



**COTTER**  
SCHOOLS

WHERE STANDARDS, VALUES, *and you* MATTER

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

August 19, 2020

Dear Cotter Junior High School Students and Parents,

We are excited to welcome you to the 2020-21 school year! We have missed you! We are just a few weeks away from the start of the year, and while we hope you enjoy your last days of vacation, we have some important information to share with you.

Thank you for coming to school today to get your school picture taken and to pick up a number of items. Please sign and return the following forms on the first day of school to your first period teacher:

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 alphabetically between three doors to create a safe entry and exit process. The attached map indicates these locations.

Pod 1 will enter/exit the doors on Vila Street.

Pod 2 will enter/exit the doors on Cummings Street.

Pod 3 will enter/exit the doors on 7th St.

Students entering the building after 7:45 am will need to enter through the secure 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](mailto:dforney@cotterschools.org).

Due to Labor Day, the first week of school for Junior High students is only four days long, so students will come to school in-person Tuesday, September 8 - Friday, September 11. Beginning the week of September 14, Junior High students will attend school in-person four days a week, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Wednesdays will be Distance Learning days, and students primarily will complete independent work previously assigned in class. Students should expect a couple hours of independent work on Wednesday morning. Some teachers may choose to Zoom with individual students or small groups who need additional help, and those online meetings will be scheduled by the teacher in advance.

In order to minimize exposure, students will be assigned to a pod and will remain with those students all day. Here is the [daily schedule by pods](#). 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, Music, Campus Ministry, etc.) We are also scheduling a morning break and a lunch break outside.



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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.

Junior High Locker numbers will be assigned prior to school and communicated to the students. Individual student supplies should be kept in the primary classroom. The locker rooms in the basement of the St. Teresa building will be available for athletes who need to store athletic bags for after school activities.

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](mailto:dforney@cotterschools.org).

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 a chromebook to use in the classroom.

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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