



Keri Holter
Principal North Woods International School

NORTH WOODS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

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When I dreamed of how my first principal letter to families would be, I never dreamed it would be like this. I thought it would be full of plans for celebrations and hugs and meeting all of you in person. But here we are in the midst of a public health crisis the likes of which we haven't seen in our lifetimes. Despite all the changes we have made in our lives since this spring, what remains the same is our dedication to students and families, our desire to support, teach and celebrate and our passion for education for all children. I want to personally let you know that we are doing everything we can to mitigate the risk to students and get everyone back in our building so we can provide the care, socialization and academics you have come to expect from North Woods and the School District of La Crosse. In any other school year, I would have reached out much sooner with details about the upcoming year, but details have been changing on a daily basis. I now feel comfortable coming to you with a plan to begin the school year.

This letter provides you with some important updates. We will be following our normal district calendar for days when school is in session with one exception, the last day of school for students in the spring will now be June 3 instead of June 4. Attached to this letter is the updated district calendar.

As you know, all families had an option of signing up for the Coulee Region Virtual Academy or continuing on with North Woods in a Blended Learning format – remote and when possible, face-to-face. We had around 60 students sign up for the Virtual Academy. Mrs. Gasser, Mrs. Swift, Mrs. Ellefson-Johnson and Mrs. Schams will be teaching at CRVA to start the year. As a result of these enrollments, the following teachers will be working with our grade levels:

PK4 – Ms. Lafleur

Kindergarten –Ms. Hooper, Ms. DeYoung, Ms. Justin

1 st Grade – Ms. Stanton, Ms. Schuttenhelm, Ms. Brudos

2 nd Grade – Ms. Misch, Ms. Oligney

3 rd Grade – Ms. Hanson, Ms. Kies and Ms. Kratt

4th/5th Global Strand - Ms. Pierre, Mr. Wittrock

4th/5th Spanish Strand - Ms. Beran, Ms. Hembd

Parents will be able to go into Family Access on August 21 and see classroom assignments for students.

We also want to welcome two new staff members to North Woods this year. Mr. Wittrock will be joining us in the Global Strand of 4th/5th and Taygen Viegut is joining us as an interpreter. Our new school nurse will be Jenna Euler. We're sure they will be fabulous additions to our already incredible team.

Because we are starting the school on September 1st with remote instruction and not face-to-face, we have several changes to the start of this school year. All students K-5 will receive an iPad to use throughout the school year. Parents have the option of purchasing iPad insurance (\$20 per student for the year) which can be paid on-line during the Skyward Student Information Update, or drop off a check or cash at North Woods the first week of school. iPads will be distributed during our first week from September 1st-4th.

Because things are still changing related to requirements when students are back face-to-face, we will be sharing these changes in early September. They will definitely include students in different grade levels using specific doors for arrival and dismissal, plans for having breakfast and lunch in classrooms or outside, providing Art-Music-PE classes either in homeroom classes or outside, limiting the number of students in hallways at one time , no co-mingling of students between classrooms, and mask wearing for students K-5.

Although we are starting the school year with remote instruction, we have been given clearance to hold face-to-face back to school orientation meetings with small groups of students/parents during the first week of school (September 1-3). Parents who feel comfortable coming to school for these face-to-face orientations will have the ability to sign up for a scheduled 45 minute time to meet your child's teacher, get your child's iPad, learning materials and supplies, get a quick introduction on how to use Canvas (the learning management system the district has adopted K-12), daily instruction schedules, and other materials your child will need to be successful this year. The ability to sign up for times will begin on August 22. Times will be available between 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 1 and Thursday, September 3 and between noon and 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 2. Please watch your email for the announcement and sign up link. For families who choose this option, masks are required for students and parents, all families are asked to come only during their scheduled times and leave immediately following their appointments and to also exercise social distancing. Families will only be allowed to go to and from homeroom classes. For parents who are not able to make these days work or who do not feel comfortable meeting face-to-face, we will provide a virtual option on Friday, September 4. Teachers will reach out to parents who did not sign up for a face-to-face meeting in order to facilitate these virtual meetings.

We wanted to help parents with materials this year so we will be providing students with some of their supplies. These will be picked up during the first week of school during family meetings. Please see the included updated supply lists for students. If you have difficulty providing these supplies or any concerns about them, please contact Administrative Assistant Kelsie Bolstad in the Main Office.

In anticipation of coming back face-to-face, all parents of students who are eligible for busing need to register your child(ren). The Special Education Office will schedule busing for special education students if it is included in their IEP. Many of you may have already done this. If you have not registered for busing this fall, we ask that you do this as soon as possible. This year, we are also asking families who are able to pick up and drop off students at school at the scheduled arrival and dismissal times to consider doing this. This will free up more spaces on our school buses to allow for social distancing. Students who ride buses will be required to wear masks, sit one to a seat unless they ride with siblings, load from back to front and unload from front to back. Go Riteway (608 881-6370) is our bus company. The bus company will be using this information to build their routes for this year prior to students returning face-to-face. Please visit the district web page at lacrosseschools.org, go to Parents and then to Transportation. On this page you will find a button for registering students for busing for the 2020-21 school year. Once your child is registered, the bus company will send you a confirmation letter with pick up and drop off times and locations.

All parents are also asked to update the necessary student information on-line again this year (Student Info Update) and sign other back to school forms electronically. You can visit our school webpage which has a direct link to the Family Access site. On the Family Access site you will be able to update the student

enrollment and health information, electronically sign the Consent to Treat Form and the Walking Field Trip Permission Form, fill out an application for free or reduced lunch, review the Student Code of Conduct, and fill out other back to school information. If you haven't done so yet you are able to enter this information now. If you need your login and password please contact our school office.

I will be at North Woods each day starting August 17. Please reach out to me by email at kholter@lacrosssd.org or phone (608) 789-6400 or contact our amazing AA Kelsie Bolstad at kbolstad@lacrossesd.org or phone (608) 789-6401.

People will sometimes wonder what people in education do all summer. I can assure you that our teachers, custodians and staff have been working hard to problem solve, come up with creative solutions and make school engaging and effective for all our students. Most people don't see this work, but I am incredibly proud of our staff and how they have approached this challenge with energy and expertise. We are all ready for an amazing school year. Personally, I am thrilled to be at North Woods and to meet you and your family. We are going to continue to do amazing things, together!

Sincerely,

Keri Holter
North Woods International Principal