



Circle of Life Academy

"Our Circle of Life Academy is immersed in Anishinaabe Mino-Bimaadiziwin for our children and community while providing the highest quality of education."

COLA February 2021 Newsletter

Dear Circle of Life Academy,

Thank you for waiting patiently for an update on the status of hybrid or in-person instruction at Circle of Life Academy. Although the Governor Walz made the metrics for reopening advisory, the mandatory portions of 'guidance' have increased the burden on local school districts across the state. We receive revised instructions on a weekly basis; however, ultimately any change in our current Learning Model is at the discretion of our Interim School Board (i.e., Tribal Council).

In the event of a Learning Model change, COLA staff have been working nonstop the last few days to assess how these guidelines impact our reopening plans that have been under development the past three weeks. I want to extend a huge thank you to the staff I serve, for their hard work and creative thinking.

In the event our Interim School Board supports and approves a change in our Learning Model, there will be four things we need from you to help us prepare for an opening of hybrid or in-person instruction:

1. Bussing will be a limiting factor for the school's ability to operate. If you can provide transportation for your child on a consistent basis, it will help us immensely to serve more children. Please contact the school office and let them know your transportation intentions and needs.
2. Each family will be asked to commit to a quarantine protocol, and a signed copy of that commitment must be returned to the school in order for your child to attend hybrid or in-person.
3. COLA will provide face shields, facemasks, and all other related COVID-19 PPE to every student (see more details below). We will kindly ask that you send your child to school with one of our proper fitting face coverings. If you need one that fits your child, please contact the school to request a mask.
4. If, due to quarantine needs, our school transitions between different Learning Models, there will be a learning break of two or up to five days that our staff will need to prepare for the change. When this occurs, it will likely be on short notice, and we will effectively need to close school for that frame of time. Multiple 'snow days' if you will. Thank you in advance for your understanding.

With the above shared, here are all the steps COLA has completed to ensure the safest learning environment possible.

For the students:

1. All students will start by receiving two (2) age-appropriate face shields and cloth face masks.
2. All students will receive regular education on age-appropriate COVID-19 best practices.

For the staff:

1. All staff will start by receiving two (2) adult face shields and cloth face masks.
2. All staff will start by receiving two (2) boxes of rubber gloves, one (1) box of sanitizing wipes and enough plexiglass plastic barriers for all desks within their classrooms and/or office spaces.
3. All staff have been offered bi-weekly COVID-19 testing (i.e., either saliva or nasal swabbing).
4. All staff were offered COVID-19 vaccination, starting on January 20, 2021.
5. All staff will set-up their classrooms and/or office spaces to meet the six feet apart social distancing mandate.

For the school building:

1. The school has installed and implemented a single point of entry to the school building to ensure proper COVID-19 mitigation check-in procedures are followed.
2. The school has installed and implemented a cutting-edge hands-free thermal imaging temperature screening system.
3. The school has installed and implemented state-of-the-art HALO-LED air purification system, which purifies every cubic centimeter of air throughout the entire school building.
4. The school has installed and implemented a front-line video surveillance system, remotely accessible by White Earth Police Department, throughout the entire school building and grounds.
5. The school has installed and implemented hands-free water fill stations throughout the entire school building.
6. The school has installed and implemented free-standing hand sanitizing units throughout the entire school building.
7. The school is in the process of installing and implementing hands-free plumbing throughout the entire school building.
8. The school has designated a rotation of custodial and maintenance team members to daily sanitize, with current best-practice misting sanitation technology, throughout the entire school building.
9. The school has placed poster reminders of social distancing and masking up throughout the entire school building.
10. The school has placed "6 Feet Apart" floor reminders throughout the entire school building.

Folks, the last eleven months have been hard on everyone. I know that we all just want a normal life again and, hopefully, that can happen with wide scale vaccinations. In the meantime, we must stick together, grant and receive grace, and remain diligent for what I expect to be another rough few months in the battle against this virus. Circle of Life Academy has always been a family. A family complete with function and dysfunction, with love and frustration, great victories, and great sorrows but together we are a family, a community. Please take care of yourself and each other and be gentle with both.

