Wissahickon School District

Elementary School Student/Family Handbook

WSD Elementary Leadership Team

Blue Bell Elementary – Angela Farlow, Principal

Lower Gwynedd Elementary – Miesja Cubito, Principal

Shady Grove Elementary – James Kelly, Principal

Stony Creek Elementary – Kelly Carter, Principal

Translate This Handbook

This document contains important information. If you need language translation assistance to understand this document, you may review this information on our district website and use the translation tool, or you may contact your student's school to request a translated document.

Click here: https://www.wsdweb.org/parent-hub/student-and-family-handbooks/elementary-school-parent-handbook

Este documento contiene información importante. Si necesita asistencia en traducción de idiomas para e ntender este documento, puede revisar esta información en nuestro sitio web del distrito y usar la herrami enta de traducción, o puede comunicarse con la escuela de su estudiante para solicitar un documento tra ducido.

Haga clic aquí: https://www.wsdweb.org/parent-hub/student-and-family-handbooks/elementary-school-parent-handbook

이 문서에는 중요한 정보가 들어 있습니다. 이 문서를 이해하기 위해 언어 번역 지원이 필요한 경우, 해당 지역 웹 사이트에서 이 정보를 검토하고 번역 도구를 사용하거나, 학생의 학교에 연락하여 번역 문서를 요청할 수 있습니다.

여기를 클릭: https://www.wsdweb.org/parent-hub/student-and-family-handbooks/elementary-school-parent-handbook

Translation and Interpretation Services

The Wissahickon School District offers free language assistance services to limited English proficiency parents or guardians. Translation and interpreter services are available by contacting the principal of your student's school. If you have not already completed a Home Language Survey, the Home Language Survey is available from the District's Registrar and, upon request, a hard copy or interpretation of the Home Language Survey may be obtained in the language that you can understand. If you have any questions or concerns regarding parent/caregiver communications or access to interpreter or translation services, please contact your student's building principal.

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Message to Parents and Caregivers

The Wissahickon School District elementary program is designed to provide a rich learning experience that builds a strong academic foundation for our students. Each facet of the program supports our students' academic, social-emotional, and physical developmental needs. In addition to offering a rich and robust educational program, our schools make every effort to build students' character, confidence, and self-esteem, both in terms of learning and in their relationships with fellow classmates and staff.

Our Elementary School Student/Family Handbook provides important information about our school, especially information about school routines and resources.

If you are looking for information not included in this handbook, please contact the main office of your student's school. They are happy to assist you.

Wissahickon School District Vision, Mission, and Shared Values

Our Vision

"Belong, Inspire, Engage, Excel"

A learning community where all students and staff feel a sense of belonging and are inspired to engage and excel to their fullest potential.

Our Mission

The mission of the Wissahickon School District—a learning community where diversity is valued, and equity is an ongoing commitment—is to empower each student and staff member to excel to their fullest potential and meaningfully contribute to the greater community.

Our Shared Values

We believe all students and staff will…

…develop healthy identities.

…value diversity and inclusivity

…maintain positive relationships.

…feel and show empathy for others.

…achieve personal and collective goals.

...make responsible and caring decisions.

...contribute to safe and just communities.

Important Phone Numbers and Addresses

- District: www.wsdweb.org
  - Administrative Office: 601 Knight Road, Ambler, PA 19002
  - Phone Number: 215-619-8000
- Blue Bell Elementary: https://www.wsdweb.org/schools/blue-bell-elementary
  - Address: 801 Symphony Lane, Blue Bell, PA 19422
  - Phone Number: 215-619-8102
- Lower Gwynedd Elementary: https://www.wsdweb.org/schools/lower-gwynedd-elementary
  - Address: 571 Houston Road, Ambler, PA 19002
  - Phone Number: 215-619-8100
- Shady Grove Elementary: https://www.wsdweb.org/schools/shady-grove-elementary
  - Address: 351 West Skippack Pike, Ambler, PA 19002
  - Phone Number: 215-619-8106
- Stony Creek Elementary: https://www.wsdweb.org/schools/stony-creek-elementary
  - Address: 1721 Yost Road, Blue Bell, PA 19422
  - Phone Number: 215-619-8108

Attendance

In accordance with Board Policy #204 (Attendance), students of compulsory school age must attend school regularly during the days and hours that school is in session. Regular attendance is essential for student success, and the Wissahickon School District values the presence and participation of every student.

Lawful (Excused) Absences

The following are considered reasonable causes for absence from school:

- Illness or recovery from accident
- Quarantine
- Professional health care or therapy services from a licensed practitioner

- Family emergency or death in the family
- Required court attendance
- Observance of a religious holiday or religious instruction (with prior written request)
- Non-school sponsored educational tours or trips (up to five days per school year, with prior approval)
- Other urgent reasons, as defined by law

Submitting Excuse Notes

All absences are treated as unlawful (unexcused) until the district receives a written excuse. Parents/guardians must submit an excuse note within three (3) school days of the student's return.

- Up to fifteen (15) cumulative absences per school year may be excused with a parent/guardian note.
- After fifteen cumulative absences, or if an absence due to illness is more than three consecutive days, documentation from a licensed medical practitioner is required.

