

October 1, 2021

Dear Chimacum Families,

Fall is really here. October snuck right up on us in a quite blustery way!

As you may have noticed, many of our kids and families are struggling with their emotions. The weariness of Covid is pervasive, as are the effects of the news each day. Our students feel this and we are responding to their short and long-term needs.

An ounce of prevention...

We know that stressed and distracted students (and adults) don't learn. We use Social and Emotional Learning Curriculums in all grades. Students are engaged in learning activities that help them process their own feelings, learn to work with other students, and develop a sense of mutual belonging. This approach is important to our staff, as they know that they will have fewer conduct problems and emotional challenges in their classrooms, halls, and playgrounds if our students are equipped with skills and resilience for dealing with hard things and challenging emotions. It's also the right thing to do for each student!

Whole Child Approach...

Building leaders, teachers, and support staff work with individual students each day to help them with difficult emotions and challenges. Our teams are patient and kind, and try to approach each situation with a student's overall well-being and dignity at the center. Many of our students came back to in-person learning for the first time in 18 months. In some cases, the first time ever! No matter what grade a student might be in, this would cause tremendous stress and anxiety of the unknown, the unfamiliar, and of not feeling immediate belonging. We are there with them.

Student Support...

Emergencies and hot emotions often arise and our building teams respond to each situation to support each student to feel safe and secure. We work with each student to ensure they can remain in class if it is safe to do so, and to keep everyone engaged. You may have heard of recent school fights in our region. The images that circulate on social media are often startling. While acts of violence aren't tolerated, we will work with students and families to help repair harm, and ensure that students take responsibility for their actions in order to learn and grow. Again, all the while we want to ensure safety.

I expect and encourage our Chimacum Staff to promote safety and well-being of themselves and our students. They receive professional training, promote district policy and Washington Law, and partner with community organizations like the Teen Center and Jumping Mouse. While academic growth is our main goal, we believe that we cannot engage students without supporting the "whole child". I invite you to join us and help us know more about how to support you.

Please let us know if there are any ways we can support you and your children. You can reach out to your school counselor or principal for specific guidance or resources.

Warmly,

Scott Mauk, Superintendent

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