



Chaplin Elementary School

Take Care of Yourself; Take Care of Each Other; Take Care of Our School

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

We hope that you had an enjoyable, relaxing summer and that your son/daughter is ready to begin a new school year that will be different due to the COVID pandemic. As you are likely aware, Chaplin Elementary will offer five-day a week, in-person learning for our students. We also have some parents/guardians who have chosen to temporarily have their child/children attend school remotely. We are confident that we can reopen with a comprehensive health and safety plan that adheres to CDC, state DPH and Eastern Highlands Health District guidelines. All staff and students will be required to wear masks while in the school building and on school buses. We will follow the six-foot rule for social distancing to “the greatest extent possible” per the health guidelines from the organizations listed above. Our low enrollment, more than adequate building space, and favorable ventilation lends itself to the full in-person model as does the highly favorable state benchmark metrics published weekly by the state DPH.

First, in terms of health and safety, we will be sanitizing various parts of our building throughout the school day, including the cafeteria after each lunch wave. We are in the process of hiring an additional custodian to add to our team of people responsible for daily sanitizing. Our night custodian will also focus on sanitization of the building. Our building has been inspected by our Director of Maintenance and we will have excellent ventilation via outtake vents along with open doors and windows. Individual desks have replaced tables in a number of classrooms; classrooms that still have tables will be limited to two students per table seated at opposite ends. All classroom designs will allow for six foot physical distancing. At the times that teachers have a small group (2 or 3 students) working at a table, we have Plexiglas dividers to separate the students from one another as well as from the teacher. An isolation room has been established to assess those students with COVID like symptoms. We will strictly follow all advice and protocols from the Eastern Highlands Health District regarding any student exhibiting COVID-like symptoms. We also ask that families do a morning assessment of their

son/daughter prior to coming to school. If any COVID symptoms are present, do not send your child to school. Furthermore, any student that **travels out of state to a state on the Connecticut quarantine list** must self-quarantine for 14 days and may not attend school during this time.

Second, masks are required of all staff and students at all times. As previously mentioned, the teachers will incorporate mask breaks into the school day by taking their classes outside for some of their regular classwork or to read aloud to them. Music classes and physical education classes may be conducted outside; in this event, students will be allowed to remove their masks as long as physical distancing is maintained. It is important to note that all staff will take part in four consecutive day professional development sessions with the primary focus being health, safety, and welfare of all in the COVID era.

Regarding transportation, physical distancing on school buses will be observed to the greatest extent possible. Chaplin Elementary School is providing bus monitors to help with safety protocols. After two weeks, we will reassess the need for monitors based on student ridership. Our Pre-K and Kindergarten students will still be allowed to sit at the front of the bus where the monitors and drivers will be able to monitor them more closely. We anticipate that numerous parents will drive their son/daughter to school so we are reasonably confident that six-foot social distancing can be observed.

We have increased our lunch waves to three and increased recess times to four periods. We will be providing lunch in the cafeteria to all but our Pre-K and Kindergarten students. Our Pre-K class will continue to eat in their classroom as they have done in the past. The kindergarteners will eat in one of the larger classrooms that does not have students. This helps us to be able to keep our lunch waves to 40 students or fewer with physical distancing. There will be individual seating in the cafeteria and all students will practice six-foot physical distancing. We will have only three students getting their lunch at a time, and the cafeteria workers will set the trays up, so students only need to carry their tray out. We are very pleased that we can offer hot lunches instead of “cold” box lunches. Recess will have fewer students as well. New games will be taught to the children that will allow them to play, distance, and not touch equipment with their hands. A schedule will be devised for the playscape areas of both playgrounds.

School will begin on Monday, August 31; the start times and dismissal times will remain the same—8:40 a.m. start time and 3:15 p.m. dismissal time. There will be staggered entry times for buses and parent drop off in order to keep our entrances safe for all. **As soon as East Conn Transportation gives us the arrival time of the buses, I will let parents know the time for parent drop off.** In order to minimize student contact, we will be using three different entrances. Our preschoolers and kindergarteners will be dropped off by the buses and parents in Silliman’s Circle near the Pre-K and Kindergarten playground. Staff will be there to assist parents. The remainder of the school body will be dropped off in the main bus loop. The fourth, fifth, and sixth graders will enter the building through the main doors. The first, second, and third graders will enter the building through the doors near the end of the hallway. Staff will be in these areas to assist students. School dismissal will be similar to what is already in place. The only difference is that parents/guardians will not enter into the school gym to gather their child/children. Instead, the staff will call the children to the door to be picked up.

In terms of technology, classes will be livestreamed to those students opting for remote learning. Students will be exposed to classroom lessons in real time and will have opportunities to interact with teachers. We have Chromebooks for our students in grades 4, 5, and 6; we have iPads for students in grades k, 1, 2, and 3.

Finally, we are acutely aware of the social/emotional issues that students may have encountered during their 57-day absence from in-person learning during the 2019-2020 school year. Our school social worker will be providing continuous support to students and families that have been affected. We are also offering social/emotional training for staff members during our pre-opening professional development for teachers.

In sum, we believe that we have a focused, safe school reopening plan that makes the safety and welfare of all Chaplin Elementary School students and staff the driving force behind the plan. We have spent countless hours this summer ensuring that our plan is focused, comprehensive and highly effective. The reopening plan can be found in its entirety on the CES website. It was developed by a broad-based school committee comprised of administrators, teachers, non-certified staff, the technology support person, school nurse, and the Director of Maintenance.

We look forward to the start of a successful and rewarding school year!

Sincerely,

Kenneth V. Henrici
Superintendent

Kevin J. Chavez
Principal