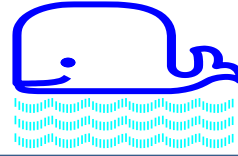


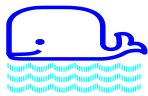
# “THE WHITNEY WHALE WATCH”



September 21, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Thank you for your continued support with the many new procedures as we start another school year at Eli Whitney. We have more than 470 students at Eli Whitney School this year. This student population is divided among three groups: Students in Cohort A, Students in Cohort B and Distance Learners. Approximately 28% of our students are learning remotely while the remaining students are fairly equally divided between the two cohort groups.



## **The Whale Express:**

As we travel through the land of hybrid learning, we continue to improve our practices. Drop-Off Bins and Pick-Up Bins will be located by the main entrance of the building on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Teachers will let distance learners know if there are any forms that need to be picked up. Also, please remember even distance learners need to sign-off and return Emergency Forms, Lunch Applications, Media Releases, Popsicle Permission Slips, and the nurse's health forms.



## **Breakfast and Lunch:**

Grab and Go lunches are available on Distancing Learning Days between 11:00 – 11:30 a.m. outside the back door of the cafeteria. When students are in the building, lunches are available at the same location between 1:20 and 1:40 p.m. **Every student at Eli Whitney will be receiving free breakfast and lunch through December 2020.** However, parents and guardians need to complete the application for free and reduced lunch as this will go into effect in January 2021.



## **Instruction:**

As previously mentioned, each classroom has three different cohorts of students who receive instruction at the same time. This is definitely a change that brings challenges to all parties involved – students, parents and teachers. In the best interest of everyone involved, we need to be sure that all students are “ready to learn” and expectations and norms are followed. When they are available, Tutors, Building Substitutes and Interns will be supporting instruction. These people include Ms. Bergamasco, Mr. Ferraro, Ms. Leroy, Ms. Maignan, Mrs. Maria, Ms. Thomas and Mr. Wright.

#### Attendance Chart



#### Attendance:

This past Monday, September 14<sup>th</sup>, attendance guidelines in Stratford Public Schools were revised to align with the demands of the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE). The CSDE recently stated that we need to “Collectively demonstrate to state leaders, advocates, parents and the general public that we are doing everything possible to support and engage all students in our public school this year.” Classroom teachers take attendance daily before 9:15AM. It is important that all students who are learning remotely log in during this timeframe. The process for attendance for students who are learning inside our building remains the same. Classroom teachers will be entering these basic categories:

- **RP - Remote Present** – This is for any student who is working remotely, either a distance learner or a student who is in a cohort scheduled to be at home for remote learning that day.
- **RAU - Remote Absent Unexcused** – This is for any remote learner student who is not "present" in the class. Teachers will be marking this accordingly. This will be “Absent Unexcused” which is equivalent to the “AB” that teachers mark now for students who are not in class.

The following are a few more codes that the office will be using:

- **RAE - Remote Absent Excused** – This is for any remote learner student who is not "present" due to sickness per parent or guardian via typical school procedures. The secretaries would be the only ones to change this. This is equivalent to any of our “Absent Excused,” such as illness, religious, etc. Parents need to report this absence to the office via the attendance line (203-385-4198 Option 2).
- **MRP - Medical Remote Present** – This is for any student who is normally an **in-person learner**, but is participating from home due to quarantine or slight illness, i.e., rash, allergies. This student should be participating like a typical remote learner for the day. Parents need to notify the office via the attendance line when their child will not physically be in school on their usual cohort day.