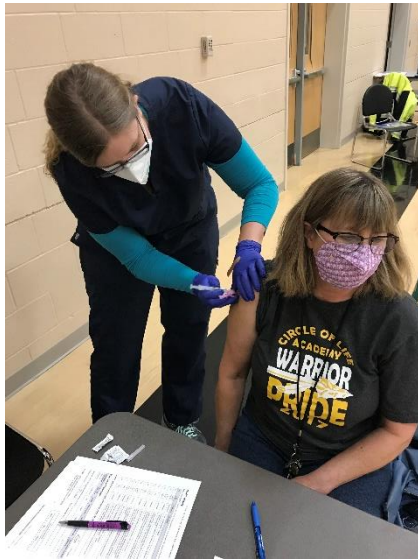
In partnership,

Superintendent Jenna Leadbetter

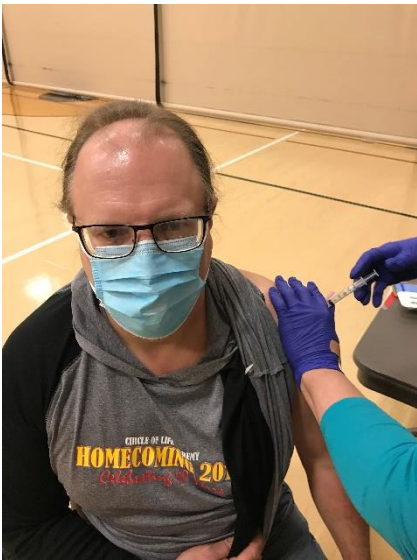
ALL COLA Educators and Staff were offered the COVID-19 Vaccination

This made COLA the first school in the state of Minnesota, as of 01/20/2021 date, to offer vaccination to ALL its school's employees! A BIG MIIGWECH to the sovereign nation of White Earth for supporting Education personnel as essential.



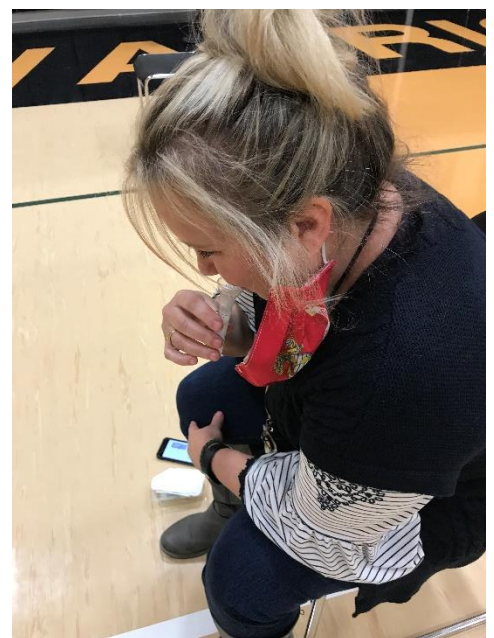


**Chi-miigwech
White Earth
Nation Tribal
Health! We are
so grateful for
your kindness,
support, time
and to be able
to partner
alongside you!**



ALL COLA Educators and Staff are offered a Bi-weekly COVID-19 Saliva Test

In a collaboration between the Minnesota Department of Education, White Earth Tribal Health Division and our school, all COLA employees are now offered the COVID-19 Saliva Test every two weeks!



NO SCHOOL February 15 and 16, 2021 due to a Holiday and a Staff Professional Development Day.



Optional March 2021 Intersession Activities for Students

Time	Monday 03/22/21	Tuesday 03/23/21	Wednesday 03/24/21	Thursday 03/25/21	Friday 03/26/21
8:30 – 9:00 AM	Opening Ceremony “Circle”				
10:00 – 12:00 PM	Alicia	Alicia	Alicia	Alicia	Alicia
9:00 – 12:00 PM	Sugar Bush with Vince Carving with Steve	Sugar Bush with Vince Carving with Steve	Sugar Bush with Vince Carving with Steve	Sugar Bush with Vince Carving with Steve	Sugar Bush with Vince Carving with Steve
12:00 – 12:30 PM	Lunch Break	Lunch Break	Lunch Break	Lunch Break	Lunch Break
12:30 – 3:00 PM	Sugar Bush with Vince Carving with Steve	Sugar Bush with Vince Carving with Steve	Sugar Bush with Vince Carving with Steve	Sugar Bush with Vince Carving with Steve	Sugar Bush with Vince Carving with Steve
3:00 – 4:00 PM					Closing Ceremony “Circle”

