

August 21, 2020

Dear Primary Blue families,

Welcome to the beginning of our new school year. Thank you for putting your trust in North Branch and me as we journey into this online learning structure. None of us is loving this new format, most especially the children. I am so keenly aware how much they have been looking forward to going back to school. They were looking forward to seeing old friends, meeting new friends, and playing on the Friend Ship. While the beginning of the year will certainly look a lot different than we had originally planned, this year will still be full of learning, friendships, many shared experiences, and even playing on the Friend Ship.

I have heard over and over again three main parent concerns/requests about online/remote learning:

1. PLEASE not too much online/screen time!
2. HELP! We need a schedule!
3. We need socialization! The kids and I are going stir crazy!

Don't worry! I've gotcha. I have created a weekly schedule which provides two direct online whole group instruction sessions daily, with offline time between sessions for eating, independent work, rest, and movement. There is also an optional daily afternoon online session for "specials." I know that I cannot mimic an in-person day online, not even close! What I will do is build a community, provide group educational instruction, and have one-on-one meetings with students or parents as needed.

In addition to online instruction, North Branch is offering weekly in-person playgroups/social hours. Tentatively, Primary Blue and Yellow are scheduled for Tuesday afternoons. Smith and I will be there to supervise and engage. Parents are welcome to stay and visit, or have that alone time that you so desperately need. Social distancing and masks will be required and enforced. This will be weather permitting, and we will comply with current safety guidelines and adjust accordingly. I will have more details to share at our Back to School Night.

Here are some important dates as we begin our new year:

- **Tuesday, September 8: 10:00-11:00am** Come to North Branch to meet me and pick up your at-home learning materials! We will have an organized drive-thru to make this a streamlined process.
- **Wednesday, September 9: 4:00-5:00pm** "Primary Blue Back to School Night" online! You will receive an invitation to join our virtual Back to School Night! This is a great time to meet all the parents and students in our class. Children are most welcome! Come prepared with questions!
- **Thursday, September 10: 9:30am** First Day of School!!

As you enjoy our last few weeks of summer, I am going to give you some homework. Before the start of school, together with your child, chose an online school space at home. You will need a stable work surface, comfortable seating, and good lighting, We are setting up for success, so no online time from bed! In addition to the school supplies you are already gathering, I will provide you with additional materials necessary for online learning. If your child is new to navigating online, practice a little with him/her. This will also be part of our beginning sessions, so don't worry if there are still things to learn! During direct instructional time, it will be beneficial to have your child in a spot where s/he can have autonomy from the rest of the family. I will give more information and tips at our Back to School meeting, but for now, start setting up a home learning space for your child.

Autum has set up a Gmail address for each student so that they can log in to our Google classroom. This is a new platform for me, so I will be leaning right along with you/them! Our Google classroom is where you and your child will post daily journal entries and other completed work, and I will give direct feedback.

Again, thank you for your support as we begin this new year. I look forward to meeting each of you, and beginning what will be a fantastic school year! Please reach out with any questions. Email, call, or text.

With gratitude,

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