

Please read through this with your child.

ANNUAL PARENT INFORMATION LETTER



(The 2020-2021 “APIL” FOR Phase One - Remote Learning)

WELCOME!

Our Renaissance community has endured much during the unprecedented global pandemic still affecting our nation and our city, and we are dedicated to providing your families with one thing you can count on: that Renaissance students will continue to experience a rich, project-based academic curriculum, a full spectrum of arts classes, and the opportunity to grow into confident global citizens through experiences that take them outside the classroom and into the digital world at large, until it is safe to explore the world outside our computers again.

Below please find a list of announcements, links and attachments that need your immediate attention. Following that, we have prepared a full narrative about your child’s education experience at Renaissance that we encourage you to read and share with your child. We look forward to welcoming your children to school tomorrow!

- **First Day of Remote Learning - Wednesday, September 16, 8:20 AM for all students**
- **Grab and Go Meals available for pick-up** - You will be issued an ID card for your family if you have requested meals by answering the recent survey. Please call or email Dawn LeDu at (718) 440-9904, dawnledu@rencharter.org, if you have not received your card, or need to sign up. Meals for 2 days are distributed Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays between 2:00 and 4:30 PM.
- **Pick up of Classroom Materials** - More materials may be needed for your child’s learning, and you will be contacted by the email with a schedule for pick-up, if necessary.
- **Pick up of Chromebooks** - If you requested a chromebook, you will be able to pick it up at the time you are scheduled to pick up classroom materials or by appointment with Peggy Heeney, peggyheeney@rencharter.org.
- **Chromebook Use Contract** - All parents of a student using a school-issued chromebook must submit the [Student Use Contract Form](#), or fill out the attached copy in Spanish.
- You may also use the attached document: please sign and send it by email to Dawn Cahill, dawncahill@rencharter.org.
- **Student Remote Learning Expectations** - All students and parents must review, and parents must submit the [Remote Learning Expectations Form](#), or sign and submit the paper form attached to this email. If you are using the attached document, please sign and send it by email to Dawn Cahill, dawncahill@rencharter.org.
- **Student Learning Schedules** - will be posted in your Google Classroom, emailed to each student, to their rencharter email address, and posted on our [website](#) on the Parents page. Students will receive the Orientation Day log-ins today. Please contact Michelle Cardona, michellectardona@rencharter.org if your child needs help with their rencharter account.
- **Remote Attendance Policy** - The Remote Learning Attendance Policy is posted on our [website](#) in English & Spanish, and attached to this email.
- **Supply Lists for at-home learning** - are posted on our [website](#) on the Parents page.
- **Make sure your email address is updated in our system!** Please make sure you are receiving School-Messenger emails and text-messages. Check your spam folder to make sure, and please make sure your email is not blocking us.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS:

- Attendance, updating your emergency contact information, home address, phone number or email address: Email michellectordona@rencharter.org or peggyheeney@rencharter.org.
- Requesting a chromebook: peggyheeney@rencharter.org.
- Take a TRCS survey that you cannot find: dawncahill@rencharter.org.
- Look up a staff member's email address: [Staff Directory](#)

Please note: if you have already submitted the Remote Learning Expectations Contract and the Chromebook Use Policy, there is no need to submit them again.

IMPORTANT FAMILY INFORMATION:

The following information is also available on our website: <http://renaissancecharter.org/about>: The School's Charter, Annual School Report Card, School Attendance Policy, Charter School Annual Report and our charter documents. All families have access to copies of the [Student Support and Discipline Policy](#) and [Elementary and Middle School Family Handbook](#); as well as the [High School Handbook](#); all available on our website at <http://renaissancecharter.org/parents.html/studentsupport.html>. The Policy for Filing Complaints and Grievances can be found in the Family Handbook.

ABOUT LIFE AT RENAISSANCE

PART 1: *The School Day - Phase One: Fully Remote*

First Day of School - We have decided to open fully remote on September 16, 2020. It is a full day for all students. The arrival times and dismissal times for each grade are as follows –

Arrival and Dismissal Times – 2020-2021 School Year

Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade classes will begin at 8:20 and will end at 3:10 pm, or in some cases 4:00 pm for 7th-12th graders. Individualized schedules will be provided to accommodate targeted instructional plans that may utilize 1st period (7:29-8:15 AM) and 10th period (3:13-4:01 PM) for various 7th-12th grade electives, AP, Skills or Gym classes, or for short-term tutoring as needed.

<i>Grades</i>	<i>Arrival Time</i>	<i>Dismissal Time</i>
PreK-12	8:20 a.m.	3:10 p.m.
K-12 Mondays only:	8:20 a.m.	1:31 p.m.

