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Dear Parents,

Thank you for your on-going patience as we navigate these unpredictable times. Please be assured that even with all of the moving pieces affecting educational planning right now, we are working hard to put a September plan in place. In all conversations, the health and well-being of our students and staff is our top priority and remains at the forefront of our decision making process. We understand that any change we make may be challenging for your family and greatly appreciate that you know we do so with great thought. This letter gives you information on our current planning about the fall as of today.

### **Class Configuration, Cohort Groups, and Weekly Schedules**

Minimizing interactions at school is one important risk mitigation strategy for COVID-19. To that end, we plan to keep students within a classroom cohort group which remains separate from all other groups, as well as greatly reduce the number of adults who interact with each group.

### **Preschool, PreKindergarten and Transitional Kindergarten**

We are looking at two scenarios for our Preschool, PreKindergarten and Transitional Kindergarten classrooms. In both scenarios these classes will be held in the building daily.

- **Scenario #1:** All students will be grouped in grade level cohorts. There would be one Preschool classroom, two PreKindergarten classrooms, and one Transitional Kindergarten classroom.
- **Scenario #2:** Students will be grouped in either grade specific or multi-grade cohorts of 10 - 11 students.

## Kindergarten

We are planning for two cohort groups of Kindergarten students. They will be in the building daily.

## Grades 1-4

We are currently looking at two scenarios for our Grade 1/2 and Grade 3/4 classrooms.

- **Scenario #1:** All students will be grouped in their "normal" cohorts. We will have two Grade 1/2 classrooms and two Grade 3/4 classrooms. Grade 1/2 classrooms will be in the building daily. Grade 3/4 classrooms will either be in the building daily or in the building Monday, Tuesday and half day on Wednesday and distance learning on Thursday and Friday.
- **Scenario #2:** All students in grades 1-4 will be grouped in smaller cohorts. In both 1/2 and 3/4, students will be divided into three cohorts for a total of six classrooms (rather than the four classrooms in Scenario #1). In this scenario, we still anticipate that students in 1/2 will be in the building daily. Students in 3/4 will be in the building Monday, Tuesday and a half day on Wednesday. They will be distance learning on Thursday and Friday.

## Grades 5-8

We currently plan to have middle school students grouped by grade level. Students in grade 7 will be one cohort, and those in grade 8 will be another; students in grade 6 will be placed into one of two cohort groups; and those in grade 5 will either be in one or two cohorts (depending upon enrollment). Grade 5 students will be in the building on Monday, Tuesday and for half day Wednesday and distance learning on Thursday and Friday. Students in grades 6, 7 and 8 will be distance learning on Monday, Tuesday, and for half day on Wednesday and be in the building on Thursday and Friday.

## Wednesday Early Release

This year, each Wednesday will be an early release day. Based on our current program models, all teachers are being asked to reimagine their classes, as well as the teaching models developed over the years. They will have little time when they are not with students during the school day, which means little time for lesson and curriculum planning and conferring with teammates, as well as communicating with parents. Offering time each

Wednesday afternoon carves out needed time for teachers to meet and plan together, which supports their ability to offer the best educational experiences to your children.

Another calendar change is that the two previously scheduled professional days will be regular school days, as well as the previously planned early release day on Friday, May 7.

### Clubhouse

Providing our normal, in-person Clubhouse is not possible for all grade levels. In an effort to provide Clubhouse activities for your children, the following is our current thinking based on the information we have to date.

- **Preschool, PreKindergarten and Transitional Kindergarten:** For both of the scenarios listed above, we currently plan to provide in-person Clubhouse (3:15-5:30pm) for parents who indicated on the survey earlier this month that they need this additional care. Children will remain with their school-day classmates in Clubhouse.
- **Kindergarten through Grade 4:** We will provide remote Clubhouse activities, for which you may sign up. It is most likely that we will not be able to provide in-person Clubhouse options (3:15-5:30 pm).
- **Grades 5 through 8:** Currently there are no plans for in-person Clubhouse for Grades 5-8. We are in the process of setting up a remote schedule for middle school Clubhouse activities.

More information about Clubhouse activities and registration will be available in August and will be posted on the website.

### Early Morning Drop-off

Unfortunately, we are not able to offer Early Morning Drop-off for the foreseeable future.

### Masks

Wearing a mask is an important way to help mitigate the risk of spreading COVID-19 to others. **Students in grades K-8 will be required to wear masks this fall. We also strongly recommend that students in Preschool, PreK and TK wear masks.** If your child has a medical reason for not wearing a mask, please contact our school nurse, Kelsey Riley, prior to the start of school. Now is a good time to find the most comfortable style mask

for your child. We also request that all students begin wearing a mask for an increasingly longer time period (one hour a day for 3-4 days; two hours a day for 3-4 days; three hours a day for 3-4 days, etc.). It will be helpful in September if your child begins now to build up "mask wearing" time.

### **Auxiliary Tablets**

There is a possibility that COVID-19 will again necessitate a switch to distance learning at some point during this coming school year. The school has Chromebooks available for students, if needed, in grades 1-8. Parents have asked about suggestions for auxiliary tablets to use for live video (e.g. Zoom, Google Hangouts), as the Chromebooks capability to handle video streaming is variable and connection can be poor. However, Chromebooks continue to be an excellent "work tool" for students to complete assignments on.

Suggestions for optional tablets:

[Fire HD 10](#), [iPad](#), [Fire Tablet 7](#), [Dragon Touch](#)

### **Travel Information**

As of August 1, Governor Baker has instituted [travel information](#) for anyone who returns to Massachusetts after traveling outside of Massachusetts. Please review this information thoroughly if you are traveling within two weeks prior to the start of school. The new travel information requires a 14 day quarantine period or a negative COVID-19 test.

### **Upcoming Chats with Deanne**

All parents are invited to join me at a Chat in the next few days to review these plans in greater detail and ask any questions you may have.

- Preschool, PreK, and TK -- Friday, July 31, 8:00 am
  - [Zoom link Early Childhood](#)
- Kindergarten - Grade 4 -- Thursday, July 30, 7:00 pm
  - [Zoom link Elementary](#)
- Grades 5 - 8 -- Monday, August 3, 5:00 pm
  - [Zoom link Middle School](#)

I realize this is a lot of information to absorb! I will continue to share with you any updates to our plan based on the ever-evolving health care

guidelines and recommendations. In the meantime, we are continuing to prepare to welcome our families and students back to school--in whatever form that ultimately looks like--in September. As I often say, one of the most distinguishing factors of Lesley Ellis is the strength and commitment of our community. I'm grateful to be a part of this community and especially grateful that you are, too, and that we're on this educational journey together.

We can do this.

Deanne

Lesley Ellis School, 34 Winter Street, Arlington, MA 02474

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