July 5, 2020

Dear Families:

Normally, I send my initial letter to families In August in preparation for the new school year. However, due to recent changes and requirements in Oregon for the reopening of schools, I felt it would be best to contact you so you would be prepared for these changes. South Columbia Family School will be following all requirements established by the Oregon Department of Education and the Oregon Health Authority. Our local agency, Columbia County Public Health, will be instrumental in providing us guidance.

First of all, South Columbia Family School will, most likely, open in the Fall. All is dependent upon what the Oregon Department of Education and the Oregon Health Authority determines is in the best health interest of the students. If we are able to reopen, the state has options for three potential school-types for reopening, and one fits what we already do: hybrid. The hybrid model has a combination for both in-person and at-home learning. Therefore, major adjustments do not have to be made for SCFS. However, we do need to make some modifications to ensure that we have a safe learning environment for our students and staff by limiting possible contamination by COVID-19. Here are some changes that will occur:

1. SCFS will go to three community days instead of just two. This is due to the necessity for having sufficient social distancing in the classroom. The community days will be Tuesdays through Thursdays, with Monday and Friday for conferencing. Each cohort will have 8-10 students in it. We will try to have all siblings from a family on the same day. No guarantees of specific days are possible at this time.
2. Conferencing may be done virtually, at times. If in person, we have to limit who comes into the various classrooms. Movement between classrooms will be on the exterior of the building.
3. There will be no access to the family room. It has been converted to a health room in the event that a student or staff member is ill.
4. Students will enter through three separate doors, depending on the cohort, for their community days. For conferencing, they will go directly to their teacher’s exterior door.
5. Any adult entering the school must have a mask on. Please ensure that you get one. We will have some limited disposable ones to distribute. The state will determine if masks are required for students. Right now, they are recommended for ages 12 and up, but not required.
6. Each classroom will have a sanitizing station upon entry. If needed, we have scanning thermometers.
7. Social distancing will be expected outside of the school.
8. Special services, including speech, will continue. We are working out details on this.
9. All school doors, including the office, will be locked during these days. A buzzer will be outside of the office in the event that someone needs to speak with office personnel.
10. All welcome back meetings will be held virtually with the individual cohorts. More will come on this in the August letter.

A committee has been established to help administration develop practices for the school that will keep students safe and follow proper protocols. This does include medical professionals.

As more information comes from the state, I will inform you, as needed. In the meantime, the school is creating a COVID-19 Management Plan plus developing their Operational Blueprint for Reopening for the Department of Education. A new web page (scfamilyschool.net) is being created to provide more information. The webpage is a work-in-progress.

Once school begins, families can have a tremendous positive impact by not sending children to school who are exhibiting any of the symptoms of COVID-19. Throughout the year, I will continue to refer to:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

Due to all of these changes, I would like some input from families so we can hear from you prior to the implementation of programs. Please complete the survey at

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7Q73TKM>

It is very brief, but will give us an indication of some adaptations we may have to make.

If you have questions, don’t hesitate to email me. I will create a FAQ page on the new webpage if I have a lot of questions. As stated previously, it is an evolving situation and the key for all of us is patience and adaptability.

Thank you for your support.

Ray Brown, Principal

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