

Appleby Elementary School
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Mr. Jonathan Hillis
Principal

Mrs. Rebecca Stone
Superintendent

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Dear Families,

Last year at this time, things began to shut down, lives began to change and the challenges we all faced came quickly. Now, a year later, things are still changing quickly, but in a more positive direction.

On February 22nd, we welcomed the 6th grade students and teachers back to Appleby for three days of in person learning. Now, a month later, as we continue to learn from our challenges and as we gain new guidance, we will be able to bring 6th grade students back for five days of in person instruction starting Monday, April 5th. In the very near future, all students 7-12 will be able to return to in person learning for five days a week.

This shift is due to a number of factors:

- Front 2 seats - In the past, we have left the first 2 seats of each bus vacant. This was to create a space between the driver and the students as well as a buffer for those entering the bus. At this time, all employees have been given the opportunity to be vaccinated. In addition, in case of a possible COVID-19 exposure on the bus and as long as students and adults remain masked, students passing by one another when boarding a bus would not be quarantined based solely on the boarding process. By filling these two seats with students, we are gaining 2-4 passengers per bus.
- Rerouting - There will be a need to reroute and reassign some students. Ms. Leber has been working hard to redesign bus routes. This will allow her to take some students off runs which would otherwise be too full and add those locations/students to different buses.
- Reseating - Some children will have a new assigned seat. All students will need to remain in their assigned seats on a daily basis for contact tracing purposes.

Other important information moving forward:

- The rearranging of busing to provide our 6th-12th grade students with the opportunity to receive 5-days of in person learning has limited the district with available seating on the bus. Should you need an appeal to change your mode of transportation from parent transport to bus transportation the appeal process is listed below. Please be aware available seats on the bus are extremely limited.

- Appeals (transportation) - If parents wish to change their mode of transportation to have the district begin transporting a student, they will need to file a written appeal. All appeals will be considered on a first come, first served basis and will not be reviewed until after April 14th, ensuring the new 5-day a week busing system has been implemented appropriately. Each appeal will be reviewed on a case by case basis, as bus ridership is different for every bus. Appeals in this instance will also not be reviewed until after April 14th.
- Appeals (instruction) – If parents wish to change their child’s mode of learning, please fill out a written appeal. All appeals will be considered on a first come, first served basis and will not be reviewed until after April 14th, ensuring the new 5-day a week instructional system has been implemented appropriately. Each appeal will be reviewed on a case by case basis. Students who request an appeal to move from fully remote to in-person and are requesting bus transportation will also need to complete a transportation appeal.
- All students will still be required to wear masks properly on the bus.
- Parents will be alerted by phone about bus changes prior to spring break.
- Student health screens need to be completed daily through the health app or on paper prior to coming to school. If you need additional paper copies, contact your child’s teacher.
- All sixth grade students who have transportation arrangements between the two school buildings for Monday-Wednesday will have those same arrangements for Thursday and Friday.
- **Starting on April 5th, car pick-up will shift from 2:00-2:30 to 2:15-2:45.**

If your family is traveling over spring break, we ask that you review NY State's travel advisory overview. (<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory>) There have been some recent changes and we expect that there will be more to come. Please be aware that all in-person students will need to complete the COVID screening questions and be symptom free to return to school on April 5th.

Marathon Central School continues to be a District committed to student safety and academic excellence. We will continue to make our decisions based on students first. I am grateful for the support of the community and the efforts from families and staff.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your child’s education, please do not hesitate to call or send me an email.

Mr. Hillis