-year celebrations before summer months are fully upon us. Certainly, despite our current conditions, DWS will honor our continuing 8th graders and our incredible 2020 graduates in a meaningful way. In my mind's eye, I am inviting and imagining a way for us to be together in person for these celebrations!

As you may have guessed, the school is cancelling sports for the remainder of the year and families will be refunded their sports fee for High School Volleyball and Middle School Ultimate Frisbee. We invite those who feel they can do so to contribute the sports fee to support the school's ongoing financial commitments during this difficult time. As a middle school parent myself, I look very forward to seeing our Frisbee team come together again next year as well as embarking on a full first year of High School Volleyball.

Looking ahead to Spring Break April 6th through 13th, I encourage pre-K through 8th grade families to check out our Spring Break activities offered at no charge thanks to Enrichment Director Dawn Archer's creative assembly of options for students to enjoy. Look for an email tomorrow with details.

And to all the families who contributed results to our remote learning survey, we thank you. Realizing at the time of the survey that DWS had only been at this big experiment for one week, we were still hopeful to collect valuable feedback so that modifications and tweaks could be made during the coming week of Spring Break. We are hearing your voices and considering your feedback. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we set our expectations and intentions upon this giant learning curve. DWS will continue to provide a remote learning experience until the end of the school year if needed.

Expectations and Balance

It is the DWS responsibility to deliver lessons and projects that students can take-up with interest at the developmental level of each child, while also facilitating social connections with teachers and classmates when possible. We know that our best effort online will not replace the feeling of the physical classroom, the experiential learning that students receive from teachers in person or the connection of our in-person community. These losses are truly the things we grieve during this unfamiliar time.

As parents, you manage the balance and well-being of your family—including what is being delivered as the DWS remote curriculum. Of course, it is important that students learn core concepts during this time, so helping students master organization and complete work expectations is vital. However, modifications to accomplish this learning reflects the core principle of balance which is also an important tenet of our education. We are holding in our consciousness each one of you and the difficulty it is to balance work schedules, curriculum and any semblance of family rhythm that you may have had in the past. Look at each day and applaud yourselves for what you were able to accomplish rather than what was left undone. For myself as a parent, we have modified our son's schedule multiple times to adjust to work life, individual moods and even the amount of will power that can be mustered during a given day. There is no doubt that the coming weeks will require continued modifications.

We got this!

Even at the outset of this virus, when DWS had to first begin planning for remote learning as a potential reality, there was a recognizable assurance that I experienced about our method of curriculum delivery during a crisis or an extended time away from each other. The powerful model of students staying together with their teachers year after year allows a continued journey where each teacher knows the individual child. During any given school year, whatever strengths or struggles student have, or whatever content gets missed or set aside, these things are picked up again or pulled out in a meaningful way the following year. The group of students in any given class, along with teachers, share the same knowledge around content and classroom experience. Waldorf education is unique in this way, and at a time like this, I am particularly thankful for that aspect.

In addition to this unique continuous model of education, *we got this* also because of our intentional look at the development of each child and the spiritual grounding in Rudolf Steiner's indications of what it is to be human. At this time, these indications guide us even more than usual. Our time away from each other will strengthen us as a school as we look deeply at the future of our students and what is being asked of us as human beings. It is a powerful experience to be a part of such an intentional community!

The Denver Waldorf School is leveraging available resources to enable families to stay a part of the school community even during difficult economic situations. Let us cherish and nurture this DWS community by staying connected, thinking and imagining togetherness in new ways and looking forward to gatherings where we can honor community in person.

Against Fear

May the events that seek me
Come unto me;
May I receive them
With a quiet mind
Through the ground of peace
On which we walk.

May the people who seek me
Come unto me;
May I receive them
With an understanding heart
Through the stream of love
In which we live.

May the spirits who seek me
Come unto me;
May I receive them
With a clear soul
Through the healing light
By which we see.

-Adam Bittleston

With continued Love, Light and Health,



Kelly Church
DWS School Director