

## Director of Pupil Personnel Services Update May 28, 2020

Dear Parents and Community Members,

As we approach the month of June, we still look for ways to keep our focus and maintain a positive and productive atmosphere in the home. As stated in previous messages, positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) are a highly effective way to build children's social-emotional-behavioral skills and reduce challenging behaviors. At home, like school, PBIS can be effective when normal routine are affected by larger events beyond our control. The information below is taken from <https://www.pbis.org>, which is a center at the University of Oregon and is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. The information in this letter is taken from *Supporting Families with PBIS at Home (March 2020)*, a collaborative publication from the Center on PBIS and Center for Parent Information and Resources

([https://assets.website-files.com/5d3725188825e071f1670246/5e83b41b7df0210d47588d12\\_Supporting%20Families%20with%20PBIS%20at%20Home%20FINAL.pdf](https://assets.website-files.com/5d3725188825e071f1670246/5e83b41b7df0210d47588d12_Supporting%20Families%20with%20PBIS%20at%20Home%20FINAL.pdf)). Specifically, this message reviews and expands on familiar strategies and focuses on new recommendations that include setting routines and setting expectations. Additional resources are also provided.

Setting routines is important for most students to do well. Schools set routines for students during the day, and these routines are often written and posted in the classroom and other areas within the school. Such routines and procedures are communicated to and established with children early in the school year. When students are not attending school, they may demonstrate increased anxiety and challenging behaviors due to having less routine and predictable activities in their day. To alleviate any potential anxiety or challenging behaviors, families and caregivers can provide structure that is similar to the school day. A home schedule, posted in a familiar and visible location, can support positive behavior and prevent other challenging behaviors.

- The following is an example of a home routine for both older and younger children. There may be some flexibility depending on your child's age, family needs, and specific online digital learning schedule.
  - **Get Ready to Learn.** Wake up, get dressed, eat breakfast, etc.
  - **Morning Check-In.** Review schedule and daily goals/expectations. Questions parents may wish to ask are "How are you doing today? Do you have any questions?"
  - **Morning Movement.** Go for a brief walk, or participate in an indoor exercise.
  - **Learning Time.** Use this time for reading, math, or writing. Engage in distance, remote learning, or scheduled meetings with teachers.
  - **Lunch.** Have a healthy lunch and review progress with the schedule.
  - **Afternoon Learning.** Take advantage of websites, virtual field trips, or activities posted by your child's teacher on the school website.
  - **Afternoon Movement.** Consider a walk, or other outdoor/indoor activity.
  - **Social Connection.** Connect with family members or friends via phone or social media. (This should be supervised.) Your child may participate in Google Meet sessions with his/her teacher.
  - **Evening Family Time and Bedtime.** Maintain usual routines and engage in dinner or after dinner conversation. You may wish to spend some time reading together.

Expectations at home help to minimize distractions and support desirable and productive behaviors. During the school year, there may be a chart or display of desired behaviors followed by a description of the behaviors in a setting. In addition, teachers and principals meet with groups of students to communicate and teach specific behaviors and expectations. These behaviors can be adapted to the home. The following are examples that could be found in any school.

- Examples of expectations in school:
  - **Be Respectful.** Use the classroom system for answering questions and turn-taking, throw food in the proper receptacle in the cafeteria, and listen to teacher instructions from teachers and staffmembers.
  - **Be Responsible.** Turn in your work on time. Have your backpack ready. Use your agenda book.
  - **Be Safe.** Walk when holding materials or sharp objects. Walk in the cafeteria and halls. Stay with your bus line before boarding the bus.
- Examples of suggested expectations at home:
  - **Be Respectful.** Lower background noise during learning time. Use kind words in conversation. Put things away such as dishes, clothes, etc. Be polite when reminded about bedtime.
  - **Be Responsible.** Do your best work and keep your online schedules with your teachers. Turn in your work on time. Wash hands routinely and practice safe hygiene. Get enough sleep and go to bed on time.
  - **Be Safe.** Keep electronics away from water (i.e., drinks and food). Play safely indoors with indoor activities. Wear your helmet when you ride your bike.

At every opportunity, teach, remind, and support expected behaviors with positive feedback or praise. However, when correction or redirection is needed quick corrections or redirections are more effective. For example a caregiver may wish to use the following to redirect use of language, “That was not respectful.” “We kindly speak to each other to show respect.” “Let’s try again.” “How can we say it better?” “That was a kind thing to say.” Redirections should be calm, brief, and provide an opportunity for the child to practice the desired behavior. Research suggests keeping a ratio of 5 positive interactions or praise statements for every 1 negative interaction or corrective statement. Reminders may be more effective than persistent corrections. Also, we may try teaching different, alternative behaviors that can be practiced instead of the undesired behavior.

Being creative and modeling emotional wellness is also important. This may include taking advantage of scheduled Google Meet times and planning videoconference interactions with family and friends. In addition, gently remind your family to take breaks from news and social media. Demonstrating and teaching healthy behaviors such as healthy eating, deep breathing, stretching, exercising, and getting the right amount of sleep also help to minimize stress.

As always, it is important to stay in contact with the school. Most importantly, we can teach our children coping skills for working through stressful situations. Depending on the situation, some of the above strategies may be more useful than others. Please maintain continuing communication with teachers, social workers, psychologists, and special education service providers. This can include Assistive Teaching times and Google Meet sessions, which are posted on the Teacher Pages of the District website. In addition, another valuable resource can

be found at the Child Mind Institute website (<https://childmind.org/>). I may be contacted at 516-434-2620. I will return your call. Thank you for all of your efforts up to this point.

Sincerely,

Jacob Russum

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Island Park UFSD