

September 3, 2020

Welcome to 2020-2021!

Cougar Family-It is hard to believe that the beginning of the school year is upon us! Although we will start with virtual instruction, rest assured that my team of teachers and staff are working diligently to provide a meaningful learning experience for each student. We've spent the last few months learning a lot about virtual learning. My teachers are quickly becoming experts at aligning their content with online formats and how best to reengage our students into this new environment. It's been challenging to say the least; however, there is no better group of educators to teach your children than the ones that call Crittenden home.

Right now, we are prioritizing welcoming students back to learning. We will spend the first week building relationships, establishing norms for virtual learning, and creating routines. Our morning meetings, called "Cougar Chats" will occur daily from 8:00 to 8:25 am. Teachers will use this time as an advisory period to discuss skills for success and get students excited about learning. Each core class will emphasize different aspects of the virtual learning environment, from being PAWSitive: Prepared, Accountable, Wise, and Safe, to becoming familiar with Canvas, Zoom, and Google Classroom.

I anticipate that the first few weeks of learning will require a lot of support and patience. Although my teachers are becoming more familiar with their new tools of teaching, technology often fails to cooperate and navigating the ins and outs of the many aspects of virtual learning will prove difficult at times. I am sure that some students will struggle as well and that is okay! This first week back is all about growing comfortable with the online experience.

There are several tools for students and families to get accustomed to:

Canvas-This is the hub of your student's classes, similar to the in-person classroom. They will access classes here where they can retrieve and submit assignments, communicate with their teachers, and receive school-wide messages. Parents can be added as Observers in their students' classes for monitoring and providing support.

Zoom-This program will be used to deliver face to face instruction. Students will access recurring links on their class page on Canvas. They will log into their class, click the link zoom and participate in live teacher-led instruction. Students are expected to actively participate in zoom sessions. Specific expectations for participation in zoom lessons have been shared by the division.

Google Classroom-Google works as a companion to Canvas, so teachers will also create and share lessons in google classroom. Links to these activities will be shared in Canvas classrooms.

Synergy-This program serves as the NNPS student information system. School staff access student records and contact information, and post grades here. Students should continue to track their progress through Student Vue and parents should continue to monitor their students with Parent Vue. If you have not registered or need access to your Parent Vue account, please contact Crittenden's main office and our staff will assist.

These formats listed separately may seem like a lot to process, but I have encouraged our staff to take it one step at a time and I encourage our students and families to do the same! Students learn at different rates and we will absolutely take the time to work with students one-on-one who demonstrate the need

or express the desire to do so! Please make sure that you reach out to your children's teachers or grade level counselor as needed. We are all here to assist the transition to virtual learning!

Please visit our website at <http://crittenden.nn.k12.va.us/> to access links to get prepared for the first day of school. There are steps to take as well as video tutorials to explain each step. I encourage you to walk through this process with your student to ensure success with logging in on Tuesday, September 8.

Additionally, please check our website frequently for upcoming events, updates, and quick links to common sites like Parent and Student Vue.

If you haven't already, please take this weekend to help your student create a dedicated learning space and routine. Having a space dedicated to learning helps students have better focus and create a routine that will help them separate at home habits from "school" habits. Students should customize these spaces and have items that help them remember that they can do this! Students will need only limited supplies for virtual learning, including writing utensils and paper. For the most part, students will complete online assignments, but will need to practice on their own. Please keep in mind that our uniform expectations have been relaxed for this year.

Hopefully, you have retrieved a Chromebook for your student! If you have not been able, please call our front office to request a device. Families still in need of Wi-Fi access can apply for a hot spot by visiting <http://www.nnschools.org/connectedathome/families.html>.

NNPS will continue to distribute meals starting Tuesday, September 8, at 33 school sites and 7 bus stops. Breakfast, lunch, snack and a supper will be provided to all students. Parents will be able to drive by and pick up meals for their students at any site between 4:30-5:30 pm. Students must be enrolled in NNPS and will have to provide their student ID number in order to pick up the meals. To access the list of locations, please visit our website and click the Meals to Go link. (expect update by Sept. 8)

We have a Back to School Supply-Drive this Thursday, September 3 from 4:00 to 6:00 pm in our front lot. Each sixth grader will receive a bag of supplies and a welcome packet. The first 200 7th and 8th graders can also pick up a bag of free school supplies. We hope to see you!

We will host a virtual orientation video on our website on Friday, September 4th at 10:00 am. We would especially like for our 6th graders to take a virtual tour, hear from our team, and get familiar with their schedules. Students' schedules can be viewed on Student/Parent Vue on September 3, 2020.

Although this is a new way of learning, I have no doubt that great learning can and will happen! My teachers are committed to providing the best learning experience possible! As a team, we stand ready to support each student as if he or she were here with us in person! Please do not hesitate to reach out!

Looking forward to seeing our students' faces in Zoom!

See you September 8th, 2020!

Natia Smith

Proud Principal