



September 8, 2020

Welcome Back, Peterson Families!

The first day of school always brings me an array of emotions. I cannot wait for our hallways to be filled with students embracing each other, exchanging stories about their summer, or laughing uncontrollably over just about anything. The stress of weeks of preparation leading to opening day all of a sudden is gone.

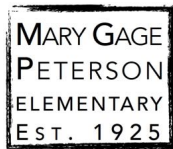
But so many things will be different this school year. It saddens me to think about everything that we once took for granted: practicing with kindergarteners how to line up for lunch and how we walk to the playground, reminding students that hallways are for walking not running, and doing some crowd control in the cafeteria because students who do not remember their ID number are slowing down the lunch line. How things have changed!

While there is still some excitement and eagerness to connect with friends and teachers, even if it is virtually, many of our students (and educators) may return to their virtual classrooms feeling anxious, worried, sad, or disconnected from their school community. Some students might not want to participate during a Google Meet. After all, what we have experienced as a result of the pandemic, social unrest, and racially motivated violence, will leave deep physical and emotional wounds that will take long to heal.

I write about trauma that many have experienced in this Welcome Back letter to remind us that now more than ever we must remain committed to our community, to each other, and to doing what is best for our children. I agree one hundred percent that our current situation is not ideal, it is very stressful, and is creating a lot of challenges for our kids and families. Please remember that no one has been left untouched by the impact of what we are living, not your family, not our teachers, not me. Knowing this, I humbly ask that you:

1. Commit to showing yourself, your children, and our educators, kindness and understanding.
2. Embrace the fact that we are all doing the best we can for our children in these dire circumstances.
3. Accept that while we may disagree, kids are our number 1 priority
4. Remember that what we are going through is hard for everyone--we are all human and deserve some grace, patience, and respect.

Even though there is so much that is not going as well as we would like it to go, I also want to urge you to focus on what IS going well and on those things that you can actually control. I



have made it a goal to leave my house every morning expressing gratitude or setting positive intentions for the day. When things start getting out of control, I try to bring myself back to what really matters to me: our children, our families, our friends, and our health. I try to focus on what I can control: my mindset, how I interact with others, and the type of person I want to be for my children and yours.

So knowing that many challenges might come our way, please remain focused on the things that truly matter to you. Yes, it is possible that there might be some technical challenges on the first day of school. Yes, some kids may be late. My response to that is *It's Okay*. Tomorrow will be another day and another opportunity to practice what it means to be doing school virtually. I know that in the future when my children think about their first day of virtual school, they won't remember if they made it on time or if they made it through the entire school day. They'll remember it as a time when we faced many challenges, but we showed a lot of love, patience, and care for one another. That is truly what matters to me.

So, as we start another school year, let's remember that this year will be what we make it. How our children remember this year will depend on the example that we set and how we show up when adversity knocks on our doors. I know that Peterson educators, staff members, Assistant Principal Lichtenberg, and I, all remain committed to making this school year another year filled with engaging learning experiences and opportunities for your children to grow academically, socially, and emotionally. All of this will be possible with your continued partnership and support.

Have a wonderful first day of school, Peterson families!

Principal Nieves

P.S. Don't forget that there will be a special edition of EncoreTV live on Tuesday morning. You won't want to miss it.



## Frequently Asked Questions

### Opening Day Information:

- **First Day:** The first day of school is Tuesday, September 8, 2020.
- **Virtual School Hours:** School starts at 8:45am and goes to 3:45pm every day.
- **Breakfast/Lunch:** Families can pick up free grab-and-go meals for every student in their household from 8:00am to 1:00pm on the Peterson Plaza. If you are unable to pick up meals in person, please contact the CPS Command Center to schedule meal delivery at 773-553-KIDS (5437) or email [familyservices@cps.edu](mailto:familyservices@cps.edu).

### General Questions:

- ***Where will classes be held?***  
All classes will meet virtually via Google Meet and Google Classroom. Please check your email for information on how your child can join their class virtually or contact your child's teacher.
- ***Will the school building be open?***  
The school building is closed. There will be no one available to answer your phone calls or to provide in-person assistance. If you call the office at 773-534-5070, please leave a message and someone will get back to you as soon as possible. Otherwise, please reach out to your child's teacher.
- ***How will Peterson teachers and staff be contacting me?***  
Teachers will most likely contact you via ClassDojo. At times, they may also use Google Voice to call you. Please note that when teachers attempt to communicate with you via Google Voice, you will likely see an out of state number.
- ***What if I need to update my contact information?***  
You can update your personal information by picking up a contact form from the Peterson Plaza during meal distribution times. You can email Ms. Rodriguez at [nrodriguez161@cps.edu](mailto:nrodriguez161@cps.edu).
- ***Where can I go for information?***  
Our website, [www.Peterson.cps.edu](http://www.Peterson.cps.edu), has a wealth of information. Please familiarize yourself with its content. You should also review the Peterson Parent Periodical which is posted on our website and delivered weekly to your inbox. If you are not currently receiving our weekly periodical, please go to our website to sign up. A lot of great information is also posted on ClassDojo--your child's teacher will help you sign up for ClassDojo.



