August 8, 2019

Dear Parents and Families:

I do hope this letter finds you well and enjoying your summer! Welcome to all our new parents and families!

I wanted to share with you a few items as we prepare for a new school year.

As you may know, our school this year is very fortunate to have 3 school communities in one building; Carl J. Lamb, Margaret Chase Smith and Willard. As principal, I look forward to the endless possibilities we will create together for our students, our staff and our community. Our school has the following grades this year:

1st grade (5 classrooms)
2nd grade (4 classrooms)
3rd grade (5 classrooms)
4th grade (11 classrooms – note: all the 4th grade students and staff are at Willard this year)

In addition, we have hired new staff to join our community. We welcome:

Meaghan Stewart – music teacher
Megan Brown, grade 4
Daniel Fernandez – grade 4
Stephanie Simpson – grade 3

Also joining our community this year is Willow; she is a therapy dog and will be working with Christen Suratt’s self-contained team. This is Willow and Christen’s second year in our district; they were at Margaret Chase Smith School last year.

Service animals are working animals, not pets. Willow will be acting as a therapy animal in Christen’s classroom. This definition is slightly different as she will be allowed to provide a different influence on the entire group of students as opposed to just one. A therapy dog in a class can provide companionship, affection, security, calming influence, and function as an additional aid in the room.
While at school, students and staff are encouraged to greet her and also may request to approach the class to visit. Willow is a highly trained specialized dog who is trained for many tasks. She is a service dog to the classroom teachers' daughter when she is not in the class setting. The students will be made aware of how to conduct themselves around her and learn that she is not a pet while she is working but rather a tool to help them improve academic, social and independent functioning skills.

Should you prefer that your child not touch or come in to contact with Willow, please complete the form below and return the form to the school on the first day. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Our first day of school is **Tuesday, September 3, 2019**. Teachers are preparing their letters and you will be receiving them soon. In addition, you will find bus information for your child with this letter.

Due to the moving, cleaning and preparation of our school for the first student day, we will not be able to host any events prior to Sept. 3rd. I do hope to have an **Open House** the first week of school. I will post this information on our school website next week.

On behalf of our staff, I thank you in advance for your support as we begin a new school year. Please contact me with any questions, concerns or ideas.

Gratefully,
Susan Inman, Principal

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**Willow Form:**

__________________________ should not be in contact with Willow.

(student name and grade)

__________________________

(Parent/Guardian signature)