Monday Early Dismissal for Staff Professional Development

Every Monday all Kindergarten-12th grade students will be dismissed at 1:31 PM, to accommodate teacher professional development. Pre-Kindergarten students will be dismissed at the regular time (3:10 PM.) Remote after-school programs will be available starting at the early dismissal time. See below for more information on After-School Programming.

Please note that 1st and 10th period programming may change throughout the year based on the academic needs of each individual student. If your child is scheduled for 1st or 10th period, it is a mandatory part of his or her school day. Your 7th-12th grade child may be dismissed at 3:10 on some days, and at 4:00 on others. You will be notified of any changes in a timely manner.

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Remote Learning Expectations

Please go over the attached **student expectations document** with your child, and return the signed document for each student, by submitting the google form. As we begin the year entirely remotely, we will be building on the best-practices learned from last spring's remote learning program, and have made changes to best accommodate all learners. Your child will receive a schedule that will mimic the school day as it would happen inside the building, with more live teaching, and fewer lessons posted in Google Classroom. Schoolwork will happen with a teacher present, and while some videoed lessons may be archived for students to reference later, the goal is to provide a school-day that is full, engaging and enriching from 8:20 to 3:10.

We will begin the day at 8:20 with twenty-five minutes of advisory to establish a personalized social-emotional support system. It is very important that your child be present for this first essential period of the day. Attendance will be taken here, and in every class following.

School Meals

School meals are cooked onsite in our own kitchen, under the supervision of Chef Ryan. While the school is operating remotely, meals can be picked up by the family. If you haven't responded to the TRCS 2020-2021 Family Food Survey sent previously, and you would like to pick up meals for your Renaissance students, please contact Dawn LeDu, Food Service Coordinator, at dawnledu@rencharter.org, or call (718) 440-9904. Espanol: Pierina Arias, pierinaarias@rencharter.org.

We are pleased to inform you that Renaissance has been approved to implement a Community Eligibility Meal Program for the current school year, which means that ALL enrolled students are eligible to receive a healthy breakfast and lunch at **no charge** to your household. Your child(ren) will be able to participate in these meal programs without having to pay a fee or submit an application. Please see the letter reprinted on our website at <http://www.renaissancecharter.org/parents.html/foodservice>, available in English and Spanish.

PK-4 After-School Center: Our long-time after-school partners, [82nd Street Academics, Inc.](#), will be running the early-childhood and upper elementary after-school program remotely until we are back in the building. The program will begin on **September 16** and requires prior registration. The program will operate on Monday from 1:45 PM, and on Tuesday-Friday from 3:10 PM, until 6:00. Please visit [82nd Street Academics](#) or contact **Shamrin Hasan at Shamrin.Hasan@82ndst.com**, or call 718-457-0429.

Upper Elementary: Students in grades 5-10 are eligible for free after-school programming provided by 82nd Street Academics, supported by The After-School Corporation, Councilman Daniel Dromm's Discretionary funding CASA arts funding, and the NYC SONYC program. The program features homework help and enrichment activities taught by a group of carefully selected 82SA staffers, and outside teaching artists and specialists. This program will also begin on **September 16th**. Please access this [Interest form](#) for 5th-10th grade and contact Catherine Aponte at catherine.aponte@82ndst.com for information.

PART 2: "Developing Leaders for the Renaissance of New York"

TRCS Mission Statement

"The Renaissance Charter School is based on the conviction that a change in the destiny of a single individual can lead to a change in the destiny of a community, nation, and ultimately humankind. Its mission as a PreK-12 school is to foster educated, responsible, humanistic young leaders who will

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through their own personal growth spark a renaissance in New York. Its graduates will be global citizens with an abiding respect for peace, human rights, the environment, and sustainable development”.

Towards accomplishing this goal TRCS has built a culture of community, cooperation, and collaboration. Its core belief is that a dynamic learning environment which prizes friendship and deep respect will open both hearts and minds of students. In this type of environment students will meet all standards as a matter of course.

In a small, village-like atmosphere, teachers team-teach, classes are arranged in clusters, and parents play a central role. Students often stay with the same dedicated teachers for two years, providing stability and enabling each student to feel cared for and well-known. The school operates under a collaborative governance model in which all constituencies have a voice. TRCS reflects the spectrum of the different ethnic backgrounds, talents, and abilities that exist in New York City.

