

THE CHRONICLE

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Living under a new normal

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

In the unprecedented times we find ourselves in during the outbreak of COVID-19 (coronavirus), our community and organizations have taken precautions to keep us all safe and, hopefully, free of this illness. In response to federal, state and local regulations, we are encouraged to go about our daily activities under a "new normal." Listed below are some of the areas that are new to us.

Education

As we may all be aware, the WSFCS system has cancelled school for at least two weeks. This means school is not in session. Online instruction is expected to begin on Thursday, March 19. Parents are encouraged to access Powerschool to keep abreast of assignments and pressing announcements.

In addition, parents whose children do not have online access or devices can contact Spectrum. Spectrum will make its services available for free for 60 days to household with K-12 and/or college students who don't already have Internet service through the company. To enroll in the program, call 1-844-488-8395. Installation fees will be waived for new student households.

A CNN report mentioned some of the ways that "regular parents" can homeschool their kids. Some of the key points were:

*Recognize homeschool is not school.

The most important caveat about temporary homeschooling is that it simply isn't school. Kids accustomed to the school environment won't be as focused. Lessons won't be as professional as the ones they're used to getting. And since local governments are encouraging everyone to minimize interactions with others, socialization will be tough. Let kids be a part of the decision-making.

*Many schools and school districts have set up online learning platforms or sent kids home with packets of schoolwork to complete. These assignments are non-negotiable. Beyond these require-

ments, however, parents can give their children a say in what else they'll learn.

*Make a schedule.

Once you and your children have identified the subjects they will study, make a schedule and display it prominently so everyone in the family knows what's coming and when it's over. Most kids work off a schedule in their classrooms, so recreating something similar at home can ease the transition to a different learning environment for the foreseeable future.

*Build in recess.

All traditional school programs incorporate some sort of recess or outdoor time, and a home-school schedule should be no different.

Please see <https://www.cnn.com/2020/03/16/health/homeschooling-during-coronavirus-wellness/index.html> for the full article.

N.C. District, Superior court cases

Most cases in North Carolina and district and superior courts will be postponed, most for at least 30 days amid concerns about the coronavirus.

North Carolina Chief Justice Cheri Beasley announced several directives Friday morning affecting the operation of the state's court system aimed at protecting public safety during the COVID-19 outbreak.

"We must be proactive in taking steps to prioritize the health and safety of our fellow North Carolinians while also maintaining the integrity of our judicial system," Beasley said in a media release. "Today's order will allow us to drastically reduce the exposure caused by crowded sessions of court, which often bring hundreds of people at a time into our court-houses."

Although the superior courts and district courts remain open, effective Monday, March 16, superior court and district court proceedings have been rescheduled for at least 30 days, with some exceptions.

The emergency directive does not apply to any proceeding in which a jury has already been empaneled or to any grand juries already empaneled.

It also does not prohibit a judge or other judicial officer from exercising any in chambers or ex parte jurisdiction conferred by law upon that judge or judicial officer, as provided by law.

Additionally, the superior courts and district courts are encouraged to



Photos by Tevin Stinson

Retailers are having trouble keeping shelves stocked amid the COVID-19 scare.

liberally grant additional accommodations to parties, witnesses, attorneys, and others with business before the courts who are at high risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

Government

Forsyth County Government remains open, but we strongly encourage citizens to call in advance to determine if their needs can be met by phone, email, mail or online services. This is particularly important because a number of county employees will be working from home in order to facilitate social distancing.

Essential services, including law enforcement, fire, EMS, 911, and Public Health, will continue as usual.

Forsyth County will assess operations on a daily basis to determine if future modifications are needed.

Restaurants

As of Tuesday, March 17, at 5 p.m., Gov. Roy Cooper ordered all restaurants to close their dining rooms. This order excludes takeout and delivery services. Residents may still order takeout or drive thru from participating restaurants. In addition, delivery services like Uber Eats and Door Dash are still operating under normal business

practices (for now). Some area restaurants have chosen to close completely, so it is advisable that you call ahead to determine if they are open.

Shopping

Shopping will also take a big hit during this outbreak. Stores are cutting their hours and supplies continue to dwindle. All 24-hour Walmart stores in our community have new store hours. They will open at 6 a.m. and close at 11 p.m. In addition, other stores like Publix and Harris Teeter will close at 8 p.m. These modified hours have been changed until further notice. As of Wednesday, Hanes Mall's statement says their hours will remain the same.

The Chronicle spoke with a representative at the Walmart on University Parkway who said, "We are restocking all day every day. Every couple of days we get a truck. So it's not that the stores aren't restocking, but the items are getting gone as we put them on the shelves." She suggested that customers call or just show up to check on the availability of items.

Entertainment

With federal and state guidelines limiting the number of people that can

convene in a particular area, movie theaters have come up with their own remedies to help curtail the spread of COVID-19. On The Grand 18's website, it's stated that they will only sell out 50% of the theater to help promote social distancing. The AMC Hanes 12 on Hanes Mall Blvd. is closed until government regulations allow reopening.

For book lovers, Bookmarks is adopting curbside service during the hours of 11 a.m. – 6 p.m. Call 336-747-1471 ext. 1000 to place an order or visit their website at www.bookmarksncc.org. Free shipping is also available on all orders over \$25.

Mental Health

We should remember that social distancing is not the same as mental isolation. While physical isolation is how we will beat COVID-19, we must be just as committed to stay connected to our loved ones. The CDC released the following statement (in part) on managing anxiety and stress:

The outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults

and children. Coping with stress will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger.

Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations. How you respond to the outbreak can depend on your background, the things that make you different from other people, and the community you live in.

People who may respond more strongly to the stress of a crisis include:

*Older people and people with chronic diseases who are at higher risk for COVID-19

*Children and teens

*People who are helping with the response to COVID-19, like doctors and other health care providers, or first responders

*People who have mental health conditions including problems with substance use

Stress during an infectious disease outbreak can include:

*Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones

*Changes in sleep or eating patterns

*Difficulty sleeping or concentrating

*Worsening of chronic health problems

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