



Parent Letter – April 17 Supporting Your Child's Learning Part I

The COVID-19 pandemic has drastically altered virtually every aspect of our lives. As a result, many of you are currently struggling to balance work responsibilities with taking care of your families and supporting your children's shift to learning from home. It is essential to recognize that feeling overwhelmed is normal and understandable. In times such as these, our goals at LA Matheson are maintaining safety and supporting well-being over learning. We need to consider the human element of all of our learners, our peers and ourselves first and foremost. As such, Matheson will continue to prioritize care, compassion, community and connection.

Keeping that at the forefront, Matheson teachers have started the delivery of service for at-home learning this week. To help you navigate the demands of work, life, and at home learning during a pandemic, please see the suggestions below.

Learning is going to look different now. Be patient and ease into it. While you may hear the term "online learning" used, most of our students will not be engaging in a true definition of online learning. I was the Principal at Surrey Academy of Innovative Learning (SAIL), Surrey's Online Learning School. What Matheson teachers are doing is NOT online learning. Matheson teachers are only using online learning tools and connecting with their students electronically. Still, ultimately, this is a new experience for everyone involved, and we will all be learning as we go.

Take an active role in your child's learning. Be curious about your child's learning and ask them what they need to do or what they are working on.

Assist your child with navigating demands. The maximum amount of learning grade 9 to 12 students should be expected to engage in within any given week, accumulatively across all classes, is approximately 15 hours. As Matheson students are juggling anywhere from 3 to 5 courses, depending on their schedule, students and parents must communicate with their teacher(s) as quickly as possible if they are struggling or the workload demand is too high.

Monitor your child's well-being. The physical and mental health and well-being of our students are most important during these uncertain times. Please monitor how your child is doing both physically and emotionally. Let us know if you are finding that your child is struggling with the demands being placed on them.

Create a workspace. With parents working from home and multiple children all on different learning plans, sharing of space, materials and technology access may present challenges for families. Include your children in the process of figuring out a workable solution for all – this



may involve developing a schedule for computer access. Teachers will share schedules of when they are available and when they need students to be available.

Being comfortable and limiting distractions for your child is advisable. A suggestion is to turn off social media notifications on devices while working.

Get some fresh air. Schoolwork and learning should not consume your children during this time. Find time for physical activity, such as a daily walk with the family. Get outside and get some fresh air. This is not only good for our brains and helps with learning but is good for the soul as well!

Don't be too hard on yourself. This is not going to be easy for any of us. Please be kind to yourself and to others. Be open with your children and be willing to share your own concerns, fears and uncertainty as this will reassure them that they are not alone. And be sure to practice physical, emotional and social wellness! Exercise, eat well, relax, and stay connected to friends and family! You need to make time for yourself and your family as do your children.

We are all navigating a world and situation we have never experienced before. We all need to work together and support each other during this time. It is our goal at Matheson to try and provide some normalcy around learning in a time that is anything but normal. The most important thing for all of us at Matheson is the health, safety and well-being of our students and their families.

The information above has been taken from various sources primarily the BC Ministry of Education's Keep Learning site to support parents at: <https://www.openschool.bc.ca/keeplearning/>

Next week I will expand on what Learning from Home can look like.

As usual, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact your child's teachers, counsellors or administration.

Sincerely,

Peter Johnston

Peter Johnston
Principal