The study of New York is the central curricular theme of TRCS. Traditional subjects such as math, science, language arts and social studies are related to the study of the geography, history, economics, culture, and the people of New York. Rooted in their community, as they advance, students engage in community involvement activities and work on individual and small group projects to prepare them for the work of the 21st century. Since the arts are so central to New York, students take classes in dance, music, fine arts and drama.

The spirit of leadership can best be transmitted through example. TRCS staff members model collaborative leadership which is characterized by compassion and responsible dialogue. Through this process wise decision-making emerges. TRCS is committed to graduating individuals who are competent, powerful thinkers, engaged citizens, and life-long learners who will create the renaissance of New York.

Advisory Program

All students in grades 5-11 will have an advisory period, and all 12th and PK-5th students have a structured morning meeting time to support community and relationship building, social-emotional skill-building, academic advising, study skill development and community service. These areas connect to our school’s mission of humanistic global citizenship and leadership.

Advisory will meet every morning from 8:20-8:45 AM. It is a small group of students who will work closely with one faculty member for the entire year. Participation in advisory is mandatory.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

Please see the attached **Student Behavior Expectations for Remote Learning**. Please review this with your child and sign the google survey form in : [English](#) or [Spanish](#).

A successful education includes the acquisition of skills and knowledge and the development of positive attitudes and effective behaviors. We strive to nurture concerned global citizens, by encouraging caring, respect, and responsibility. These benchmarks for leadership and citizenship are recognized in every interaction; by the way we acknowledge others, listen and speak to each other, by putting others’ interests before our own, and by responding to those in need. We stand up for others, work to resolve conflict, and fight injustice. We take pride in our community, our diversity, and appreciate and support the hard work of community members in providing a safe, clean, well-cared for environment.

Successful people recognize that achievement is their responsibility and they act on this belief. They are prepared to engage in meaningful participation, equipped with assignments, supplies, knowledge, and open-minds. Successful people show up every day, on time, and abide by community standards,

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recognizing that rules help communities function for the benefit of all. They take responsibility for missteps and are prepared to learn from their mistakes. We strive to recognize the efforts of our young people, to encourage their growth, and to support them in working through the sometimes difficult process of growing up.

We are continuing a behavior development framework intended to encourage positive comportment in all of our students. Referred to as Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), the framework consists of explicit instruction for behavior expectations and consequences, the development of social emotional skill sets, and data driven decision-making for missteps in behavior. Please, be ready to encourage your child to follow our expectations and to celebrate her or his successes!

Parent Support

Renaissance believes that parents are full partners in the education of their children, and as such we welcome parent input and collaboration in your child's academic success and living the mission and vision of our school. Parents are encouraged to become active members in the school Parent Association (PA), and are invited to serve on the Collaborative School Governance Committee (CSG), as the parent-representative on the school's governing Board of Trustees, and we rely on parents to bring their talents and expertise to support our school.

In return, we provide parent workshops on a variety of subjects, in partnership with the PA and other organizations. For example, we have held workshops on Remote Learning, Social-Emotional Wellness during the pandemic, organizing work-spaces at home, talking to your teen, fixing kid-friendly nutritious meals and snacks, and others. Parent Coordinators, Pierina Arias at pierinaarias@rencharter.org and Peggy Heeney at peggyheeney@rencharter.org are here to help you.

Bullying Prevention Policy

The Renaissance Charter School's commitment to creating humanistic leaders of its students means that bullying is not tolerated within our walls, or online in the digital classroom or on social media. We define bullying as the repeated exposure, over time, to intentional, negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, in which the subject of the treatment has difficulty defending him or herself. Our community's rules about bullying are (1) We will not bully others; (2) We will try to help others who are being bullied; (3) We will include others who are being left out; and (4) We will tell an adult at school and at home if we witness bullying.

Attendance and Lateness

Attendance will be taken every morning during Remote Learning, PK-12, so make sure your child attends morning meeting or advisory promptly at 8:20. In addition, all 5th-12th graders will have their attendance taken at each period class.

We will also be sending a morning google form "check-in", to give your child a chance to provide feedback. All of these methods will be used to ensure student participation throughout the school day.

TRCS strives for student excellence at all levels. We consider academic achievement, character development and social responsibility integral facets of success. Maintaining excellent attendance and being on time for school are critical elements in demonstrating and/or supporting these. Students should only be absent for illness, family emergencies (such as a death in the family) or for other valid reasons that prohibit the student coming to school. These are considered excused absences. We do not consider well-care doctor or dental visits to be valid reasons for absence. These visits should be scheduled during the days and times when school is not in session whenever possible. **Additionally, family vacations should not be scheduled during times when school is in session, including Rensizzle Week.**

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All absences must be documented by a parent phone call/email/note. Parents are also encouraged to contact the main office when their child will be absent. In many cases, Renaissance staff may call your home to verify your child's absence. Students who have excessive absences (attendance below 95%) are considered to be at-risk for attendance which is one component of class grades and promotion.

