

August 13, 2020

Dear families,

First of all I want to thank each and every one of you for returning our survey and making the very difficult decision to either start the year with distance learning or in-person. It was important that we ensure the safety of all people in the building by knowing the number of students who will be in the building. With that being said, we will be giving families the option of reassessing their choice every eight weeks. It will be important, especially if you are choosing distance learning, that you wait for those eight week periods so we can prepare to potentially have more students in the building. Just as a clarification, moving forward we will refer to the families who opted not to attend school in-person as distance learners. Should the school need to close during the year, the students who were in-house would become remote learners with BES staff providing instruction.

At this point in time we plan to use VLACS as our distance learning option. If you are choosing to have your child/children be distance learners, you will be partnering with a VLACS instructor as well as a BES staff member. VLACS includes an expectation that students at home will have the support of an adult to meet with VLACS instructors periodically to ensure that the students are meeting the academic expectations. It will be critical if you choose the distance learning option that you are able to support your child. Enclosed you will find information from VLACS about the home expectation. I understand that right now VLACS is showing a waitlist. Next week I will be calling families who have chosen distance learning to discuss VLACS as well as one or two additional options.

For those of you who will have your children joining us at BES, there are some very important guidelines that we will need everyone to adhere to. It is these guidelines that will help keep everyone safe which is our top priority:

- Your child/children will need to wear a mask throughout the day. This is a change from my original letter that stated that masks may be removed in the classroom with physical distancing. In meeting with staff and given the current situation throughout our country, I have changed course on that

expectation. If you do not have access to masks, we will provide them at the door. Mask breaks will be provided throughout the day.

- Students' temperatures will be taken as they prepare to enter the building. If their temperature is 100.4 or greater, they will need to go home for a period of at least 72 hours.
- If you travel outside of NH, especially to a hot zone state or use public transportation, you will be asked to quarantine your child for 14 days.
- Students who exhibit ANY of the following symptoms will be isolated and sent home immediately: sore throat, runny nose, cough, aches, upset stomach. If your child is attending school in person, it is imperative that you are able to pick them up quickly in the event that they exhibit any of these symptoms.
- If any students refuse to follow directions related to safety, we will ask that they become distance learners immediately. We all have to work together to keep our school community safe.
- The school will not open until 7:45 so kids who traditionally take the bus and arrive early will need to make alternative plans. I will be discussing with the bus company the need to adjust their routes to ensure no early arrivals.
- Staff plans to make the most out of our many outdoor spaces in Bethlehem. You will find a permission slip on our website that will give your child permission to leave BES and walk to places within our community.
- Our ventilation system will not be installed until mid-September, and since that is a non-negotiable safety feature, we will not open until the system is up and running. We are planning to open on September 8 at 7:45 only if the system is up and running safely. If we are unable to open, we will offer temporary remote instruction. This is very much a changeable situation which I understand makes things very difficult for all of you. I will keep you updated weekly about any decisions that have been made.
- Another possible but not yet determined change to our school day will be the possible shortening of our days. School might end at 1:30 every day. As we looked at many options, we felt it was important that students could attend school every day. Since movement around the building will be very

limited, staff and students will not get as many breaks out of the classroom, therefore, we felt a shorter day would benefit everyone. Staff will be in the building and available until 3:00.

- If your child has an allergy or other condition that might cause any of the Covid symptoms, you can provide a note from your child's doctor before school starts explaining possible symptoms your child might develop due to an underlying condition. This may mean that they will not need to be sent home.

I understand that this is A LOT of information to digest and with all of this information all questions have not been answered. I completely understand and sympathize with families who need to make childcare and work plans for the fall. I will keep everyone in the loop as decisions are finalized. Some of the information in this letter has NOT been finalized, but I felt it was important that you heard all of the details that could happen.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to me via email or Dojo with any questions you have. Take care and be well!

Sue

If you have not let me know whether you are choosing distance learning or in-person learning, PLEASE let me know by next week if you possibly can. Thank you!