



August 17, 2020

Dear CES Parents,

We realize that many parents have concerns about the new circumstances under which we are back to school. If we think back to March, many of us had as many concerns about home based learning, but we made it through. And we will make it through this. Things WILL be different. So many of the changes were decisions made without the input of school council or parents. To be honest, some didn't have the input of staff either. We are required to rely on the provincial guidelines at this time to do our best to get kids back to school in a healthy, safe setting. I am confident our staff is ready to welcome your students back safely and ready to learn!

I appreciate the conversations happening on Facebook. While I appreciate the value of Facebook in sharing information, it is not always the best source for addressing concerns. I thought the idea of holding a question and answer session was excellent! I am working on a date and will send that out this week. I realize we all have different technology skills but if you can access Facebook you can access Zoom so we will use that platform to communicate. In the mean time, feel free to email your concerns or questions to me at stacy.jacobs@westwind.ab.ca or send them through our contact link on the [Cardston Elementary School website](#). We work to respond to all of the concerns via email daily.

A few of your concerns are easily addressed here. All students new to Cardston Elementary will have the opportunity to come see the school with their parents before the start of school. This include preschoolers, kindergartners and new students. After lengthy conversations about how to keep our school healthy environments while maintaining cohorts, all Westwind Schools are closed to the public at this time. I am sure you can appreciate how important it is for you as a parent to know on a daily basis exactly who is coming in contact with your child. We can only accomplish this in our closed cohort settings. Because of this priority, we will have to change the tradition of walking your child to their classroom the first day. You will still have an opportunity to meet your child's teacher and walk your child to their "class" outside in a designated area on the first day of school. This is something I have heard through your comments is very important to you as parents and we can make that happen. A little different than usual, yet accomplishing the same thing. If you need to walk your child to their teacher every day for the first month, I am sure we can accommodate that, but it will be outside the school building.

As we approach a new school year after a nearly 6 month break, I am sure many students have anxieties and questions. It is normal for students to find the beginning of a school year stressful. You are the most important and powerful calming tool your child has. Answer their questions honestly. If you aren't sure about an answer it is ok to provide an assuring response such as, "I don't know but I know Mrs. Allred (or their teacher) has a plan and I can't wait until you come back from your first day and tell me about it." Don't hesitate to contact teachers with questions and let them know about your child's worries. First days are very busy and the best time to share concerns is BEFORE school starts, not during the bustle of first days. Cardston Elementary staff are skilled at supporting student anxieties. We have counselors on site who can help and support as well.

I look forward to our Question and Answer period together. Please email or call if you have questions.

Stacy Jacobs

Principal: Stacy Jacobs

Vice Principal: Terry Heaney