

August 2017

Dear Parents,

Hello! We hope you've enjoyed your summer! We have had a busy couple of months.

Jen spent the summer walking, swimming, reading, vacationing at Silver Lake, hiking, kayaking, visiting colleges and enjoying time with friends and family. She can't wait to begin the school year with your child!

Melinda has spent time with her family and friends at their new lake house boating, swimming and paddle boarding. She has enjoyed kayaking in the Cape Neddick River and hostessing at the Cape Neddick Lobster Pound. At the end of the month, she is looking forward to a whitewater rafting trip in Northern Maine that her daughter will guide. She has been preparing for the year and is excited for school to begin with your child!

We are fortunate to have **part-time educational technicians** in kindergarten. Our educational technician is **Mrs. Pam Lombardi**. Pam worked for 19 years at York Middle School as an ed tech in 5th grade. In addition, she started the Youth Enrichment Program in York and has been the Youth Enrichment Coordinator for 25 years. She came to kindergarten at Village Elementary School four years ago and she plans to enjoy her fifth year with kindergarteners!

Please read through this letter carefully, as it contains information to help alleviate any anxieties your child may have about the first day of kindergarten. We hope all children will feel comfortable and confident heading to school.

1. Please **print and complete** the "**Dismissal Information Form**" below. Your child should **return it to school on the "Welcome to Kindergarten" 'Sneak a Peek' day** (details below). Whenever you need to make any **changes** in your child's after school destination, you must send written notification with your child by completing a **bus pass** (these will be printed and given to you inside your child's "Home to School" folder at 'Sneak a Peek' day) and include the following information: the date, the name of the person your child will be visiting, the address of the destination and your signature. Phone calls during the day will be allowed only in emergencies so that we can keep classroom interruptions to a minimum. **Please do not send emails regarding destination changes** as we do not always have time to check emails during the school day. Be sure to **review with your child his/her bus number, address and after school destination each day. Please check our school's website at www.yorkschoools.org for bus numbers/routes.**

2. **Send your child with TWO quick, healthy snacks each day** to eat in the

classroom. Please **label the first snack, “#1” each day**. (Small pieces of masking tape on the containers or permanent markers on baggies work well for labeling.) The snack should be a “quick” snack like pretzels or grapes. Please **label the second snack, “#2”** each day. The second snack could include a utensil and it could be more substantial like cheese and crackers or yogurt. Numbering the snacks is very helpful as the children are never confused about what to eat and when to eat their food. (Please limit your child to snacks and lunches with nut-free ingredients.) Thank you for your cooperation and understanding. **Please do NOT send in more than two snacks** as it can be confusing for young children. Packing the snacks in a separate area from the lunch may be helpful for your child.

3. Please **send your child to school each day with a labeled, no-spill, no-leak water bottle**. We will *try* to remind your child to bring it home each day for cleaning!

4. **School Lunches**: The cost of a school lunch (“lunch of the day,” tuna on whole wheat roll, sunbutter and jelly, yogurt and crackers or a hummus meal) is \$2.75 per day. The cafeteria also provides juices, milks (skim-white, 1%-white, and fat free chocolate milk, all \$0.50) and various snacks (\$0.50 - \$1.25...to be eaten during lunch time only). We **encourage** your child to **prepay lunches** by bringing in checks made out to York Schools Food Service in a labeled envelope or Ziploc bag with his/her name on it. Lunches can be prepaid by the week, month, or trimester...(Prepaying can allay your child’s fears about having money in their account for lunch. It also takes less time in the cafeteria each day.) You may also prepay for lunches by going to www.myschoolbucks.com Although **we strongly encourage kindergarteners to eat breakfast at home**, the school does offer breakfast for \$1.75. Please notify Ms. Ellis and Mrs. Gallagher in writing if your child plans to order breakfast. Applications for free and reduced lunches will be sent home and copies will be available at the school’s front desk as well. Dietary accommodations are available when requested.

