



COTTER
SCHOOLS

WHERE STANDARDS, VALUES, *and you* MATTER

1115 WEST BROADWAY
WINONA, MN 55987 USA
PHONE: 507.453.5000
WEB: COTTERSCHOOLS.ORG

August 24, 2020

Dear Cotter Elementary School Students and Parents,

We are excited to welcome you to the 2020-21 school year! You will be the first 5th and 6th grade students at Cotter Schools! We are just a few weeks away from the start of the year, and while we hope you enjoy your last days of summer vacation, we have some important information to share with you.

We are hosting a **Meet Your Teacher** night on **Monday, Aug. 31, from 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm**. Four to Five students will be assigned to a half hour window of time. Students can come in at any point during the time and find their locker, meet their teacher, drop off supplies, and get some additional information. [Please review your assigned time in the color-coded attached document](#). This document also lists your classmates. We ask that only you and your parent(s)/guardian(s) come in at this time - no siblings - so that we can adhere to current safety guidelines.

Thank you for coming to school last week to get your school picture taken and to pick up a packet of information. Please sign and return the following forms at Meet Your Teacher night or on the first day of school:

1. [Acknowledgement of Receipt and Understanding of the Cotter Handbook](#) - The updated Student Handbook for 2020-2021 can be found in the student portal. A COVID section outlining some required safety changes can be found at the beginning of the document.
2. [The District 861 Forms for textbooks, health and counseling services](#) - Cotter Schools can only receive state funds for these services if you complete the forms and check "[I do request](#)" where indicated.

Cotter Schools follows the guidelines of the School Immunization Law in Minnesota. Therefore, it is important that your child is up to date on his/her vaccinations. Please have this taken care of and up to date before school begins. The webpage describing the School Immunization Law is:
<https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/immunize/basics/kids.html>.

Your first day of school is **Tuesday, September 8**. The school day begins at 7:45 am and ends at 2:15 pm. Students may arrive at school between 7:15 am - 7:45 am. Students will be divided by grades and enter two different doors to create a safe entry and exit process. [The attached map indicates these locations](#).

5th grade students will enter/exit the doors at the 360 Vila Street entrance

6th grade students will enter/exit the doors closest to the Tennis Center/Parking Lot.

Mrs. "A" Getzin and Mrs. Ortega will be the John Nett Rec Building Receptionists, and they will be available throughout the day for students and parents, as needed. The phone number for the JNR building is 507-453-5000 x5035. Students entering the building after 7:45 am will need to enter through the secure 360 Vila Street entrance. We adjusted our start and end time to accommodate the busing schedule. If these times present a problem for you, please email Mr. Dave Forney directly at dforney@cotterschools.org.

In order to minimize potential exposure, students will be sitting 6 feet apart in the classroom and will be expected to wear a mask. Students will remain in their primary classroom for the majority of the day, and the teachers will switch classrooms. For some classes the entire pod will move to a new location (Phy Ed, Art, Band, etc.) All students will be participating in Band and General Music classes this year in their pods. Additional information about the Band program will be sent to you from Ms. Welch. We are also scheduling a morning recess and a lunch break outside, and we are encouraging our classes to meet outside when appropriate.



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We ask students to adhere to the following protocol when entering the building:

1. Students should approach their assigned entrance wearing a mask and follow social distancing protocols. Safety cones and floor markers will guide students through the entry.
2. Staff will greet students, ask the Health Assessment questions and take their temperature to confirm the student is feeling healthy.
3. Students will be asked to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer as they enter the building.
4. Students will proceed to their locker to put away their backpacks, lunches, and coats, and then will move directly to their classrooms. They will not be permitted to gather in the hallways.

The student's name will be on his/her locker near the teacher's door. Due to our current cleaning protocols, we ask that the students do not decorate their lockers at this time. Most supplies should be kept in the classroom. There have been two additions to the student supply list - a pair of headphones to use with the chromebooks, and a towel/blanket/cushion to sit on outside that can be kept in the student's locker until needed.

If you are interested in bringing in a treat for your student's birthday, we ask that you communicate first with your student's teacher, and only store-purchased, individually wrapped items will be permitted.

There is no before or after school care at this time. Students must arrange transportation. If this is a concern for you, please contact Mr. Dave Forney directly at dforney@cotterschools.org. We are still waiting to hear about the final bus routes and drop off/pick up times. Vila Street in front of the 360 Vila entrance to the John Nett Building will be reserved for the buses. Please do not park in this area or drop off/pick up your student in this space. More detailed information about parking and the car line to drop off and pick up students will be sent in a separate email.

Students must bring a cold lunch with them to school each day. There is no hot lunch service. Students are recommended to bring a filled water bottle to school each day as well. Drinking fountains are only available to fill water bottles; the spout feature for individual drinking is not permitted at this time. Students will be assigned an individual chromebook to use in the classroom for the year.

We know there are a lot of changes this year, and we are asking each and every student and staff member to adjust to new protocols. This will take practice and reminders, but the health and safety of our community is our highest priority. Thank you for doing your part!

We are thrilled to be able to meet in person to begin the school year! We look forward to partnering with you to provide a great educational experience for our Cotter students and their families. Please let us know if we can be of any service to you at any time.

Sincerely,

Mary Eileen Fitch and David Forney
Vice-Principals, Cotter Schools

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