Spring 2021 State and Federal Standardized Testing

As of January 27, the Spring 2021 State and Federal Standardized Testing are still required of all public, charter, tribally controlled and Bureau of Indian Education schools for 2020-2021 School Year. COLA is as prepared as possible with the following update:

English Language Arts and Mathematics
Standardized Testing
March 22 – April 30, 2021
Mandatory on-site only
Grades 3-8 and 11th

Science Standardized Testing
March 1 – 19, 2021
Mandatory on-site only
Grades 3-8 and 11th

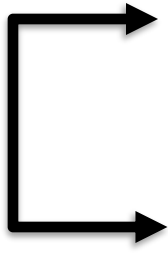
A Friendly Reminder on Weekly Opening and Closing Ceremonies

Friendly reminder that COLA's amazing Team of Cultural Educators is hosting our remote virtual ZOOM Opening Ceremony at 8:30 AM at the beginning of each week and our remote virtual ZOOM Closing Ceremony at 3:00 PM at the end of each week. The teachings are incredible, and the ZOOM chat box is full of student and staff chatter! We LOVE seeing and hearing from our students!



We miss you!





INCREDIBLE Update on Outstanding School-owned Technology Invoices

As of January 20, 2021, the White Earth Reservation Business Committee recognized this unprecedented time of hardship and approved with funding the replacement cost of all outstanding school-owned lost, missing, or stolen technology spanning between the specific months of March 1, 2020 and December 31, 2020. This will include reimbursement to families who paid their outstanding invoices between March 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020. Moving forward, as of January 1, 2021, we kindly ask families to work with the school to pay any future invoices for lost, missing or stolen technology.

Need Internet Access?

COLA continues to seek funds and partnerships to positively address the remote Distance Learning needs of our students, families, and staff during this unprecedented time. If you have limited or zero internet connectivity at your home, please let your teacher know as soon as possible or call COLA at 218-983-4180.





The second half of the school year is underway and going well. The challenges have been numerous this past year, but we still experienced reading growth and success for many of our students! We are ready to see more growth in student reading levels as the school year progresses. 2021 is looking brighter in so many ways, and we know our COLA students will shine by reading even more and increasing their Lexile (reading) levels!



Colder Weather Means More Time to Read

As we move more into Winter and colder weather, students may be spending more time indoors. This will give them an opportunity for more reading. Research tells us that if students do a minimum of two Achieve3000 lessons and answer the questions with a 75% or higher score, their Lexile reading levels will grow. Add an additional lesson to that, and students' reading levels could grow even more. Remember that students need modeling to show them how to take notes during reading, use a graphic organizer, or unpack the Thought Question before reading. It's such an important life skill for students to learn how to analyze text, answer questions and write in response, referencing text. Achieve3000 is the perfect tool for not only growing their reading level but taking them to higher level textual analysis.



COLA Students are Keeping the Pace

The month of December showed some great gains for our students. The following nation-wide data shows that Circle of Life Academy is making moves recognized nation-wide and our very own 9th through 12th graders are excelling! Let's see who can take the lead for January! We know that **2.0 activities per week** with **75% first-try scores** are key to accelerated Lexile gains. We can do it!

Grades 3-5: Kickapoo took the lead, followed by Circle of Nations, and Theodore Jamerson

Grades 6-8: Duckwater led the group followed by Theodore Jamerson, and Oneida Nations

Grades 9-12: Nay Ah Shing, and **Circle of Life Academy**, tied for first place followed by Shoshone-Bannock, and in third, Turtle Mountain High School

Our High School Language Arts Teacher, Dr. Sheila Michaels, was featured in the Bureau of Indian Education's nation-wide Newsletter! Here's her excerpt!

