



Jess M. Giannini
Principal

Amy Borio
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"Together we Share, Discover, Create, and Achieve"

Dear Pine Grove Families,

I hope this message finds you well and enjoying the summer months with friends and family. As I write to you today, I am very aware that this summer has been unlike any other on record. For parents and educators, a cloud of uncertainty has loomed overhead. As the father of 2 elementary age children and the husband of a school teacher, I know that returning to school is a very big deal. It has been the main topic of discussion around our dinner table, I am confident it has been for your families as well.

Over the past few months our district has explored numerous options, reviewed past plans, talked with colleagues in other districts, read material from health organizations, and met in task forces to develop our framework for reopening. It is enough to make anyone's head spin. We also know that plans will continue to be modified as we are updated about the virus and as state and local health agencies provide new information. Regardless of where we land, the one constant is that the PGS staff and I are excited to see our students again, teach live lessons, and experience the joy and passion for teaching and learning in person. We also share in the concerns and apprehensions all families feel at the moment as we prepare to take our first steps back into the school again.

Today, I am hoping to provide families with as much information regarding the specific plans to reopen Pine Grove School in August as possible. These plans and talking points will be followed regardless of the model we reopen with. In terms of models, I am referring to a complete reopen with all students or a hybrid model (½ of our students in the building at a time) which has more recently been discussed. Unfortunately, I do not have information to share regarding models at the time as this is yet to be determined. I do encourage all families to set some time aside to read these plans at their earliest convenience. Also included is a list of Frequently Asked Questions with responses. This list represents the most commonly asked questions to date. Finally, and perhaps most important, is a link to a video starring Mrs. Borio, Mr. G and some special guests. The video is a guide for students and families on some of the basics for a return to school. We hope it helps children feel more at ease with their return to school.

The links to the full plans and video can be found below.

- [Proposed Arrival and Dismissal Plan for 2020-2021](#)
- [Proposed Hallway and Restroom Plan for 2020-2021](#)
- [Lunch and Recess Plan for 2020-2021](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions 2020-2021](#)
- [Preparing to return student and family video](#)

Clearly, there is much to digest. To help families begin to wrap their heads around the changes, found below are some helpful highlights from our PGS reopening plans for you to consider. While they do not cover all aspects of our return, I offer them here as a quick way to begin digesting the changes that will be in place when we return.

Pine Grove reopening highlights Include:

- Students and staff will be required to wear masks for extended periods of time. This includes several extended periods during the day. Finding a mask your child is comfortable with (multiple pairs is recommended) and beginning to practice wearing it is a good idea for all families.
- Classrooms will be outfitted with a mix of tables and desks. Children will sit 3'-6' apart and be provided a clear, protective shield to use throughout the day.
- Students will be grouped in cohorts. This means that classroom will be paired with 1-2 other classrooms to form a cohort. These groups will eat lunch together, play together at recess, and where feasible, interact with similar staff throughout the week.



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- Arrival and dismissal will look different. Families will not enter the building to pick up or drop off their children. A complete review of the current plan can be found below. Please review it and make sure you understand how this process will work.
- The best way families can help us all stay healthy and stay in school is to keep children home when they are sick or showing signs of illness. Stricter guidelines exist regarding keeping children home from school when sick and when they are demonstrating signs of COVID-19.

In closing, I want to thank you, the members of our school community for sharing ideas, concerns, and asking questions during the past few weeks. This always gets me thinking and helps with the process of creative problem solving. Regardless of where Avon Public Schools lands with our reopening plans, know that our staff and I remain resources for you in the coming days and weeks. While I am planning and re-planning, I still try to take time each day to think about what is most important, the social emotional needs of our students. Here are a few links for kids that I hope they will enjoy. The first is a resource filled with social stories. Social stories are often used to help students prepare for new experiences. They are very visual. The second link shares the idea of making your own self portrait. I would love to have all our students return in August with one. What a great way to introduce themselves to their new class and perhaps post them at their seat to remind one another that behind their mask is a smiling, friendly face. I know I am going to start working on mine.

Social stories related to masks and COVID in general:

<https://www.autismlittlelearners.com/2020/07/covid-19-related-stories-for-schools.html>

Make your own self portrait:

https://cassiestephens.blogspot.com/2020/07/behind-my-mask-super-kid-self-portrait.html?fbclid=IwAR3_wyrXYOj_GNoDDX5hNL_NcoZfvaGki2BpytLBEfBT8pCRiwDydVJadsA

I wish all members of our school community a safe and healthy end to your summers. I look forward to being together again soon.

Warm Regards,

Jess