Dear Families of Pentz Elementary School:

Our staff hopes you and your family are enjoying a safe summer. School is back in session on September 8, and after almost 6 months apart, we are excited to welcome you back! With COVID-19 rates at low levels, students will return to school following the full opening model outlined in Nova Scotia’s Back to School Plan. To learn more about the plan visit www.novascotia.ca/backtoschool. How we support your child’s return to school is our priority. COVID-19 may have changed what our school day will look like, but it has not changed the quality of education your child will receive. We know you have a lot of questions. The answers we give now may change depending on the public health guidance in place to support a return to in class instruction. If the conditions change, our approach will change, including a possible move to either a blended learning or at-home learning model. The direction to move to a different learning model would come from Public Health. Should this or any other change take place, we will let you know as soon as possible. As you may have already heard, there are some key changes coming to school in September.

This includes:

- Mask use for all students who ride a school bus.
- Mask use for all students in grades 4 to 12 and all staff, when they are unable to physically distance. Our grade 3 students are in a combined class with grade 4 and will also need to wear masks.
- Students will need a water bottle this year, to use with our bottle filling stations.
- Enhanced cleaning in our schools.
- Increased hand washing and sanitizing as students enter and exit school and throughout the day. While these measures will become commonplace in schools across our province, we want to provide you more details about what your child’s day will look like here at Pentz Elementary School.
- Teachers will communicate safety protocols to students on September 8th and these protocols will be regularly reviewed and updated.
- Students will stay in classroom cohorts all day (this means even their recess and lunch breaks will be with their class).
- Recess and lunchtimes will be staggered to allow for physical distancing on our school grounds.
- The playground will be divided into different areas and classes will be assigned to a different section each day so that during the week they can access different parts of the playground.
- Students will still have access to the Breakfast Program and some lunch services (more information to follow on this as it becomes available).
- Students will be eating in their classrooms and food will be delivered to them.
- Bus notes will only be allowed for custodial arrangements, daycare, and employment needs. Students should not be accessing different buses for any other purpose.
• Large gatherings are not permitted in schools this year, therefore there will be no concerts, assemblies, tournaments or ceremonies.
• Each student will be issued two masks by their homeroom teacher on the first day of school.

Things that won’t change this year:
• Your child’s teacher will be very excited to see them on the first day of school.
• As in past years, school supplies have been purchased by the school. We ask that families pay the student fee of $35 in the month of September, if at all possible. If you need alternate arrangements, please reach out to the school office.
• Students will need their own lunch box/ indoor shoes and book bags.
• We will continue to build relationships and make your child’s safety and well-being a priority.

We look forward to sharing more information with you as it becomes available. We want to assure you that together, we’ve got this. Working together, we can all help students feel safe and supported when they return to school. Let’s keep the lines of communication open to make this a positive year. Please reach out if you have any questions or concerns at pes@ssrce.ca or 902-688-3210.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Smart
Principal