Attendance Notifications

- Families receive reminder letters when students reach 10 total absences.
- After fifteen total absences, families receive an additional notification and may be invited to a School Attendance Improvement Conference (SAIC) to create an attendance improvement plan.

Reporting Absences or Tardies

Parents/guardians should report absences or tardies by phone or email:

•Blue Bell Elementary School: 215 619 8102 ext. 2099 (press 2) | bbesattendance@wsdweb.org

•Lower Gwynedd Elementary School: 215 619 8100 ext. 3099 (press 2) | lgesattendance@wsdweb.org

•Shady Grove Elementary School: 215 619 8106 ext. 4099 (press 2) |sgesattendance@wsdweb.org

•Stony Creek Elementary School: 215 619 8108 ext. 5099 (press 2) | scesattendance@wsdweb.org

Include the student's name, date(s) of absence, homeroom teacher, and reason for absence. If you email, no additional note is required. If you call, a written note must be sent within three days.

School Start Times and Tardiness

Students must be in their classrooms by the school start time: 8:45 AM (doors open at 8:30 AM)

Students arriving after 8:45 AM are considered tardy and must be signed in at the main office by a parent/caregiver. Missing the bus, oversleeping, or similar reasons are not excused.

Family Travel

WSD Board Policy #204 allows for up to five days of non-school sponsored travel per school year. These days count toward the fifteen day cumulative absence limit and will not be approved during state testing. Parents/guardians should complete the Family Travel Acknowledgement Form and submit it to the main office at least two weeks in advance to allow for review and approval.

Releasing Students for Medical Appointments or Emergencies

Parents/guardians should make every effort to schedule appointments outside the school day. If early pickup is necessary:

- Send written notification to the school with the date and time.
- Report to the school office to sign out your student.
- Provide identification; only contacts listed in Infinite Campus may pick up students unless otherwise noted in writing.

Early Dismissals

Early dismissals should occur at least 30 minutes before the end of the school day and will not be processed after 2:45 PM to avoid disrupting dismissal procedures. We appreciate families' cooperation in minimizing classroom interruptions.

Truancy and Unexcused Absences

Truancy, which is unlawful absence from school according to the Pennsylvania State Code, and other unexcused absences from school will not be tolerated.

Truancy will result in the assignment of school discipline. Administration may request a parent conference to enact a Truancy Elimination Plan or other measures. Each case will be referred to the Home and School Visitor for appropriate legal action, which may include a parent conference, a court notice, a court hearing, and fines.

Birthdays and Party Invitations

Birthdays are special days for our students. Birthday recognitions are held at the discretion of the classroom teacher and should not interfere with the instructional program. Birthday treats and/or food items are not permitted to be a part of birthday recognition. Small gift items/goody bags/bouquets of flowers/balloons are not permitted. Party invitations of any kind may not be distributed at school. Caregivers may access the Home and School directory for contact information.

Books and School-Issued Materials

Students are responsible for any books, computers, or materials issued by the school. Parents/Caregivers are responsible for replacing damaged and lost items.

Breakfast and Lunch School Meals

District students may purchase breakfast, lunch and snacks each day. Students and their families may view the school menus online: https://wsdweb.nutrislice.com/. The school menus include images and descriptions of the meals and nutritional information. School menus are also available on the district mobile app. Glass containers are not permitted in school for safety reasons.

Wissahickon School District is proud to offer **free breakfast to all students each morning**. We encourage all students to take advantage of this nutritious and convenient option, which is available in the cafeteria before the start of the school day.

To help maintain a clean and allergy-aware environment, we **discourage students from bringing in outside breakfast items**. Utilizing the school's breakfast program ensures all students are provided with safe, balanced meals and helps us maintain consistency in our morning routines.

Thank you for your cooperation in supporting a healthy and inclusive school environment.

Meal Costs

Breakfast is free for all Wissahickon students in the current school year! Additionally, students identified as eligible for free or reduced-price lunches, with an approved school meal application through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), will not be charged for their meals. Therefore, during the current school year, students eligible for Free or Reduced-Price meals will not be charged for breakfast or lunch. Lunch costs $2.65 for all elementary schools.

Additionally, students eligible to receive free or reduced meals are also eligible to receive SUN Bucks (Summer EBT) program the following summer without the need to apply. SUN Bucks is operated through the Department of Human Services. For more information on SUN Bucks visit http://www.dhs.pa.gov/SunBucks.

