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September 3, 2021

Dear Norwell Families:

We are looking forward to the new school year and welcoming our students back to in-person learning five days a week. While some of the procedures from last year have changed like distancing requirements and quarantine and close contact procedures, we will maintain our ventilation systems, hand hygiene, and the wearing of masks. Custodians, secretaries, support staff, and administration have diligently prepared the schools for the return of students and teachers. All of our summer work has been focussed on supporting the classroom. The dedicated faculty and staff have been preparing their classrooms, refining lessons and materials, and are anticipating a whole new group of students.

The overall focus this year is to address students' academic and social development. During the last 18 months, aspects of instruction and social relationships have been impacted by COVID-19. We will strive to address three main areas throughout the year:

- Reestablish a sense of belonging and a safe learning environment as students reintegrate into the fabric of the school community;
- Create a positive learning culture by remaining flexible with our students as we continue to build student academic and social-emotional confidence in an encouraging and developmentally appropriate way; and
- Re-engage students with a focus on our standard grade level expectations and build student academic stamina.

As we start the school year, if there is information about your child that would be helpful for us to keep in mind, please contact your child's teacher, school counselor, or administrator. Thank you for your patience as we continue to navigate the uncertainties of this year's school reopening. Our highest priority is to keep students, teachers, and staff safe while providing a holistic learning environment that continues to foster students' academic, and social emotional growth, and achievement.

Below are a few points to be aware of as we start the year.

#### COVID-19 PASS:

- The COVID-19 Pass is located on each school website. It needs to be completed daily for each child before school. This is a constant reminder to check for any symptoms or reasons a child should remain home. The system will send an email that confirms your child is able to attend school.
- Starting September 8, please visit this [link](#) and complete the attestation before your child leaves for school in the morning.
- An email will be sent to each family early in the morning reminding you to complete the COVID-19 Pass.
- Once the COVID-19 Pass is complete an email will be sent attesting that your child is clear to attend school. Middle School and High School students will be able to display the pass on their phones and/or iPads.
- Families that do not complete the COVID-19 Pass will be contacted during the day and reminded to complete the process.

#### Quarantining, Contact Tracing, and Routine Safety Testing:

- A letter to families was sent on August 26 titled “NPS Reopening Letter” with information regarding testing consent and DESE’s most recent protocols.
- Please check Norwell Public Schools’ website for the most recent information.

#### Masks:

- Students should bring their own masks to be worn throughout the day. Disposable masks will be available should a student’s personal mask become unusable. We are asking students to use standard fitting masks. Gaiter style masks are discouraged.

#### Handbooks:

- Annually parents are asked to complete a sign off via Aspen that you have read the handbook, give various permissions to share information and complete the health information update for each of their children attending Norwell Public Schools. The handbooks are now available on the [NPS website](#). Please take some time to read the handbook and complete these sign offs for each of your children, preferably before school starts on the 8th, but no later than Friday, September 10th.

#### Lunches:

- School lunches will continue to be free throughout the school year. Additional a la carte items will be available for purchase. Please see your school specific instructions for the ordering of lunches.
- For more information regarding the school lunch process please email Judy Crooks, Food Service Director - [judith.crooks@norwellschools.org](mailto:judith.crooks@norwellschools.org).

#### Buses:

- Bus routes have been created and the drivers have done their test drives. All students requesting a bus have been accommodated. Bus stops are published in the ASPEN portal.

- Students must wear a mask to ride a bus. This is a federal mandate and state requirement. Students on the bus will not be considered close contacts as they will be wearing masks with windows opened.
- For inquiries about whether you requested a bus, please check the ASPEN portal. Any other bus questions or concerns, please contact Janet Asnes at [janet.asnes@norwellschools.org](mailto:janet.asnes@norwellschools.org).

Website Resources:

- Each school has a section on their website dedicated to information regarding COVID-19 as well as the testing consent link.

We look forward to welcoming your child to school next week.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Keegan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "M".

Matthew A. Keegan  
Superintendent of Schools