

August 28, 2020

Dear MMS Families,

On Monday morning we will welcome in the new 6th graders. We are excited to get started with them and have a great orientation day planned for that day. On Tuesday, September 1st we will welcome back the 7th and 8th grade students. The MMS staff worked extremely hard to prepare the building as well as materials for our remote learners. We are prepared to make changes on the fly to best suit the needs of our school community. The start of this new school year will likely feel very different in a lot of ways. We are fully aware of that and will devote a lot of time checking in with our students.

Some changes and things to note as we all prepare to start this school year are outlined below:

- **Microwaves** – There will not be microwaves available for use by students (in the cafeteria, or by having a staff member heat their food).
- **Snacks** – Teams will be working snack breaks into their schedules. Snack times are complicated by the need for 6’ of distance so that masks may be removed to eat. I would recommend quick and easy snacks that can also easily be taken outside with the student for an outside snack break.
- **Water** – By their nature, our traditional water fountains will not be in use. We have two water bottle filling-style fountains. These are located. By the cafeteria and the gym. Please send your child with a well-labeled (with their name), washable reusable water bottle. We want students to stay hydrated, so water bottles are definitely recommended.
- **Face Coverings** – Face coverings are required any time that students are in the building unless during a designated mask break or during eating when 6’ of distance can be maintained. Bandanas would not qualify as a face covering under the current parameters. If you have any question about whether a mask would qualify, please have your son/daughter check in with a staff member at the MS, but also bring a more traditional face covering just in case. Again, please practice prolonged face covering wearing before school starts.
- **Self-Advocacy** – With some of the parameters put in place, teachers will not be able to move around their classrooms with as much ease to assist students. It may be more challenging for teachers to quickly identify those students who may be struggling with a concept. Please encourage your son/daughter to speak up and ask for assistance. Our teachers are excellent at a lot of things, but reading minds is a skill we are all still developing.

- **In-Building Traffic Flow** – The hallways are all labeled with tape lines down the right side. The main goal when in the hallway is to “stay to the right.” We are fortunate that our hallways are wide and allow for spacing. The stairs in the lobby are one change that should be pointed out. The stairs on the front (across from the Main Office) will be used to access the third floor, while the stairs on the back of the lobby (by back parking lot) will be used to access the second floor. This will help reduce congestion on the landing between the two floors. It will take some time to get used to, but we think it will help the overall traffic flow.
- **After school Coverage** – We will be able to offer after school coverage in the cafeteria until 5pm starting on Monday, August 31st. Please only access this on an as needed basis. We are working hard to limit the people in the building after school hours so the custodial crew will have the necessary space to work. However, we also understand that this may be necessary coverage for our families.
- **6th Graders** – When you arrive on Monday morning, there will be lots of staff members around to assist you in getting to your Advisory to start the day. Remember, Atlantic is on the far end of the second floor (so take the stairs in the back of the lobby) and Kennebec is on the far end of the third floor (so take the stairs in the front of the lobby across from the Main Office windows. We look forward to seeing you!
- **7th and 8th Graders** – You will start your day with your Advisor on Tuesday, September 1st. This Advisor is possibly different from the one you had last year. The name of your Advisor can be found on a label on your welcome letter or in PowerSchool. We will have people around with lists to assist if needed.
- **Overall Adherence to Protocols** – We all share the same goal: A safe return to school. So, please make every effort to follow the established protocols. Your teachers will go over these with you and will be able to answer your questions.

Over the past few weeks we have received emails with questions (to be expected). However, in many of those emails there were also kudos to the MMS team for our hard work in preparing for the start of school. Thank you for acknowledging the work that has gone in. We cannot do this without working together, though. Please communicate with teachers and other school staff if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Sam Dunbar
Principal - MMS