- ***Can I still register my child to attend Peterson Elementary?***

If you live in the Peterson boundaries, you may still register your child. Please contact Clerk Nydia Rodriguez at [nrodriguez161@cps.edu](mailto:nrodriguez161@cps.edu) to schedule an appointment to complete registration. Prior to contacting Ms. Rodriguez, please go to <http://www.peterson.cps.edu/registration> to download and complete the registration materials or stop by the Peterson Plaza to get printed copies.

- ***How do I find out my child's teacher?***

If you have your child's homeroom number, you can find who their teacher is by going to <http://www.peterson.cps.edu/peterson-people>. By now, you should have also received communication from your child's teacher or a letter from the school containing your child's ID number, teacher's name, and classroom number. If this is not the case, you can stop by the Peterson Plaza from 8am to 1pm, Monday through Friday, and Mr. Caban will be able to provide you with this information.

- ***Where can I drop off enrollment forms or other important documentation?***

Enrollment forms or other important communication can be dropped off in the secured mailbox located near the main entrance, door 9, on Christiana Ave (Please see below). You can also hand any documentation to Mr. Caban on the Peterson Plaza from 8am to 1pm, Monday through Friday,

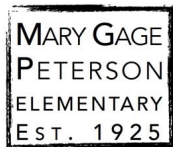


- ***Does my child need school supplies?***

School supplies are provided by Peterson. If you were unable to pick up supplies from us, you will be able to pick up supplies on the Peterson Plaza from 8am-1pm, Monday through Friday or from 4pm-6pm during the first week of school. Supply pick up will conclude on Friday, September 11, 2020.

- ***Do I have to pay school fees this year?***

Peterson does not ask families to purchase their own school supplies. Instead, school fees help us purchase school supplies and learning materials such as magazines, books, etc. The school fee for School Year 20-21 will remain the same: \$50.00 per child or \$100.00 for two or more children. Fees can be paid online here: [Electronic Payment](#)



(<https://magic.collectorsolutions.com/magic-ui/Login/cps-24941-mary-gage-peterson-el>).

We are aware of the financial difficulties many of our families may be experiencing. If you are unable to pay your school fee in full, you will have the option of submitting a partial payment or spreading your payments throughout the school year.

If you wish to sponsor a student and cover their school fees, you are also welcome to do that electronically. Please go to [Electronic Payment](#), click on the blue "Donation" tab, enter the purpose of the donation (school fees donation), and the amount you wish to donate. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Rodriguez at [nrodriguez161@cps.edu](mailto:nrodriguez161@cps.edu) or Ms. Steiny at [masteinys@cps.edu](mailto:masteinys@cps.edu).

#### **Attendance:**

- ***What do I do if my child is absent or requires an early dismissal?***

If your child is going to be absent, please call our attendance line at 773-534-5070, press option #2, and leave a message that includes:

- 1) The date of the absence
- 2) The reason for the absence
- 3) The absent student's name
- 4) The name of the person calling
- 5) The relationship between the person calling and the student

If possible, please also notify your child's teacher of the absence via email or Dojo.

- ***Can my child accrue tardies while learning remotely?***

Yes, students will be considered late if they join their Google Meet after 8:45am.

Nonetheless, even if your child is late, they should make every effort to join their class.

- ***Do absences count during remote learning?***

Students are expected to attend virtual school for the entirety of the school day, 8:45am to 3:45pm. Students not present when attendance is taken will be marked absent. If your child arrives late to class, they will be marked tardy. If your child needs an early dismissal, please communicate with your child's teacher so that attendance can be accurately recorded. All attendance procedures remain the same during remote learning.





## **Remote Learning:**

- ***What will remote learning look like?***

All students should expect to be learning for the full school day and will receive live real-time instruction for several hours a day. In addition to live instruction, students will also have access to small group instruction, activities with their classmates, and meaningful individual support from their teachers.

