

March 25th, 2020

# HCS School Social Work Newsletter - Our New "Normal"

## WHO AM I?

Hi Highland Students & Families,

Some of you know me, some of you do not—my name is Ms. Alexis and I am the School Social Worker at Highland Community School. This year at Highland I have implemented new attendance and behavior interventions, assisted with the special education evaluation process, conducted social skills groups for students, connected HCS families with resources, and conducted classroom lessons focusing on various social emotional skills.

However, as you can imagine, things have shifted a bit with schools being closed. Since I cannot see you all at Highland, I will be providing support via a weekly newsletter. Each week's newsletter will have a theme and will be packed with content. This week's theme is "Adjust to Our New Normal."

Hope you enjoy!  
Ms. Alexis, School Social Worker

## HOW TO MAKE A NEW HOME ROUTINE

For most of us, life feels very different right now. Schools are closed and most of us adults are working from home. One of the best ways to create a "new normal" for your family at home is to establish consistent routines. Here are some suggestions of how to make a weekday routine at home:

### Set a school day schedule.

Keep it as close to your child's normal school schedule as possible. Set up specific times for reading, math, other subjects, and breaks.

### Learn from the world around you.

Use the environment! Go on a "nature walk" and talk about what you see. Make time in your daily schedule for art (Ms. Amy!!), music (Mr. Barry!!), and movement.

### Schedule two or three times a day to get outside.

Be physically active! Go for a walk, ride your bike, or do exercises in your backyard. If you can't get outside, play Simon Says or Red Light, Green Light.

### Make time for quiet time.

Mindfulness activities can help relieve the stress of kids and adults. Try free options like [Stop, Breathe, & Think Kids](#) or [GoNoodle FLOW](#) videos

### Consider your needs as a parent.

Choose activities that your kids will be to do on their own. Be patient with them and yourself during this time.



Are you having difficulty meeting basic needs at this time?

Please reach out to me directly at [akramschuster@hcsmke.org](mailto:akramschuster@hcsmke.org) or at 414-376-0655 for local resources and assistance.

## Enjoy a Movie About Resilience

One of the benefits of being at home is that we can curl up on the couch to watch a movie. Here are some movie suggestions, each with a focus on building resilience:

-Mulan  
-The Emperor's New Groove.  
-Mr. Peabody & Sherman

-Turbo  
-ANTZ

If you can't access these titles, pick your favorite movie and try answering these questions with your family instead:

MOVIE DAY MENU			
Write your answers on a sheet of paper. Color the box when you finish.			
What was the name of the first movie you ever watched?	In the movie you just watched, who was the main character?	What was the problem the character faced?	How was the problem solved?
Write the names of 4 movies that made you laugh.	Make a list of all the movies about Superheroes you have seen.	What happened at the beginning, middle, and end of the movie?	Write the names of 3 movies that take place in another country.
How many letters are in the title of the last movie you saw?	Write 5 adjectives that describe snacks at a movie theater.	Write the names of 3 movies that were sad.	Make a list of the things you can eat at a movie theater.
Write the names of your favorite movie characters in ABC order.	How long do you think most movies last?	Write the names of 5 movies about animals.	What was the scariest movie you have seen?

## Book Recommendations: Coping with Change

We are all facing a great deal of change and uncertainty right now, which can be difficult, but can also open each of us up to new experiences and opportunities. Here are some links to great read-alouds about adaptability and coping with change:

### [The Dot](#)

-How does Vashti change over the week?  
-How do you think Vashti is feeling at the end of the story? How can you tell?

### [The Most Magnificent Thing](#)

-Can you think of a time you had an idea that didn't work? How did the dog help her to not give up?

## Practice Self-Care

During this time, it is important that you engage in self-care activities for yourself and with your children. Here are some examples of fun ways we can nurture our kids (and ourselves!) mentally and physically:

**Physical self-care:** Take a walk, have a dance party, make healthy snacks, do a fun workout

**Mental self-care:** Read a book, Color/Draw your feelings, Do yoga or meditation, write in a journal

## Featured Family Activity: Homemade Playdough



### Things You Need:

- Flour - 1 cup  
- Salt - 1/3 cup  
- Oil - 1 tbsp  
- Water - 1/2 cup + 1 tbsp  
- Food coloring

1. Put flour and 1/3 cup of salt into a bowl.
2. Add 1/2 cup + 1 tbsp of water to the bowl.
3. Next, add 1 tbsp of oil and mix it all together
4. When the batter is soft and not sticky, separate the dough into different amounts to make multiple colors.
5. Add 5 to 10 drops of food color to each piece of dough. Mix together.
6. Enjoy! Make letters, numbers, or create yourself in dough form!