



September 13, 2021 Newsletter

IMPORTANT DATES



- 9/13 PTO Meeting – 6:00PM – Botelle Cafeteria
- 9/22 Open House – 6:00PM – Botelle School

NEWS FROM BOTELLE LIBRARY

Students will be bringing their devices home nightly (iPads for Early Primary and Primary, Chromebooks for Intermediate and Upper Intermediate). Every student gets a charger to keep at home. Please make sure your child charges their device **every night** so it is ready for school work the next day. Thank you!

BOTELLE PTO ANNUAL BELIEVE KIDS FUNDRAISER!

Your children came home with our annual Believe Kids catalog fundraiser. This is the PTO's opportunity to raise money for our teachers who may need items throughout the year, as well as fund all of the exciting events that the PTO sponsors every year, like Friday's Ice Cream Social.

The catalog will have an order form for you to show family and friends, but the most important thing to do is register your child online. This will allow us as parents to share via social media and email so we can reach family and friends near and far! They can order online and have their items shipped directly to their home!

**The website to register is www.shopfund.com

You may begin registering online and selling ASAP!! The fundraiser will run through September. It's very easy and it's one of our biggest fundraisers of the year, so please help us make our small school even greater!! Do not hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions regarding this fundraiser!! You may call/text Jenna Brown at 1-860-967-5944

Also, for the latest PTO events and meetings make sure to follow us on Facebook and Instagram!!
Facebook: Botelle Elementary PTO Instagram: @botelle_pto Happy Fundraising!!

NEWS FROM THE NORFOLK LIBRARY

The Norfolk Library book club for 5th and 6th graders will start the new school year with a National Book Award Finalist for Young People's Literature. *Ghost*, by Newbery Honor author Jason Reynolds is a story about kids who are, in both senses, running for their lives and the generous souls who help them on their way. Please sign up for the PAGETURNERS by Sept 7th and we will get a copy to the student a couple days later. The student may keep this book to read and take notes in. All students who participate will meet with Miss Eileen over a meal at the end of the month.

We hope to read a book a month if possible. This book talk group is limited to 10 students who live in Norfolk and the surrounding area. If we have room, we will open it to 4th graders.

Please email Eileen Fitzgibbons, Youth Services Librarian at efitzgibbons@biblio.org with any questions.



PRINCIPAL'S CORNER

The 2021-22 school year has gotten off to a great start! We enjoyed seeing our students and families at the Meet and Greet and at our first PTO event, the Ice Cream Social. On Saturday morning, 30 students joined our music teacher, Ms. Kleisner at the Norfolk Volunteer Fire Department to participate in the 9/11 20th Anniversary Ceremony. Our students sang three songs as part of this event. The community appreciated their attendance. A big thank you to the soccer coaches who changed the game times so students could participate in this meaningful ceremony.

While we have several Covid-19 mitigation strategies we continue to implement to keep students and staff safe, we are pleased that some have been relaxed and we were able to get together as a whole school community. It is so nice to reconnect with our parents and families!

It can be difficult to understand and keep track of all of the health and safety strategies that we are putting in place to keep our school community safe. Last week you received a screening tool to help you determine whether or not to send your child to school. There was a flow chart designed to help you understand the testing and quarantine scenarios. The most important thing to remember is to **keep your child home if he/she is sick or if anyone in the household is Covid positive or awaiting Covid test results**. Our school nurse is available to answer any questions you may have, so contact her via phone or email. Below is more information about our Covid Health and Safety Protocols, including FAQs and the screening tool.

COVID HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS

Botelle School will be following the most recent health and safety protocols from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH), Connecticut Department of Education (CSDE) and our local health district, Torrington Area Health District. As new information becomes available, we will share it with you.

FIRST AND FOREMOST, PLEASE KEEP YOUR CHILD HOME WHEN ILL

- Use the Daily Screening tool to determine whether your child should come to school
- Keep your child home if anyone in the household is POSITIVE or awaiting Covid test results

FAQs: Health & Safety Protocols

Will masks be required?

Yes. **Masks are required in all indoor areas and on buses**. The masks must be worn properly and cover the nose and mouth.

- Outdoor mask breaks will continue to be provided.
- Masks will be removed for eating as long as proper social distancing is maintained.
- Masks are not required to be worn during outdoor activities, including recess.

Who makes the decision about wearing or not wearing masks in schools in the coming school year?

Currently the Governor's Executive Order 13A states that all individuals, regardless of vaccination status must wear face coverings while in school buildings. This Executive Order is in effect until at least September 30, 2021. At that time we will follow a new Executive Order or follow the recommendations and requirements of DPH, CSDE and the Governor.

What should I do if my child feels sick?