#### P.T.S.A.

Mrs. Rodrigues is the newly elected President of our P.T.S.A. The Treasurer is Mrs. Kenny while Mrs. Marcus is the Secretary. Mrs. Gramling is overseeing Membership and Mrs. Rich is organizing our fund-raising efforts. Meetings of our P.T.S.A. are scheduled for the first Wednesday of each month and everyone is invited to attend. The first meeting is being scheduled through Zoom at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, October 7<sup>th</sup>. While many of our traditional events are on hold for now, we are always thinking of new ways to support our students' education and safety while building Whitney pride. Already this year, the P.T.S.A. sold Whitney Whale logo masks to promote health and school spirit, hosted a welcome back luncheon for our amazing staff, collected donations for picnic tables to encourage outdoor learning and beautified the school grounds for our incoming students. We will continue to look for ways to enhance our community, but we need you to help by becoming a P.T.S.A. member! The P.T.S.A. is also having its annual membership drive. The classroom with the highest membership percentage wins \$100.00 of Scholastic Bucks and a popsicle party.



### Oops Box:

If your child has forgotten his/her homework, water bottle, folder, lunch, sneakers, etc., please place the forgotten item in the clear plastic box outside the main doors. There will be a pad of sticky notes so you can properly label the item with your child's name and teacher. The office staff will check the box throughout the day.



### Open House:

A virtual Open House is scheduled for September 23<sup>rd</sup> at 6:00 p.m. through a specific link which will be e-blasted to our families. The first session begins at 6:00 p.m. which is followed by the second one at 6:35 p.m. for families who have more than one student at Eli Whitney. Classroom teachers will review pertinent information about the grade level and/or content area. You will also become familiar with classroom schedules and routines, along with an overview of the grade's curriculum and instructional practices.



### Staff Changes:

In addition to welcoming many new students and their families, we are also greeting a few new staff members this year. Mrs. Maria has officially joined our staff as a Building Substitute who works with Mr. Ferraro and Mr. Wright to support instruction in numerous classroom settings. We welcome Mrs. Maignan as our new Reading Tutor and Ms. Martin as our new sixth grade teacher. Both of these educators are highly qualified educators who effectively complement our learning community.



### Safety:

As you know, in the interest of safety we have revised both our arrival and dismissal plans which provide various locations across our campus. After confirming adult identification, classroom teachers will release individual students at dismissal. Although this process may take a little more time, we feel it increases everyone's safety. Students in grades four through six must have signed permission slips to walk home independently. Additionally, please make sure you are using the crosswalk to cross Huntington Road. Please let the crossing guard cross you when she is on duty. **Please do NOT park in the four handicapped parking spaces in the front parking lot, unless you have the designated marker.** We need to reserve these spaces for their intended use. There are also two visitor parking spaces in this part of the lot. These are for use during the day, not for drop off and pick up before or after school. The rear of the building is a safe place to drop off and pick up students. Students should be arriving at school just before 8:30 a.m. when supervision begins. Please also be mindful that dogs should not be walked on the property during school hours. If you change the after school dismissal plans for your child(ren), please send a note to the teacher in the morning so we can have time to properly plan. The safety of our students continues to be our focus at Eli Whitney. To this end, we continue to practice fire drills and lockdown drills on a regular basis. Your child's teacher has reviewed the procedures for both of these exercises with their students.

**Upcoming Events:**

As previously mentioned, our virtual Open House is September 23<sup>rd</sup> which is our next Distance Learning Day. There is no school on September 28<sup>th</sup> in observation of Yom Kippur. Teachers have PLC's on both Wednesday, September 30<sup>h</sup> and Wednesday, October 28<sup>th</sup> which are early dismissal days on which school is dismissed at 12:30 p.m. School will not be in session on Election Day, November 3<sup>rd</sup>. The first round of conferences is scheduled for November 17<sup>th</sup> and November 19<sup>th</sup>.

Even though it's a "new normal," we are all so happy to be back in school. I look forward to working with everyone as we maintain our many new health practices while creatively finding ways to build and support our strong learning community. Safety continues to be our priority at Eli Whitney and has definitely taken on a much stronger meaning. At Eli Whitney we are "Responsible, Respectful, Honest and Always Safe and Kind!"

Sincerely,

*Victoria K. Florek*

Victoria K. Florek  
Principal