- ***What will my child's school schedule look like during remote learning?***

For your child's class schedule, please contact their teacher via email or ClassDojo. Your child's teacher will share their schedule and guide you through how to access class specific information on their Google site.

- ***When will schedules be available?***

Teachers will make their class schedules available on Mondays of every week or on the first instructional day of the week. Schedules will be posted by the teacher on their Google site. Teacher Google sites will be up and running by the first day of school. You can access them by going to [www.Peterson.cps.edu](http://www.Peterson.cps.edu) and clicking on the Remote Learning tab.

- ***Will schedules stay consistent or will they change from week to week?***

Our goal is to ensure that weekly schedules remain constant from week to week. We want your child's virtual school day to be similar to what they would experience if learning from the building. Unless there are special events such as virtual town halls for students or assemblies, please expect your child's schedule not to change from week to week. For more specific questions, please contact your child's teacher.

- ***Can I adjust asynchronous learning time to when it fits my schedule best?***

Please communicate your needs to your child's classroom teacher.

- ***Will my child have Encore classes?***

Encore classes or specials (music, physical education, art, etc.) will be offered remotely. Students will take one Encore class for a duration of five weeks. Every five weeks, students will rotate to a new Encore class. In the event of hybrid learning, this set-up ensures we meet state of Illinois requirements and minimizes exposure to others.

- ***How will my child's work be graded?***

Grades are meant to provide you and your child with feedback on their mastery of grade level content. Therefore, students will be given ample opportunities to attain mastery prior to a grade being issued. Grading will adhere to regular grading policies, with students earning letter grades based on standards mastery. For more information, please contact your child's teacher.



- ***How do I access my student's accounts or grades?***

Families will use Parent Portal through Aspen to access grades. Students will need their login information to access their email, Google Classroom, etc. We have created [this guidance](#) to help you create your Parent Portal account and guide you through how to set up your child's email account.

### **Social Emotional Learning and Supports:**

- ***How will my child's social-emotional needs be addressed?***

The first two weeks of school year 20-21 will be entirely devoted to building community, establishing strong relationships with your children, and assessing student needs in order to provide the right support. As a school, we will continue to focus on restorative practices and commit to 30 minutes of social emotional learning everyday. Practices such as (virtual) community circles and restorative conversations will remain integral at Peterson.

- ***Who can I contact if I feel that my child needs support from a counselor or social worker?***

Peterson has 2 full time counselors and one full time social worker. They are available to support you and your children however possible. Their contact information can be found below. You can also visit our counseling webpage at

<http://www.peterson.cps.edu/counseling-department>.

Svetlana Vasilev: [svasilev1@cps.edu](mailto:svasilev1@cps.edu)

Brooke Bowman: [banderson38@cps.edu](mailto:banderson38@cps.edu)

Casey Fennell: [cefennell1@cps.edu](mailto:cefennell1@cps.edu)

- ***How can I support my child while learning from home?***

Here are some ways you can support your child while they are learning from home:

- Review the work assigned to your child and create a schedule for school work and break times.
- Reserve a space for your child to complete remote learning work.
- Ensure your child gets enough sleep.
- Set sensible time limits for technology use.
- Talk to your child about their work every day.
- Help your child establish and follow regular daily routines

### **Supports for Diverse Learners and English Language Learners:**

- ***How will diverse learners be supported during remote learning?***

Peterson will continue to support students with diverse learning needs during the remote learning period as per their Remote Learning Plan. Peterson Staff will be reaching out to schedule Remote Learning Plan meetings starting the week of 9/21. In



the interim, teachers will continue to deliver services. Please contact our Case Manager, Ms. Jenna Brandon at [jlbrandon@cps.edu](mailto:jlbrandon@cps.edu), for more information.

- ***What services will English learners receive?***

Peterson will make every effort to provide English Learners (ELs) services in line with the Bilingual Education Services required during both in-person and remote instruction. In order to maximize access to these services, ELs will be placed in classrooms with EL-endorsed teachers (bilingual or ESL, as appropriate) who would be able to provide required components of services in a whole-group setting, or in small groups if a classroom includes both ELs and non-ELs. Please contact your child's teacher for specific information on instruction and groupings. If you have any questions on the ELL program at Peterson, please email Ms. Jenna Brandon at [jlbrandon@cps.edu](mailto:jlbrandon@cps.edu).

### **Technology:**

- ***How do I access Google Classroom, Google Meet, or use a Chromebook?***

We have created a [guide](#) to help families obtain guidance on the technology resources students will engage with this fall. This guide is available in English, Spanish, and Arabic.

