



**BROOKLYN
FRIENDS
SCHOOL**

April 3, 2020

Dear Lower School Families:

We hope that your child has engaged positively with the morning messages, lessons, and activities your classroom teachers, math specialists, and specialty teachers have shared with you this week. The teachers were so happy to spend time with the children on Zoom. The notes, photos, and videos you have shared with us of your child learning from home, whether it be going deeper with a lesson that we've sent or simply sharing one of your child's creations, has warmed our hearts and made our work joyous.

Thank you for all the ways that you have supported your child and our colleague-body this week. Thank you for your patience and understanding as we continue to work through various challenges.

Next week we will continue with class Zoom meetings. It is a shorter week. BFS is closed on Thursday, April 9 and Friday, April 10 for Passover and Good Friday. Your teachers will send the plans for Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday on Monday morning, April 6 at 8:30 a.m. As a reminder, the specialist activities are posted on Monday and Wednesday. This is intended to cover the entire week. Children should select one-to-two per day. Have your child keep track of their completed specialist activities on the [Specialist Bingo Board](#).

Please read the letter below from Dr. Rachel Maldonado, Lower School Psychologist. Rachel's letter provides us with helpful resources to support adults and children. There is also a parent survey in her letter that we hope you will complete so that we can continue to learn how we can best support your family.

In friendship,

Jacquelyn Condie, Head of Lower School
Katie Banks, Assistant Head of Lower School for Academics

Dear Lower School Families:

As we wind down our first full week of virtual BFS, I want to share that I have been thinking about you and wondering how you all are doing. In many ways, a commonality has connected all of us for several weeks now - being home, managing anxiety, supporting family, thinking about the health of ourselves and loved ones; and also juggling work, parenting, virtual school, handwashing and groceries. Yet, I also feel it is important to acknowledge that we are all dealing with different circumstances and realities, having different reactions, and need different things. This both/and, of how we are all holding the same and different things right now, has been on my mind a lot lately.

A letter from our mental health colleagues across all divisions was included in our recent BFS E-news. To access this letter, please go to the [BFS remote learning website](#) and scroll down to Virtual BFS: Support From Our Counselors and Psychologists. Our BFS mental health team collaborated to create [this document with resources that address coping and parenting needs](#). There are many wonderful resources within that document and also on our BFS Creative Ideas for Home website. A few are highlighted here:

[This article discusses](#) how many of the emotions we have been feeling are likely grief and offers ways to cope. [Here is a short article with some great coping tips](#).

[These grounding techniques](#) are appropriate for all ages. They work especially well when combined with [deep belly](#) breaths to activate your body's natural relaxation response. When we practice these techniques, our brains and bodies have to step away from the anxiety, and it is a quick way to come back into the moment.

And as a reminder, while it will look different for each of us and may take some creativity, it is so important for parents to take breaks and engage in self care. [This short article](#) has great tips, which include making time for yourself, making healthy choices, keeping expectations realistic ("perfectionism and the coronavirus don't mix"), setting boundaries, and reconnecting with things you enjoy.

Jackie, Katie and I have been thinking a lot about ways to support you and your family's emotional and parenting needs. Please complete [this survey](#) and let us know what you feel could be helpful to you.

As a reminder, if you would like to schedule a time to check in with me directly, please fill out [this form](#). I wish you all health, safety, self-compassion, patience, and strength during this unprecedented time.

All my best,

Rachel Maldonado
Lower School Psychologist