Dear Monmouth Junction Families,

As we prepare for another school year, a good word to keep in our minds is ‘FLUID.’ The circumstances of the pandemic have presented so many challenges to students and adults alike. As such, we need to keep an open mind about the upcoming school year in order to maintain continuity of our children’s education while mitigating against the spread of the virus.

With that said, Monmouth Junction will follow all guidelines and directives from our central office staff that are designed to help to keep our students and staff safe. In short, there may be changes along the way. We must try to expect the unexpected.

At this time, we are focused on preparing for an exciting return to the building! Our teachers are setting up their classrooms and writing specific messages for your children in order to get them ready to begin on September 9th. My letter, therefore, is intended to send some basic information to help parents get ready on their end.

**Important Dates**

August 24th: Placement letters are available in Genesis for grades kindergarten through five.

September 2: **‘Sneak a Peek’: 3:00-5:00 PM.** In-person visits to see the classroom from the doorway. Masks are required for the entirety of your time in the building.

  NOTE: In order to reduce our numbers of people in the building, I am asking that parents of students who attended Kindergarten Orientation, First Grade Orientation, and Kindergarten Prep do not attend ‘Sneak a Peek’ unless they have an older student who attends MJ.

Schools Closed: 9/6 Labor Day; 9/7 & 9/8 Rosh Hashanah; 9/16 Yom Kippur

September 9: **First Day** In-person all students: Schedules will come from the teachers.

September 10: **Ice Cream Social** 6:30 PM Playground Details will come from MJ’s PTO.

“First we UNIFY...then REBUILD...ultimately, we THRIVE!”
September 22:  **Back to School Night -- Details to follow.**

**New Staff Members:**

I want to welcome new staff members to Monmouth Junction. First, Ms. Devon Hobaugh has joined our kindergarten team along with Ms. Kimberly Chiu, who taught second grade at Monmouth Junction last year.

Additionally, we have a new instructional support teacher. Mrs. Andrea Hutchison is returning to Monmouth Junction in her new role as instructional support. She is replacing Mrs. Gonzalez who transferred to Brooks Crossing. Welcome, Mrs. Hutchison and Ms. Hobaugh!

We have also hired a new kindergarten teacher and another special education teacher who are still working through details with our Human Resources Department. As soon as I am able to, I will communicate with families in order to introduce our new teachers.

**ARRIVAL / DISMISSAL ROUTINES**

**Hours:** 8:55 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

**Early Release Hours:** 8:55 a.m. - 1:35 a.m.

**Absences**

If your child is going to be absent, the school must be notified. You may call the school’s voicemail at any time or call the office after 8:00 a.m. to report your child absent. You may also register your child absent in Genesis using the Parent Portal. Please do not use the email to report your child absent.

If you do not call or mark your child absent in Genesis, the office will call to locate your child usually by 10:00 a.m. Please be sure to follow the prompts on the voicemail.

*Changes to dismissal plans must be called in no later than 12:00 p.m.* If you are planning to change your dismissal plans, call the main office secretaries, Lynn Maiorano or Nancy Shearer. Our secretaries will contact the teacher. Do not send in paper notes or send an email in case someone is absent. We are trying to be as contactless as possible. Call (732) 329-6981.

**ARRIVAL**

Between the hours of 8:55-9:05 a.m. and 3:25-3:40 p.m. children are walking, buses are arriving, and still other children are crossing streets and walking their bicycles onto and off the property. To help keep things organized and safe, a bus patrol will direct bikers and walkers to the sidewalk. A crossing guard will help children cross. Never leave children unattended in the parking lot or playground prior to 8:55 a.m. The building doors open at 8:55 a.m. to admit students to the building. Students and parents are expected to wait outside until 8:55 a.m. unless students are in the Before-School Program. The late bell rings at 9:05 a.m. Students are expected to arrive prior to 9:05 a.m. so instruction can begin promptly.

*Please note that Preschool students will follow modified arrival procedures shared with the parents by the teacher.*

**Before-School Program:** Parents are required to sign their children into the Before-School Program. All grade level programs will be in the cafeteria. Parents are to park in the back parking lot and enter the building through the back door. No drop-off or parking is permitted in the bus loop. Please park your car in the spaces, shut it off, and walk children to the back door. Please use caution in this area.

“*First we UNIFY...then REBUILD...ultimately, we THRIVE!*”
**Bus Students:** All buses serving our school either park in the horseshoe or along the curb immediately past the horseshoe on Monmouth Drive. Bus students will enter the building through the door by the gym.

**Walkers:** Students walking to school are expected to cross Ridge Road or Monmouth Drive at the locations that have crossing guards. All Ridge Road walkers will enter through the bus loop doors. All other walkers will enter through the back of the new wing. Walkers are not permitted to enter the building until 8:55 a.m. Therefore, they should time their arrival accordingly.