On a good day, there are innumerable obstacles that present themselves to learners and the teachers that walk with them on this journey we call education. Nowhere is that more prevalent than it is as we are in the thralls of a pandemic which has sent both learners and teachers into a sea of uncertainty and filled with waves of unknowns. As a teacher/learner myself, I have always operated my best from the proverbial bottom of the bucket where the "sky's the limit" for creative ways to engage students where the focus is learning growth on all fronts.

To lay the foundation, Achieve3000 was a program that we implemented at Circle of Life Academy (COLA) in 2017. Until that time, my teaching journey had focused more in the college realm, and I was just learning the ins and outs of ELA in the high school environment. In my second quarter at COLA, the ELA team was tasked with the implementation of Achieve3000. To say that I was not super excited about another program implementation is a vast understatement; however, I quickly realized that there were several components that provided assessment tools that made this platform incredibly valuable. I was able to meet learners where they were at, regardless of skill level, and help to give them the tools and resources that they needed to advance. When the students used the program, there was undeniable growth and Lexile gains. This was huge for me as I could show them how far they had come, and then challenge them to go further. I have places all over my classroom that celebrate them . . . this is not about me; it is about them. I would like to share what I have learned in the face of a pandemic and teaching our kiddos via distance education utilizing Achieve3000.

My best advice is to keep it super simple, and to trust what you know. Our learners were/are familiar with Achieve3000 which made the transition into distance education easier. Whereas there were a few "fall-on-our-face" moments, we were able to dust ourselves off and move forward from a place of positivity. I never randomly choose a point of entry for our ELA students. Articles are chosen intentionally. For example, I might feel a spark with something that I think that they will connect with on a personal level. If/when that happens, it will facilitate engagement and discussion points that can be further researched. I want them to be curious about their world. The next week's lesson/s will expand on a skill set that was introduced in the previous week. I push them because I believe in them. When I see that several of them are struggling, I research their question responses to determine where I have missed the mark in providing them tools they need to experience success. There are NO failures in my classes, just opportunities to learn. As often as you can, give them props, tell them that they are AWESOME, because indeed they are! They make me look good. They are AMAZINGLY resilient and incredibly strong.

I am lucky to have an interventionist to work with me and we collaborate strategies that help "us" all to experience success. Break out groups focus on skill acquisition and lifting learners up rather than breaking them down. I am also lucky to have a principal that pops into our ZOOM classes and shares her experiences, both as an Anishinaabe woman and as a lifelong learner. As a teacher, I have failed more times than I can count. BUT at the end of the day, my students know that I love them, and I believe in them . . . that is the best recipe for student engagement and success that I know.

Miigwech bizindawiyeg (thank you for listening).

Sheila Michaels, Circle of Life Academy

NEW COLA School Gear for ALL Students!

This February 2021, COLA is all about connecting with our students for support, warmth, love, and motivating attendance. With a recent private donation, we've given our COLA school gear a much-needed update and we want to provide each student with a new wardrobe to show their #WarriorPride! **To get you your new COLA school gear, we need each student's preferred sweatshirt and t-shirt size.** Our Elementary and High School Teachers are striving to contact each student individually for their preferred clothing size; however, this is not always successful. Please call or email either...

High School Teacher, Wanda Goodwin at:
218-556-1989
wanda.goodwin@col.pvt.k12.mn.us

OR

Office Coordinator, Heidi Harstad at:
218-983-4180
heidi.harstad@col.pvt.k12.mn.us



Can YOU spot the Principals or Superintendent in class?

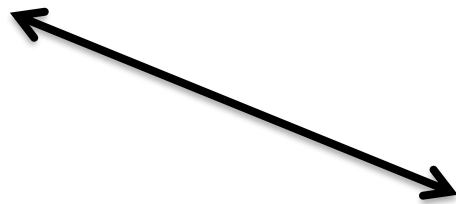
Make sure you are attending all your classes! Keep your eyes open for the Principals or Superintendent. Catch them in your class and you will win a special prize! Special prizes will be sent home snail mail style to students who spot them in class



A friendly Message from your COLA Bus Drivers

This is friendly reminder to set out your heavy-duty red storage bins every day for our deliveries! With winter weather here, we secured extra heavy-duty red storage bins to drop off food or school items. If you need another heavy-duty red storage bin, please call COLA at 218-983-4180. We ask that you ensure these bins are visible to the bus drivers and placed away from snowplows.

