



Preparing students for life beyond the classroom

Accredited by NCASES and Middle States Association

June 17, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As we near the last day of the 2019-2020 school year, we reflect in all that we have done together in the last 62 school days of virtual instruction. What a year it has been and definitely one that will go down in history. While we may not have been together in person for the past three months, we have stayed connected, listened and supported each other the whole way. As we have said before, when this all began in March, we did not know what virtual learning was going to look like and believed it would only be for a few weeks. Well, here we are at the end of June with students who continued their education and therapeutic services through virtual/remote learning. There were many challenges along the way; however, students, staff and parents stepped up to the plate, gave it all they had, and truly hit it out of the ball park. We are just so grateful to all of you for working so closely with The Phoenix Center during this unprecedented time and maintaining your child's education along the way. A special thank you also to the grandparents, siblings, and additional caretakers who supported your family and child's education. We could not have done this without the care and dedication from everyone.

We are in the process of gathering all student personal belongings that are in the building to be picked up. The graduate families have received an email with specific details to retrieve their child's belongings. As we gather the remainder of the personal items for all other students we will be setting specific dates and times, in July, for you to come to the school to pick them up. Please be sure to look for an email with more details shortly.

In addition, it is important that we collect the completed student work packets that were originally sent home in March as well as the daily Academic Log that we asked for you to sign and date each day your child engaged in lessons and learning. There are several ways in which we ask that you return these to your child's teacher. You can scan and email them to your child's teacher, you can take pictures and email them, you can drop the packet and log off at the school in July when you pick up your child's personal effects, or you can mail the packet and log back to The Phoenix Center at 16 Monsignor Owens Pl., Nutley, NJ 07110. This will allow for us to maintain records of student learning as well as lessons/materials that were provided during this virtual/remote learning time.

There is still uncertainty as to what the educational community will look like come September. Be assured that we are continuously monitoring the NJ Department of Education and the NJ Department of Health on guidelines. As we are planning and preparing the school environment to ensure everyone's care, welfare, safety and security, and we ask for your assistance in preparing your child for the return to the school building as well. The main focus now is on having the students become more familiar with seeing others wearing a mask as well as trying to wear a mask themselves. Depending on the needs of each unique student, you could begin by showing them a mask, letting them touch it, and briefly explaining it what it is for. Then you could move on to having you child see you or others in the family wearing a mask. Lastly, you would encourage your child to wear the mask themselves, starting off with very brief moments and gradually working toward a longer period of time. If possible, you may consider purchasing a mask that appeals to the student (i.e. preferred

character on it, sports team) to possibly increase their willingness to wear it. Any practice now may increase their comfort when we return to the school building. I have also attached a social story to read with your child, if applicable.

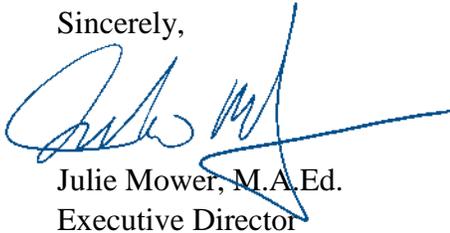
As we close out the school year, below are a couple important dates to remember:

- Thursday, June 18th, is our Virtual Graduation Ceremony
- Thursday, June 18th, is a 1:15 pm dismissal for students so teachers and therapists can begin closing out the year
- Friday, June 19th, is the Last Day of School and a 1:15 pm dismissal
- Monday, July 6th, is the first day of our Virtual ESY Program

This challenging time has given us all new perspectives on so many things in our lives. Many of us, both adult and child, truly appreciate the importance of a schedule and routine, the freedom to go to a store whenever we want to, and the value of spending time with our families without the hustle and bustle of overscheduling our lives. We have seen so many families spending more quality time together, outside playing games, going for bike rides and taking walks. While there have been so many difficulties during this time, I truly hope that we all take away the appreciation of the everyday things in our lives, the value of our loved ones, and gift of time with the people we care about the most. Once again, thank you all so much for working together with The Phoenix Center and know our virtual door is always open.

Take care and be well!

Sincerely,



Julie Mower, M.A.Ed.
Executive Director



Katie Passarotti, M.A.
Principal