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Principal

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Dear Parents and Families of Riverside School,

On behalf of the faculty and support staff of Riverside School, I want to welcome you and your family to the 2020-2021 school year! As a parent of two sons who just a few years ago were still in elementary school, I understand the excitement the whole family feels upon starting a new school year.

This school year will be a little bit different (to say the least) for students and families, with all the COVID-19 related restrictions we will experience as we go through the year. Please know that we have 3 main goals at the school as we start our year, #1 the safety of your children and our entire Riverside School community (staff and all families), #2 a top quality education (in person for as long as possible) for your children, and #3 an enjoyable and connected classroom and school community for each student to look forward to being a part of each day.

Our assistant principal, Ms. Safiya Key, and I are pleased to welcome all of the students this coming Wednesday on our first day of school. We have spent many days this summer preparing for their return and we are eagerly awaiting their arrival back in the building. We pledge to work together with our families and staff to provide a safe, healthy, successful and rigorous learning experience for all of our students, whether we are in school or in a remote learning situation at some point. (Families participating in **The Remote Learning School** this year will receive information directly from the RLS and the logistical information in this letter does not apply to them.)

Please take some time to read the information in this letter prior to the beginning of the school year.

The first day of school is September 9. It is a full day. **Arrival is between 8:30-8:45 and the day officially starts at 8:45.** (Kindergarten arrival for the first day only will be 9:45). Note that due to COVID-19 safety restrictions, we will not be able to hold our "Parade of Learners" this year but we look forward to holding it again soon. Please also note that no parents or visitors will be permitted in the building at any time this year, including the first day for the safety of all of our students, staff, and each of your families.

Staff members will be stationed at the designated building entrances (specific doors for each grade to enter and exit - more information to be shared this weekend) each morning at 8:30 am to help ensure the students enter the building safely. I also encourage you to read the [Greenwich Public Schools School Reopening Plan](#) that Dr. Jones submitted to the state, as that is also the plan for Riverside School. All GPS schools are following the district plan. In addition, please read the [Community FAQ](#) as it also has a great deal of information. Many parents' questions and concerns are addressed in this document.

There are however, some specific protocols and procedures that will be specific to Riverside School that I am sharing with you here. In addition, by this Monday, I will send out a parent slide presentation and

orientation video for you and your child to watch in order to feel confident and secure about coming to school on the first day.

I also wanted to reiterate that right now there are three strategies that are considered effective in mitigating the spread of the virus:

1. Wear a mask
2. Wash your hands
3. Watch your Distance (Minimum of 3 feet with a mask, six feet without a mask)

These strategies are an integral part of the GPS plan and we will focus on keeping our students safe to the greatest extent possible.

### **Back to School Documents**

Please be sure to review all back to school documents accessed via this link on our **Back to School Page (BtS)** of the Riverside School website linked in the email you are receiving.

### **Arrival**

#### **Bus Drop Off**

**Bus routes and pick-up times will be on the BTS page of the website.**

Bussing will proceed as usual, however, students (wearing masks as required) will be required to fill the seats from the back to the front of the bus upon boarding. Siblings will need to sit together. Upon arrival, starting at 8:30 am the doors of the school will be open and staffed for bus students to enter the building. Students will exit the bus from the front to the back and proceed straight to their designated door and head straight to their homeroom class.

#### **Parent Drop Off**

The **Drop Off and Pick Up Procedures** for those families driving to school described below.

Please plan to arrive between 8:30 and 8:45 so the arrivals are staggered. We will use our usual drop one-way off loop/driveway off of Hendrie Avenue. Staff will be stationed outside starting at 8:30 am to assist with arrival each day. We will make sure students enter the correct door. Parents can also park in our parking lot or in a parking space on Hendrie and walk through child onto the campus.

Please note that for everyone's safety and to ensure we are able to stay in school for as long as possible this year, all adults (as well as all children) need to wear a mask and socially distance a minimum of 3 feet on campus as they enter and exit the grounds, wait on campus outside, and as they drop off or pick up their children.

After the first day of school (just for K), students in **Kindergarten** will proceed to the side door of the school by our Kindergarten wing (next to our media center), located just off of Hendrie Avenue (coming from Eastern Middle School and before the turn into our school drop off lane).

