

## Highlander Hilltop



Dear Portland Middle School Families,

This week we welcomed our students back to PMS and had successful opening days for both groups of students in our hybrid schedule. To be honest, it was quite an emotional event for me, seeing students in person again, walking into the school building, where they belong. I still remember back in March, when school's closed down their buildings across the state of Connecticut, none of us realized the true enormity of the challenge that lay before us. In starting up this summer as the new principal of Portland Middle School, I was blown away by what the students, teacher, and families of this community

were able to accomplish at a distance; but ultimately as almost every educator will tell you, we get into this profession to work directly with kids...to be together. Now that we are together again, we need to cherish each moment that we have, and take all of the necessary precautions that we must, in order to ensure we can stay together in the school building.

This year begins a new journey. As I mentioned in our [virtual opening assembly](#), our theme for the year will be exploration. We will be launching into new waters this year, and that includes our physical building. Students walked into a very different environment than the one they left in March. Students now stay in their classrooms for the majority of the day, they stay with the same group of students, and they do all of this behind a mask. Additionally, that only accounts for about half of our students on any given day, as the other half are at home engaging in the virtual work of their hybrid class. We also have opened up a brand new school program with the Portland Virtual Learning Academy. Despite all of these changes, one thing remains the same, our promise to provide every student in the Portland Public School system a top quality education that ensures that we meet their individualized needs.

It was a pleasure to wave in the class of 2025 and 2026 on Tuesday and Friday, while wearing a traditional Highlander kilt. I saw smiling eyes, and a cheerful bounce in the step of each student as they passed through our doors. We may be exploring the unknown this year, but we will be doing so together. And together we will grow, we will learn, we will succeed. That is the spirit of a Highlander.

Sincerely,  
Chuck Hershon

 [@ChuckHershon](#)

### From the Nurse's Office How to use a cloth mask

Wash hands before you pick it up by the ear loops.

Loop one ear then pull across your face and loop the second ear.

You should avoid touching your face (especially eyes, nose and mouth), but if necessary you can touch the outside of the mask to adjust it for comfort. AVOID sticking your fingers around the edges and underneath.

When you remove it, (again using clean hands) hold it by the ear loops and fold it so the outside is wrapped in. Avoid flapping it around and that can send germs airborne.

Stick it in a bag or pocket until you can wash it (20 seconds with soap and water), wash your hands, and let it dry completely before wearing it again.



I recommend having a personal bottle of hand sanitizer available for any time you need to do this without a sink available. Sanitizer can kill a lot of germs, including COVID, but not all germs. Soap and water is the best for removing ALL germs, including rotavirus and norovirus (GI bugs).

If your mask is not comfortable and you find yourself having to adjust it frequently, you may want to try a different size or style. In particular, the 3-D masks with adjustable ear loops don't touch the mouth nearly as much and can be more comfortable for long periods. You need at least 2 layers of fabric, and should not see light through it.

Remember, masks work! I'd like to thank students and faculty for following our new safety protocols so diligently, it really makes a big difference. Any questions, please feel free to reach out.

Renee Hyland, BSN, RN-BC

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## Chromebooks Expectations, Procedures, and FAQ's

### Expectations

- Devices should come to school fully charged. We may not be able to accommodate in-school charging due to social distancing rules.
- School devices should be used at home on distance days. Only in extreme cases should a home device be used on distance days. Please email Mr. Toussaint if you have any questions on this.

### Procedures

- Please encourage your student to seek out Mr. Toussaint first thing in the morning (during Block 1) with any Chromebook issues. Mr. Toussaint is not available otherwise.
- If you encounter any issues or problems when your student is at home, please email Mr. Toussaint.

### FAQ's

- What if my student is missing a charger?
  - *If it is lost, search high and low! We have no chargers to spare. If one cannot be located or is damaged, contact Mr. Toussaint.*
- What if Google Meets are running slow at home?
  - *There are some issues that we are discovering that have to do with the size of Google Meets. But if videos, small Meets, and other tasks are taking a long time, please make sure the device has been updated and make sure the wifi connection is strong enough.*
- What if we have an extra device or charger at home?
  - *Please bring them in! Our inventory is low and we need as many devices as possible.*

Contact - Corey Toussaint - ctoussaint@portlandct.us

## Next Week's Hybrid Schedule

Monday 9/7	Tuesday 9/8	Wednesday 9/9	Thursday 9/10	Friday 9/11
Labor Day- No School	Blue at home	At Home Learning Day for All	Blue in school	Blue in school
	Red in school		Red at home	Red at home

### Important Dates in September

9/7: Labor Day (No School)

9/9: PMS Virtual Meet & Greet ([Form](#) to Pose Questions Ahead of Time)

9/14: First Day of Fall Sports

9/15 Board of Ed Meeting

9/23: Two Hour Delay - Professional Development for Teachers

