

CONNECTION

A NEWSLETTER FOR MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS PARENTS

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- COLLEGE MONTH
- FAFSA
- DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

October 2020

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MAGNETSCHOOLS

GIVING OUR STUDENTS A WORLD OF CHOICES

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Our award-winning programs are available for students in grades PK-12. Apply now and be part of a legacy of choice and innovation at <https://yourchoicemiami.org>.

PROMOTING SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

#ValuesMatterMiami

RESPECT



Values Matter Miami is a values-based educational initiative by Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS). It promotes and recognizes exemplary behavior that aligns with the District's nine core values: Honesty, Integrity, Cooperation, Kindness, Pursuit of Excellence, Fairness, Citizenship, Responsibility, and Respect. During October, Values Matter Miami focuses on Responsibility. This year, in

response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are reinforcing the importance of greater social responsibility in keeping ourselves and others safe. Help us promote this value by completing the daily at-home health screening, which can be found at <http://reopening.dadeschools.net>, and adhering to the following guidelines:

- Keep your child home if sick.
- Speak to your child about:
 - a. Using hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol upon entering the building.
 - b. Washing and/or sanitizing hands frequently.
 - c. Avoiding touching their face and eyes.
 - d. Limiting the use of shared objects, such as pens/pencils, physical education equipment, playground equipment, art supplies, toys, and games.
- e. Maximizing physical distancing to the extent possible.
- Ensure your child wears an appropriate, well-fitted personal facial covering, which covers both the nose and mouth, at school and when on a school bus.
- Ensure your child brings personal reusable water bottles. Water fountains will be out of service and water bottle filling stations will be made available for refills.
- Ask your child to follow all directions provided by teachers or administrators for the safety of the school community. It is especially important that students stay in their assigned classrooms and spaces.



The past seven months have been tough to navigate, as life has been altered in so many ways. The so-called “new normal” is anything but normal. Facing an ongoing global pandemic, widespread unemployment, social unrest, and divisiveness over the upcoming election have challenged us and made it hard to attain a sense of physical safety and emotional security. As a rule, adversity can be difficult to manage, even under the best of times; and these clearly are not the best of times.

Many Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) students recently returned to on-campus learning, while other students continued their education through My School Online (MSO). Students returning to campus have entered a much different environment than the one they left last March. Physical distancing, wearing masks, eating in the classroom and other instituted safeguards have altered the schools’ social-emotional landscape and impacted students and teachers in a variety of ways. The presence of anxiety, fear, irritability, anger, depression, sleep disturbance, and mounting stress have become commonplace in this time of uncertainty. Although stress is a natural part of life, in excess, it can become debilitating.

It is well-established that a child’s ability to learn is deeply influenced by their physical and emotional

wellness. Whether returning to campus or learning through MSO, a child’s concerns over becoming infected with COVID-19 may result in excessive anxiety and worry. In extreme cases, school avoidance can become a daily struggle for parents to address. Likewise, pandemic-related social isolation and other factors have resulted in depression for some of our youth. Despite these challenges, most children are resilient and will recover.

Below, we outline some of the ways parents and guardians can help their children acclimate to their return to campus learning or continuing their education through MSO.

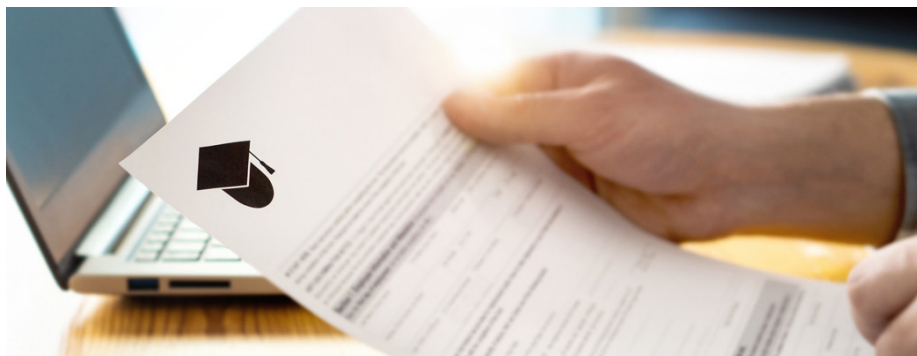
- Reinforce the importance of safe behaviors, including wearing a mask, washing hands, and practicing social distancing. This may lessen anxiety and fear and let the child know they have some control over the situation.
- Remind children of any changes in school policy and procedures.
- Prepare children for the possibility of school closure in the future should there be an outbreak of COVID-19 in their school.
- Check-in with your children daily to measure any concerns they may have. Welcome their questions but don’t force them to talk.
- Acknowledge their feelings, letting them know that it is OK to feel a little anxious or scared. If they are fearful, reassure them that there are many adults working to keep them safe and well.
- Empower children to feel more in control of their lives by letting them decide about meals, shows to watch, and activities to participate in.
- Maintain routines and structure as best possible. This provides

children with a sense of expectation and predictability, which serves to lessen anxiety.

