March 16, 2020

Dear Cougar Families,

Today, Monday, March 16 is the last day of school for student across the state and in Lyle until Monday, April 27, at the earliest. For those parents who did not to send their children to school today, we understand and honor parents' choices when it comes to their child's health and wellbeing.

Absences today will be excused, but as always, please email support@lyleschools or call 509-365-2211 to let us know you are aware of your child's absence today, even if you don't get around to it right away. If your child is sick, and you are comfortable disclosing the symptoms, please let us know that too. We're finding that most kids are suffering from a stomach bug right now.

MEALS

We are firming up our plans to begin delivering meals to families, beginning Thursday, March 19. Buses will bring two days' worth of meals on Tuesdays and Thursdays for kids in our district.

- You'll receive an automated parent call tonight that will include survey questions. By participating in that survey, you can request meals to be delivered. Or you can instead fill out a confidential request form on our website, www.lyleschools.org, under Recent News. Typical breakfast and lunch deliveries might include cereal, milk, sandwiches, fruit and/or vegetables and prepackaged food items like string cheese and granola bars.

- The supplemental backpack meals that typically come home on Fridays will be delivered along with the Thursday breakfast and lunch delivery. (We want to thank our anonymous community donor who makes this possible year round, not just at this time!)

- We are so pleased the Lyle Lions will be partnering with us to help fill in the food gaps for families and elders in our community. We are also in touch with WAGAP regarding food bank services, and will share more information about accessing these services as soon as possible. Parents, please watch your email, answer calls from the school, and check the website or Facebook so you don't miss important information.

- In an effort to better understand community need, our school is working with the Lyle Community Council and other community helpers to address or refer needs resulting from closure and shortages related to the virus. We know some community members live in pretty isolated locations. If you or someone you know is in need, have them email (or email for them) support@lyleschools or call 509-365-2211 x121. Someone will get back to you within 24 hours. If there is an emergency or urgent need, call 911.

- As we begin this process, there may be a few snags along the way. Be patient with us, especially the delivery team on the buses, this is the first time we've attempted to do this. We expect
demand for meals to increase as word of this service gets out, and we will keep forms on the buses and on the website for people to sign up for meal deliveries.

MEDICATIONS AT SCHOOL

If you keep medications for your child here at the school, please feel free to come pick them up. Give Jen a call first to let her know when you want to come by. All medications will be kept locked up (as always) and will be here when your child comes back to school if you feel you do not need them as back up at home during this time.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

We’ll be sharing a variety of home learning resources on our Facebook page (look for us @lyleschools) on a continuing basis during this closure. We are meeting with our teachers and support staff over the next two days and will update parents on additional learning resources, if any, the team determines will be available.

Special Education Families, more information will be coming to parents of students who receive special education services in the near future.

CHILD CARE

We are currently planning to provide emergency childcare to students of individuals working in the medical field or are first responders during regular school day hours (8 a.m. – 3 p.m.). If you need this service, email support@lyleschools.org.

FROM THE HEART....

Parents, as we watch our students heading home today, it’s with the knowledge that we won’t see them again for at least five weeks. For school staff, it’s not easy to be disconnected from those young faces and minds. We’re in this line of work because we love children.

We anticipate, too, that some of our students, especially the younger ones, may also struggle with the separation. There are some free online resources for parents trying to help their children feel with feelings of loss or anxiety. We will post these to the website and Facebook. In the meantime, we’re attaching one from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

KEEP IN TOUCH!

We want to hear how your kids are doing throughout this, and how you’re doing. We care about our extended Cougar family. The administrative team, maintenance and food staff will be on site much of the time, and emails and phone messages will be answered frequently. If there’s something we could be doing to support you, or if you have ideas for ways to help, don’t hesitate to reach out!

Keep practicing those good hygiene tips – stay well away from other people as much as possible, wash your hands a LOT, cover coughs and sneezes and stay home as much as you possibly can.

With gratitude and warm wishes,

Lori Smith, Principal