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Dear Amazing Canaan Students,

Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey. You all have some great questions and I enjoyed reading about your amazing hopes and dreams for this school year! I know you all will do great things with hard work and determination.

COVID-19 information is continually changing, answers I am able to give you, are noted below. We will review new procedures once school begins and you will have opportunities to ask questions and express your concerns throughout the year.

As you know, school will be different this year, but students and staff will navigate the changes together. Everyone's feelings regarding these changes will be respected and we will support each other through them. It is all new and it will take time to adjust.

### **So why can't things be normal?**

There is a virus called COVID-19

- COVID-19 is caused by a germ (virus) that can make the body sick. People who have COVID-19 may have a cough, fever and trouble taking deep breaths. But some people, especially kids, who have the virus may not feel sick at all or may have mild symptoms such as those of a cold.
- Most commonly, the virus that causes COVID-19 enters people's bodies when it's on their hands and they touch their mouths, noses or eyes. A virus is so tiny that you can't see it. This is why it's important to wash your hands often and try not to touch your mouth, nose or eyes. If someone who has the infection coughs or sneezes on you from a close distance — closer than six feet — then that also can spread the virus.
- You're hearing so much about COVID-19 because it's a new illness that has not been seen before. Experts around the world are working hard every day to learn about COVID-19 and how to keep people safe.
- The State of Vermont Agency of Education and Vermont Department of Health have given schools guidelines we must follow to re-open school.

To reduce the risks of passing COVID from one person to another we will have many different safety measures in place. There are 3 major safety measures I want to bring your attention to

that will be discussed below: Facial Coverings, Social Distancing, and Cleaning- of hands and frequently touched surfaces.

It sounds like a lot of your questions will be answered if I give you a snapshot of what a day will look like, but first I want to acknowledge that just like you, parents, teachers, and your friends look forward to things being back to normal. We all know this isn't easy. We will work together to follow the plans to keep each other safe and healthy.

### **A Snapshot Of An Elementary Students Day**

Upon arrival you will be asked a few questions and your temperature will be checked. As long as you are healthy you will go directly to your classroom. You will stay in your classroom for the day, including specials. You will leave your classroom for bathroom use, recess, mask breaks, and PE. You will eat breakfast, snacks and lunch in your classroom with your friends this year. Your mask must be worn when inside, at all times unless you are eating.

Teachers will be taking you outside for mask breaks throughout the day. If your mask is off, you must stay 3-6 feet away from others, grades PreK-5 and 6 feet for grade 6. If your mask is on you can be closer while outside.

You will be washing your hands frequently and areas in your classroom and around the school will be cleaned frequently as well. We have three custodians this year to assist us with the cleaning and disinfecting of the building, Jim Reynolds, Richard Gibbons and Anne Noyes.

Recess will be taking place in different areas outside and your teachers will share many more details about recess with you on the first day of school!

The weather can change pretty quickly in Canaan so be sure to have extra clothes with you as we will be spending more time outside this year and classroom windows may be open to circulate fresh air.

Please be watching for your mail. We are mailing you a package containing additional information, forms to be completed by your parents, student facial coverings and a digital thermometer. Your teachers are excited to see you and I am sure they have lots of fun things planned and so much to teach you!

### **A Snapshot Of A High School Students Day**

Upon arrival you will be asked a few questions and your temperature will be checked. As long as you are healthy, you will then go to your assigned classroom that will be your homeroom, WIN, lunch and study hall space. You will change classrooms for each of your 4 blocks. You will have a locker and be able to access your locker during set times during the day; homeroom, WIN, and study hall. Students will be released to lockers by grades and lockers will be spaced out to allow for social distancing. Your mask must be worn at all times inside unless you are eating or outside and greater than 6 feet from others. Please be watching for your mail we are mailing you a package containing additional information, forms to be completed by your parents, student facial coverings and a digital thermometer

Teachers will be taking you outside for mask breaks throughout the day. If your mask is off, you must stay 6 feet away from others. If your mask is on you can be closer while outside.

