

August 10, 2021

Dear BNS families,

If your house was anything like mine this evening there was a mix of excitement and sadness as we prepared our "say goodbye to summer" celebration and simultaneously our "let's get ready to return to school tomorrow morning!" droopiness.

Although a number of questions remain in all of our minds about what this year will bring, I think one thing is certain: it's sure to be epic. Maybe in more ways than one. My family is excited to take this journey with yours.

Now, a few last minute nuts and bolts announcements for the start of the school year.

*** Health Tickets & Assumption of Risk:**

Unlike last year, we are not requiring that families bring a completed and signed health ticket to school each morning. (Similarly, adults do not need to complete one either). *HOWEVER, we are asking that each of you please read through our [Community Expectations](#).* We are in this together, and this means that we all need to be actively working to engage in the world safely and thoughtfully. **We are also asking that each family print, read, sign, and return one copy of the [Acknowledgement of Risk Form](#). Please return this form within the first 7 days of school.** The form can go back to school with your child(ren). I will collect them and track returns on Wednesday, August 18th.

*** Staggered Arrivals/Departures:**

Please note your 10-minute drop-off window and your 10-minute pick-up window. **Siblings should come (and go) with the earliest shift that applies to their household.** This will make the parking lot flow more smoothly. Parents will be pulling around the parking lot in a one-way circular way (follow the arrows) and a "drop-off helper" will walk kids to their classrooms via their outside doors. In the afternoons, a "pick-up helper" will radio the kids names to teachers and then help bring kids to their cars. We all got quite good at this last year.

*** Here's the Arrival/Departure schedule:**

Arrival:

8:30 to 8:40 = Purple Arrival ("Middle School")

8:40 to 8:50 = Green, Turquoise, Blue Arrival ("Upper Elementary")

8:50 to 9:00 = Red, Orange, Yellow Arrival ("Lower Elementary")

Departure:

3:15 to 3:25 = Purple Departure ("Middle School")

3:25 to 3:35 = Green, Turquoise, Blue Departure ("Upper Elementary")

3:35 to 3:45 = Red, Orange, Yellow Departure ("Lower Elementary")

*** Pick-up Signs:**

Pick-up signs will go home with your children tomorrow (Wednesday) afternoon.

The oldest sibling will have the pick-up sign for your whole family. If you would like a PDF version of the pick-up sign for your family, please email me directly. For pick-up on Wednesday, please just tell the pick-up helper your child(ren)'s class color and first name.

*** Departure/Parking Lot Routine:**

As was the case last year, please **line-up, single file, parallel to the sidewalk in the front of the school**. This will leave the center "circle" (closest to the inner island) free for cars to safely pull out and around the line of cars as they are loaded. Please also **pull as far forward (toward the school mailbox) as possible even if you have red, orange, or yellow room kiddos that exit the playground/school grounds at the gate closest to the art room**. Pulling all the way forward when you get to the pick-up line will ensure that we can maximize cars closest to the school and help to keep everyone moving. If you are waiting for your child and there is space in front of you to pull forward safely, please do so. If you need to park, please ensure that you do so in the parking spots at the back end of the parking lot (by the pine trees).

*** Finally, A Note About Travel**

In my last email about our updated COVID page, I pointed you all to updated documents (i.e. [Community Expectations](#)), policies (i.e. [BNS Handwashing](#)) and guidelines (i.e. [CDC Behavior Guidance](#)). A couple of questions about traveling with and without unvaccinated children prompted an extensive exchange among members of the BNS Health Committee. ***As a committee, and as a board, we want to emphasize the importance of maintaining scientifically-sound mitigation strategies while traveling, while engaging in the outside world right where you live, and while at BNS.*** These layered mitigation strategies which BNS has and will continue to maintain - along with widespread vaccination for those who are eligible - will be our best defense against outbreaks of COVID (or any other infectious agent) in our school community. If you have questions about travel plans or activities that you and your family are considering and want to better understand how the health committee and board would view these plans and/or what the expectations for returning to school would be please reach out to me directly. I will bring the questions before the health committee and we will do our best to provide scientifically-supported guidance for you to weigh as you make your decision. I know it can be hard, but there is a measure of trust that we are

going to have to place in one another that we are all working toward the same goal of caring for each other. We have unvaccinated and immunocompromised members of our community - both at BNS and in Blacksburg more widely. The health committee and board thank you for doing your part to consider how your actions will affect these vulnerable populations.

As always, I remain available to answer questions.

Best,
Kiyah