Chi-miigwech,
Your Bus Drivers



A message from Assistant Dean of Students, Loretta Solmon

Boozhoo Everyone,

I am excited that everyone is on-track with their Distance Learning and turning in their assignments. Hoping that you are all well and enjoying the beautiful weather that we have been having. I miss all of you and hope to see you soon.

Chi-miigwech,
Assistant Dean of Students, Loretta

A message from K-12 Dean of Students, Mike Bunker

Aaniin gakina awiya,

Niin bagosendan gaye giinawaa minochige dash ayaaw mino-giizhigad
Minjimenim gaye giinawaa zaagichigaazo

Hello everyone,

I hope you are doing well and have a good day!
Remember you are treasured.

Chi-miigwech,
Dean of Students, Mike

A message from K-12 Principal, Lynda Wadena

Miigwech to all our families! Distance or Remote learning is a challenge and you have met it. Mid-term grades will be sent out around February 16, 2021. Students remember to submit all your classwork to your teachers. Please notify the office with any contact changes, for example, a new phone number. Keep safe. I look forward to seeing you in the classes I join!

Chi-miigwech,
Principal Lynda

NEW K-12 Student Recognition for Consistent Attendance and Completed Work

COLA's K-12 educators are tracking student attendance and work completed! Every student, regardless of grade, who shows good attendance and/or completes their work is now receiving an additional award via our School Bus home deliveries! The Student Recognition Squad would like to recognize 26 students who received a reward for attending class and completing their work last week. Thank you students for being COLA STRONG! Below are just a couple of examples, but awards will be different every single month! #GoWarriors



Neighboring FREE and VIRTUAL Community Conversations

As COLA is a neighbor to Detroit Lakes, MN and we serve many students who reside in Detroit Lakes, MN, we thought you, our school community, may be interested in these important FREE and VIRTUAL conversations.



Building community by exploring hot topics in 2021

A partnership with Detroit Lakes Public Library, Becker County Museum, and the Holmes Theatre. Each virtual conversation features experts in the field and an opportunity for community members to ask questions and be part of the conversation.

Free, but registration is required for each conversation. Zoom link will be emailed.

Register at DLCCC.org
Under Upcoming Shows & Events

1st Conversation:

Thursday, Jan. 28 at 7pm
Education in a Pandemic

SPEAKERS:

Mark Whiting
Elementary School Teacher
Karen Trout
High School Mathematics Teacher
Tim Siewert
High School Band Director
Marcus Lacher
M State Community & Technical College

Future Conversations:

Feb. 25: Beyond Diversity to Cultural Competence
March 25: Gender Equity
April 22: Climate Change in Minnesota





COLA K-12 Music Teacher (1 Position Available)

COLA Industrial Technology Teacher (1 Position Available)

COLA EBD Special Education Teacher (1 Position Available)

COLA Education Technology Coordinator (1 Position Available)

COLA MARSS and Data Coordinator (1 Position Available)

COLA Maintenance / Custodians (2 Positions Available)

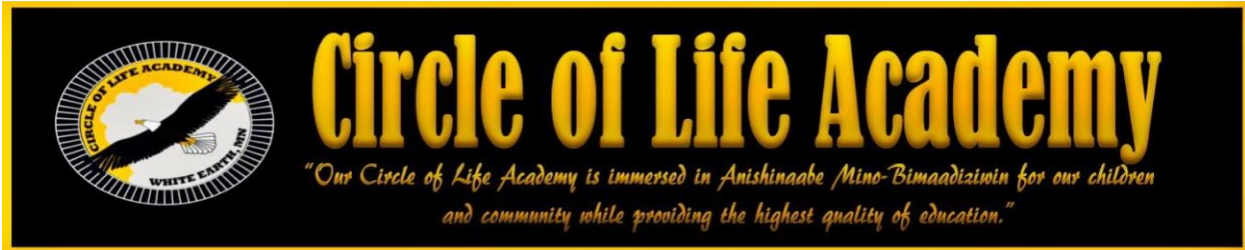
COLA Bus Driver (1 Position Available)

COLA Substitute Bus Drivers (Multiple Positions Available)

COLA Substitute Teachers (Multiple Positions Available)

Please call White Earth Tribal Human Resources at (218) 983-4646 to inquire about open positions!

