

Dear Northeast Remote Learning Academy Families;

August 23, 2020

Welcome to the 2020 school year. For our new families who have not yet been a part of our Northeast family, I welcome you to our school and 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, and especially for all of our new families I thank you for your willingness and patience in entrusting us with the care and education of your children.

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. In the meantime, here is some important information for you to have before the start of the school year. It's a lot, so you may want to grab a snack and get comfortable before you plow through all these details with me.

Because we will not be able to send notes home in student folders every day, 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.

The first day of school for all Vermont students is September 8th. Prior to this, if you do not already have a Chromebook computer from Rutland City Public Schools, you should have been notified with instructions on how to get one. Please call the school if you still do not receive a call or email about how to obtain one.

Your child will be assigned to and rostered to one classroom teacher. Grades 1 and 2 have already been notified of this in the spring and Kindergarten will receive this after September 14th). However, as a part of the Remote Learning Academy, they will have a team of staff members (teachers, math and reading interventionists, special educators, art, music, and physical ed teachers) that will provide your children's remote programming. Our Remote Learning Academy staff are:

- Teachers: Kelly Hutt Vater, Sarah Gecha, Paula Lynch, Allison Josselyn,
- Para educator: Paula Allen
- Specialists: Bryan Cupoli (PE) Nicole Graves (Art) and Jen Hart's Long term sub to be determined (Music)

Within this team, one of these staff members will be identified as your child's lead remote teacher and they will be the person that you can reach out to during the remote period. Your child's lead remote teacher will be in contact with you before September 8th.

The NE Remote Learning Academy is an entirely at-home (or out of the physical school building) learning opportunity. Students participate in lessons through active engagement with the teacher, and students will be expected to work independently with family appointed guidance using various online programs offered by the Remote Learning Academy. Teachers will offer some degree of flexibility to accommodate our students' and families' various needs through the use of a combination of synchronous (real-time) and asynchronous (recorded and independent) learning opportunities.

During remote learning, the importance of computer based tools becomes even more clear, as digital technologies become the main tools for communicating, managing learning, and staying connected. RCPS sought recommendations from several leading organizations and agencies across the state, country and internationally in developing our Reopening Plan. School leaders have also carefully studied the plans of other leading schools.

With regard to the school's core technological and communications systems, all RCPS Students preK-12 will receive district Chromebooks and chargers. Students will be responsible for charging devices at home and transporting devices back and forth to school. Each student will receive one device. Through a collaboration with VTEL, RCPS has received 100 routers that are capable of connecting to the internet within most of the city limits. The majority of the routers were distributed to parents in March-June, 2020. RCPS staff is currently contacting the spring VTEL router recipients to determine if routers are needed for educational purposes this fall. In addition, RCPS staff is sharing information about other options such as Comcast Internet Essentials which provides low-cost Internet access to qualifying families.

STUDENT ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- Follow the daily routines for engaging in the learning experiences.
- Identify a comfortable, quiet space to work without too much distraction.
- Regularly check SeeSaw to check announcements and notes from your teachers.
- Complete assignments doing your best work.
- Do your work on time.
- Be positive and ask your teachers questions, ask for help, share ideas.
- Work as a team with your classmates in their learning.
- Follow RCPS's Acceptable Use Policy which lists rules for online behavior.

PARENT/GUARDIAN ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- Establish routines and expectations.
- Define the physical space for your child's study.
- Monitor communications from your children's teachers.
- Begin and end each day with a check-in.
- Take an active role in helping your children process their learning.
- Establish times for quiet and reflection.
- Encourage physical activity and/or exercise.
- Remain mindful of your child's stress or worry.
- Monitor how much time your child is spending online.
- Keep your children social, but set rules around their social media interactions.

REGARDING TECHNOLOGY and TECH SUPPORT

RCPS's have a small staff of 5 people supporting approximately 2100 students and 500 employees. We are responsible for hardware, software and infrastructure. We manage the educational and business functions for 10 buildings (NE, NW, RIS, RMS, RHS, STC, Allen, Grove, Maintenance, Longfellow) around the district. This lean staffing model prompts us to remind households that we do not have the capacity to communicate with families directly to troubleshoot Chromebook, logins and other issues. We ask that you work with your child's school and teachers using the following guidelines below. Our teachers are our first line of support. They will engage our IT staff as needed. If necessary during an emergency, IT may deploy a hotline phone number. Please don't try to call or email IT directly. For broken machines and faulty hardware, please return devices to our secretary Heather Olsen so that we can check the device in and issue another.

REGARDING ATTENDANCE

Teachers are responsible for reporting attendance in accordance with state requirements and VTAOE guidelines (<https://education.vermont.gov/sites/aoe/files/documents/edu-student-attendance-policies-and-procedures-strategies-during-school-closure-and-planning-for-a-strong-healthy-start.pdf>) whether instruction is provided in person or remotely.

Please call our school and leave a message with our attendance secretary 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.

Attendance in a remote learning environment is measured by students logging-in to and participating in live online class, communication between students and teacher at the beginning of each class/class period, by email/text/ phone communication between staff and students/parents, and completion of work in a remote learning environment and/or participation in online classes, and for following up with the student's parent/guardian as appropriate when it appears that a student is not participating in learning opportunities.

Even though you may be "away" you're an important part of this learning community and I have seen over and over again that when family is involved, kids do better in school. I look forward to seeing you and send best wishes for a successful school year.

Sincerely,

Susanne Engels
Principal of Northeast Primary School