



August 24, 2020

For our new and familiar families, **welcome and welcome back!** I am sure you've been anxiously awaiting information about what our school year will look like in the fall.

This letter outlines some of the new and important protocols set in place to promote the health and well-being of all children, families, staff, as well as the community at large. We know that there will be bumps along the way, and we want to thank you in advance for your cooperation, flexibility, and patience as we start the school year, knowing that some of the plans may change as we refine our practices and receive updates on the science and data regarding COVID-19. This is important and there is a lot of information here. So you may want to grab a snack and get comfortable before you plow through all these details with me.

Our transition back to school: Given the importance of in-person learning for social and emotional development of our children, and in order to help our kids adjust to new routines and precautions there will be a strong emphasis on establishing routine and building relationships during the first months of school.

The first day of school for all Vermont students is September 8th. In school learning takes place Monday through Friday from 8:45-3:10. Tapestry will be running an in-person program. Paperwork with applications and details will sent in student folders.

New Staff: We have many new staff to welcome. New to our building or in a new role within our building are Secretary (Heather Olson), Volunteer Coordinator (Loren Boudreau), School Nurse (Chanda McCarthy), Grade 2 Teacher (Laura Aprilliano), Interventionists (Phyllis Smith and Kelly Hutt Vater), Special Educators (Allison Josselyn and Heidi Campbell Landon), Long-term Substitute Counselor (Brandy Guillette), Pre K Teacher (Amy Hall), Pre K Special Educator (Michelle Goodrich), Pre K SLP (Ashley Brua), Occupational Therapist (Allison Bembe), Paraeducators (Jen Gilhooli, Janine Nielson, Carol Carini, Darlene Brookman, Micki Blanchette, and Shar Weillis), and Director of Support Services (Sharon Naplolitano).

Communication: In order to stay in touch with you it is imperative that we have current and regularly updated address, home phone number, cell phone numbers, and emails. We use all of these methods for communication so please keep us updated on all of these when they change for you.

Arrival & dismissal: Bus letters with bus stop locations and times will be arriving under separate cover. Car rider arrival times need to be staggered to accommodate health screenings and physical distancing of students. Please be patient with this new process. We anticipate this will take longer and there will be longer car rider lines until we all get used to the new process and make adjustments as necessary.

Car riders are to drive up along the front sidewalk and stay in line until attendants come to your car at the end of the line near the far entrance and ballfield. Children are to stay in the car until the attendant takes their temperature and asks the adult in the car a series of screening questions. Students with symptoms will not be able to attend school. **Car rider times are 8:30 for Grade 2, 8:40 for Grade 1 and 8:50 for Grade K.** If you have children in more than one grade, please arrive at the later of the times.

Car pick up will begin at 3:10. Please do not ask your child to leave the line to come to your car. Please do not pass cars in line even if you have your child and someone in front of you is still loading the car. These are unsafe short cuts and unless there's a medical emergency you really can wait one or two more minutes in order to help keep our kids safe.

For bus riders, temperatures and screenings will occur before students get on the bus in the morning. Therefore, an adult must accompany students to the bus stop to help with the screening and to bring students home if they do not pass the screening.

COVID-19 Safety Measures: Below are some of the safety measures we will have in place. As we continue to receive state and district guidance, we adjust these plans accordingly.

1. Smaller class sizes with fewer transitions during the school day
2. Frequent handwashing and use of hand sanitizer
3. All meals served in classrooms (Therefore no allergens such as peanuts allowed if a class has a student with those allergens)
4. Frequent outside time for learning, even with light drizzles. Therefore, rain coats or ponchos, a change of clothes, and sunscreen should be packed daily.
5. Masks. As per the Governor's executive order requiring masks in public buildings, **all students and adults will be required to wear a face masks** and maintain social distancing. Masks must cover both the nose and mouth. If you believe your child might be eligible for a medical/other exemption for the mask requirement, please obtain documentation of this from your health care provider. Mask breaks will occur throughout the day when outside and when engaged in social distancing and low risk activity.
6. Given mask use, our district will consider calling off school for "heat days" (similar to snow days) when it is determined by the Superintendent that the heat index is too high for indoor mask use. Notification systems used for snow days (Alert now calling systems and WCAX and VPR school closing websites) will apply in this case.
7. If someone tests positive for COVID-19, we will follow direction from the Vermont Health Department. This may include closing a classroom, school or schools for a period of time and shifting quickly to remote learning at home for students who are impacted.

Attendance: Given the increased health risks, students must stay home if they have symptoms associated with Co-vid 19. Please call 786-1722 and leave a message with our attendance clerk Judy Olson, if your child will be absent on every school day that they are not attending. Leave your name, student's name, their grade, the reason for their absence, and a call back number to reach you. Similar to when students are in school, if are not informed of the reason for their absence by the parent or guardian, the absence this will be considered unexcused. Students having more than 10 unexcused absences per school year will be considered truant and truancy affidavits may be submitted for a truancy charge through the Vermont State's Attorney's Office. If your child travels to a county out of state that

is on Vermont's quarantine list they will need to quarantine based on [Vermont's guidelines](#). This means they will not be allowed to attend in-person but will be considered excused absent or can go to a short term remote model.

Visitors, late arrivals and early pick ups: Until health restrictions are no longer in place, family members and all other visitors may not enter the building beyond the front entryway other than on an emergency basis only. Visitors are to be admitted to the building only with advanced notification or an appointment made with a staff member.

1. Before school, adults must drop off students in the car rider line or for Pre-K parents/guardians, at the back door near the Pre K room. During school hours late drop offs must include screening in the front lobby with the adult present. Students may not be dropped off at the curb.
2. If students need to be picked up for appointments during the day, parents/caregivers should when possible call the office when they arrive (773-1940), park and wait either at the front steps or in the front lobby.

What Can Parents Do Now: We encourage parents to talk with, reassure and support their children about these changes, and the importance of social distancing, wearing masks, and frequent handwashing and sanitizing. Allow your child to ask questions and answer them to the best of your ability. [Find guidance here](#). Explain the [why behind wearing a mask](#) and have your child practice wearing their mask. Read a story about returning such as [Going Back to School](#) or [Welcome Back to School](#). Follow recommended guidelines regarding masks and social distancing this summer to help prevent a future surge in cases that might impact the start of school. Help students get back into a normal schedule at least a week before school begins, such as reinstating bedtime and wake up routines. Be sure that all your child's immunizations are up to date, including newly required immunizations for students entering kindergarten. Stay in close communication with school should your health situation or plans change.

Open House: You will have a chance to get to know us on a more personal and friendly level at our upcoming Open House. Our Open House will be held virtually Wednesday September 30th from 6:30-7:30 pm. This event will allow for the opportunity to meet staff "face to face- virtually and to have breakout sessions with just your classroom families and teachers. More information will come with the link invitation for this event closer to the 30th.

I look forward to times ahead when we can get together as a large in- person group celebrating our students' accomplishments, learning, and playing all under one roof. Until that time, I thank you for your willingness and patience in entrusting us with the care and education of your children during this unusual year. We will continue to provide you with more information as we plan for the school year, but please don't hesitate to call us for any questions, good ideas to share, or concerns.

Sincerely,

Susanne Engels
Principal of Northeast Primary School