



**Calvert County
Public Schools**

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Dear Parents/Guardians,

Thank you! Thank you for the support you have provided your children as we embarked on virtual learning this fall. We know that you have faced many challenges during this time and appreciate your patience and willingness to help. It is through our combined efforts that we have been able to meet each challenge that has arisen as our students learn in a virtual environment. One challenge that our teachers are currently facing is the ability to interact fully with and engage all students virtually when students do not turn their cameras on during instruction.

Here is what we know: Both teacher and student interactions are major contributors to the culture of the overall learning environment. Visual cues and student engagement are critical components of the learning process. Teachers use these cues to guide their instruction, assess the effectiveness of the lesson, and provide feedback. In order to provide the most rigorous and interactive online learning environment, it is important to have students engage by turning cameras on.

Here is what we are learning: Teachers are specifically planning for virtual activities that ask students to have cameras on during the lesson. These activities support the building of community within the class. In the virtual environment, having cameras on increases engagement for the entire class and improves the overall learning experience.

Despite ongoing teacher encouragement, it is becoming increasingly more difficult to know if some students are “present” and engaged or simply logged in. When we do not see your child, it is difficult to know if they are present and available to learn. Your child’s presence matters.

Going forward, teachers will let students know when they would like them to have their cameras on or off. We understand individual technical challenges can limit camera usage for a small number of our families. We encourage students to use Teams backgrounds if they are worried about home privacy issues. If you would prefer that your child’s camera is off during recordings, that is completely understandable and okay. We will honor exceptions brought to the teacher’s or administrator’s attention.

We do ask that you consider how much more engaging your child’s learning experience can be by adding the ‘camera on’ feature during the instructional block, especially during class discussions, when answering questions, and in small groups. Please talk to your child about how important it is to have their camera on during instruction. Thank you for helping to make our classrooms vibrant, inspiring, and interactive, supporting a more engaging learning environment for everyone.

Thank you for your partnership and support,

Diane A. Workman
Asst. Superintendent of Instruction