**COVID-19**

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Going through my typical school life during the Covid-19 pandemic was very different than every other school year I’ve went through. During my junior year of high school, we were only about five days into the second semester when they closed down the local schools to start the COVID-19 quarantine. Quickly adapting to a new virtual way of school meant logging in everyday to Microsoft teams in the morning and going through my daily classes online instead, this was a very wild change. No longer did my day begin with getting up at six in the morning to shower and get ready for school, it became wake up at seven and sign into my first period class.

It was very weird not being able to see classmates and friends in person anymore due to everyone forced to stay quarantined for months. Very quickly it became stale and lonely, waking up logging into class and not saying a word. Not being able to say hello to friends or talk to new people rather just sitting by myself in my bedroom with my computer in silence.

Nintendo, a video game company, released a gem of a video game known as Animal Crossing: New Horizons which was an online multiplayer world building game which I played a lot during quarantine. This new game allowed me to talk and play games with my friends now that I wasn’t able to see them in person. This went on for several months before eventually, the school decided to reopen doing a hybrid mix of online school and in-person class.

The reopening of my school was a great joy to me as I was finally able to meet up with my friends again, quarantine restrictions were lifting. Although we went back to in person class, it wasn’t the same as it was before we left for quarantine, we had a new hybrid routine two days in-person and two days online. Many changes occurred for those physically present, for example, my gym class did not allow students to use the locker rooms due to lack of social distancing. Proximity was too close of quarters with no mask, instead of doing typical activities during our gym period, we would come in and sit on the bleachers and do nothing for an hour and thirty minutes, then go to our next class. We also could not eat in the cafeteria.

Virtual school changed as we moved into a hybrid stage. With students now back in classes at least part-time, teachers went to focusing on the students in front of them, while those at home attending virtually just sat at computers and listened. It no longer felt like a virtual class rather that we were listening in on a class and when it was our turn to come in for class, we learned what they learned. I feel the rate we were learning at was cut in half. This was due to teachers having to repeat and reteach the same materials, because the online half of the class was basically being ignored the entre time, sitting in silence just listening.

Nonetheless we carried on and finished school. We were given the date for graduation, though we were not sure if we were going to be able to have a ceremony. We had four different plans for graduation in case we were unable to have our normal graduation ceremony due to COVID restrictions. Thankfully we had a somewhat traditional graduation ceremony with no issues. All in all, it was nowhere near what I had expected for my high school years to be like, but it was a memorable experience, nonetheless. I’m very happy to be in college now with in person classes for the most part and so far, much better than high school.