

Dear Merrimack Families~

I hope this finds you all well and looking forward to the upcoming holiday weekend. I am writing this afternoon to provide two important pieces of information relevant to our school and town community.

The first piece of information relates to our summer lunch program. As you know, the Merrimack School Board recently voted to support the extension of our lunch program through this summer. In its current form, the school district sponsored lunch program is scheduled to run through August 28, 2020. Pick-up and delivery will remain the same with just a few changes to the schedule. We encourage any Merrimack School District family to participate in this service throughout this summer.

In order to give our staff some much needed time off we are transferring to a **Monday, Tuesday, Thursday** weekly schedule beginning Monday, July 6th. Pick up times will be lessened by ½ hour; **the new pick-up time will be 10:30 – NOON.**

Please note the important detail, below:

5 meals will be given for the week in the following manner:

1 meal on Monday
2 meals on Tuesday
2 meals on Thursday

In this way, we maintain our commitment to supporting our school community during this on-going challenge while allowing our staff to enjoy some much needed rest.

Once again I wish to thank our Food Services Director Dave Dziki and his incredible and dedicated staff for all they have done in extraordinary circumstances to support the food and nutritional needs of our school district families. Our district food services team have been one of the shining lights of this really difficult time and we are proud of them and grateful for their service.

The second piece of information relates to our athletics program. As you know, athletics, like all other services provided through, with and for our

district on behalf of our students and their families, was severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite positive trends in the state of New Hampshire, the virus is clearly still a major source of concern throughout our state and, of course, nationally. In light of that fact, the District has been very cautious with regard to a return to traditional activities. That said, beginning on July 6th the Merrimack School District Athletics Department will begin **Phase One** of its Return to Play protocols beginning with conditioning activities for student athletes. This can only happen under very strict and tightly controlled guidelines that must and will be enforced in order to better protect our athletes and our coaches during the on-going uncertainty related to the virus, its transmission and the many unknowns that surround it still. We are very grateful to Athletic Director Mike Soucy and members of his Athletics Task Force for their care in developing **Phase One** guidelines for Return to Play.

In light of this development, I wish to address the broader use of Merrimack School District athletic fields by other groups this summer. Due to the COVID-19 emergency, our fields have been closed to this point to all users. With the proposed **Phase One** plan for student athletes the District is carefully reopening fields **ONLY for that purpose**. Given the scheduling and maintenance/sanitizing challenges made necessary even by this limited reopening of our field facilities it will **not be possible** to make our fields available this summer for use **by any outside groups** as we normally would. **Therefore, until further notice, school district fields and facilities will continue to be closed to the public.** Like so many things, the challenges of this virus, and our collective efforts to respond to it responsibly, continue to require all of us to deviate from some traditions and past practices that we have always enjoyed and relied upon. Like all of you, it is our hope and expectation that things will improve, and that whatever improvement is achieved will be **maintained** over time. When that happens, the District, like all of us, will be ready to return to whatever the new normal will require of us.

Best wishes for a safe and Happy 4th of July.

Mark McLaughlin
Superintendent