



igniting your purpose!

August 28, 2020

Greetings! It will be so good to have our returning students back and our incoming students join us! There is obviously a good deal to cover as we prepare to open our doors. I will try not to overwhelm everyone with pages and pages of information in this week's newsletter and will send another newsletter next week with more details to attempt to make all of this easier to follow.

You all should have received a copy of our COVID protocols and have hopefully had time to review them. The protocols are also included in our Parent/Student Handbook which can be found under the "Parents" and "Students" headings on the Spark website. Every year brings some revision of the handbook and therefore it should be reviewed by all families before the start of another year. We are attaching a copy of the **Handbook Agreement Form** to this newsletter and ask that it be completed and returned to us during the first week of school.

Now some of the details...

Our first day of school will be Wednesday, September 9th. **That day will be entirely virtual for all students.** We will begin at 8:00am and end by noon, with a 15 minute break at 10:00. The focus of that day's program will be entirely a matter of orientation according to the following schedule.

Opening Day Schedule – Sept. 9th

- 8:00 - 9:00 ----- An overview of the school handbook.
- 9:00 - 10:00 ----- Detailed description of the COVID protocols
Laptops disinfecting procedure
- 10:15 - 11:00 ----- The biology behind COVID and our protocols from our
biology teacher, Mrs. Harnois
- 11:00 - Noon ----- Overview of the daily and weekly schedules and of the
remote learning process for our hybrid model and an
introduction to the Spark Canvas portal

The Spark Weekly Schedule

For the duration of our hybrid learning model, we plan to use the following schedule. It will be adjusted if necessary. Each day will begin at 8:00am and end at 3:00pm for both in-person and remote learning.

Mondays	-----	First Year (Grade 9) Students	-----	In-Person Learning
		Second Year (Grade 10) Students	-----	Remote Learning
Tuesdays	-----	Second Year (Grade 10) Students	-----	In-Person Learning
		First Year (Grade 9) Students	-----	Remote Learning
Wednesdays	----	Remote Day for All Students:		
		- Extra Help Zoom Sessions		
		- Virtual Exploration Activities		
Thursdays	-----	First Year (Grade 9) Students	-----	In-Person Learning
		Second Year (Grade 10) Students	-----	Remote Learning
Fridays	-----	Second Year (Grade 10) Students	-----	In-Person Learning
		First Year (Grade 9) Students	-----	Remote Learning

At any time during this hybrid model, a family may choose remote over in-person learning.

Our Remote Method:

All classes will be live-streamed whether remote or in-person classes. All classes will take place according to the daily schedule. Students learning remotely will be required to observe their live-streamed classes and to participate simultaneously through the school's secure Zoom account. Students who are unable to attend their in-person classes will be able to participate remotely if they are well enough to do so. Classes will not be recorded.

Each class period will feature outlines, powerpoint presentations, videos, and other elements which will be posted on the students' Spark Canvas portal. Assessment will be focused on the materials posted on the Canvas portal. Class time (in-person and remote) will focus on discussion and activities to help develop greater understanding of the information and skills presented in the posted materials. In this way, the students will be able to access all necessary materials as they prepare for their assessments.

Laptops:

Each student will be loaned a laptop to be brought back and forth to school on a daily basis. Parents will need to sign an agreement assuring proper care,

responsibility for damages and/or replacement. Students will need to bring their laptop chargers back and forth with them to school and clean them at home each day according to the procedure demonstrated during orientation. In this manner, our students will have their laptops in school and at home so as to provide a seamless transition from in-person to remote learning. These units are very expensive, and we expect them to be treated with the utmost care. Material and software other than those connected directly to course work are not to be loaded onto these units!

Materials from Home:

As we are working to eliminate possibilities for COVID transmission, we will ask that our families purchase **rolling briefcases** so as to eliminate storage in lockers. Two models will be recommended to you via email though families may certainly choose another style as long as laptops, books, and individual supplies can fit well into them. We have found two models which will provide that function, though we have noted that the less expensive of the two has a tendency to tip forward and may be a problem.

The List of Materials from Home:

- **rolling briefcase**
- **agendas** - to be purchased at the school on the students' first in-person day. We are currently reviewing agenda types and will notify families as to the cost in next week's newsletter.
- **two masks per day** - disposable or clean fabric in a plastic bag (sandwich bag)
- **personal hand sanitizer**
- **bottled water** – in sufficient amount for each day (water fountains are not operating during the pandemic)
- **lunch** (Note: Microwave ovens will not be in use.)
- personal container of **tissues**
- **pens and pencils** (no materials may be shared)
- **personal pencil sharpener**
- **notebook(s)**

Please note that other items may be added to this list as we progress through this process.

Mask Breaks:

We are still working with Manchester Community College regarding the possibility of our going outdoors for breaks when the weather permits. Mask breaks will be definitely needed and will be planned in conjunction with our students' and parents' suggestions. This situation is limiting, but let's see what we can do together!

New Teachers:

I am very pleased to announce the addition of two new teachers to the Spark Academy Family!

Ms. Karen Pringle will be joining Mr. Larochelle to teach technology classes. She has a very rich history of teaching technology and science at the high school level and has worked with Mr. Larochelle for many years. We are very fortunate to have such an experienced and capable teacher joining us!

Mr. David Trent will be teaching our Humanities classes. He brings a rich scope of study and experience to us. Recently having taught in the British International School of Kurdistan, and with study-abroad experiences in Cambodia, Thailand, and India, Mr. Trent will add much to our Humanities experience.

I am sure everyone at Spark will welcome our new teachers as we grow together to make our school one of the very best high schools in New Hampshire!

Manchester Transit Authority Busing:

MTA is working with us to attempt to provide busing to and from Spark even though the Manchester School District will be in total remote mode at least until the end of the first marking period. We will keep our Manchester families posted on developments.

Thank you for your patience as you navigate this lengthy, but very important newsletter. We will have more information for you next week. Please send any questions to Mrs. Larochelle at jennifer.larochelle@sparkacademynh.org, and we will be sure to answer them both individually and in next week's newsletter.

We will need your perspectives on all aspects of school life as we work together to make our year a great one from start to finish. I am looking forward to seeing everyone and to the time when we can look back on all of this and say, "We really made it all work well! We made it work *the Spark way!*"

Until then, I am
Yours in Spark

Denis Mailloux
Director