

September 6, 2021

EMES Mission Statement

“The purpose of our school is to teach all children to become competent, caring citizens and life-long learners through a challenging and relevant curriculum.”



Alicia Lyford, Principal

2021-2022 EMES Family Newsletter

Dear EMES Families -

Phew! We made it through a stressful and unexpected week of home learning. I want to thank you all for your support as we navigate these somewhat uncharted waters of Covid-19, 2021-2022. I know what a burden keeping your children at home for extended days during the school year can be, and I apologize it had to happen right off the bat. While I hope this isn't something we have to do again, educating your children while keeping them safe and healthy is our number one priority. I will share some additional information in this newsletter with you that I hope will be helpful in understanding why we made the decision to send all children home for the remainder of the week. I do believe that we made the best decision we could, given the information we were given last Monday morning.

Early Monday morning, we learned that our classroom of fourteen Pre-K students and four adults were considered close contacts to an individual who tested positive for Covid-19. After meeting with Jen Miller Arsenault, Nurse Dave, and Maria Melekos, our Covid-19 Coordinator, we agreed to send the four adults home to get tested and begin notifying families of our Pre-K students. At this time, we had planned on only keeping this class of students home until they could get tested on Thursday. We were confident that this positive case did not impact other classrooms and would only result in keeping one class at home.

Just before lunch on Monday, we received a phone call that members of another family in our school tested positive for Covid-19, impacting our 6th Grade classroom and potentially another classroom in our primary unit. Once we began that contact tracing, it brought our numbers up to 38 children and 10 adults, with potentially another 20 children and 4 adults being impacted. In addition, 19 of these 38 students have siblings in all but one of our eleven classrooms. Over the course of these hours, we also learned that several of our EMES families had contracted Covid-19 at a local wedding with more families sharing they may be impacted as well and were awaiting test results. Given this information, we decided it was best to send everyone home with the hope of preventing further spread within our school. It is our sincere hope that this was a one-time thing and if we are to get more cases within our school, it will impact only one classroom at a time and not spread throughout the entire school.

I have heard from several families with questions about podding, distancing, outdoor masking, and whether or not we will have to make these days up. I will share what I know about that with you as well.

Our classrooms are naturally podded for the majority of the school day, similar to last year. Students are mixed for interventions, services, and at recess. While mixing outdoors at recess is a change this year, mixing students for interventions and services is not new.

In regards to distancing—our students are distanced as they can be while inside, and all students are distanced at least 6' when they are eating (indoors and out).

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We are so excited to welcome about 20 students returning from remote learning last year and another 20 students who are new to EMES this year. With the addition of roughly 40 students in our eleven classrooms, there is no way we can ensure 3' or greater distancing throughout the entire school day. Our classrooms simply aren't big enough. However, as you have heard from Jen Miller Arsenault, we are practicing multiple mitigation strategies this year in order to reduce the risk of transmission. These include ventilation, hand hygiene, universal masking, surveillance testing, staying at home when sick, and vaccination for those who are eligible. While the CDC recommends adhering to a physical distance of greater than 3 feet when community transmission is moderate to high, both the CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) state that the priority is in person learning above all else. EMES continues to teach students about personal boundaries and space (KHFOOTY).

I realize there are different opinions about requiring that masks be worn while outdoors. At this time, the CDC states: "In general, people do not need to wear masks when outdoors. CDC recommends that people who are not fully vaccinated wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact with other people. Fully vaccinated people might choose to wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings if they or someone in their household is immunocompromised." An example of a crowded outdoor setting is a music concert. Students running around or sitting near each other is not the same as being in sustained close contact. Anyone who feels more comfortable is welcome to wear their masks outside as well, and we see many kiddos and adults choosing to keep their masks on outside. At this time, it is their choice and not mandatory.

While EMES was the first school in the state to go "remote" this school year, I am certain we will not be the last. At this time, the AOE will not allow us to count last Tuesday—Friday toward attendance as they are saying that the majority of our students would have to be physically present in our building in order to count. However, I can assure you that what I observed last week was most certainly some great teaching and learning and am confident we will not make these days up. We have several options on how we can address this with the AOE, and we are working closely with them as we documented attendance, made meals available, and ensured that students were engaged for at least the daily minimum requirements like we did last year. If needed, we will apply for a waiver from the State. The AOE has been responsive of us and are interested in hearing from the field. Once I know more about what this will all look like, I will let you know.

