

August 31, 2020

Dear Parents and Families:

This letter is for all our Willard families – whether you are an in-person learning family or a remote learning family.

This year will certainly be one that none of us have experienced before. However, the Willard team is ready to welcome your child and ensure that they learn and grow academically, emotionally and socially.

Below are some highlights that will help give you an overview of our school.

**Service Dogs** - As some of you know, we were very fortunate to have service dogs as part of our Willard team last school year. We are fortunate to have our service dogs back with us for this school year. They are: Willow and Ory (handler is Christen Suratt, special education teacher), Dodger (handler is Liz Cyr, social worker) and Luna (handler is Laurie Keene, guidance counselor).

Service animals are working animals, not pets. Our service dogs will provide support throughout our school. Service dogs provide companionship, affection, security, calming influence, and function as an additional aid throughout our school community.

While at school, students and staff are encouraged to greet our service dogs and also may request to approach the class to visit. The students will be made aware of how to conduct themselves around our service dogs and learn that they are not pets while they are working but rather a tool to help students improve academic, social and independent functioning skills.

Should you prefer that your child not touch or come in to contact with our service dogs, please complete the form included and return it to the school on the first day. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me.

**Safety reminders** – As mentioned in our return to school plan, safety is paramount for all of us as we return to school in person. Keeping this in mind, I wanted to highlight a few items for you:

* All students and staff are required to wear face masks/coverings
* All families and staff are required to perform a self-check each day before boarding a bus or entering school
* Face shields and gaiters
  + A doctor’s note is required for students who need to wear a face shield
  + Gaiters are not allowed to be worn

The Re-Opening plan can be found on the district website under family links and Covid 19. A student handbook supporting the Re-Opening Plan will be posted on the district website soon. We will send you a message via the Thrill Share app once it is posted.

**Arrival and Dismissal –** For those students who will be dropped off and picked up each day, we ask that you follow the guidelines below:

* Please use the circle in front of our building to drop off and pick up your child each day.
  + Students are allowed to be here starting at 7:45AM.
  + Students need to be picked up each day by 3:20 PM.
  + Our school day begins at 8:30 AM.
  + Our school day ends at 3:00 PM.
* Thank you for reminding your child about when leaving the vehicle to follow staff directions about staying 3 feet apart.
* Specific information regarding dismissal procedures for parents/families will be shared over the next week.

**Bus information –** Bus information will be shared over the next week.

**Walkers –**

***2nd, 3rd or 4th grade walkers:***

1.       A child who leaves the school at regular dismissal time

2.       Will walk to their parent who is waiting outside of the building or walk to their after-school destination

3.       Has WRITTEN permission from their legal guardian (the note can be given to the office on a day-to-day basis for out-of-the-ordinary situations, or the note can be given once at the beginning of the year stating that the child will be a walker on a daily basis)

***1st grade walkers:***

1.       Leave the school at regular dismissal time

2.       Will be escorted outside by one of their classroom teachers

3.       The classroom teacher will report with the children to the same location outside everyday

4.       Have WRITTEN permission from their legal guardian (the note can be given to the office on a day-to-day basis for out-of-the-ordinary situations, or the note can be given once at the beginning of the year stating that the child will be a walker on a daily basis)

5.       The classroom teacher reserves the right to request ID from ANYONE who is picking up a child from school

6.       If no adult is outside to pick up the child at dismissal time, the child will return to their classroom with their classroom teacher

**Visitors and/or parents, families in the building –** As you may know, we need to limit the amount of people in our building at this time. If there is a circumstance that requires you to pick up your child during the day, we ask that you:

* Pull into the circle in front of the school and park
* Call our office phone and let us know you are here to pick up your child

We do appreciate planning ahead and sending in notes with your child for those times that he/she will be dismissed early.

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