



Michelle Dutrow
Superintendent
516 Allport Cutoff
Morrisdale PA, 16858
Phone - 814.345.5615 x 4000
Fax - 814.345.5220
www.westbranch.org

Michelle Dutrow, Superintendent

August 24, 2020

Greetings WB Families:

Well we have finally arrived – T minus 3 days to the start of the new school year. This morning’s communication will provide you updated information and reminders as we look to get started later in the week.

Staggered Start Reminder

As previously shared, we are starting this week with Group A students on Thursday, August 27th and Group B students on Friday, August 28th. All PreK, K, Grade 1, and Special Needs students have been assigned to either Group A or Group B just for this school opening. The A/B Groups can be found on the front door of the buildings, on the district website, and on the district Facebook page. On Monday, August 31st, we will be starting our Full Reopening for those students scheduled to return in person this Fall.

WB Cyber Rollout

Students who will be attending school this Fall via our cyber program (West Branch Virtual Academy – WBVA) may pick up their device, schedule, and contact information on Wednesday, August 26th. At that time, we will also have information about our meal service that will be offered to all families. Please report to the HS Rotunda Entrance outside the Auditorium. If you are unable to come to the school on August 26th, we will be in touch to give you a scheduled time later in the week. If possible, families are asked to adhere to the following schedule, however you may come to the school whenever during our posted hours if you have a conflict:

Grade PreK – Grade 2	9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
Grade 3 – Grade 5	10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Grade 6 – Grade 8	1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Grade 9 – Grade 12	2:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Our WBVA staff will be in touch with 50% of you on Thursday, August 27th and the other 50% of you on Friday, August 28th to introduce themselves and provide opening information. We ask for your patience as we get this part of our plan started. While we have operated a cyber program for several years, this year finds us servicing a much larger number of students and our model has been designed to provide more of a West Branch personal approach.

Student Masks

All students are to arrive either to the bus stop or the school with a mask. If you do not have a mask for your child to wear, a disposable one will be provided upon entry onto the bus or into the school. As previously shared, our PTO and Community Education Foundation generously bought each student a cloth mask and the district purchased a lanyard for the students to attach their mask to each day. Unfortunately, with the supply chain being what it is at this time, the masks and lanyards may not be here by the end of this week. We will distribute them as soon as they arrive. Until that time, disposable masks will be provided each day to those who do not come to school with their own.

Attendance

We have received many questions and concerns about student attendance and the impact of COVID-19. If a student is sent home with a fever above 100.3, and/or is subject to a quarantine by either a physician or the Department of Health (PADoH), or tests positive for the virus, these days will be recorded as excused absences, regardless of how many days. In each instance, a note will be required to return to school. Understanding how busy physician's may be once school reopens, we have revised our School Policy to state that these notes may be provided by a physician, physician's assistant, or a nurse practitioner.

A letter from our School Nurse has been included with this communication. This letter will provide more detail as it relates to student health and absences.

Water Bottles

Water fountains will not be used in the tradition way this school year. We plan to add cup dispensers to each fountain area but again the supply chain has these items shipping after the start of school. Students are permitted and encouraged to bring their own water bottle to school each day. We do have a bottle filling station in each of our three building areas: elementary, middle school and high school. Please clearly label your child's water bottle and expect it to come home each afternoon for cleaning.

Final Thoughts

The District hopes that you will find that your child's/children's school experience has been designed with their health and safety at the forefront. I am sure they will have much to share with you when they get home that first day: thermal temperature scanning, classroom arrangements, staggered lunch seating, social distancing dots, one-way arrows, desk cleaning, hand sanitizing and mask breaks. We certainly understand that our plan is not a perfect one and it will require some adjustment once we get the students back into the buildings and can see our trouble spots. We appreciate your patience as we work through the first week of school. A calm and positive attitude about all the new safety measures, by each of us adults, will go a long way toward our students feeling okay about our new normal.

Micki Dutrow