**First grade students** will enter through the door next to the gym area (to the right side of or building when facing the front).

**Second grade students** will enter through the front door of the building (by the main office).

**Third grade students** will enter through the door to the left of the front door and go right up the stairs to the second floor where all the Grade 3-5 homerooms are now located.

**Fourth and Fifth Grade students** will enter through door to the right of the front door and go straight up the stairs to the second floor where all the Grade 3-5 homerooms are now located.

## **Dismissal**

### **Parent Pick up**

Grade 1-5 students will exit from the same doors that they enter in the morning, one class at a time between 3:15-3:25 pm. More details on the specific 5 minute time window they will likely exit will be shared by this Tuesday. K students will exit at 3:10 from their door but we may start with two K classes a few minutes earlier to help with social distancing. More information on the K dismissal to follow by Tuesday.

**We will continue to use School Dismissal Manager for dismissal changes so please be on the lookout for an email about setting up your SDM account in a couple of days.**

### **Bus dismissal**

The staff helping with bus dismissal will aim to arrange for students to enter the bus from the back to the front in the order of the stops. (Students with the furthest stops are at the back). This will help limit students walking past other students who are seated both when boarding and exiting.

### **Masks and Mask Breaks**

As noted in the district plan all students must wear masks all day in the building. Masks will be provided for anyone who forgets to bring their mask from home. We will provide mask breaks for all children a few times a day in a variety of ways. Some examples could include going outside for a read aloud or independent reading activity, snack, a movement break, or SEL activity. These will occur during the day, approximately every two hours (or less), but sooner if needed, especially at the beginning of the year as everyone adjusts to wearing them.

### **Cleaning and PPE supplies**

All classrooms have sinks for hand washing with soap, and bottles of hand sanitizer. As noted by Dr. Jones, we will have extra masks at school for emergencies, but we are asking parents and teachers to provide their own masks that children (and adults) are comfortable wearing and easily identifiable.

### **Class lists**

The eleven Greenwich Public Elementary Schools will be emailing class lists, most likely by this Friday afternoon.

### **School Calendar**

The District's 2020-2021 school calendar is available on the Greenwich Public School's website.

- **Orientation** for all **Kindergarteners** only will be held on **Tuesday, September 8 at 10:00 AM or 10:30 am (depending on the child's last name)** in the Kindergarten classrooms. A letter was previously sent to K parents about this and a follow up email will be coming with the location of the door for entry that day.
- Please check the district calendar for all early release days, school holidays and other important dates.

### **The Handbook**

Reading and returning the "Receipt of Handbook Form" is **required**.

### **Emergency Contact Information**

Our home-school notification system known as **Blackboard/Parent Link** will continue to enable us to inform you of important events and emergencies through automated messaging. **Please inform the main office immediately of any changes to your personal contact information.**

### **School Lunch**

The price for school lunch, including milk, will be **\$3.70** per day. If a student prefers to bring lunch from home, milk may be purchased separately for \$0.75. Information on the optional prepaid lunch plan is available on our Back to School webpage. Students can bring lunch from home or buy a bagged lunch from the cafeteria. We will use two spaces for eating lunch, either the class will be in our alternative cafeteria (the gym) or in the main cafeteria, with everyone sitting 6 feet apart while eating in both locations. We will alternate classes every 8 weeks or so, so that classes will be in the traditional cafeteria at least part of the school year.

### **Recess**

Outside recess will take place with students maintaining social distancing. The playscape will not be open.

### **School Supplies**

The 2020-2021 **School Supply List can be found on the Riverside Back to School page**. If you ordered your child's school supplies through the PTA, they will be ready for your child in their classroom on the first day of school. For all others, please make sure to send the supplies in with your child on the first day of school. All students will use their own supplies. There will be no sharing of supplies.

### **Additional Information:**

Please provide your child a clean towel each day to sit on outside when having a mask break, snack, or when their class is outside having a shared reading time or another activity (weather permitting).

Enjoy the last few days of summer vacation and we look forward to seeing your children soon!

Sincerely,

Christopher Weiss  
Riverside School Principal