Free and Reduced-Price Meal Eligibility

We invite our families to apply for free or reduced-price school meals. A qualified application may provide additional federal program benefits. To be eligible for free or reduced meals, families need to complete an application unless they participate in a qualified benefits program (e.g., SNAP, TANF, or certain Medical Assistance). Click here to complete
the application: https://www.schoolcafe.com/WissahickonSD

Cafeteria Accounts

Each student has a cafeteria account that is accessible with their student ID number. Families may choose to send their student with money to pay for lunch each day. Alternatively, families may periodically (i.e., weekly, monthly, etc.) send a check with their student to school to replenish their cafeteria account; or families may use MySchoolBucks to replenish their student's account online. Checks are made payable to "WSD Cafeteria Account." Please include your student's name on the check. For MySchoolBucks, visit this website to learn more:
https://www.wsdweb.org/departments/business/my-school-bucks

Board of School Directors

The Wissahickon Board of School Directors is governed by nine citizens elected at large by voters of the district. The Board operates under the authority granted by the Pennsylvania Public School Code of 1949; Title 22, Education, of the Pennsylvania

Code; and regulations of the State Board of Education. The Board's meetings are held in accordance with Act 84 of 1986 and Act 20 of 1993 of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The Board of School Directors meets twice monthly for its public meetings. Please visit the School Board section of the district website to learn more: https://www.wsdweb.org/school-board

As the elected governing body of Wissahickon School District, the School Directors are responsible for:

- Policy making for school district operations.
- Designating the chief executive
- Planning, goal setting and appraisal
- Adopting an annual budget and appropriation measures.
- Exercising its taxing power to provide funds for the operation of the district.
- Considering and passing upon the recommendations of the Superintendent in all matters of policy, appointment or dismissal of employees, salary schedules or other personnel regulations, courses of study, selection of textbooks, or other matters pertaining to the welfare of schools.
- Informing the public concerning the progress and needs of the schools, and to solicit and weigh public opinion as it affects the schools.

Board Policies

The Board policy manual serves as an instrument to guide the decision-making process affecting all aspects of the Wissahickon School District organization. These board policies are designed to reflect culture, character, and values of the school community while meeting state and federal regulations. These policies are applicable to school directors, students, employees, families, and community members. As such, these groups are charged with knowing, reviewing, and abiding by the policies set forth in this reference manual. Click here to review to Board policy manual: https://go.boarddocs.com/pa/wiss/Board.nsf/Public

Class Placement

Class placement is designed to benefit all students. Students are assigned to classes so that each classroom reflects a reasonable distribution of students about gender, ethnicity, academic needs, and number. As a matter of philosophy, we encourage parent/caregiver input, and a form for such input is distributed to

parents in spring of the school year. The administration, however, reserves the right to determine final class placement to ensure educationally appropriate placements for each student.

Classroom Celebrations

In addition to seasonal classroom celebrations, elementary schools may host grade level and schoolwide celebrations, all of which will be approved in advance by building principals.. To ensure that all students can participate in classroom parties, if there are food options available at the celebration, consideration will be made in terms of food restrictions and food allergies. As a reminder, students' birthdays are not acknowledged with classroom celebrations. Students will be recognized on their birthdays in other ways that do not involve food.

District and School Communication

The district communicates with students and their families through various channels, including but not limited to email, phone call, text message, website, mobile app, and social media.

To receive timely and effective communication, it is essential for parents/caregivers to maintain up-to-date contact information including email and phone numbers in the Infinite Campus Portal.

District Website

We invite you to visit our website to learn more about our district: www.wsdweb.org

News & Calendar Alerts

Set up email and/or text alerts to receive district and school-specific news and calendar events that are posted on the WSD website. Alerts can be customized by district and school news and events. Read WSD News and subscribe to receive customized news & calendar alerts

Parent Square

Parent Square is the district's notification software used for emergency information (e.g., weather-related, or other), school news, student and staff accomplishments, upcoming events, current issues affecting WSD families and other district/school communication. Family contact information entered Infinite Campus is

automatically uploaded to Parent Square allowing e-news to be shared via phone, text, and email.

Parent Square Mobile App

The Parent Square mobile app provides on-demand access to the most important information and resources. Search Parent Square in your App Store to download the free mobile app to your mobile device. The app provides access to:

- School calendars
- Lunch menus
- Access to Infinite Campus, and MySchoolBucks
- WSD staff directory
- Important news and notifications

Social Media

Our social media sites keep families and the community updated on school news and provide a forum for connecting and sharing accomplishments, photos and videos of our students, staff, and school community. Below are the official social media accounts for the district and our schools.

- Facebook - http://facebook.com/wissahickonschooldistrict
- Twitter - District/School News @WissahickonSD
- Instagram - @WissahickonSchoolDistrict
- YouTube - Watch us on YouTube

Search our Hashtags:

- #WissLearns (classroom/learning highlights)
- #WissCares (community service/character education)
- #WissPride (staff, student, school achievements)
- #WissNation (athletics and district-wide news & achievements)

Dress Code

It is important that students come to school with the intention of doing their best. The way a student dresses usually reflects the student's preparedness for learning and actions in school. We ask that students refrain from wearing shorts that are not at least fingertip length, tank tops and tops that expose the mid-section, see-through clothing, and flip-flops or open-toed footwear. Our students enjoy an active day at school, including lunchtime, recess, and physical education classes on

some days. For this reason, sneakers are the expected footwear at school. If student clothing causes distraction or disruption, caregivers may be contacted to provide alternative clothing for their child.

Change of Clothes

Please consider sending a change of clothing (undergarments, socks, etc.) to be kept in your student's cubby.

