

March 24, 2020

Dear Families,

I hope that everyone's families are safe and well at home. As you may well know, the governor of Virginia announced yesterday that all schools, both public and private, must remain closed for the remainder of the school year as a response to the coronavirus. We are deeply saddened to not have this time with our students. Teachers will continue to email families resources, ideas for at-home learning, YouTube circle times, and even give some phone calls for children so that we can stay connected. That being said, all the online learning in the world will never replicate what we offer at Mountain Laurel. The sensorial activities, the traditions that MLMS enjoys, and above all, the sense of community that we build each year have all been ended abruptly.

Optimistically looking forward to a bright and happy summer, we are offering a June session to all families. It will run right along side of camp from June 1st to June 26th. During this time, students will still have the chance for their Montessori lessons from their teachers to continue. Elementary students will have rehearsals for the Shakespeare and Greek plays. Dessert Day will still take place. In the afternoons, children will have the chance to swim, bake, or nap, depending on their needs. We will still have some field trip Fridays. We will end the June session with a Summer Spectacular including the Auction, Graduation, and a performance of both plays. The children will get the chance to participate in the traditions that make Mountain Laurel truly special to them. We will have a clear closure to the school year, with the chance to say goodbye to each other before the July and August summer camps begin.

Remember to take time to breathe with your little ones over these next few months. Look for the silver lining and the gift of time that has just been bestowed upon many families. Any families who are feeling overwhelmed at this time, whether you are essential personnel or not, please let me know so that we can help.

I look forward to the time that we can all be together again.

Sincerely,
Meg DeMato

March 25, 2020

Dear Families,

Thank you for your positive responses yesterday. I know that our community is trying very hard to make the best of a difficult situation. A number of folks asked the same questions, so I thought it would be best to send the questions and answers to everyone.

[1.\) Is there an additional cost for the June session?](#)

NO! I'm so sorry that I did not make that abundantly clear yesterday. The June session will be funded by current tuition dollars. We are hoping for everyone to join us so that children can have a successful end to their school year, surrounded by friends, teachers, and the lessons to get them ready to move on to the next grade/level with us.

[2.\) What about the extra days off that kids are missing?](#)

These are the remaining days that we were supposed to be in school:

March 17, 18, 19, 20, 30, 31

April 1, 2, 3, 6,7,8,9,14,15,16,17,20,21,22,23,24,27,28,29,30

May 1,4,5,6,7,8,11,12,13,14,15,18,19,20,21

That makes 41 days.

subtract 9 snow days

subtract 20 June days

There are still 12 days remaining. You can use these 12 days during any of the July and August camps. We would love to see the kids more, and still give families the chance to have a summer vacation.

[3.\) Will there be Laurel Club and bus service during the June session?](#)

Yes and yes!

[4.\) What about my volunteer hours?](#)

It's easy enough to extend the deadline to July 15th. We still have lots of projects to do now, as well as in June as we get ready for the Auction. We are still hopeful to start our new playground construction!

[5.\) Did all of the field trips get cancelled?](#)

Yes, Blandy and the Kennedy Center contacted us to say that they needed to close during this time. All of the museums are closed as well. Field trip fees will be applied towards summer field trips and swimming for the children during the June session.

[6.\) Can teachers send me more work/things to do with my child?](#)

Absolutely! Some families want work, while others do not. We will send out ideas and lessons that you can work on with your child at home. Please keep in mind that so much of what we do in the classroom involves special Montessori materials. We can give you ideas for good replacements at home. Montessori teachers are typically major advocates for little to no screen

time, so making the switch to online learning is not ideal. It may take us a few days to set up some appropriate online lessons for children that will be beneficial. Another thing to remember is that children need to (and love to!) repeat lessons over and over again until they feel comfortable. A lesson given by a teacher is never one and done. Think of it like ice skating. Was your first time on the ice particularly successful? It takes lots of practice for students to master a concept.

Sincerely,
Meg