If your child feels sick please keep them home. If they are exhibiting signs or symptoms of Covid please contact the child's healthcare provider and consider diagnostic testing. Please immediately contact the school nurse if your child has been exposed to an individual who has tested positive or if your child has tested positive for Covid-19.

- If your child has a fever, please keep them home until they are fever free, without fever reducing medication, for 24 hours.
- If your child has vomiting or diarrhea please keep him/her home until they are symptom free and able to tolerate a regular diet for 24 hours. Please discuss your child's return to school with the school nurse.
- Children diagnosed with strep throat or conjunctivitis (pink eye) should stay home until they have been on a doctor prescribed antibiotic for 24 hours.

What if a child in school has a fever or becomes ill during the school day?

We know that there are other illnesses besides Covid and students become ill or have fevers during school hours. Your child will be evaluated in the Health Office and will remain there until you or an emergency contact picks them up.

What does maximizing social distance mean?

Per the CSDE's updated fall mitigation guidance we must maximize social distancing to the extent feasible.

- Students will be seated at least 3 feet apart when in the classroom and recess settings.
- Staff, to the extent possible, will maintain 6ft distance from students in the classroom setting.
- Dividers and desk shields are no longer required as a barrier between individuals. The use of desk shields may be an option in certain cases or for certain individuals who feel this provides an extra layer of safety.

Will students stay in cohorts?

Cohorting is not required this year, but may be used as an additional mitigation strategy. Elementary students, by nature of our school structure, are typically with their cohort or class. Lunch and recess are two times of the day when students interact with others who are not in their class or cohort. Because we have large gathering spaces that are well ventilated, we will have whole school assemblies and cultural events. In these settings we will increase social distancing to 6ft.

Why does my child have an assigned seat in the cafeteria and on the bus?

Assigned seating is an additional mitigation strategy to minimize the number of students who must quarantine if an individual contracts Covid-19. Assigned seats help school staff when contact tracing must be completed.

Will regular hand washing and hand sanitizing be put in place?

Hand washing and hand sanitizing are two front line defenses in the prevention of all infectious diseases, including Covid-19. This mitigation strategy will be practiced by all who are in the building. Hygiene instruction and reinforcement will be provided.

Will visitors be allowed in school?

Volunteers and guests will be welcomed back to school but may not interact with students in classrooms. Volunteers and guests will be expected to follow school Covid policies at all times, including the proper use of face coverings, regardless of vaccination status.

Is there a designated person to speak with if I have questions or concerns about mitigation strategies?

You can contact the principal, Lauren Valentino (valentinol@botelleschool.org) or the school nurse, Keondra Dillard (nurse@botelleschool.org) with any questions or concerns.

Will we be provided with the names of children or staff that are sick?

We will not disclose names of individuals who are sick. We are legally obligated to keep all health information about individuals within our school district private at all times. We value the privacy of our staff, children and their families.

How will notification of positive cases be handled?

With the guidance and assistance of the TAHD, we have developed protocols for communicating to our school community if we have a positive case of Covid-19. If an individual tests positive for Covid-19, we will engage the Torrington Area Health Department (TAHD) in contact tracing and quarantine individuals as necessary;

- We will notify members of the school community if an individual within the school community tests positive.
- We will not release the name of any individual who tests positive. We will, as noted above, work with the health department in making determinations about who must be quarantined if necessary.
- We will notify close contacts of the positive individual.

Our school nurse has illness tracking protocols in place including a separate space to isolate individuals who are not feeling well at any time during the day. We need families to immediately communicate with us when students or family members have been exposed to or contract Covid-19. In all communications, we will focus on HIPAA confidentiality and privacy requirements in consultation with the TAHD.

Is the school providing remote learning?

The school will provide remote learning when students must quarantine due to a positive Covid test or identification as close contact of a positive individual. More details about remote learning will be provided.

Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together — Fall 2021. Updated Guidance for the Use of Mitigation Strategies in Connecticut's PreK–12 Schools, Connecticut State Department of Education.

Covid Protocols



Daily Screening For Parents

Every morning before you send your child to school, please check for the following:

- ⚠ Does your child have a temperature of **100.4 degrees** or greater?
- ⚠ Does your child have any other symptoms of COVID 19? *See the below list.*



- ⚠ Was your unvaccinated child in close contact* with anyone confirmed with COVID-19 within the last 2 weeks?

✗ If the answer is **YES** to **ANY** of these questions, **DO NOT** send your child to school. Instead, **begin quarantine** of your child and contact your healthcare provider. Strongly consider COVID-19 testing.

STOP If **ANYONE** in your home has been tested for COVID-19 (**excluding routine testing**) or is symptomatic, **DO NOT** send your unvaccinated child to school until the results have been obtained.

- ⚠ If your unvaccinated child has traveled, CDC Travel Guidelines advise that individuals who have traveled should quarantine for 7 days with a test on day 5.