If you have not signed and returned the following **Student Use of Technology Agreement and Release of Liability Form**, please read through it here, sign the **red outlined "PLEASE RETURN"** page and return to COLA.



Student Use of Technology Agreement and Release of Liability Form

The COLA authorizes students to use technology owned or otherwise provided by the school as necessary for instructional purposes. The use of school technology is a privilege permitted at the school's discretion and is subject to the conditions and restrictions set forth in applicable Board policies, administrative regulations, and this Acceptable Use Agreement.

The school reserves the right to suspend access at any time, without notice, for any reason. The school expects all students to use technology responsibly in order to avoid potential problems and liability. The school may place reasonable restrictions on the sites, material, and/or information that students may access through the system.

Each student who is authorized to use school technology and his/her parent/guardian shall sign this Acceptable Use Agreement as an indication that they have read and understand the agreement.

Definitions

School technology includes, but is not limited to, computers, the school's computer network including servers and wireless computer networking technology (Wi-Fi), the Internet, email, USB drives, wireless access points (routers), tablet computers, smartphones and smart devices, telephones, cellular telephones, personal digital assistants, pagers, MP3 players, wearable technology, any wireless communication device including emergency radios, and/or future technological innovations, whether accessed on or off site or through school-owned or personally owned equipment or devices.

Student Obligations and Responsibilities

Students are expected to use school technology safely, responsibly, and for educational purposes only. The student in whose name school technology is issued is responsible for its proper use at all times. Students shall not share their assigned online services account information, passwords, or other information used for identification and authorization purposes, and shall use the system only under the account to which they have been assigned.

Students are prohibited from using school technology for improper purposes, including, but not limited to, use of school technology to:

1. Access, post, display, or otherwise use material that is discriminatory, libelous, defamatory, obscene, sexually explicit, or disruptive.

2. Bully, harass, intimidate, or threaten other students, staff, or other individuals ("cyberbullying").
3. Disclose, use, or disseminate personal identification information (such as name, address, telephone number, Social Security number, or other personal information) of another student, staff member, or other person with the intent to threaten, intimidate, harass, or ridicule that person.
4. Infringe on copyright, license, trademark, patent, or other intellectual property rights.
5. Intentionally disrupt or harm school technology or other school operations (such as destroying school equipment, placing a virus on school computers, adding or removing a computer program without permission from teacher or other school personnel, changing settings on shared computers).
6. Install unauthorized software.
7. "Hack" into the system to manipulate data of the school or other users.
8. Engage in or promote any practice that is unethical or violates any law or Board policy, administrative regulation, or school practice.

Privacy

Since the use of school technology is intended for educational purposes, students shall not have any expectation of privacy in any use of school technology.

The school reserves the right to monitor and record all use of school technology, including, but not limited to, access to the Internet or social media, communications sent or received from school technology, or other uses. Such monitoring/recording may occur at any time without prior notice for any legal purposes including, but not limited to, record retention and distribution and/or investigation of improper, illegal, or prohibited activity. Students should be aware that, in most instances, their use of school technology (such as web searches and emails) cannot be erased or deleted.

All passwords created for or used on any school technology are the sole property of the school. The creation or use of a password by a student on school technology does not create a reasonable expectation of privacy.

Personally Owned Devices

If a student uses a personally owned device to access school technology, he/she shall abide by all applicable Board policies, administrative regulations, and this Acceptable Use Agreement. Any such use of a personally owned device may subject the contents of the device and any communications sent or received on the device to disclosure pursuant to a lawful subpoena or public records request.

