



November 17, 2020

Dear Families,

This afternoon, Chancellor Carranza sent word that schools are closing in response to rising COVID-19 rates in New York City.

All public schools be closed on Thursday, November 19. Schools buildings will stay closed, the chancellor says, “until further notice.”

Following the announcement, our staff met to confirm our plans. **All students have live, remote learning at 8:30 Thursday morning.** The Google Classrooms children already know will be open as usual.

Mingie will create online music classrooms for children who usually have music only in person. Related services, such as speech and occupational therapy, will continue remotely.

School cafeterias will continue to serve grab-and-go meals. Meals are available weekdays from 9:00 to 12:00 and 3:00 to 5:00. You don’t need to bring a child; you can take the food you need, and you can take food for others.

The answers to the biggest questions now all depend on how long schools are closed. When the chancellor says “until further notice,” that could mean a couple of days, or much more. Staff in the building today have been carefully packing up materials, just in case. We will be in touch regularly.

On Thursday, all classrooms will have a class meeting to talk about the news. We also encourage you to talk with your child about this news. All children should know that the mayor’s decision to close is based on what’s happening for all New Yorkers, not just schools. They should know that the mayor has not said when schools will re-open, or how that decision will be made. They should know that they’ll continue learning remotely as they already do. Please encourage them to ask questions.

Whether your child has been coming to school or learning remotely, you have been juggling so much, and this feels like more bad news. A phrase like “until further notice” is full of troubling unknowns. I’m struggling to find the right words and feelings, so I’ll just tell a true story.

We were expecting schools to close last weekend. Last Friday, I was talking with Aishah’s class about how it might be the last time we would be in school together for a while. One boy’s eyes fluttered, and tears rolled onto his mask. That, of course, made me cry, too. But this week, the boy says he’s feeling better, because he realized he will continue to see Aishah and his friends in their remote classrooms. Schools closed, but the boy’s realization is still coming true.

What an amazing group of children, all of them, to keep facing restrictions and disappointments with so much strength.

Gabriel