Field Trips

As part of our educational experience, students will participate in at least one field trip during each school year. These field trips are curricular-based and extend the learning from the classroom. We view these field trip experiences as a valuable part of our learning experience.

Families are required to complete and sign permission forms for students to participate in field trips that are outside the district boundaries. These forms are sent home in advance of the trip and will include specific information about the trip. For those trips within the school district community, parents will complete an "Intra-District Field Trip" form at the beginning of the school year, and this will satisfy the parent permission requirement. Teachers will notify parents when these in-district field trips occur.

Students not participating in field trips still must attend school on the day of the trip. During the time of the field trip, they will be placed in another classroom with appropriate class work. Staying home during a field trip (if not ill) will be considered an unlawful absence.

Students and parents/caregivers are reminded that field trip attendance is a privilege. Inappropriate behavior will be a reason to have the privilege rescinded.

Health Services

State-Mandated Immunizations

State required school immunizations are required within the first five days of school or your student will not be able to attend school. Any single dose vaccines (Tdap and Meningitis) are required by the first day of school.

To protect our school students from serious and sometimes fatal diseases, the Pennsylvania Department of Health regulations require that all students entering school for the first time must be immunized.

All the required doses of immunizations must be completed and verified by your health care provider prior to the student's entry into school. We ask for your cooperation with your school nurse in the process of providing a proper record of any immunization already completed and in securing those that are lacking. The only current exemptions to the regulations for immunizations are medical reasons and religious beliefs with proper documentation from your health care provider submitted to school. Please note that if your student is exempt from immunizations, he/she may be removed from school during a communicable disease outbreak.

State-Mandated Physical and Dental Exams

The Pennsylvania School Health Law requires all students upon original entry to the district and when entering sixth grade or eleventh grade to have a physical examination.

Dental Examinations are required for all students upon original entry to the district and when entering third grade and seventh grade.

All examinations must be completed within one year prior to the new year for which the examination is required. Families are encouraged to have these examinations performed by the student's own health care provider.

Please visit the Health Services web page to download and print these forms: https://www.wsdweb.org/departments/health-services If necessary, you can also contact your school nurse to secure these forms. The completed forms must be returned to the school nurse by October 15th or no later than two months after your student enters the Wissahickon School District.

State-Mandated Health Screenings

Each student will have state mandated screening which includes growth (body mass index), and vision. Hearing is tested in kindergarten, grades 1,2,3,7 and 11 and those in special ungraded classes. We will report deficiencies to you in these tests. These reports should be rechecked by your family health care provider and returned to the school nurse when problems are corrected.

Medical Care in School

Medical care in the schools is limited to first aid for accidents and illness until the parent can be contacted to take the student home or to their personal health care provider or hospital. Emergency information completed by you will give us the information to locate you when needed. It is important to keep this information updated each school year. School nurses are permitted by law to perform only those services written on the Standing Orders of the consulting school physician. Do not expect the school nurse to diagnose or treat illnesses. This is the proper function of your family health care provider.

Absence Due to Illness

Please encourage your student to practice good health habits that will contribute to growth, development, and well-being. These should include a balanced diet, adequate sleep, regular exercise, and study. When there are signs of illness, your student should stay home. After a student has accumulated fifteen days of absences, a physician's note is necessary after three consecutive days absent from school.

Notify the School Nurse

It is important to contact the school nurse for these special circumstances.

- If there are restrictions caused by a recent illness, if there are any continuous restrictions on your student's school activities, or if your student is on daily medication.
- If your student has an allergy to foods, medicines, or insect bites. Provide the school nurse with a written plan completed by your physician with your approval signature outlining the directions to follow in case of an incident.
- As soon as possible if your student has a confirmed communicable disease to protect the safety and well-being of others.
- If your student needs to take medication during the school day, the medication must be brought to the school nurse. Controlled substances must be brought directly to the nurse by a parent/caregiver. All medication must be in its original, properly labeled container with a written prescription by the licensed physician or advanced practice nurse. The prescribing physician/advanced practice nurse must indicate the reason for the medication, dose, time and route, and side effects.

Epi-Pen Opt Out

The Pennsylvania Public School Code, Section 1414.2 (g) allows parents/caregivers to request an exemption to the administration of an epinephrine auto-injector for their student. To request this exemption, contact the school nurse to make an appointment to discuss this decision, review and sign the opt-out form.

Physical Education Exclusion

Students who are to be excluded from physical education classes (or recess) for medical reasons must bring a note from the parent/caregiver stating the reason for that exclusion. In cases involving exclusion for more than one physical education period (or recess period), a medical doctor's statement with the reason for exclusion and the anticipated length of exclusion must be provided. The student will still attend physical education class and be expected to participate within the constraints delineated by the medical doctor. A physician's note must be provided to the school nurse before the student returns to full physical education activities without restriction.

Holidays

The study of holidays is a significant way in which students learn about the importance of culture. Traditions are highlighted and the similarities and differences in cultural practices are recognized. The communication of historical, cultural, religious, and patriotic events with ceremonies or festivals is common across cultures. As members of a diverse classroom community, students will have the opportunity to learn about and experience a variety of cultures and customs represented by their classmates. The district recognizes and acknowledges holidays as meaningful traditions celebrated by families and as part of our local, national, and global communities.

