Hello Free Horizon Fox Community,

Our first week of Remote Learning was largely successful with the vast majority of our students engaging in learning activities with their classes. Our staff are working hard to mitigate some of the challenges and make the experience more positive for everyone. We would like to thank our families and students for your flexibility and support. I am so proud of our entire community, grateful to our families for supporting our students with this new type of learning, and utterly humbled by our incredible teachers, specialists, and special service providers for rising to the challenge and finding ways to keep learning moving forward and connecting with students in whole new ways. It’s been inspiring to watch unfold. Our Instructional Leadership Team met yesterday to both share what went well from the teachers’ perspective as well as identify areas needing improvement or support. Together, we developed shared expectations for Remote Learning moving forward. We’ve already learned so much, and we are excited to share the enhancements already underway:

- **Our Primary teachers will be extending the same level of lessons and support for all of their students, including preschoolers. Mr. Seth Adcock, our amazing Tech Teacher, has been busy creating accounts and logins for our preschool students so that they, too, can access the fun and educational learning opportunities planned by the teachers as well as participate in things like Virtual Circle Time, video chats with teachers and peers, and more.**

- **All teachers will create classes in Google Classroom. This is where assignments, work plans, and general communications will be shared. We received a lot of feedback from guardians that the daily emails were challenging to keep track of, especially for families with more than one child, or with children attending more than one school. By moving everything within Google Classroom, guardians will be able to better support their students in finding key information and access learning resources.**

- **All teachers will provide opportunities for support appointments for students needing help. By scheduling appointments, both teachers and families can better manage time and assure that those who need help can get it.**

- **All teachers will create both required assignments and optional ones. Required assignments are designed to prevent loss of skills and propel learning. Required assignments are at the student’s instructional level, and students might need support or assistance in completing this work. Optional assignments are designed to be at a student’s independent level. These provide opportunities for students to pursue additional learning as well as provide structured activities for those whose guardians are working from home as well.**

- **All teachers will continue to include Practical Life assignments as part of every student’s daily work expectations. In Montessori, these activities are designed to help students learn independent living skills as well as support the family. Practical Life work also promotes the development of concentration, coordination, independence, and a sense of order, which directly support executive functioning skills.**

- **As shared by Jeffco Public Schools last week, we will shift to a different school week for students. Starting March 30th, students will have school via Remote Learning on Tuesdays through Fridays. All students are expected to complete work daily, with Mondays available to catch up if needed. Our schedule will continue as follows:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Morning Work Cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Specials, Lunch, Outdoor Play Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Afternoon Work Cycle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Finally, I wanted to share our plans moving forward.

During this unusual Spring Break, I also want to take a moment to check in, seek feedback, and share our plans moving forward.

First, I hope you and your family are healthy and finding ways to make the most of our current Stay-at-Home mandates here in Jefferson County and Colorado. I hope that those who have already been or will be directly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic have full and fast recovery: physical, emotional, financial, and all of the ways in which this virus continues to disrupt so many lives. I hope that every family in our community is finding all the resources needed to support you during this period of Social Distancing, quarantine, Stay-at-Home Orders. If you have need, Jeffco has compiled a listing of many resources at www.jeffcopublicschools.org/services/health_services/coronavirus ranging from technical support and Remote Learning to community services and mental health supports. If you are considered an essential employee and need back-up childcare, the Colorado Emergency Childcare Collaborative can be accessed at https://covidchildcarecolorado.com/. I also encourage every member of our community to follow the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control, the Colorado Department of Health and Environment, and Governor Polis in regards to staying home, Social Distancing, washing hands frequently, disinfecting surfaces, and doing your part to minimize the spread of COVID-19. It is currently believed that someone infected with the virus is contagious before they show symptoms, making these measures vital in minimizing spread.

Second, we are seeking feedback about how the first week of Remote Learning went for your student(s) and family. As you know, Remote Learning will continue at least through April 17th. Your input will help us in planning the coming weeks of instruction. With the extension of the Remote Learning period, we will have one more opportunity for families to check out a Chromebook if needed. This survey will capture your feedback as well as indicate if you have a need to check out a Chromebook. Thank you in advance – your feedback will help our instructional staff better plan our educational program in the coming weeks. You can access the survey between now and 9:00 am on Monday, March 30th at https://forms.gle/V6MubQvJqpx1sngB6.

Finally, I wanted to share our plans moving forward.

- **FULL STAFF CONTINUE TO RECEIVE FULL PAY AND BENEFITS:** Many families have expressed concern for our staff and asked specifically about whether Remote Learning impacts their compensation. Like Jeffco Public Schools, we at Free Horizon Montessori PK-8 are committed to honoring each employee’s Employment Agreement and continuing to provide full salary and benefits to all of our school’s employees. As an Option School of Innovation, we manage our own budget based on actual revenues and expenses. This is different from neighborhood schools, as it allows us to provide for our own staff and program specific to our Montessori model through utilization of both state Per Pupil funding and revenues such as that from our Before and After Care and Preschool programs. When challenges arise that could potentially result in a deficit, then the school is required to make adjustments in order to end the year balanced or net positive. As a school, we have intentionally built carryforward funds to invest in our programmatic and facility needs. These funds have been earmarked for curriculum, materials, furniture, and facilities enhancements. Our Board of Directors recognizes the importance of assuring our staff are taken care of through their pay and benefits, and during a special meeting held last night, approved a one-time use of carryforward funds to assure full payment of salary and benefits for our staff for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year.

- **BEFORE & AFTER CARE TUITION SUSPENDED:** Before and After Care tuition payments will be suspended starting April 1st until the students are back in the facility and on-site learning resumes. If the return happens mid-month, the amount due will be prorated for the number of days students are back in the building.

- **PRESCHOOL TUITION:** We recognize that many families are experiencing multiple impacts as a result of COVID-19 and that Remote Learning presents additional challenges unique to preschoolers. In order to do our part to provide some financial relief to families during this uncertain time, we are offering a 50% credit on the 2019-20 tuition payments due on April 1st and May 1st, which can be applied as long as Primary Remote Learning is being utilized by
In closing, I would like to thank each of you for doing your part to slow the spread and lessen the impact of COVID-19. We support the data-driven decisions our district, county, and state leaders have implemented in efforts to protect all of us, especially those within our community at higher risk of life-threatening complications, from the Coronavirus. All of us at Free Horizon Montessori PK-8 both look forward to when we can safely resume our regular school routines and also stand ready to continue with the Remote Learning Plan as long as we need to for the good of the wider community. We are all in this together, and we are grateful for our supportive and caring school community during this difficult time.

In Support and Gratitude,

Kresta Vuolo
Principal