



# COUNTRY DAY

## CONNECTED

Wow—it has been a busy but successful week. As we move through the month, there will be bumps and tweaks, but we’ve had PERFECT attendance this week—that never happens. Check out the attachment for the morning announcements which the students receive every morning. Have some fun—fill out the favorite movie form! I’m so proud of everyone in the MS community—students, parents and faculty who are working together during this unprecedented time. And, since the campus closure has been extended, it’s necessary that we continue on this path to keep our community safe and healthy. As I told some parents this week, the teachers are working hard to find the balance between too much and too little. I’m certain the actual amount of homework and/or live classes falls somewhere in the middle. Please [click here to complete a survey](#) on the Country Day ConnectED experience.

For the 5th grade families, we are starting slow. We will teach the students different aspects of the TEAMS program, which will lead to “live” classes in the future. The students will be getting lessons over the next couple weeks with Amy Thonnerieux and Julia Joyce. During this time, we will be looking to add different ways for the teachers to connect “live” with their students. In the coming weeks, my “Hirsch Notes” will take on a different look with resources and information from our middle school psychologist, Alexis Nordrum, and from NAIS (National Association of Independent Schools). I continue to hear that LESS is MORE and the need for social emotional learning is more important than ever. As such, I will keep my notes brief and focus only on key points. The three points for today are independent reading, SEL—Ride the Wave, and talking to your 5th, 6th and 7th grader about choices for 2020-21 school year.

Independent Reading for Family on Friday, April 3

No matter the schedule, we want to continue our independent reading program and invite your entire family to join. We are asking all students to read for 30 minutes. See the attachment for text ideas as well as supportive information listed below.

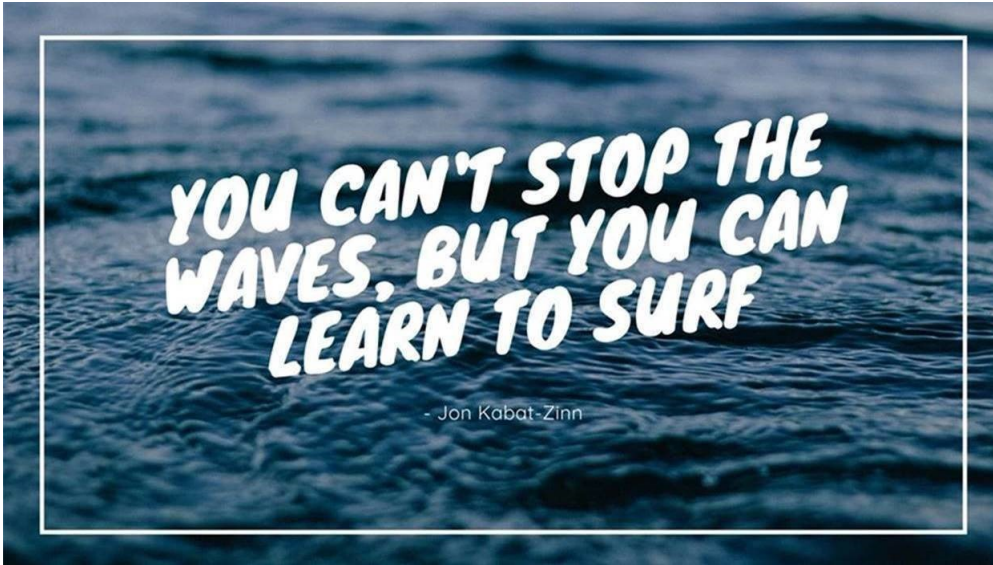
Possible questions from your son or daughter:

- I have an independent reading book that I started over spring break. Can I keep reading it? Of course! And let your friends know that you’re enjoying it – they might be looking for recommendations.
- I don’t have an independent reading book, and I’m quarantining at home. What should I do?
- Most of the texts listed here are online resources, so you can read them on your school computer or e-reader. Some can be downloaded for free from [Project Gutenberg](#), [Hathi Trust Digital Library](#), [GooglePlay](#) or [Amazon](#). Others can be checked out from the public library; view their [e-branch site](#).
- For physical books, consider finding reading material the following ways:
  - Order online. In addition to Amazon and Barnes and Noble, you can #supportlocal and order from [Joseph-Beth booksellers online](#).
  - Receive a book handpicked for you by experts. The service [Just the Right Book](#) is beloved by a number of Country Day families. Share information about books you’ve enjoyed in the past and how many books you hope to read a month, and you can receive handpicked selections delivered to your door!

- Comb the shelves of your home. Family members may be poised to offer great recommendations. Ask them!

Message from Alexis Nordrum: Ride the Wave

In the words of Jon Kabat Zinn, “you can’t stop the waves, but you can learn to surf.” One of the best things we can do for our children, as parents/caregivers/and educators, is to model healthy self-care and coping skills. As we have experienced with this situation, life can throw us completely terrifying and unpredictable situations, many of which are out of our control. We can control how we respond to these situations.



Self-care and modeling calm behavior is important, but it doesn't mean you should avoid experiencing your true feelings. It's okay to cry, be scared, and worry. Give yourselves permission to be in touch with your feelings each day because resisting them could trigger other problems.

Here are some simple healthy coping skills to add to your list:

- Yoga
- Run/Hike (Get some fresh air)
- Gratitude Journal
- Meditation
- Coloring
- Listen to Music
- Read or Listen a Book
- Take a Bath
- Puzzle
- Breathing (smell the flowers, blow out the candle)

I would encourage you to schedule relaxation time every day for your family. Explain to your children that taking time out to practice these skills is helpful because your thoughts control how you feel and have an impact on how you act. So, with practice, you can change your thoughts, which will help improve your mood!

Heads Up: Entering 6th, 7th and 8th Grade Students

Please have a discussion with your son/daughter about a form that they will be receiving next week. We are making plans for 2020-21 for advisory choices (same gender or mixed gender groups), world language choices, Vocal/Band/Tech Theater for 7th and 8th graders, and sports choices for all 7th and 8th graders. A couple of key points for your discussion.

- We will offer the option of Tech Theater for 7th and 8th Graders. (New Offering)
- Entering 7th and 8th graders will have three world language options: French, Spanish, or Chinese. The world languages will be leveled by proficiency. Similar to what we did this year in the 5th and 6th grade language classes.
- Advisory selection—This is NOT about whose group your child will be in but just a preference for the mixture of the group. There will be single gender groups and mixed gender groups for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade.

Make it a great day—Go Country Day! Stay healthy and safe.

Hirsch

Thought of the week: “I want to send a message to parents, and in particular to working moms, who will inevitably take on most of this home labor along with working remotely: This is going to be messy and that is OK.” Jennie Weiner (University of Connecticut)

Theresa Hirschauer • Head of Middle School

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