Excusals from Recognizing and Teaching About Holidays and Holiday Celebrations

One of the primary objectives of public institutions of education must be to educate a student without either promoting or curtailing religious beliefs. Wissahickon School District tries to protect the rights of all parents/caregivers to decide what is appropriate for the education of their students. Therefore, parents/caregivers may ask that their students be excused from classroom discussions or activities related to holidays. Excusal requests should be submitted by the parent/caregiver in written form to the classroom teacher who will present the request to the building principal. The building principal, in cooperation with the assistant superintendent

for curriculum and instruction will be responsible for granting or denying the request for excusal. Alternative activities will be provided for students excused from classroom activities.

Homeless Education Act

Homeless children have the right to a free, appropriate public education **(McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001)**

The Homeless Children's Initiative exists to help homeless children with a variety of services. A detailed description of the definition of homelessness and the rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness can be found here. In addition, the McKinney-Vento Act defines an unaccompanied youth as "a homeless child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian" (42 U.S.C. § 11434a(6)). This definition can be used to describe youth residing with a caregiver who is not a parent or guardian, as well as youth living without the care of an adult. More information about the rights of unaccompanied youth can be found here.

If you are experiencing housing instability with school or preschool children or are an unaccompanied youth, please contact your school counselor or **the District Liaison**, who can provide support and assistance.

Kevin Witchey: Wissahickon School District Homeless Liaison
kwitchey@wsdweb.org

Michelle Connor: Regional Homeless Coordinator
1-215-348-2940 ext. 1361
mconnor@bucksiu.org

Additional Links/Resources:

The Department of Education Basic Education Circular - Education of Homeless Youth (Reviewed 2016)

Wissahickon School Policy 251- Students Experiencing Homelessness (5/1/2023)

Your Way Home - Montgomery County PA

Mattie Dixon Community Cupboard
150 N. Main St., PO Box 367
Ambler, PA 19002
Phone: 215-628-3002
Send Email: info@community-cupboard.org

Foodfinder.us - a nonprofit website and app (for iOS or Android) that offers the location and contact information of more than 40,000 food pantries and similar food programs across the country

Homework

Homework is an aid to learning and an integral part of the school program. The aims of homework in the Wissahickon School District are:

- To have students practice learned skills and reinforce learning.
- To have students develop research and critical thinking skills.
- To have students develop independent work-study habits.

When Your Student Asks for Help

Homework is explained to the students in class before it is assigned. If a student cannot do the work, is having difficulty, or is taking an excessive amount of time to complete it, your student should stop working on the assignment. The parent/caregiver should send a note or e-mail to the teacher to let the teacher know. The teacher will work to resolve the matter.

Homework During School Absences

If your student is absent from school for one day of school, the teacher will work with your student upon their return. If a student is absent for multiple days and he/she is well enough to complete work at home, contact your student's teacher to arrange for any missed class/homework.

Homework Procedures for Student Absence from School

In addition to completing the family travel acknowledgment form, parents/caregivers are expected to contact a student's teacher to acquire any work that can be completed during the absence. Any other missed work will need to be

completed upon return for the student's absence. Computers will not be issued to students during approved family travel.

Infinite Campus

All parents/caregivers are asked to set up their Infinite Campus Parent Portal account. Your family's contact information in Infinite Campus is used to communicate urgent notifications such as weather delays, closings, or emergencies. It is essential for parents/caregivers to maintain current contact information including preferred email and phone numbers. Infinite Campus is the district's web-based student information portal that contains family contact information and includes various student information including:

- attendance and discipline
- report cards.
- health information
- teacher assignments and class schedule
- other school activities (middle and high school)

Inclement Weather or Other Emergency Notifications

In the event of inclement weather or a school emergency that results in early dismissal, late arrival of students or the closing of schools, the district notifies the community via:

- Parent Squarephone call, text message and email *(For families with students who currently attend Wissahickon schools only)*
- WSD Facebook, Twitter and Instagram
- Pop-up message on the district homepage
- Push notification via the WSD mobile app *(please allow push notifications from the WSD mobile app)*
- TV Stations 3, 6, 10 and 29
- KYW NewsRadio - School Closing Number **314**

*Please note schools are open unless otherwise notified via the methods above. Periodically, review your contact information (phone and email) listed in Infinite Campus as this information is used for School Messenger - our school notification system.

Calling the School's Main Office During Emergency Conditions

It is extremely important that telephone lines to the school office be kept open for emergency use only. Students and parents/caregivers are asked not to call the school office at times of emergency conditions.

Library

The Librarian provides on-going instruction, conducts read-aloud, facilitates book exchange, and makes available a wide range of learning resources. Technology and multi-media resources are also used to further enhance the educational program. The library also provides all K-5 students with the opportunity to engage in STEM activities. Students may select books and materials to take home and share with parents/caregivers. Students are to return all borrowed items by the due date. Parents/caregivers are responsible for replacing damaged and lost items.

