

Kelly M. Lyman
Superintendent

April 8, 2020

Dear Mansfield Families,

I hope you and your family are managing well during this time. I have been heartened by the expressions of gratitude for our school staff shared by so many of you. Truly we are all in this together!

With our School at Home program up and running we continue to explore the best ways to keep our students learning during this time. Your feedback provided to staff who contact you is extremely helpful and we expect to continue to make adjustments over the course of this school closure period.

One resource that has been used in only a limited manner thus far is real-time video, or virtual, contact. We have rolled this out slowly for several reasons, including ensuring we employ the safest practices possible. We have researched several platforms and identified Zoom (education account), as the platform that allows for the most safeguards. Despite what you may have heard in the news, when used with the safeguards provided for education customers, Zoom offers a safe way to communicate. Please know that we have done the following to allow use of this virtual platform:

- Subscribed to the K-12 Education Account which has built in controls
- Prohibited any integration or data sharing with Facebook on our Zoom accounts
- Provided resources and support to all staff to ensure understanding and activation of the safeguard features
- Controlled who has the link to further control who can enter the Zoom conference
- Required the host to admit each individual to the conference so that no one can enter unexpectedly
- Mandated that staff require participants to use a password to enter a conference
- Limited the use of recording of conferences and required teachers seek permission and advanced training before recording a session
- Required notification of all participants if recording is used
- Disabled the ability of participants to record a conference

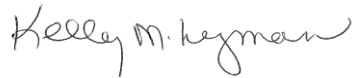
In addition:

- Students do not have Zoom accounts (access/permission is granted only by staff and the staff member is the only account holder)
- Zoom signed a legal agreement with the State of Connecticut's Commission for Educational Technology affirming full compliance with Connecticut's Student Data Privacy regulations for use by all Connecticut K-12 schools
- We are actively keeping current on any new safeguards or developments to ensure we are following best practices

Providing virtual instruction does serve an important role in ensuring continuous learning and we expect that use of this feature could increase over time should our school closures extend beyond April 20. We may use this virtual communication with a parent, a parent and a child, an individual child, or groups of children. We ask for your assistance with this by ensuring that all participants are in a quiet setting, that those who are not part of the conference are not in the room, and that confidentiality of what is observed is respected. Please check your child's weekly plan to see when and if virtual contact will be utilized. If you would rather your child not participate in virtual communications, please contact the building principal.

We expect to know more by the end of the week with regards to the length of this school closure and more communication will be forthcoming. In the meantime, we remind you to check out the Mansfield Public Schools webpage for School at Home and community resources by using the link found on our homepage or by going to <https://www.mansfieldct.gov/2012/Mansfield-Schools-COVID-19-Information-R>.

Please be safe,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kelly M. Lyman".

Kelly M. Lyman
Superintendent of Schools