You will be washing your hands frequently and your classroom and around the school will be cleaned frequently as well.

Any students attending Canaan will be required to abide by VT rules, including masks despite what their home school rules are. Students attending other schools upon return from that school will be asked some questions and have a temperature check.

The weather can change pretty quickly in Canaan so be sure to have extra clothes with you as we will be spending more time outside this year. Your teachers are excited to see you and I am sure they have lots of fun things planned and so much to teach you! Many of the specific questions you have about classes can be asked directly to your teachers on the first day. It is exciting that so many of you are eager to return to learn and as some of you mentioned be prepared for college!

### **Sports**

What I do know right now is that soccer and cross country are approved. Practices may begin September 8th and games will begin 2 weeks after this date. Masks must be worn when practicing or playing in VT with the exception of cross country when social distancing is maintained.

### **Is it safe?**

Many VT professionals have studied this virus and the benefits and risks about reopening schools and it has been determined that it is safe for schools to open with the precautions put in place.

I understand that many of you are worried about bringing home germs to your family. It is important to protect each other and that we follow the guidelines set forth around social distancing, facial coverings and cleaning to decrease the risks to others. Due to these worries the safety precautions that will be in place in school should also be a part of your life outside of school. VT is under a mask mandate.

Should you not feel comfortable with returning to school there are two other learning options. If you would like to explore more about the other two options, reach out to the Guidance Counselor, Mrs. Sweatt, [klsweatt@canaanschools.org](mailto:klsweatt@canaanschools.org).

### **What is a close contact?**

When we talk about containing the spread of COVID-19, we often refer to reaching out to the “close contacts” of a person who tested positive. But what does that mean? Both time and distance matter. Close contact generally means being within six feet for 15 minutes or more, of the person who tested positive while they are contagious (infectious). Examples of close contacts include someone you live with, rode in the car with, or had dinner with. Close contact does not mean: being more than six feet away in the same indoor environment for a short period of time, walking by, or briefly being in the same room. Examples of not close contacts include a cashier or someone you passed by at a store, or a coworker you briefly passed to ask a question. The infectious period starts two days before any symptoms began, or for people

who didn't have symptoms, two days before they got tested, and continues until they are recovered. The average number of close contacts per person who tests positive for COVID-19 in Vermont is three. Close contacts get a call from the Health Department with guidance to stay home and away from others for a certain amount of time, and are asked to watch themselves for symptoms.

### **How else can you take care of yourself?**

Everyone will have different emotions around these changes. It will be important for students to establish a trusted adult to talk to. Classroom teachers, Mrs. Prehemo, and Mrs. Berry will be available to support student needs. We also anticipate a new, fulltime counselor joining the staff of Canaan Schools. More information coming soon.

It is important to develop a routine that includes; eating healthy, exercising, getting adequate sleep, taking time to do things you enjoy that are fun, and limit watching, reading and listening to news stories about COVID-19 to include social media.

### **Schedule Questions**

If you have questions or concerns about your schedule contact Mrs. Sweatt, [klsweatt@canaanschools.org](mailto:klsweatt@canaanschools.org)

### **Mask Concerns**

Lots of studies have been done and continue to be done about masks. Thus far, no study has shown that it is unhealthy and a risk for you to wear a mask for long periods of time. However, if you have a health condition that prevents you from being able to wear a mask, you must have a doctor's note to excuse you from wearing masks.

### **Will schools have to close and go remote again?**

The goal is for school to remain open for in-person instruction. However, if there is a rise in the number of cases of COVID, The Department of Health has a plan in place for schools to follow. It is hard to share this plan as it will depend on a number of circumstances around the positive cases.

I hope this information has been helpful to you. We are working hard to have a plan in place to keep everyone safe and healthy when returning to school. This will take a team effort with cooperation from everyone. If you have questions or ongoing concerns, feel free to email them to [mprehemo@canaanschools.org](mailto:mprehemo@canaanschools.org).

I look forward to seeing all of you soon!

Take Care,

Mrs. Prehemo

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