

September 16, 2020

Dear CSI Families,

The transition to remote learning has presented challenges for parents, students, and teachers alike. The CSI Parent Association is appreciative of all the support that you have given to teachers in the early days of this new phase of virtual learning. As a parent with three children all engaging in virtual instruction at the same time, I personally understand the challenges of suddenly having our homes converted into public classrooms. Literally, every student, teacher, and parent participating in a live lesson is now in our homes.

The CSI Parent Association would like to share some useful tips with you to better help your children and all family members adjust to this change, until such time as schools can safely bring all students back into the building.

1. We should help our children log on, but we also need to know when to step away. Just as in the regular classroom, our children should be allowed to develop a sense of independence and self-reliance.
2. Remember that it is ok for our children to struggle. We all have a hard time seeing our children face challenges, so we often try to rescue them and maybe even give them the answer. Teachers do not want us to do that. Teachers need to hear what our children think, understand, or do not understand. Mistakes are good because children and teachers both learn from them.
3. We need to remember that our children are one of many children in the virtual classroom, and each child needs to have the attention of the teacher. There will be times when the teacher is focusing on another child and may not be able to get to our child right away. The CSI virtual learning schedule has a built-in time for office hours/tutoring if our children need additional small-group attention.
4. We need to remember to reduce distractions from background noise. Even if our children are wearing headphones, the microphone is still on and broadcasting background noise and conversations to the entire class. All conversations, but particularly those that could be considered private or “adult” in nature should be held away from our children’s workspace.
5. In the spring, Zoom lessons were less structured and designed to reduce academic regression. Now, teachers are presenting new content. New content is always more challenging for children and their focus and concentration is essential. To reduce distractions for our children, we need to keep other siblings away from the workspace while live lessons are being conducted.
6. Much of what we may hear or see on Zoom could be considered “confidential” or “private.” Just like when we are volunteering or spending time in our children’s classrooms, we need to respect the privacy of the other students and teachers.

7. Remember that the background is always being broadcast to other students and families. It is recommended that children have their back to a wall during live lessons so that family members walking past the camera will not be recorded. If this is not possible, all family members must be conscious of a live camera on their every movement. We have all heard of stories from other schools of family members forgetting that a child was on a live Zoom lesson and walking past the camera inappropriately dressed.
8. The temptation may be there to jump into a lesson and add our own thoughts or perspectives. There may be times when teachers invite us to share during a lesson; otherwise, we need to remember that there is an established curriculum that teachers and students must follow.
9. Live lessons are not the time for us to conference with our children's teachers or discuss concerns. CSI has built in time at the beginning and end of the day for parents to have phone conferences with teachers.
10. We need to remember that every student, parent, and teacher who is a part of a live lesson is in our home.
11. Lastly, if we find that our children are having a difficult time adjusting to remote instruction, the CSI social workers are available to give us advice or talk with our children.

Overall, the parents, teachers, and administrators of CSI have had a successful launch to virtual instruction, and it will only get better as we all become more confident with the technology and learn how to navigate the challenges of this new learning mode.

The CSI Parent Association would like to thank you for the support and patience that you have shown our teachers and administrators who are also embarking on challenges never before experienced in education.

Sincerely yours,

Nichelle

Nichelle Gray,
CSI Parent Association Chair and
Member of the CSI Board of Trustees

