



## Barre City Elementary & Middle School

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Dear Parents of Children in Grades PK-8:

We hope you are enjoying time with your family during these beautiful summer days. In just a couple of weeks we will be welcoming you and your children back to what we are confident will be another wonderful and fulfilling year. We want to take a few minutes to remind you of some important back-to-school items.

### **Information for Children Entering Prekindergarten and Kindergarten**

Welcome back to our returning Prekindergarten and Kindergarten children! If you are new to our school, we want to welcome you and your child to our elementary school! We know how excited we are when we think about seeing all of our children arriving for their first day of school. We are sure that while you share this sense of excitement, you may also be feeling some anxiety and perhaps a little sadness as you may be sending your child off for the first time. We will do everything we can to ensure that this important transition for your child goes as smoothly as possible and that the programs we offer here are tailored to meet individual student needs and to challenge every child.

### **Prekindergarten**

Our prekindergarten teachers are: Mrs. Nancy Benoit, Ms. Jennifer McKelvey and Ms. Emily Lajeunesse. These teachers will be working together throughout the year to develop programs and to plan special events.

**\*\*Please note a slightly different start of the school year for Prekindergarten children\*\***

On **Tuesday, August 29th**, our Prekindergarten staff will be hosting a “**Meet and Greet**.” All Prekindergarten children are invited to come with you, their families, to visit their classroom. This will give you the opportunity to share your child’s first visit to school.

\*If your child will attend the **morning session**, you can visit the classroom on Tuesday, August 29th between 10-11:30am.

\*If your child will attend the **afternoon session**, you can visit the classroom on Tuesday, August 29th between 12:30-2:00pm.

There is a limited amount of visitors’ parking located directly in front of the south rotunda entrance, closest to the Prekindergarten rooms. Additional parking is available at the lot on the north, three-story end of the building.

Included with this letter is a bus tag with your child’s bus information printed on it. **Please attach this tag to your child’s backpack, lunchbox, or other visible place for the first two or three months of school.** This tag will help any staff member or bus driver ensure that your child is where he/she is

***“Doing Whatever It Takes to Ensure Success for Every Child”***

supposed to be. If the tag is damaged or lost, please request a replacement from Nancy LeBlanc, our bus coordinator.

Also included in this mailing is a bus card which states your child's bus number, bus stop, and listing his/her seating assignment. Please be sure to send this card with him/her to school on the first day s/he will be riding the bus.

On **Thursday, August 31st**, according to the first letter of their last name, half of the Prekindergarten children will attend school for their regular half-day schedule, riding the bus to and from school as you have arranged with Nancy LeBlanc, our bus coordinator. **Children attending school on Thursday, but NOT Friday:**

***Nancy Benoit's Class: last names A-H***  
***Jen McKelvey's Class: last names A-Hi***  
***Emily Lajeunesse's Class: last names A-Ha***

On **Friday, September 1st**, according to the first letter of their last name, the other half of the Prekindergarten children will attend school for their regular half-day schedule, riding the bus to and from school as you have arranged with Nancy LeBlanc, our bus coordinator. **Children attending school on Friday, but NOT Thursday:**

***Nancy Benoit's Class: last names I-Z***  
***Jen McKelvey's Class: last names Ho-Z***  
***Emily Lajeunesse's Class: last names Hu-Z***

By having a smaller group of children on each day, your child will have more individual time with his/her teacher and s/he will have an opportunity to be introduced to the Prekindergarten space in a gentle and supportive way. Session hours are:

Morning: Monday through Friday, 8:30-11:15  
Afternoon: Monday through Friday, 12:30-3:15

On **Tuesday, September 5th**, all of the Prekindergarten children will be coming to school. If you are picking your child up at the end of the session or on a regular basis, please notify the office in advance. You will need to sign in at the office where you will be given a blue pass. Please bring the blue pass to your child's classroom and give it to the classroom teacher. **We do ask that if you need to have your child's bus assignment changed, please call the school office at 476-7889 no later than Monday, August 14, 2017.** This will give our bus coordinator adequate time to make the necessary adjustments before the first day of school.

### **Kindergarten**

Our kindergarten teachers are: Ms. Rebecca Allen, Mrs. Jennifer Bisson, Mrs. Allyson Healey, Mrs. Brandy Kolling, Mrs. Alicia Partridge, and Ms. Kim Tewksbury. These teachers will be working together throughout the year to develop programs and to plan special events.

