

ALHAMBRA

UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



BRIGHTWOOD SCHOOL, 1701 Brightwood Street, Monterey Park, CA 91754
Natalie Tee Gaither, Principal

PHONE: (626) 570-6200
FAX: (626) 308-2407

August 2, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians of Brightwood School Students,

Welcome to the families of our kindergartners and other new students, and welcome *back* to the families of our returning students! The start of the 2020-21 school year is right around the corner and we are looking forward to welcoming everyone back in just 10 days, on Wednesday, August 12th. As I'm sure you already know, all students in the Alhambra Unified School District will be starting the school year on 100% Distance Learning (DL), so this year's opening of school will be much different than previous years, but I know it will still be an exciting and successful year for all of us.

Usually we post student homeroom assignments in front of the office on the day before school starts and our amazing PTA hosts an ice cream social so we can enjoy each other's company on the last day of summer break. Obviously, that will not be possible this year. **Instead, your child's teacher will be reaching out directly to your family to provide you with information about his/her DL program and will invite you to attend an online Parent Orientation meeting (through Zoom) during the week of August 10th. This will ensure your child knows how to access his/her class' online platform and will be ready to begin school on August 12th at 8:00am.**

If you have not heard from your child's teacher by August 11th, there might be an issue with the contact information we have on file. Please call the school office at **626-570-6200** or email the office manager at torres_jane@ausd.us, and we will help you to connect with your child's teacher/online class.

I know everyone is a bit anxious and apprehensive about the unusual school year ahead of us. But I hope you and your child are also excited to see what amazing and innovative things await us this year. To prepare you for our 2020-21 DL model, I would like to provide you with a few important pieces of information. *(You will also receive additional information directly from your child's teacher.)*

For those of you who were at Brightwood last year and participated in our pandemic/emergency DL model last spring, please be aware that this year's DL model will be VERY different. It will be much more rigorous and structured, and will be more like a "traditional" school day, including daily interaction and instruction for your child. Please be patient with us as we go through this DL adventure together. We will likely encounter some glitches along the way, but I am also confident they will get smoothed out and that our students will be able to grow and learn a lot during this school year.

Your child's teacher will be sharing his/her daily/weekly schedule with you and your child. Students will be expected to login to their DL classroom DAILY by 8:00am. School attendance has a direct correlation with a child's academic success, including while we are on a DL model. We will be closely monitoring students' absences and tardies, and will notify you if your child's attendance becomes a concern. Please notify your child's teacher or the school office if your child will be absent from his/her DL class.

When it is safe to do so, our district will move to Hybrid Learning (HL) model and students' daily schedules will adjusted, but we will send home information regarding the HL model when the time comes. In the meantime, if you have not yet responded to the district's survey about HL, please do so (or call the office to provide your responses) as this will help us when the time to transition comes.

Parents should be aware that it may be necessary to change some students' class placements in the first few weeks of school. Even though we are in a DL model, we "level" our classes each year and still need to adhere to district and state regulations, including maximum class sizes. If our classes get too large, we may need to reorganize classes and/or possibly overflow students to other schools in our district. *(Overflowed students will be determined based on latest enrollment date.)* You will be notified if your child is affected by any of these changes. Student homeroom placement is determined based on staff

members' professional judgment in order to ensure an equitable balance in each classroom. Parent requests to change to a preferred teacher/classroom are NOT granted. We appreciate your understanding in this matter.

Our school office is open Mondays through Fridays from 7:30am to 4:00pm for **ESSENTIAL BUSINESS** and by **APPOINTMENT**. As much as possible, we encourage families to try to conduct school business by phone or email. Due to health and safety concerns, there will be times that the office staff may be working from home, but the phones will still be answered and/or voicemails will be returned during regular office hours. Even when staff members are working from home, if you have something that needs to be handled in person, arrangements will be made to ensure that someone is on site to help you.

Please be aware that all district sites are following strict health and safety protocols, in accordance with the Los Angeles Department of Public Health's guidelines. This includes requiring the wearing of face coverings on campus and temperature checks upon entry. Visitors who do not comply with the required protocol will be denied entry to the office, but we will still assist you by phone or through other methods. Parents who would like to continue volunteering will still need to go through the volunteer approval/renewal process to help in a classroom (even though the class is being held virtually). Please contact our school community coordinators to process your volunteer application/renewal.

Despite our students being on DL, our wonderful PTA still plans to be a big support to our students and families in new and creative ways. **Joining PTA is a great way to show your support to Brightwood School.** I strongly encourage you to join PTA during their upcoming annual membership drive. Please be on the lookout for PTA information, which will be sent through email and posted on the school and PTA websites (www.BrightwoodElementary.org and www.BrightwoodSchool.weebly.com).

We also encourage you to visit the school website often and to subscribe to the calendar. Although many of our events/activities were calendared last spring, they are all now subject to rescheduling. If you subscribe to the calendar, you should automatically receive updates when any dates are changed. Our school and district also utilize *Blackboard Connect*, a communication system that enables us to send out mass phone and/or e-mail messages with important information to all parents. In order for the system to be effective, **it is vital that parents update the on-line information through the Parent Portal** each year. We encourage all parents to include a current email address when you update your child's information, as more information and reminders are sent through email than through voicemails. (Parents who do not have Internet access at home may make an appointment with the office to access the Parent Portal using one of the school's computers.) This year, the school and district will also implement usage of the *Remind 101* app to send information and announcements through text messages. Contact information is linked to the Parent Portal and all parents have automatically been enrolled into our school's *Remind 101* roster. Teachers will also be sharing information for their own class communication process (using *Remind 101* or a similar app like *Class Dojo*).

For more information and updates about our school or district, please visit the Alhambra Unified School District's website (www.ausd.us), Brightwood School's website (www.BrightwoodElementary.org), and/or our PTA's website (www.BrightwoodSchool.weebly.com). Our PTA also posts a lot of important school information and reminders on their Facebook page.

All members of the Brightwood School staff are looking forward to working with you to make this a successful (though very unique) school year. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the school office (626-570-6200) or email our office manager, Mrs. Jane Torres (torres_jane@ausd.us).

Sincerely,

Natalie Gaither

Natalie Gaither
Principal

IMPORTANT Message for 7th Grade Parents Only: Please remember that all incoming 7th grade students are required to submit proof of their Tdap vaccination before the school year starts. The California Department of Education has NOT waived any vaccination requirements, even while we are in a Distance Learning model. We still have some Brightwood families who have not submitted their documentation. Please email your proof to torres_jane@ausd.us. Mrs. Torres will follow-up with you if she needs you to turn in the original copy. If we do not receive proof of your child's Tdap vaccination by August 11th at noon, your child's homeroom teacher will be notified that your child may not participate in his/her DL class the following day.