Parent and Community Involvement

The Wissahickon School District recognizes the importance and value of interest and involvement by citizens of the school community in the programs of the district. Many residents have readily volunteered their services in assisting with programs and projects that have helped to enrich the educational experience of our students. As opportunities arise, principals will use their discretion to utilize volunteers. To ensure the safety of our students and staff and to comply with Public School Code, all volunteers must comply with the district policies and procedures, including required disclosure forms, clearances, and training.

Home and School Associations

Each school has an active and supportive Home and School Association (HSA). The HSAs coordinate school and classroom activities and events and provide funding for school programs (i.e., activities, events, and assemblies). Families are encouraged to become members of their school's HSA. As members, families may participate in monthly meetings, volunteer in the school and classroom, and serve as room parent. All room parents should report to the school office each time they enter the school building. Room parents should confer with their teacher prior to planned activities to clarify the room parent's role during given activities.

School Volunteers

Wissahickon School District values the contributions that volunteers make to the educational programs of our schools and encourages parents and community members to volunteer.

Families and community members who are interested in volunteering in our schools are invited to review the procedures and requirements as outlined below. For the safety of our students and staff, all people who are interested in volunteering in our schools are required to comply with these volunteer eligibility procedures in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. Volunteers who do not comply with these requirements are not eligible to volunteer.

As always, thank you for your contribution of time, talent, resources, and support. We appreciate your willingness to volunteer in our schools and hope you know how much your efforts mean to our staff and students! For specific questions, please contact the main office of your student's school. Click here for more information about the volunteer procedures in the Wissahickon School District: https://www.wsdweb.org/parent-hub/volunteers

Step #1: Complete and submit the required documentation. All volunteer documentation is submitted to the main office of your student's school. Any costs associated with procuring these clearances are the responsibility of the volunteer.

- WSD Volunteer Disclosure Statement *(required for new and returning volunteers, annually)*
- Act 34 State Police Clearance *(required for new volunteers; must be renewed every five (5) years)*
    - Complete this clearance online and download/print your results immediately. Please save the Control Number provided.
- Act 151 Child Abuse Clearance *(required for new volunteers; must be renewed every five (5) years)*
    - Complete this clearance online and download/print your results immediately. You may also receive your results by mail within 14 days.
- Act 114 FBI Fingerprints *(required for new volunteers; must be renewed every five (5) years)*

  Note: if the person has resided in Pennsylvania for ten (10) consecutive years prior to the date listed on the Volunteer Disclosure Statement, then the person does not need to submit the Act 114 FBI Fingerprints clearance. There is a check box at the end of the Volunteer Disclosure Statement to indicate residency.

    - Enter your service code (1KG6Y3 for Volunteering)
    - Complete registration process
    - Select a location & appointment time.
    - Print the pre-enrollment form to take to your appointment.
- Tuberculosis (TB) Test *(required for volunteers with direct contact with students for 10 or more hours per week)*
    - A physician of the volunteer's choice shall perform the tuberculin test. The volunteer shall provide the school with a report/physicians' note showing that the test was administered. Testing must occur before serving as a school volunteer and within three (3) months of submitting volunteer documentation to the school.

Step #2 - New Volunteers Only: Once the volunteer documents are received and reviewed by the district, the volunteer will receive an email with instructions and information to complete the required online training through the Global Compliance Network (GCN). This email will contain step-by-step instructions, username information, and a direct link to complete the training. The volunteers will need 20-30 minutes to complete this online training.

School Visitors

All visitors must enter the building through the main entrance and proceed directly to the office; visitors will sign in, show identification, and receive a visitor's pass. This pass must always be worn in a prominent place while in the building. At the end of the visit, please return to the office, sign out and return the pass. At no time are parents or visitors to enter the school building and go directly to their student's classroom or any other area of the building. We value the health, safety, and welfare of our students. Therefore, to protect our students, all staff members will be required to ask anyone they see in the building for the visitor's badge. Staff members will respectfully direct any person without a badge to the office.

In addition, it should be understood after 8:45 a.m. that no visitors may interrupt the instructional process by taking a teacher's attention away from the students while classes are in session. Security of the building and the safety of our students are our top priority.

- Visitors shall sign the visitor log located in the main office area and receive a visitor's badge which must always be worn in a visible location while the visitor is present in a District building. Wissahickon requires all visitors to provide a photo ID (e.g., driver's license) for entrance into the building.

- Visitors should turn off all cell phones while inside the building.
- Infants and young students are not allowed into the classroom during a visit as this can be disruptive to the learning process.
- Visitors should enter the classroom quietly and take a seat as suggested by the teacher.
- Visitors should not attempt to communicate with the teacher or the students during instructional time. It is important that classroom activities continue as planned by the teacher.
- Visitors should not view student work such as journals, logs, folders, etc. unless the work is authored by their own student. This is to protect the confidentiality of all students in the classroom. Visitors shall report to the Main Office area and sign out on the visitor's log before leaving the district building.

Personal Items

Bicycles, Scooters, Skateboards, and Rollerblades

Because of the danger inherent in situations where there is automobile and bus traffic, students are not permitted to ride bicycles, scooters, skateboards, or rollerblades to and from school without parent/caregiver supervision.