Reporting

If a student becomes aware of any security problem (such as any compromise of the confidentiality of any login or account information) or misuse of school technology, he/she shall immediately report such information to the teacher or other school personnel.

Consequences for Violation

Violations of the law, Board policy, or this agreement may result in revocation of a student's access to school technology and/or discipline, up to and including suspension or expulsion. In addition, violations of the law, Board policy, or this agreement may be reported to law enforcement agencies as appropriate.

PLEASE RETURN

Student Acknowledgment

I have received, read, understand, and agree to abide by this Student Use of Technology Agreement and Release of Liability Form and other applicable laws and school policies and regulations governing the use of school technology. I understand that there is no expectation of privacy when using school technology. I further understand that any violation may result in loss of user privileges, disciplinary action, and/or appropriate legal action.

Student Name: _____
(please print)

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____ Grade: _____

Parent or Legal Guardian Acknowledgment

If the student is under 18 years of age, a parent/guardian must also read and sign the agreement. As the parent/guardian of the above-named student, I have read, understand, and agree that my child shall comply with the terms of the Acceptable Use Agreement. By signing this Agreement, I give permission for my child to use school technology and/or to access the school's computer network and the Internet. I understand that, despite the school's best efforts, it is impossible for the school to restrict access to all offensive and controversial materials. I agree to release from liability, indemnify, and hold harmless the school, school, and school personnel against all claims, damages, and costs that may result from my child's use of school technology or the failure of any technology protection measures used by the school. Further, I accept full responsibility for supervision of my child's use of his/her access account if and when such access is not in the school setting.

Parent Name: _____
(please print)

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____

If you have specific questions or concerns regarding your child's education, please contact one of your building Principals as follows:

K-12 Principal, Lynda Wadena
Office: 218-983-4180
Work Cell: 218-850-8876

Assistant K-12 Principal, David Perry
Office: 218-983-4180
Work Cell: 612-578-6141

If you have specific questions or concerns regarding Circle of Life Academy, please contact the School Superintendent as follows:

Superintendent, Jenna Leadbetter
Office: 218-983-4180
Work Cell: 218-850-8677

If you have other questions or concerns:

K-12 Cultural Coordination

- Principal, Lynda Wadena
- Teacher of Anishinaabe, Vince Olson
- Teacher of Anishinaabe, Susie Ballot

K-12 Special Education Coordination

- Assistant Principal, David Perry

K-12 Curriculum / Instruction Coordination

- Principal, Lynda Wadena
- Assistant Principal, David Perry

K-12 Technology Coordination

- Superintendent, Jenna Leadbetter
- High School Teacher, John DeJong
- High School Teacher, Wanda Goodwin

K-12 School Assessment Coordination

- Principal, Lynda Wadena
- Assistant Principal, David Perry

K-12 Transcripts / Graduation Coordination

- Principal, Lynda Wadena
- High School Counselor, Matt Meyer

K-12 Attendance / Truancy Coordination

- Principal, Lynda Wadena
- Assistant Principal, David Perry
- Dean of Students, Mike Bunker
- Assistant Dean of Students, Loretta Solmon

COVID-19 Coordination

- Dean of Students, Mike Bunker
- Superintendent, Jenna Leadbetter

K-12 Student Support / Mental Health / Wellness Coordination

- High School Counselor, Matt Meyer
- K-8 School Counselor, Sheila McLeod
- K-12 Social Worker, WillyAnn Heisler-Hoban
- K-12 Principal, Lynda Wadena

K-12 Food Service Coordination

- Head Cook, Grace Jackson
- Business Manager, Carol Zortman

Transportation Coordinator

- Transportation Coordinator, Matt Jensen

Business / Finance Coordination

- Business Manager, Carol Zortman
- Business Coordinator, Andrea Thompson

Facilities Coordination

- Facilities Manager, Darwin Shaugabay

All Other

- Superintendent, Jenna Leadbetter

New information continues to come out as we progress through this school year. Changes and modifications may need to be made to our plans as situations, experiences, and challenges arise.

We thank you for your continued trust and support as we navigate these interesting times. Throughout history and into the future, Circle of Life Academy will continue to put children and families first.