Please be sure your child knows what to order for lunch each day, whether it’s lunch from home, or one of the school lunch selections. For the **first weeks of school you will need to complete a lunch choice form for your child**. Once the children understand the “ordering process” we discontinue the lunch choice form. At that time, the children will be responsible for independently selecting their own lunch choice each day.

Please check the “Back to School” issue of a local newspaper or click on this link for September’s menu (this link may not yet be updated at this time):

<https://sites.google.com/a/yorkschoools.org/ves/> and click on the left of the webpage for current menus.

5. The children will have a cubby in the hall for their backpacks, jackets, lunch boxes and

space on the floor for boots. **Please send a complete change of clothes in a labeled ziploc bag** to remain in your child's cubby during the year in the event of an "accident." **Please be sure ALL of your child's belongings are labeled with their first and last name!** When the seasons change, please send in notes requesting the bag so you can send more appropriate clothing.

6. This year we would like each child to **contribute the following items to our classroom**. All contributions will be used as community school supplies throughout the year:

- **three large (.77oz) "purple" glue sticks** (the kind that "write" in purple so that the children can see where they have glued...a three pack is around \$3.00 at Walmart)

- **a box of 24 crayons-Crayola brand**

- **3" X 3" post-it" notes**

- **a donation of one or more of the following: snack, gallon size and jumbo "Big Bags" ziplock bags;**

- **a donation of one or more of the following: paper towels, "soft" tissues**

- * **thin crayola magic markers (set of 10)**

- * **a donation of \$5.00 to offset the price of various classroom material needs such as supplies for the farm unit like a dozen eggs, or cookie sheets used for magnetic letter work...**

7. Throughout the year there will be a **"Helping Hands" display** near the classroom door. Each hand will list an item needed in the classroom. If you can help us out, please take a helping hand, purchase the item and return the hand and the item to the classroom. (Typical contributions might include **grocery store gift cards to offset the price of classroom ingredient needs, cooking supplies, craft items...**) We will also list items of need in future parent letters.

8. Our informal open house called "Welcome to Kindergarten" 'Sneak a Peek' will take place on **Wednesday, August 30 from 1:00 until 1:50. 1:00-1:15:** Parents and students from our classroom will meet in the cafeteria for a bus ride. Bus will leave promptly at **1:05**. Following the bus ride, at **1:15**, ALL parents and students visit in their classrooms. You will complete a brief "scavenger hunt" with your child and review bus information. You may be given your first "homework..." a packet of essential forms for you to complete. Please return the completed forms with your child inside his/her "Home-School Folder" on the first day of school. **1:30:** Parents will be called to the gymnasium to meet other staff and review school protocols, students will remain with teachers. **1:50:** Parents return to classroom to pick up child for dismissal.

9. Be sure to read the **Kindergarten Handbook** available at <http://www.yorkschoools.org/ves/Info> about drop-off and pick-up policies as we want to keep classroom interruptions to a minimum. This handbook may be updated soon.

10. We will notify you of our specials schedule as soon as we receive notification of our master schedule from our new principal, Beth Hutchins. Specials will include:

Art

Music

Library: return books each week (as soon as “borrowing” is initiated)

Physical Education: please send your child wearing sneakers for p.e. each week

Rotating Specials: Please be sure your child either wears or has a pair of sneakers in his/her backpack every Friday

10. We will begin our writing program with a focus on oral storytelling and sharing. Please help your child choose 1 item to spur memories about a summer activity. Please send the item to school in a labeled zip lock bag on “Welcome to Kindergarten Day” ‘Sneak a Peek’ day. The item will stay at school for approximately 6 weeks. (Item could be something from nature, a drawing, a photograph, a ticket stub, etc.)

11. Please **send one small (12” or less) labeled stuffed animal** for your child’s quiet time and for your child’s reading buddy. **Please let your child know that the stuffed animal will stay at school for the year, but they may swap it for another animal per their request!** Thank you!