On our first day of school, Monday, August 28, our kindergarten staff will be hosting an **Open House**. All kindergarten children are invited to come with you, their parents, to visit their classroom any time between 9:30 and noon. This will give you the opportunity to share your child's first visit to school, hopefully easing his/her anxiety or nervousness. There is a limited amount of visitors' parking located directly in front of the south rotunda entrance, closest to the kindergarten rooms. Additional parking is available at the lot on

the north, three-story end of the building. Two school buses will be parked in the bus loop, from 9:30 - noon, so that you and your child may board them and visit with the drivers. On Tuesday, August 29, according to the first letter of their last name, half of the kindergarten children will attend school all day, riding the bus to and from school. On Wednesday, August 30, according to the first letter of their last name, the other half of the kindergarten children will attend school all day. On Thursday, August 31, all children will attend all day.

***Children attending school on Tuesday, August 29:***

***Ms. Allen's Room – A-L; Mrs. Bisson's Room – A-L; Mrs. Healey's Room – A-M;  
Mrs. Kolling's Room – A-K; Mrs. Partridge's Room – A-H; and Ms. Tewksbury's Room – A-L.***

***Children attending school on Wednesday, August 30:***

***Ms. Allen's Room – M-Z; Mrs. Bisson's Room – M-Z; Mrs. Healey's Room – N-Z;  
Mrs. Kolling's Room – L-Z; Mrs. Partridge's Room – I-Z; and Ms. Tewksbury's Room – M-Z.***

By having only half of the class there on each of these days, your child will have more individual time with his/her teacher and s/he will have an opportunity to be introduced to the full day kindergarten program in a gentle and supportive way. **All of the kindergarten children will be coming to school on Thursday, August 31.** If you are picking your child up at the end of the day or on a regular basis, please notify the office in advance and plan to meet him/her in the cafeteria where you will need to sign them out. **We do ask that if you need to have your child's bus assignment changed, please call the school office at 476-7889 no later than Wednesday, August 23, 2017.** This will give our bus coordinator adequate time to make the necessary adjustments before the first day of school.

Attached, please find a copy of the bus schedule indicating the pick-up and drop-off points and times. Also attached is a copy of our school bus rules. We would greatly appreciate it if you would take some time with your child to review, in a positive way, these behavioral guidelines, and explain why they are so important. **To protect their safety, our policy is that the bus driver will not let any kindergartner off his/her bus unless a parent or a designated person (at least 7<sup>th</sup> grade or older) is present at the school bus door. If neither is there, the child will be brought back to school.** If someone other than yourself will be picking up your son/daughter at the bus stop, please let the school office know **in writing** the name and phone number of this person prior to the school dismissal time. Thank you for your careful attention to this.

Enclosed is a tag with your child's name, teacher's name, and bus information on it. **Please attach this tag to your child's backpack, lunchbox, or other visible place for the first two or three months of school.** This tag will help any staff member or bus driver ensure that your child is where he/she is supposed to be.

In order to provide a more orderly environment and to eliminate competition for seats, all students are assigned a reserved seat on the bus. Included in this mailing is a postcard stating your child's bus number, bus stop, and listing his/her seat assignment. Please be sure to send this card with him/her to school on the first day s/he will be riding the bus.

**Information for All Students Grades PK-8:**

**Open House Schedule**

Open House for children in grades K-4 is scheduled to take place on Thursday evening, September 21. This event will give you and your child an opportunity to visit his/her classroom and meet his/her teacher. More information regarding this night will be coming home after the start of the school year.

Grades 5-8 will host a Back to School Night on Thursday, August 24th from 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. The time and schedule for this evening is on the colored paper attached to this newsletter.

### **Hot Lunch/Breakfast Program**

BCEMS provides a nutritious breakfast and lunch daily from our food service provider, Fitz Vogt & Associates. We also have a fresh fruit and vegetable program where we offer a fresh snack every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday to all students free of charge.

Included in this mailing is a letter from our food service supervisor, Craig Locarno, as well as a menu for August and September.

The Barre City Elementary and Middle School will be implementing for the third year a new option available to schools participating in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs called the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). This means that **all students enrolled in Barre City Elementary and Middle School are eligible to receive a healthy breakfast and lunch at school at no charge each day of the 2017-18 school year. No further action is required of you. Your student is automatically eligible to participate in these meal programs without having to pay a fee or submit an application.** If you have any questions please call the cafeteria at 479-2461.

*Federal guidelines require us to send home the following notice:*

*The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal and, where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or if all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited basis will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)*

*If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W. Washington, DC 20250-9410 or by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov). Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities and wish to file either an EEO or program complaint please contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339 or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish). Persons with disabilities who wish to file a program complaint, please see information above on how to contact us by mail directly or email. If you require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) please contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD.) USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*

### **School-Based Health Center**

For the fourth year BCEMS will host a school-based health center. Two nurse practitioners alternate their time working here, providing primary health care to students on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. The School-Based Health Center is an extension of Central Vermont Medical Center's pediatric primary care practice. More information regarding this program will be coming home at the beginning of the school year.