- ***What should I do if my child's classroom is not showing up in Google Classroom?***

Each night, CPS automatically updates Google Classrooms based on information from Aspen. If your child is not connected to their classroom, you or your child can contact the teacher directly and they can send your child a link to join that classroom.

- ***Who should families contact if they do not have reliable internet access?***

The district's Chicago Connected initiative will provide free high-speed internet service to approximately 100,000 CPS students for four years. You can check if you are eligible for this free program by going to <https://www.cps.edu/strategic-initiatives/chicago-connected/eligibility/>.

- ***Who should families contact if they need a computer for remote learning?***

Peterson families needing a computer for remote learning should contact Mr. Deters at [csdeters@cps.edu](mailto:csdeters@cps.edu). You can also contact the district's IT Helpdesk at 773-417-1060 for additional assistance.

- ***Are there any other technology learning resources available for parents and families?***

Parents are encouraged to access the following resources:

- Setting Up a Student Email for New Student:  
[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1NjVAOMGMWshkC609IYjC\\_63htfRP7f06Hl5Fq7hfRdk/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1NjVAOMGMWshkC609IYjC_63htfRP7f06Hl5Fq7hfRdk/edit)





- Changing Student Passwords or Resetting Forgotten Password:  
[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1VqKwXN0lQrH\\_W8sO2fhIZwB50E5IJ1y7614kUstkiVc/preview](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1VqKwXN0lQrH_W8sO2fhIZwB50E5IJ1y7614kUstkiVc/preview)
- If you'd like more training on the Google Suite, please go to <https://www.cps.edu/calendar/> to access professional development specifically for families in English and Spanish or <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIxyEUFeytMQdvTvDhH0vAw> to watch videos created by the CPS Office of Family and Community Engagement (FACE).
- To sign up to receive notifications about virtual training provided by FACE about technology, SEL, and more in both English and Spanish, go to [bit.ly/FACEPARENT](http://bit.ly/FACEPARENT).

### Health and Wellness:

- ***Where can I access the health and wellness forms families usually complete at the start of the school year?***  
You can access the required health forms here:  
<https://www.cps.edu/school-reopening-2020/remote-learning-guide/preparing-for-school/health-and-wellness-requirements/> These will be due on September 30, 2020.
- ***What are the minimum health requirements for the 2020-21 school year?***  
Information on the minimum health requirements can be found here in [English](#) or [Spanish](#). These requirements must be completed by October 15, 2020 or upon enrollment. Families who need support obtaining health insurance or finding a provider can call the district's hotline—773-553-KIDS (5437)—or visit <https://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov/>.
- ***How do I find medical care?***  
If you need help locating medical care, please reach out to the CPS Office of Student Health and Wellness at [oshw@cps.edu](mailto:oshw@cps.edu) or by calling the Healthy CPS Hotline 773-553-KIDS (5437).
- ***Will families receive a Back to School Packet?***  
Packets will be available in paper format and online at <https://www.cps.edu/school-reopening-2020/remote-learning-guide/preparing-for-school/back-to-school-packets/>.
- ***What If I need help completing all these forms?***  
If you need help completing any of the required forms, please come to the Peterson Plaza from 4pm to 6pm, from Tuesday, September 8, 2020, through Friday, September 11, 2020.
- ***Where can I submit all of these forms when completed?***



Signed and completed forms can be turned in to Mr. Caban on the Peterson Plaza, Monday through Friday, from 8am to 1pm. Forms can also be placed in the school's secured mailbox located by the main entrance, door 9, on Christiana Ave. If you prefer, you can email the forms to Ms. Rodriguez at [nrodriguez161@cps.edu](mailto:nrodriguez161@cps.edu) or Ms. Steinys at [masteinys@cps.edu](mailto:masteinys@cps.edu).

- ***Should my child be in front of the computer for the entire duration of a school day?***

Whenever possible, please encourage your child to move around, stretch, or go outside to get some sun and fresh air.

- ***How can I connect with other Peterson families?***

Later in September and then throughout the academic year, there will be virtual Parent Advisory Council (PAC) meetings that all parents and guardians are welcome and invited to attend. More information will be shared through the newsletter and Dojo about these opportunities. You can also sign up to receive the PAC newsletter directly at <http://eepurl.com/gQHvSP>. Additional opportunities to connect with other families will also be shared soon!

- ***What if I have questions that are not answered in this document?***

If you have questions that are not answered here, please reach out to your child's classroom teacher. You can also visit our website where we post the most up to date information.