12. We will **need a Volunteer Coordinator for our classroom.** This person will schedule volunteers to assist during class time. This is the most important volunteer position for our classroom! **There will be a sign-up sheet at ‘Sneak a Peek’ on Wednesday, August 30 for all volunteer positions.**

Please think about how you may be able to **volunteer in our classroom** this year. We plan to gather information about your volunteer interests as well as to obtain days and times for which you will be available to help. You will be a valuable part of our program. Volunteering can mean helping in the classroom on a regular basis, or it can be presenting a special activity once or even taking things to work on at home. Volunteers will begin as soon as possible, although we do like the children to develop a sense of “classroom community” before we begin. We appreciate your eagerness to assist us!

We are lucky to have a **community volunteer** assisting us from the very beginning. Special thanks go to **Mrs. Susan Saxton.** Susan has been assisting for 25 years!

Please let us know if your child's grandparent would like to be included in our volunteer schedule...better yet, please include them on the "sign-up" sheet at 'Sneak a Peek' day!

13. A date for Open House (or "Curriculum Night") will be determined soon! This event is for adults only. At Open House we will explain the schedule, curriculum, routines, homework expectations etc.

We want to make school a positive, happy experience. If any **questions arise**, please **email both** Jen Ellis at jellis@yorkschoools.org *and* Melinda Gallagher at mgallagher@yorkschoools.org. We will return an email response as soon as possible. Please be aware that we usually check our email once a day.

Beginning school requires time to adjust to new routines, new expectations and new faces. It is so important to talk to your child about feelings during this time of adjustment. Communication is the key to a smooth start. Your child will probably be tired and may require extra sleep for the first several weeks of kindergarten!

Enjoy the remaining days of summer. We look forward to a brand new year!

Sincerely,

Jen Koltermann Ellis...a.k.a.: "Ms. Ellis"

Melinda Gallagher...a.k.a.: "Mrs. Gallagher"

•Please scroll down and print the "Dismissal Information Form" and the "New Kindergartener Questionnaire" below. Return to school at the "Welcome to Kindergarten" 'Sneak a Peek' informal open house or complete at school on 'Sneak a Peek' day. Please **complete each small box in the "Dismissal Form" table! Thanks!**

Scroll down!

Dismissal Information Form

(Please print all information neatly)

My child _____'s regular destination for each day will be:

Day	Destination (Home, PAL...)	Address	Phone #	Bus #, Pick up, Other	Person/s Picking Up Child
Mon.					
Tues.					
Wed.					
Thurs.					
Fri.					

Please return this form and the following "New Kindergartener Questionnaire" to school on 'Sneak a Peek' day.

Please note that this is the schedule we will follow unless we receive dated, signed bus notes or general notes instructing us differently.

Thank you! Jen Ellis and Melinda Gallagher (see next page)

New Kindergartener Questionnaire: (Please **print** and return at ‘Sneak a Peek’ day.)

Dear Parents,

Please take a few minutes to answer the questions below. This will help us get to know your child better. This is for our use only and this information will stay with us. Thank you.

•Child’s name:

•What does your child like to be called?:

•Birthday:

•Age:

•Parent(s) names:

•Names and ages of siblings:

•Has your child had preschool or playgroup experience?

Please give name of school, teacher and number of years attended:

•Does your child have any special interests:

•Is your child afraid of anything?

•Does your child have any health problems or allergies? If so, please explain:

•What skills has your child acquired? (Please check those that apply.) Comment below:

likes to listen to stories can zip own clothes recognizes most letters

recognizes most letter sounds knows right and left

can tie shoes knows telephone number/s knows address

knows birthday

•recognizes numbers - •independently counts to

•If your child is reading, when did he/she learn to read and what types of books does he/she read?

•What are your goals/expectations for your child this year? What do you see as your child’s strengths?

•What do you think challenges your child?

•Please include any other information you’d like us to know: (turn over for more room!)

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire!

Jen Ellis & Melinda Gallagher