### **Bus Schedule**

Bus schedules are enclosed with this letter. Please be sure to check for your child's bus number and pick up/drop off location. **Parents of children in Prekindergarten, Kindergarten, and First grade**, enclosed please find a tag which has your child's name, teacher's name, and bus information on it. We ask that

your child have this tag on the backpack for at least the first two months of school. The hours for our middle school, grades 5-8, will be from 7:35 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The buses will be picking up these children between 7:00 a.m. and 7:30 a.m., arriving at the school at 7:35 a.m. The middle school buses will depart the school at 2:30 p.m. The last student should get off the afternoon bus by 3:00 p.m. The hours for the elementary school, grades K-4, will be from 8:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. The buses will pick up these children between 7:50 a.m. and 8:30 a.m., arriving at the school by 8:30 a.m. Buses will depart with the K-4 students at approximately 3:30 p.m. The last student should get off these afternoon buses by 4:15 p.m. Especially at the beginning of the year, please be sure that your child is at his/her bus stop 10 minutes before the scheduled departure time and is patient if the bus is a little late. It will undoubtedly take a few days to confirm the time schedules. **For the first couple of weeks, or until we are able to be sure that space is available, we will not be in a position to honor requests for students to ride any bus, either to or from school, other than his/her own current assigned bus.** Attached is a list of the bus rules. Please take some time to review these rules and procedures with your child and to emphasize their critical importance.

In order to provide a more orderly environment and eliminate competition for seats, all students in grades K-8 are assigned a reserved seat on the buses. Included in this mailing is a postcard stating your child's bus number, bus stop, and listing his/her reserved seat assignment. Please be sure s/he brings this card with him/her to school on the first day. **We do ask that if you need to have your child's bus assignment changed, please notify us of this request by calling the school at 476-6541 no later than Wednesday, August 16, 2017. This will give our bus coordinator adequate time to make the necessary adjustments before the first day of school.** All students will use the larger, north rotunda entrance. For security reasons, side doors are not to be used for student entrance or exit.

### **Supervision of Bus Stops**

The school's supervision of the students does not begin until they board the school bus in the morning. We strongly encourage you to work with other parents in your area to develop a system to ensure that a responsible adult is always present while your child is waiting for the bus.

### **Parents Driving Their Own Children**

All students will be required to ride their assigned bus home unless the office receives **written notification** from you stating that they are to walk (students in grades 5-8 only), or will be picked up by private vehicle. Parents transporting their own children should not drive in the main bus circle in front of the flagpole. All private vehicles must use the small traffic circle where the handicapped and visitor parking area is located. We would ask that you exercise extreme caution at all times as you drive near the building. If you are driving your child to school, please arrange to have him/her arrive no sooner than 5 minutes before the start of the school day. Grade 5-8 children transported by private vehicles are to wait on the benches in the rotunda area until the first bus arrives and discharges its children. Grade K-4 students are to wait in the lunchroom where supervision will be provided. The office is located directly to the left after you enter through the north rotunda entrance, to the right of the flagpole.

### **Security System**

To help ensure your child's safety here at school, a video, intercom, lock release system must be used. Once the children have arrived in the morning and are in the building, all outside doors are locked and any parents or visitors to the school will need to go to the main, larger entrance, enter the rotunda area, and push the buzzer on the wall to the left of the doors. One of our receptionists will greet you, ask for your name and reason for coming to the school, and have you sign in and get a visitor or volunteer badge to wear. At the conclusion of your visit, please return to the office and sign out in the visitor log book.

We hope you understand and appreciate that this security system is not meant to discourage visiting, but rather was installed solely to help protect your child's safety.

### **Summer Reading Reminder**

Your children should be completing the summer literacy activity page for their grade. These were sent home with all students who will be entering grades 1-8. If you need a replacement, all materials are available on the school website or in the school office, school library, the Aldrich Library, and Next Chapter books. Basic requirements are articulated for each grade level, so please check to see what your child should have completed by the time school starts. Many thanks!

### **School Improvement Planning**

Our school's Improvement Team met regularly throughout the 2016-2017 school year to continue the process of evaluating our school's strengths and identifying those areas where we would like to grow and improve. The primary focus of this team is on student performance as measured by various assessment instruments or tests. We are committed to working together with you to insure that our school provides your child with the best educational experience possible. We welcome your thoughts, ideas, and participation at any time.

### **Smoking Policy**

We want to remind you that the Vermont State Legislature passed a law during the 1995 session making it illegal to smoke anywhere on any public school's grounds at any time. Consequently, our school's entire campus is smoke-free. This includes the outside grounds.