I would like to end by sharing how proud I am of EMES and greater East Montpelier community. I truly believe we all have your children's best interests and health at the forefront of our every decision and am so thankful for the support we have received this past year and a half, and most recently this past week. I know how stressful it is for families (and staff!) and wish we weren't living in such times. However, as I shared with our staff last week, I wouldn't want to go through a global pandemic with anyone else.

I hope you all had a wonderful Labor Day weekend. We moved my daughter Ella back into college this weekend and I am crossing my fingers and holding my breath that she too will have a better school year experience this year. We are looking forward to welcoming your children back tomorrow—we've missed them!

Best,
Alicia

Upcoming Dates to Note:

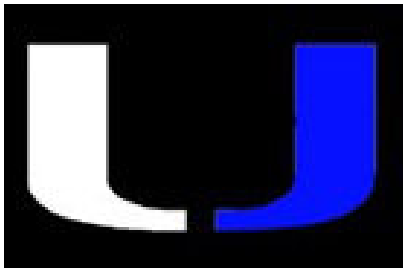
- ⇒ **Saturday, September 18th:** Covid vaccine clinic at Berlin Elementary School 2:00—8:00pm
- ⇒ **Saturday, October 9th:** Covid vaccine clinic at U-32 2:00—8:00 pm
- ⇒ **Thursday, October 14th:** Lifetouch Picture Day
- ⇒ **Wednesday, October 27th:** Lifetouch Picture Retake Day
- ⇒ **Wednesday, November 3rd:** 12:30 early release Wednesday
- ⇒ **Thursday, November 11th:** Parent/Teacher conferences—no school for students

Welcome Back to Book Club!

Our first Book Club for 4th through 6th graders will be after school on Tuesday
Sept 28th!

Please read the graphic novel *When Stars are Scattered*
by Victoria Jamieson and Omar Mohamed
and join us!





League information and UAUTL
overview

UA Under the Lights overview:

UA Under the Lights is dedicated to bringing a uniform, cutting edge approach to flag football and has worked diligently to create a program that is designed to bring dedicated community and business leaders to build flag football leagues that deliver first class experiences for kids and parents who participate.

Under the lights is a non-contact league that brings together participants to compete and learn about the game of football. UTL is the most unique youth football league in the country as it promotes a competitive, non-contact football experience for all levels while teaching the latest techniques of contact football.

CVMR League overview:

Chris Cadorette is a resident of East Calais. He has been coaching or participating in football in an organized manor since playing at U-32 beginning in 1996. Chris has been a varsity assistant at U-32 since 2016 and was named the JV head coach in 2019. Before founding the CV Mini Raiders in 2016, Chris also assisted with the Lyndon NFL Play 60 team. Chris has a degree from Norwich University in Physical Education with a minor in Coaching and is a National Federation of High Schools accredited level 1 football coach. Chris is certified in HeadsUP concussion prevention, and CPR/First Aid through the American Red Cross.

The Central Vermont Mini Raiders team works with school age kids from grades K through 5. It is a skills-building league that will focus on teamwork, basic skills, having fun, and learning the basics of Football. Players will get the chance to learn stance, start, routes and plays, and have a chance to participate in multiple inter-squad scrimmages.

The CVMR will meet at U-32's football field on Sunday mornings beginning 9/12/21 from noon to 1pm. We will have a meet and greet on 9/5/21 (Sunday) at 11 am at U-32. I will be taking registration fees then and will be available to answer questions. I will also be able to take registrations prior to that date through contacting me online. The league fee is **\$30.00** and covers an UA Custom team jersey, SKLZ flags and belt, as well as a 30% discount on all UA equipment. Also find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/CVminiraiders, email vtpowerlifter@gmail.com, or contact me on Twitter @CoachBigCat.

Checks should be made to Christopher Cadorette with CV Mini Raiders in the memo line.