



August 4, 2021

Phone: 868-2715

Dear Primero Students, Parents and Guardians,

We are on the cusp of the 2021-2022 school year. There is a lot to be excited about as we near the first day of school. For starters, Primero Secondary School will once again be using the Block Schedule, but NOT the Hybrid Schedule. The Block Schedule creates a longer contact time for teachers and students. Like last year, Periods 1,3,5, and 7 will be taught on Mondays and Wednesdays, while Periods 2,4,6, and 7 will be taught on Tuesdays and Thursdays. All periods, except 7th, shall be nearly two hours in length while 7th Period is one hour.

The remainder of the secondary schedule is almost identical to last year, however, we have added multiple new classes for students to choose from. New to 2021-22 are: Outdoor Education, Junior High Business, Computer Science, Environmental Science, Calculus, Primero Studio, and Weight Training.

The elementary school—grades Kindergarten through 5th—will be run as closely to the 2018-19 school year as possible. There have been some changes in the way Specials are run. We will be rotating through two 40-minute periods each day from 1:00-2:20, making sure every child receives PE daily and still gets an opportunity to participate in art, music, and social-emotional learning. Hands-on science labs, taught by secondary science teachers, will occur at least one hour per week as well.

Our Preschool has expanded to a capacity of 24 students and will begin operations on August 30, 2021. Puppyland will take on added academic responsibilities this year for the four-year old (Pre K) group. There will be two full-time instructors and one full-time classroom aide to help meet the needs of this growing center.

COVID RESPONSE/PLANNING: These plans are subject to change relative to current local public health conditions. The Primero School Board and Administration feel strongly that in-person instruction and school operations are a priority for the well-being of our children; and our students are best served when learning on-campus, in classrooms, with trusted adults and their peers. We also trust in our health and safety plans that were put in place in June 2020 and served us well since their inception.

We know you have many questions regarding the upcoming start of school and the following protocols should provide guidance as to what school will look and feel like this year.

Primero School will continue to collaborate with our local public health agencies to ensure that our protocols are up to date, relevant, and will maintain the health and safety of all students and staff. Please take an active role in your child's education and uphold a high level of communication with school personnel.

* Masks / Face Coverings - Masks are recommended for all unvaccinated students and staff, though mask use is not mandatory in school buildings. School staff will ensure a climate of respect regarding individual choice of mask wearing so that those choosing to wear masks or not will feel equally validated in their actions.

All students riding school buses **MUST** continue to wear masks at this time. The drive to and from school represents a period in which students are in close proximity with others and the chance of viral contamination is at its highest. **No mask=no ride!**

* Vaccination - COVID vaccination is not a requirement to attend Primero schools. We fully support those that feel receiving the vaccine is in their best interests but understand why some choose not to become vaccinated. The status of all people in regard to receiving the COVID (or any vaccination for that matter) is a highly private and personal issue school administration does not take lightly.

* COVID-19 Testing and Quarantining—The district shall work with Las Animas/Huerfano County Health Department to keep informed of testing procedures and results of those individuals associated with the school. Individuals who test for COVID-19 will be informed of their results as will the school IF those results are positive.

* Quarantine Policy - CDPHE has relaxed but not yet eliminated the state requirement to quarantine individuals exposed to COVID.

Primero will only quarantine close contacts following confirmed COVID exposure with health department documentation. The 14-day period shall be imposed for non vaccinated individuals only. Those individuals who have positively contracted COVID are automatically quarantined for 14 days regardless of vaccination status.

Vaccinated individuals (who are asymptomatic) are not required to quarantine after COVID exposure. The health department will perform contact tracing efforts—along with cooperation of school district personnel—to determine those exposed to potential contamination.

Quarantine procedures are an effective tool to prevent the spread of the Corona Virus among unvaccinated individuals. Preventing asymptomatic transmission of COVID is especially relevant when contact tracing younger children who may not exhibit pronounced symptoms, but may still contribute to viral spread and potential classroom or school outbreaks.

* Symptom Screening - All students and staff are requested to self-screen before leaving home for school or work. Morning symptom screening will still take place at school or prior to students loading buses. If staff observe a student who is obviously ill, that individual shall not be allowed to enter the bus or school building. Parents shall be responsible for taking their child home at that point. Parents may not leave the school or bus stop area until school personnel have signaled the OK to do so. Should an ill student be diagnosed later on at school, it is incumbent on parents to come to school to retrieve their child. Needless to say, it is better to catch the problem at home rather than at the bus stop or school building.

Please keep children home for 72 hours if they exhibit any of these Major or Minor COVID symptoms:

- Major Symptoms -fever, persistent cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, loss of taste or smell. It is strongly recommended in these cases to seek testing for ill students.
- Minor Symptoms –fatigue, muscle aches, headache, sore throat, nausea / vomiting, diarrhea, runny nose / congestion.

Keeping children home when they are sick is a critical prevention method. The CDC offers some helpful tips on its website (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>).

RATIONALE: Primero was able to stay open for live, in-person instruction for the entire year—with few quarantine issues—in large part due to the plan put in place a year ago. For 2021-2022, Primero will follow the aspects of the plan that worked: enhanced building ventilation, promotion of hand washing and personal hygiene practices, social distancing whenever feasible, COVID cleaning and disinfecting measures, cohorting of classes within reason, fresh air breaks during block classes, multiple lunch periods to reduce overcrowding, and other proven actions.

If you have any questions specific to our district, please do not hesitate to contact school administration or our District Nurse, Cindy Abeyta, at 868-2715 x-129.

Sincerely,
Blake Byall—Superintendent/Principal

Please sign and date this form to confirm you have read/understand the District COVID content. Return the signed form to school during the first full week of classes. Thank You!!!

Child(ren) name(s) _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____