Commented [SG1]: @Jones, Amanda I don't think this is true for Lower Gwynedd. Do we add a sentence or two about how it is permitted at Lower Gwynedd because of the location? Also, Stony Creek may have bike riders too. I am not sure.

Electronic Devices, Cell Phones, Smartwatches & Toys in School

We believe that students should primarily focus on learning when they are in school. No electronic games, electronic tablets, trading cards, toys, sports equipment, or special possessions of students should be brought to school. This list is not all-inclusive. Occasionally some of these items are costly, look the same, and are easily broken, lost, or stolen. This can result in anger, accusations, or disappointment. Unfortunately, even putting items in one's backpack or desk does not ensure security. With their many duties, teachers cannot be expected to guard students' belongings.

Electronic devices such as cell phones may not be used at school during the school day, which also includes bus transportation. These devices must be turned off and kept in backpacks during the school day and on bus transportation.

Watches that act as communication devices (i.e., smartwatches) are permitted to be worn for time purposes, but they are not to be used during the school day as a communication device (i.e., texting and making calls) or for gaming.

If a student uses an electronic device during the school day, the teacher will remind the student to turn it off and place it in their backpack. If the student is found to use the device again, the device will be held at the main office of the school until the parent/caregiver may pick it up.

If a parent/caregiver needs to communicate with their child during the school day, the main office should be notified. Parents/caregivers are asked to avoid contacting their child during the school day through a cell phone or smartwatch.

The school is not held responsible for any lost, stolen, or damaged electronic devices. All electronic devices are brought to school at their "own risk."

There may be an occasion when a student might be given permission to bring one of these items to school for a specific educational purpose. In this instance, the teacher will discuss this with the student and/or parent/caregiver. Your support is appreciated. The building principal has discretion over the safety and appropriateness of all items.

Lost and Found Articles

Check the "Lost and Found" regularly for any lost items. Found articles will be displayed periodically so that students may make claims. Helpful hint: All personal articles belonging to your student should be marked or labeled on the inside with the student's name. This includes book bags, wallets, lunch boxes, and articles of clothing such as sweaters, jackets, hats, etc. Unclaimed items will be donated each trimester.

Money and Valuables

Students should not carry large sums of money or other valuables to school. If it is necessary for a student to bring money or other valuables to school, the student should arrange for safekeeping with the teacher. The school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or missing items.

Recess

Recess is a time when our students take a break from learning in the classroom. However, we are aware of how much there is to learn on the playground as well. Recess supports the development of social skills and the overall health and well-being of our students. It is the time of the school day when students engage in unstructured play and make choices, develop rules for play, and practice important social skills such as sharing, taking turns, being a good sport, cooperating, listening

to others, and solving conflicts, to name a few. Recess/lunch aides supervise students during this time of the school day.

The Wissahickon School District has adopted a recess before lunch schedule. Our upper grade levels (grades 3, 4, and 5) have one 25-minute recess period that occurs prior to lunch. Grades K, 1, 2 will have one 15-minute recess period prior to lunch and another 15-minute recess period in the afternoon.

After much consideration and research, the district chose to position recess before lunch. This has proven to have several benefits: students tend to make healthier choices about what they eat, the students eat more and drink more fluids, less food is thrown away, and there are fewer visits to the school nurse and playground injuries.

Recess, along with movement breaks and structured outdoor activities, are a vital experience for our students.

Resolving Concerns

The classroom teacher is the initial contact in situations concerning your student. The assistant principal or principal should be contacted if the parent/caregiver cannot resolve the concern with the classroom teacher or in matters dealing with general school policies.

Contacting Classroom Teachers

The school urges parents/caregivers to be in touch with their student's teacher if questions about school arise. Do not wait too long to discuss concerns. Please call or e-mail the teacher to set up a time to ask questions or discuss concerns. During instructional times, all phone calls will go directly to voicemail and messages will be picked up as soon as possible. Calls of an urgent nature should go directly to the main office, including last-minute changes to a student's dismissal. Unscheduled meetings on the playground or in the halls are not appropriate times for any discussions. Privacy is important to provide you and your student with undivided and professional attention.

Contacting Building Administrators

If you have a question or concern that warrants administrative attention, please contact the assistant principal or building principal by phone or e-mail to set a time to discuss the matter. To schedule an appointment, please contact the school secretary.

School Schedule

School Start and End Times

For the 2026-2027 school year, these are the school start and end times for students.

- Blue Bell: 8:45 a.m. to 3:25 p.m.
- Lower Gwynedd: 8:45 a.m. to 3:25 p.m.
- Shady Grove: 8:45 a.m. to 3:25 p.m.
- Stony Creek: 8:45 a.m. to 3:25 p.m.

Early Dismissal

On early dismissal days, elementary students will be dismissed at 12:05 PM unless otherwise noted on the district calendar. On these days there is no lunch or recess, but breakfast is available.

Students Remaining After School

When students are dismissed, they are expected to go directly home. If a student is to stay at school for a school-related reason, school personnel will obtain permission from the parent/caregiver in advance.

