Hello Calais Cougars!

Wow, this has been such an important first week of school! We have learned so much about what is working and what needs more work. I’m happy to report that things have gone surprisingly well and any bumps in the road were very minor. Given this is a momentous event in history to ReOpen schools, I need to take an extra moment and acknowledge all the incredible work that went into this success:

- There have been administrators, teachers, support staff, and health professionals working nearly every day since last March to support remote learning last spring and planning for reopening in the fall. This time was incredibly vital to our success but it deserves some acknowledgment that these folks took time from their own lives to do this work to create a plan for us to be back together as safely as possible.

- Beginning August 24th, we have had all staff and faculty working towards planning to be back together both in person and for our remote options during In-service and there has been so much to take on. Staff have had to work through new cleaning and health protocols, new technology, all while working through the emotions of navigating this strange new world. At Calais, I am filled with respect, gratitude, and pride in our faculty and staff. These are the best humans on the planet in my opinion!

- I also want to acknowledge our students and families. You all have placed an enormous amount of trust in us and we feel the responsibility that comes with that. I hear every day from parents with thanks for everything that we are doing, offers to help in whatever way we need, and quick responses to any requests we have. In a time where it is far easier to complain or admire the problem, it is a truly beautiful thing to be surrounded by a community that is lifting people up. Thank you!

There are also a few important reminders:

- Masks should be cleaned after each use. It’s also important to remember that the Vermont Department of Health and guidance from the Agency of Education recommends two ply, cotton masks. Shields, bandanas, and neck gaiters are not approved for use in schools.
• **Arrival and Dismissal** have been going well for bus riders and family carpools. Thank you for making sure that students arrive on time, wearing masks, and following the markers on the sidewalks for physical distance.

• **Visitors are not allowed** into the building. If you are picking up your child for an appointment, you will need to call ahead to the front office and plan for them to meet you outside. In this first week of school we allowed Kindergarten parents to enter up to the classroom door but beginning next week, the only exceptions in the guidelines are for PreK. Thank you for your understanding with this.

• **Health screenings** – Students need to be screened daily at home before getting on the bus or being dropped off at school. Click [here](#) for information on how to use Base Camp if you’re still unfamiliar with it. Use of Base Camp should be our first layer of protection with a follow up screening at the main entrance. Base Camp must be used in order to access our Before Care program.

• **Meals/Food** - Click [here](#) for a revised copy of our changes to food service shared last week. It’s also important to remember that we are a Tree Nut and Peanut Free School!

Thank you for your support with these really important details!

Thank you,
Ms. Cat, CES Principal

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**Dates to Remember**

- **Picture Day** – Thursday September 17, 2020
- **In-service/No School** – Monday October 12, 2020
- **Picture Retake Day** – Wednesday October 28, 2020
First week is in the books! Your children are AMAZING and so resilient given the last 7 months!

First, thank you for sending your children with extra masks. Please make sure to take the dirty masks out of their backpacks every day and send them in with clean masks the next day. Thank you for not sending bandanas or neck gaiters as they are not allowed. Students should have at least 3 masks a day; more if your student has allergies (runny nose) or tends to run hot (sweaty masks). **Speaking of allergies, if your student has medically diagnosed allergies PLEASE reach out to make sure I have a note from their Primary Care Provider or Allergist – otherwise I will have to send them home for runny noses and other allergy symptoms as they mimic Covid-19 symptoms.**

Mornings are flowing nicely given the new protocols. **Please remember to complete Basecamp prior to bringing your children to school or putting them on the bus.** If they do not have Basecamp completed, they will need to come see me at the gym entrance for a complete screening. Please contact me at mmelekos@u32.org if you are having difficulty or have any questions about Basecamp.

**A reminder about our illness policy this year:** Any student or staff presenting with any potential Covid-19 symptom may not attend school. These symptoms include cough, fever (100.4 or greater), shortness of breath, chills, fatigue, muscle pain/body aches, headache, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, sinus congestion or runny nose, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea. **If your child is found to have these symptoms during school hours they will be placed in our Waiting Room and a parent or guardian is expected to pick them up within 30 minutes.** Please contact me for Return to School protocols as State guidelines continue to change. We understand the policy is strict but if we let community health and safety be our guide, the need for these restrictions are clear. Feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns regarding this District policy.

Please consider the weather daily and send your child prepared to be outside! **As a reminder, we cannot lend clothes out this year so it is imperative that students bring warm clothes, hats/gloves, changes of clothes (K-3 and as needed for older students) and appropriate footwear/rainwear for inclement weather.** As long as it is safe to do so, we plan to have classes outside.

It has been so wonderful for all the staff to see your students’ joyful faces (above the masks) and to start to establish this year’s routine. Thank you for your flexibility and commitment to safety as we start this year amidst so much uncertainty. We are all in this together!

Thanks!

Nurse Maria
Last week, local artist DJ Barry, made a visit to Calais Elementary to deliver our new Calais World Cow. DJ’s World Cow organization lives the motto “we are all a spot on the same world cow.”

DJ was commissioned to create a Calais World Cow that is exactly 6 feet long to help give our elementary students a visual for being physically distant. You can check out the cow in this short video if you haven’t already seen it. In this video, budding student reporter, Charles Grzankowski interviewed DJ about his organization and how the mural can be used to support safety practices at school. Look for more information to come soon on how we will use the cow to teach Calais Cow KYHFOOTY (Keep Your Hands, Feet, and Other Objects to Yourself) pronounced “cow-footy.” A fun but true fact, we had a small cow from the farm across the road decide to visit us as well when our Calais World Cow was delivered. Fun times!