- Encourage children to practice healthy coping behaviors like exercising, journaling, mindfulness practices, relaxation techniques, drawing, painting, listening to music, and communicating with friends via telephone or social media.
- If necessary, closely monitor or restrict access to upsetting media coverage of the pandemic, violence and other disturbing content, especially for younger children.

Some of our students are grieving the loss of family members due to COVID-19 and return to school grappling with strong emotions. Additional losses may have gone unrecognized, including the absence of physical interaction with peers, routine and structure, expectations and predictability, normality, and the loss of a sense of safety and security. Children will need time and support to grieve these losses, and the journey through loss is unique to each individual.

If you are concerned about your child’s emotional reactions and/or behavior, you are encouraged to contact their school counselor or the school’s Mental Health Coordinator for assistance. You can also call the Department of Mental Health Services Assistance Line at 305-995-7100 or the Division of Student Services Crisis Helpline at 305-995-2273. M-DCPS is committed to the emotional and mental wellbeing of our students and employees. Don’t hesitate to lean on us if you need assistance. 2020 has been a difficult year, and we are here for you.



Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) has designated October as College Month. This new initiative was created by the College Assistance Program (CAP) to provide support and guidance to students and their families, as they navigate the college application and financial aid process. A month-long series of virtual family workshops and fairs were developed for families. All events were recorded. Students can inquire with their CAP advisors to find out how to view the sessions. Below you will find some useful college planning tips.

Narrow your list of colleges

Have your child meet with a counselor

about their college choices, plan a college visit, and download college applications and financial aid forms.

Remember deadlines

Create a master list or calendar that includes: college entrance exams, their fees, dates, and registration deadlines; college application due dates; required financial aid application forms and their deadlines; other materials you will need such as recommendation letters, and transcripts.

Request a fee waiver

Ask your child's counselor to help you request a fee waiver to assist with

college application or college entrance exam fees.

Take College Entrance Exams

Your child should take the SAT or ACT. Remember to have their scores sent to the colleges they are applying to.

Gather Recommendation Letters

Have your child ask a teacher or counselor for letters of recommendation. Your child should provide their teacher or counselor an outline of their academic record and extracurricular activities. For each recommendation, provide a stamped and addressed envelope.

PARENT E-TIPS

Communicating with Teachers

<https://bit.ly/2GjLjah>

APPLY FOR FAFSA TODAY!

The 2020-2021 FAFSA® Form: What to Know

Federal Student Aid

October

1

The FAFSA® form: became available on Oct. 1, 2020.

Taxes 2019

You'll report your 2019 tax information.

Taxes 2020

There is no need to update your FAFSA® form after filling your 2020 taxes.

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is available to high school students and their families in order to obtain aid from the federal government to pay for college.

The 2020-2021 FAFSA application period opened on Thursday, October

1st, and runs through June 30, 2021. The FAFSA application process is free and provides applicants with access to sources of financial aid. Families are encouraged to apply early as some colleges award their aid on a first-come, first-serve basis. When completing the FAFSA, families will

need to provide personal and tax information.

Families may complete the FAFSA online at fafsa.gov.



Social media has greatly expanded how we communicate. This has never been more evident than during the more than six months Americans everywhere have been quarantined because of COVID-19.

In today's hyper-connected world, our students spend much of their time completing assignments and interacting with friends and family on online platforms. Whether at home or school, it is important to emphasize how to act with integrity, keep safe, and distinguish reality when things are sometimes not what they seem. This October, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) will celebrate Digital Citizenship Month to continue teaching students how to

appropriately use social media and other online platforms for the highest benefit of their educational and professional trajectories.

Social media is one of the easiest, quickest, and most common ways to share information. Platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and YouTube allow users to engage in online conversations and instantaneously share information, including photos and videos, with people worldwide. As digital citizens, our students are encouraged to be image-conscious – that is, to be aware of all the photos and videos they post and are tagged in. Online interactions leave a permanent trail, so it is important to remind students that college recruiters, potential employers, and parents check their social media presence. Anything they post online cannot be erased, even if they delete it.

Because parents play a pivotal role in a child's education, they must be equipped with the appropriate tools and resources to navigate social media and its continuous evolution effectively. Parents are also encouraged to talk with their children about digital citizenship. [The Parent Academy](#) hosts various workshops

focused on social media and how the digital world has been integrated into the learning environment.

IMPORTANT DATES & INFORMATION

October 23
Teacher Planning Day

November 3
Teacher Planning Day

November 11
Veteran's Day

SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

November 17
10:00 a.m.
Organization Meeting

November 18
11:00 a.m.
Regular Meeting

SOCIAL MEDIA



@MDCPS
@EscuelasMDCPS
@MiamiSup



@MiamiSchools
@AlbertoMCarvalho1



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www.dadeschools.net

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