You will be contacted by our SchoolMessenger® service each time your child is marked late or absent. In the event your child is absent, it is your (and your child's) responsibility to get the make-up work. We encourage you to establish contact with other students and families in your child's class.

Being late to school is unacceptable in most circumstances, especially so during remote learning. While we understand that problems with technology may contribute to lateness, these certainly should be the exceptions. Please see the attached **Remote Learning Attendance Policy**.

Chronic, unexcused lateness and absences are considered by us to be educational neglect. As mandated reporters we are obligated to notify the Administration for Children's Services in case of educational neglect. It is a parent's responsibility to work with school staff to help your child maintain excellent attendance.

If you anticipate a problem with your child's attendance, please contact Michelle Cardona at (929) 314-4903 or michellecardona@rencharter.org immediately so we can work with you and your child before this becomes a serious issue. We are here to help you!

PART 3: Student, Parent, Teacher, Staff Collaboration; How We Communicate

Renaissance prides itself on an active and involved parent body. There are opportunities to make real contributions to the community through involvement in the PA, attending Parent-Teacher Conferences, participating in the CSG, attending public Board of Trustee meetings, or just getting involved in one of the many volunteer opportunities. There are many ways to stay connected and involved in your child's education. If you would like to meet with any staff member, it is imperative that you make an appointment by email.

School-Wide Communication

Communication starts at the most basic level; between students and teachers. Remember to contact your child's teacher as the first step to getting information or resolving an issue relating to your child's education. Our carefully developed communication protocol ensures that you are getting the most timely and accurate information: 1) Talk to your child's teacher; 2) if the issue is not resolved, talk to the cluster leader; 3) if the issue is not resolved, talk to one of the Directors of Teaching and Learning; 4) if the issue is not resolved, talk to the Principal; 5) and finally, an issue can be brought before our Board of Trustees. Contact information can be found on our website at <http://www.renaissancecharter.org/about/contact/directory>. Please make sure you can receive school emails from SchoolMessenger (admin@renaissancecharter.org).

****Important--Please Note**** Do NOT reply to a SchoolMessenger email or text (from admin@renaissancecharter.org). The system is not set up to get a message to school personnel in a timely manner.

Our website (www.renaissancecharter.org) is packed with information for parents and friends of Renaissance. Please take some time to explore the site, especially the information on the PTA, Parents and Parents/Notices and Events pages, and check back frequently for updates. We will be introducing a newly refurbished website that includes information about our second school, later in the fall.

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Parent Information and Notification

According to state and federal law, TRCS is required to annually notify parents and guardians as to their rights of access to their child's educational records. To read The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Policy please go to our website at:

<http://www.renaissancecharter.org/parents.html/studentsupport.html>. FERPA affords parents and students over 18 years of age certain rights with respect to the student's education records. Please note that school staff can never divulge information about a student's record, including discipline records, to the family of another student.

TRCS will be participating with the US Department of Education and **National Student Clearinghouse**, which provides information on high school graduates' college performance, in order for us to better understand how to tailor our program to prepare our students for college. If you are concerned about privacy, please see http://www.studentclearinghouse.org/about/privacy_commitment.php to view the Clearinghouse's Privacy Commitment. In order for TRCS to collect data and information needed for the study, we will be sharing certain "directory information" which may include names, addresses, grade levels, and dates of birth of students, among other information. To see what constitutes "directory information" please go to our website at:

<http://www.renaissancecharter.org/parents.html/studentsupport.html> and click on the link for the FERPA policy. For TRCS to do this, federal law regarding student privacy requires us to provide you with notice and an opportunity for you to instruct TRCS not to release this information. You may opt-out of the program by completing the form on page 2 of your Student Emergency Contact form.

For those students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP), you are also entitled to review this document and any supporting reports and documents. Upon written request to the attention of Michelle Cardoña, Student Records Coordinator, you may obtain copies of your child's cumulative record. Written requests for special education records should be directed to Liz Perez, Special Education Coordinator.

Accordingly, TRCS is notifying you that all of your child's educational records are maintained in a highly confidential manner in the main office. All instructional support evaluations, IEPs, and other records pertaining to the provision of special education services are maintained in a separate, secure file housed in the Instructional Support office. Federal law requires that TRCS also annually notify you as to your right of access to information concerning the certification and qualification of your child's teacher(s) and paraprofessional(s).