**Parent Drop-Off:** Parking is extremely limited! We recommend that you do not plan to park, but use the Drop-Off Zone. The Drop-Off Zone will be at the rear of the parking lot. Enter the parking lot, and pull as far forward as possible in the Drop-Off Zone. There is no parking permitted in this zone. Please do not block driveways or park in any area marked by “No Parking” signs or yellow curbs. A. Cones will be placed at the end of the staff parking area at approximately 8:45 am and 3:15 pm. Please do not drive into the staff parking area during arrival or dismissal time since many children are walking in this area to meet parents. B. Do not park your car and then leave it idling while meeting your children. C. Please use caution when driving in this area because children may dart out into the lot. D. Do not use the handicapped parking space without a proper permit.

**No Parking on Monmouth Drive!** This is a reminder that there is no parking allowed on Monmouth Drive (either side of the street) when school is in session. This restriction is in effect from 8:45 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily. Cars parked illegally will be ticketed by township police.

**DISMISSAL**

**After-School Program:** Students will be dismissed to their After School Program, and attendance will be taken before all other students are dismissed.

**Walkers and Parent Pick-Up:** The location of the waiting area is on the blacktop at the rear of the building. We begin dismissing these students at approximately 3:25 p.m. (1:30 p.m. on early dismissal days). Teachers will walk students to the waiting area and supervise their pick up. Children will not be permitted to cross the parking lot or Monmouth Drive without being accompanied by a parent. Please meet your child at the waiting area. Students walking home will exit the building with the students being picked up by parents.

"Please note that Preschool students will follow modified dismissal procedures shared with the parents by the teacher.

**Dogs at Dismissal:** In addition, some of our students are very afraid of animals, specifically dogs. Please **do not bring your dogs** to the waiting area. Stay at the sidewalk with your pet if you bring one. Thank you for helping our children exit the building calmly.

**Bus Students:** All bus students will exit through the bus loop doors to meet their buses. The buses will be parked either in the loop or along the curb immediately past the bus loop.

**IMPORTANT REMINDERS**

- Preschool students will use modified arrival and dismissal procedures that will be shared with the parents by the teacher.
- Dropping a child off in the front of the school during morning arrival is not permitted. This area is not supervised by any staff and the front door is locked. The only morning drop-off location is on Monmouth Drive.
- There are limited visitor parking spaces in the front parking lot. These are for 15-minute parking only. If you are planning on being in the building for a longer period of time, you must park in the back parking lot.

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• During the school day, all entrances are locked. All visitors to the building must be admitted through the front door and go to the Main Office for a visitor’s badge. Visitors must display the badge while in the building.
• Do not park in the fire zone. Cars parked illegally are subject to ticketing by the township police. We would appreciate it if you would follow the guidelines listed above to ensure the safety of our students during arrival and dismissal times. Your cooperation is very important. Please drive slowly and carefully.

**Breakfast and Lunch -- Free Daily for Every Student for the Entire School Year**
All students will receive a non-perishable breakfast from Chartwells food service on a daily basis. Students may eat breakfast in the classroom, eat it as a snack, or take it home. Water fountains are currently inaccessible. Please send in a water bottle with your child.

Students will eat lunch in the cafeteria. They will have a choice of three lunches. As always, you may send in a lunch in your child’s backpack. There is no method to heat up a lunch for your child at school. If you send in a lunch, please be sure it is one that your child can manage by himself/herself. Capacity at each lunch table has been decreased so that there are fewer students eating lunch at any one time during a lunch period.

Please refer to our district parent handbook for further information needed for the school year. Also, please check our Friday Folder weekly for ongoing communication related to Monmouth Junction and the district.

On behalf of our teachers and staff members, I want to thank parents in advance for their cooperation on all routines. Health and safety protocols are of the utmost importance, so that we have a successful opening for our students and staff members.

I feel so privileged to be the principal of Monmouth Junction School. Our staff members are outstanding, and I know they will be doing a fabulous job with our students. I look forward to working with all of you as we make this year, however unusual it may be, meaningful, rewarding and memorable for our students, families and staff members.

Sincerely,

*Dr. Maribeth Edmunds*

Principal

NOTE: DEVICES:

If you have a DISTRICT DEVICE there is a **YEARLY TECHNOLOGY INSURANCE FEE.** The yearly non-refundable $35 technology insurance fee can now be paid online using the link below! Please verify proof of payment prior to issuing the Chromebook. Free and reduced lunch recipients are automatically waived. Requests for non free/reduced student waivers due to financial hardship can be sent to Rachel.Kolibas@sbschools.org.

If you need a device, please contact the main office to arrange for device pick up. You’ll need to pay the insurance fee noted above and sign an agreement form, here: **Chromebook Agreement Form**
Email the completed and signed agreement forms to Rachel.Kolibas@sbschools.org and retain a copy for your records.
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1bX7h54CaS-WL-UmpjiHNoWcCVMOrv9vXbInDGdoYg/edit

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