### **School Clothing**

A respectful appearance is required for staff and students at all times. Clothes, including shoes, are not to be a health or safety hazard or cause interference with the educational process. If any student and/or staff member is concerned about another person's dress, the matter should be brought to the attention of either of the co-principals and we will determine the appropriate action. Specifically:

- All underwear must be completely covered, including sports bras and boxer shorts
- All shirts/blouses must be long enough to cover the tops of pants/skirts
- Skirts must be long enough for respectful sitting and bending
- Hats, coats, and sunglasses (unless needed for medical reasons) are not permitted to be worn in school. They should be removed as soon as possible upon entering the building.

The following are not allowed:

- Clothing that refers to sex, drugs, cigarettes, alcohol, unacceptable language or violence
- See-through clothing
- Spaghetti straps and revealing necklines
- Pants, skirts, or dresses, that are worn low enough to inhibit walking, or which drag on the floor
- Low riding pants/skirts/shorts that reveal the midriff and/or buttocks/underwear
- Wearing of potentially dangerous objects or fashion accessories such as wallet chains or spiked attire
- Clothing or apparel with gang-like appearance
- Pajamas and slippers
- Shoes which present a safety hazard (wheeled shoes, extremely high heels or soles)
- Pants with writing on the buttocks

Thank you for your support by insisting that your child follows these guidelines.

### **Cell Phones/Electronic Devices**

Cell phones, while permitted, are for emergency use only. To avoid disrupting the learning environment they are not to be visible or turned on throughout the school day. If a student has a phone visible or in

use it will be given to the adult for the student to pick up at the end of the school day. If this becomes a repeated problem, a call will be made to the parent(s) who will have to pick up the phone.

In addition, because of the distractions they have caused on school buses, except for emergencies, cell phones are not to be turned on or visible while riding the bus to and from school.

Electronics are discouraged from being brought to school. If a student brings an electronic device to school and it is visible or turned on during the school day the same procedures used for cell phones will be followed.

### **Voicemail System**

Our school has a voice mail system. While one of our office staff members will answer the phone from 7:15 a.m. – 4:15 p.m., except in cases of emergencies, calls for teachers and other staff members are forwarded to the voice message system. Because the staff most likely will not have the opportunity to access their voicemail until the end of the school day, please do not leave time-sensitive or emergency messages in their mailboxes. We want to remind you that any non-classroom issues such as bus arrangements or hot lunch questions are handled by the office staff and not by your child's teacher. Our hope is that this voicemail system will serve to support positive home-school communication.

### **Used Music Instrument Sale**

For all parents of students in grades 5-8 who are interested in playing a musical instrument, and prefer not to rent one, there is a used instrument sale on Saturday, August 26, 2017 at the Bethany Church, 115 Main Street, Montpelier, Vermont. The sale hours are from 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. If you have a used, serviceable instrument you wish to sell, please bring it to the Bethany Church between 4:00 and 7:00 p.m. on Friday, August 25, 2017. If your instrument is sold, you will receive 80% of the selling price. The remaining 20% will go to Central Vermont Share the Music, Inc. 100% of the profit goes to provide music scholarships. It is recommended that musical instruments not be purchased online without consulting with our music teacher first to ensure that the instrument is of high enough quality.

### **Basic Student Expectations**

Our three guiding principles are: Respect yourself, respect others, and respect property. In an effort to help cultivate an environment where all members of our school community follow these guidelines, we have hung signs stating what respectful behavior specifically looks like in all classrooms, hallways, bathrooms, buses, and the lunch room. Please take some time to remind your child that we expect everyone in our school to be respectful and kind, to follow directions, and to keep their hands and feet to themselves.

### **Student Handbook**

The 2017-18 Student Handbook will be posted on the school's website. If you would like a paper copy of the handbook, please let an office staff person know by calling 476-6541 and we will be happy to send one home.

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At the start of every new school year, we like to use this opportunity to invite and encourage you to be actively involved in your child's education. Plan to make arrangements to visit his/her classroom. Consider serving as a parent volunteer. Certainly, never hesitate to contact either your child's classroom teacher or our office if you have any questions or concerns. All of the research clearly indicates that a child's opportunities for success at school are directly related to the degree to which families and schools work together.

We also request that each of you devote a minimum of 15-30 minutes every day to reading to or with your child. There is no doubt that children who experience a rich language environment at home are more successful life-long readers and learners.

Finally, we want to remind you about the importance of ensuring that your child is here at school on time every day unless s/he is sick. Good attendance not only gives your child the opportunity to experience success at school, it also establishes an important life pattern that will serve him/her well both in school and later in the workplace.

All of us welcome you back to school. We are eager to begin and know that we will have a wonderful year together!

Sincerely,

Michael Dreiblatt  
Co-Principal

James G. Taffel  
Co-Principal