

Kelly M. Lyman
Superintendent

August 28, 2020

Dear Mansfield Families,

This week we hit an important milestone; all Mansfield Public School staff members returned to our schools. While administrative staff have been back for many weeks, and other staff in smaller numbers more recently, this week was our first opportunity to see how our health and safety planning would hold up with a full staff. Staff are reporting comfort and a feeling of preparedness. A five day sequence of professional learning began yesterday with staff time split between building skills to meet the demands of the upcoming school year and having time to collaboratively plan for the first days of school. At the conclusion these five days, we will have a much sharper view of what to expect as both a learner and staff member.

Today, I am sharing with you additional information to get the year started but expect I will have even more details next week about our teaching and learning approach. I hope the information below can get you started as you prepare as a family for a return to school. Be sure to also check your school's Reopening webpage for additional helpful information.

School Start Date, Opening Schedules, and Class Assignments

Our start date remains as identified on the calendar I sent to you a few weeks ago. **Students attending school in person** begin on either September 3 or 4; **those opting in to remote learning** five days a week begin on September 8. September 3 and 4 will be early dismissal days and used as orientation and introduction days. The middle school will dismiss at 12:30 and the elementary schools at 1:30. Students in attendance group A will attend school on September 3 and those in attendance group B will attend school on September 4. (Please see attached calendar.) Lunch will be served on September 3 and 4.

Schools are in the process of communicating with families about **homeroom class assignments**. We have done our best to balance classes. All classrooms have enough physical space to accommodate the number of students assigned. Students who have chosen remote learning and decide to return to school at some point will be given a homeroom assignment at that time. At this time, all students choosing remote learning are assigned to the Remote Learning Team.

Transportation Details and Bus Routes

The number of families choosing to drive their children to school is significant and bus ridership will be very small. We will continue to operate all 17 bus routes and bus stops will be very similar to what you have experienced in past years. A complete list of bus routes and stop times have been posted to our website (<https://www.mansfieldct.gov/1497/School-Bus-Transportation-Information-Pa>). Please look there for details for your child's bus.

Other things you should know about riding the bus:

- All children must wear a mask on the bus at all times and while waiting at bus stops. We have supplied the drivers with masks for any child who forgets to put one on in the morning. The driver has the right to refuse students who do not wear a mask.
- Parents of preK students must get on the bus to put their child in the safety harness. Parents must also wear a mask.
- Children are to sit one person to a seat and load the bus from the back. Leaving empty seats in the rows between children is encouraged. Drivers will assist with loading the first few days.
- Absolutely no eating is allowed on the bus.
- Due to the small number of students riding buses and the need for additional supervision at the schools to manage the number of parent drop-offs, bus monitors will not be on the buses.
- Please review the bus rules with your children.
- Handrails and seat backs (high touch areas) will be cleaned in between each bus run.

Individual schools may have sent additional information about drop off and pick up procedures. Please review as some routines may have changed.

Technology Devices

Students attending school in person will be assigned a device on September 3 and 4 (iPad for students in grades K-1 and Chromebooks for students in grades 2-8). Each device will include a charging cord. Please be sure the device is fully charged each evening. The child must bring the device to school each day but the charging cord should stay home. Information on use of technology will be sent with the device. Please be sure to read and sign off on the form sent home. If your child has a Mansfield device from last spring at home, please return it to school on the first day.

For **students choosing remote learning**, devices can be picked up on September 2 between the hours of 9:00 am and 3:00 pm or on September 3 and 4 between the hours of 2:30 pm and 4:00 pm. You will need to pick up the device from your child's school. At MMS please go to the lobby in the lower bus lot. At elementary schools you may pick up the device at the main entrance. All students in grades K and 1 must have an iPad, use of a laptop or Chromebook that you may have at home will not be sufficient. For students in grades 2-8, we recommend using a school device. If your child has a Mansfield device from last spring at home, please return it to school and pick up a new device. If you are not available at pick-up times, please call the school office to arrange a different time.

Technology Support

We will be using a number of instructional programs this year and we know that there may be times when your child needs assistance. We are developing a webpage <https://mansfieldct.gov/DigitalTools> that will offer information and assistance including step by step instructions. Should you have more specific questions, you will find an email contact on the page so that someone can respond to you personally.

Health Screening

All staff and students are asked to conduct a daily health screen before coming to school. You will receive an easy to use checklist from your nurse's office. Please remember that a travel advisory remains in effect for all residents of Connecticut. Travel to more than 30 states and territories requires a 14 day self-quarantine upon return. We also request that anyone who travels internationally self-quarantine for 14 days. If your child has traveled to one of the states on the list, or internationally, please contact the school. The list of states on the travel advisory is updated each Tuesday. To access the list go to: <https://portal.ct.gov/coronavirus/travel>.

Details on the Hybrid Approach and Remote Learning Plan

As I stated in the opening paragraph, we are working hard to complete the detailed planning for the hybrid approach and the remote learning students. Expect more details next week but there are a few details that I can share now that may be helpful:

Students Learning in the Hybrid Model

There will be a daily check in and attendance on the days a student is home. There will also be some times when the student will need to attend instruction via Zoom. Teachers will provide a detailed plan for the at home days including the times when students must be logged into the classroom.

- Plans will be available on Fridays for the next week.
- There will also be some "on your own" tasks that students must complete each day they are home.
- These at home days are good opportunities for small group or 1:1 support from a para-educator, especially at the elementary level. Some students may experience this on at home days.

Teachers will work a regular work day in school five days a week. They will be available as in a typical year to respond to emails or phone calls. Please allow 24 hours for a response.

Students in the Remote Learning Model

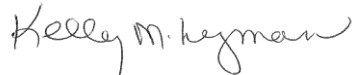
Students will be supported by a team of teachers from across the district, para-educators, and Master's level education students from UCONN. The teachers on the team represent the various grades and departments found in our schools. Using a collaborative approach, this team will develop a weekly learning plan that follows Mansfield curriculum. This team approach has been designed to create the most flexibility possible across the district as we expect some students who begin with remote learning will choose to transition back to school.

- Instruction will occur using a combination of interactive software, videos, and some live instruction and support.
- Parent support and oversight will be necessary.
- There will be a daily check in and attendance in the morning and there will also be some times when the student will need to attend instruction via Zoom. Students will not be expected to be on a screen all day.
- Teachers will provide a detailed plan for each day including the times when students must be logged into the classroom. Plans will be available on Fridays for the next week.
- A member of the team will contact all parents on September 3 and 4 to provide more information and final preparations for the September 8 start.
- Teachers will work a regular work day in school five days a week. They will be available as in a typical year to respond to emails or phone calls. Please allow 24 hours for a response.

I know a lot of information has been shared with you in the last many weeks and I thank you for your attention to it all. To look back at any of the previous communications go to: <https://www.mansfieldct.gov/2012/Mansfield-Schools-COVID-19-Information-R>.

We appreciate your support, understanding, and patience throughout these challenging times. Despite our efforts, I fear we may have more challenges ahead of us. Know that we are ready to adapt and change whenever it becomes necessary and will do all we can to keep you informed. Wishing your household a smooth transition back to school - in whatever model you are beginning!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kelly M. Lyman".

Kelly M. Lyman