



HARRISBURG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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Darlene Geddes Principal

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Dear Parents and Guardians --

I want to thank you all for your patience as you wait for key information about the upcoming school year. We have not been dragging our feet but have been waiting for the most recent guidance from the Oregon Department of Education and the Oregon Health Authority. Please know we do have a plan for your children. First, our Governor and leaders in education have made early learning a focus and priority. With current metrics in Linn County, we have been given the clear to bring kindergarten through 3rd grade back to school on-site. With this said, it is important to note, that if the metrics in the county shift, we may be forced into distance learning. This is a state level decision. Right now, we welcome students K-3 on September 8th.

It is our intent to maintain the following plan during the first 9 weeks of school. Depending on the state mandates, we will reassess and continue this model or implement a gradual return to a typical school model.

The school day will run from 8:15 am - 2:35 pm for 1st - 4th grade. Specific scheduling information will be sent home later at the end of week along with adjusted class placements. Visitors will not be allowed in the building per state mandates. Specifically trained and scheduled volunteers will be allowed.

Our kindergartens will be in an am/pm model. Kindergarten will run 8:15 - 11:00 and from 11:50 - 2:35. Kindergarten students will have the opportunity to access two meals. The a.m. students may eat breakfast at school and take home a lunch and the p.m. students may eat lunch at school and take home a snack. Transportation is available for both sessions. Class sizes will be capped at 16 during the mandated social-distanced time frame. It is our intent to return to full day kindergarten when appropriate.

Our first through third graders will be placed in classrooms of 14-17 during the first 9 weeks beginning September 8th. Classrooms are currently being set up to accommodate the 6 foot distancing mandate while also providing a brain break desk and mask break area with a shielded area.

During this period of time, our K-3 students will access PE and Library. Our library program will look different and we will not be checking out books at this time but we will be working to send home free books with our students as we can that they can add to their libraries permanently. Students will be able to check out books that will remain in the classroom in their own book bin weekly. Books will then be returned to the library to a staging area for disinfecting and removal from circulation for a minimum of two weeks. We are working to schedule our music program so that students will be able to access music. Each activity has been carefully planned and thought out so that students will remain in their classroom cohort of 14-17 students without inter-mixing with other cohorts.

Recesses will be planned on a class by class basis with disinfecting in-between.

Breakfast and lunch will be eaten in the classroom with disinfecting of the desktops before and after and thorough hand washing before and after.

Strategies and services to meet the needs of our talented and gifted students, special education students, English Language Learners and/or any students with specialized needs for enrichment or intervention will be provided for as we would during any school year. We are committed to the success of our students and meeting their needs.

Our 4th grade students will receive distance learning that will look different from the distance learning students and families experienced in the spring. First, parents and students will receive orientation meetings and videos to on-board them to this distance learning model. The teachers assigned to 4th grade classes will remain with these students the entire school year to optimize relationships with students, teachers and parents. During the time that these teachers are assigned distance learning, they will be responsible for these students only, not other in-person classes in the building. The distance learning model has very clear mandates from the state this fall. Attendance will be taken, specific subjects will be taught, assignments will be scored and feedback will be provided. Students will have specific class times with clear expectations shared with parents and tracking of grades.

Elementary school is a time of special significance during childhood. Most parents and guardians can recall our own elementary experiences and think of special events or activities that were especially memorable or exciting. How can we possibly create these experiences for children during a global pandemic? My response to this is, why wouldn't we? Yes. School may look a little different but whether or not our students are involved in a distance learning environment or on-site in a smaller class size during the first 9 weeks of school, we can still create opportunities for students to be engaged in the upcoming celebrations of fall. Instead of assemblies, we will create YouTube videos announcing class awards and competitions (including 4th grade) and speciality dress up days. We have some other fun new programs in the works - such as the Harrisburg Elementary Post Office. These are just a few of the fun activities we have planned. It is our desire to create a memorable experience for our students despite the unusual circumstances that we are in.

Should we have a positive case of Covid 19 within our school or district, we will be guided by the Oregon Health Authority as to the course of action. In such situations, it is no longer within the school district's authority to make determinations about closures. We will be creating both a transition plan to move from a social distancing plan to our typical school model as well as a distance learning plan so that we are prepared.

While I know that there still may be many questions and concerns, it is my hope that this general information will help many of our families know that as your principal, I am a parent also. Your children matter deeply to me. Each child's success and love for school is so important to all of us at Harrisburg Elementary. My staff is working tirelessly, whether they are developing plans at home or moving furniture around at the school, to prepare for your children. I could not be more grateful or proud to be working alongside them. Your children are so lucky!

We are all in this together for OUR kids.

All my best,

Darlene M. Geddes