Forgotten Items

Please note that students may not re-enter the building after school is dismissed due to a need for security and the fact that the custodians should not be pulled from their duties to supervise those who forgot their books or assignments. Students must take an active role in these responsibilities. Concerns or questions relating to homework assignments should be directed to your student's teacher.

School Spirit

- District (and middle and high schools)
    - Mascot: Trojans
    - Colors: Blue and gold
- Blue Bell Elementary
    - Mascot: Blue Sharks
    - Colors: Blue and white
- Lower Gwynedd Elementary

    - Mascot: Leopards
    - Colors: Blue and gold
- Shady Grove Elementary
    - Mascot: Bulldogs
    - Colors: Blue, gray, and gold
- Stony Creek Elementary
    - Mascot: Owls
    - Colors: Blue and red

Student Behavior

Self-discipline and the acceptance of individual responsibility are stressed throughout school life. A fair, consistent discipline policy is an integral part of our sound educational program. A major goal of the school program is to maintain the best possible environment for learning. To reach this goal it is important that all members of our school family respect the basic rights of others. All students are to attend school free of physical or verbal abuse and to feel secure with their own property. Click here to review the Code of Student Conduct: https://www.wsdweb.org/parent-hub/code-of-student-conduct

Student Progress and Assessments

The system of reporting student progress has three formal phases: progress report cards, parent conferences and standardized testing.

Progress Reports

Progress reports are issued three times a year. The purpose of the progress report is to communicate to students and their parents/caregivers the student's progress in the school program during the marking period. Parents/Caregivers may print student progress report cards at the Infinite Campus Community Portal. Parents/caregivers without internet access are welcome to contact their student's school's main office to request that a paper copy of the progress report card be sent to them.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent/caregiver conferences are scheduled in the fall and spring for every elementary student. Conferences provide a personal opportunity for information and "feedback" about the student's growth, performance, and behavior.

Parents/caregivers are strongly urged to attend. Conferences will be offered in-person and to meet the needs of all families.

Assessment of Student Progress

Standardized testing is administered to students to provide a continuing record of each student's academic progress in comparison with national norms. Parents/caregivers will receive information regarding their student's progress following standardized test administration.

Student Records

All official student records (attendance, progress reports, cumulative folders, test data sheets, concert programs, etc.) must list students by their legal names only. This means the name that appears on the birth certificate or other legal document. At no time is it permissible for any school authority to use any other name on official student records, for example, a nickname or a surname of a stepparent where the student's name has not been legally changed.

Change of Student Information

Parents/caregivers are responsible for reporting to the school office any change of address, telephone number or other pertinent information that may occur during the school year. As soon as such a change occurs, the school should be notified. We must have current information to notify you should an emergency occur.

Students of Divorced Parents/Caregivers with Custody Decree

At registration time, the parent/caregiver must present the custody document to the school principal. The school district will follow the terms of the custody decree specifically. A copy of the document will be maintained in the student's school file. It is the responsibility of the parent(s) to ensure that the custody agreement language is clear and up to date so that the administrator can understand the expectation.

Students of Single, Separated or Divorced Parents/Caregivers with No Custody Decree

Both parents/caregivers will be allowed equal access to the student as well as to all data pertaining to the student: educational and health records, the right to attend parent/caregiver conferences and school activities. The parent/caregiver with whom the student is living will routinely receive all communications regarding their student. The nonresident parent/caregiver may request the same information. This

request should be addressed to the building principal. The district will make reasonable efforts to comply with such requests.

Parents/caregivers will be notified and urged to attend meetings pertaining to special education placement, discussions pertaining to promotion or retention, suspensions, expulsions, or other serious disciplinary matters. Therefore, it will be the parents'/caregivers' responsibility to keep the school information of their current addresses and phone numbers.

The parent/caregiver with whom the student is living will be notified in the event of serious accidents. If this parent/caregiver is unavailable, the person(s) listed in the student information system will be contacted based on the listed emergency priority. The nonresident parent/caregiver may request in writing that he/she be notified in the event of a serious accident. The district will make reasonable efforts to comply with such requests.

Student Safety

Safety on School Grounds

It is essential that parents/caregivers and others driving onto or around school grounds be mindful of school area speed limits, parking designations, common driver courtesy, school buses, traffic regulations – and especially – students. The safety of students is paramount.

Photographs/Video of Students and Social Media

Out of respect for the privacy and safety of our students, parents/caregivers are not permitted to post photographs or video clips of our students during school-sponsored activities on any of the current social media sites.

Student Abuse or Neglect

To ensure the safety and well-being of every student, whenever there is reasonable cause to suspect student abuse or neglect, all school staff are required by law to report to the appropriate county and/or local authorities. They are considered mandated reporters.

"Abused Student" means a student under 18 years of age who exhibits evidence of serious physical or mental injury not explained by the available medical history as being accidental.

Student Services

The Wissahickon School District has an extensive array of regular and special education programs and services that provide the opportunity for all students to achieve the ultimate benefit from their educational experience, including:

- Social Work Services
- Psychological Services
- Clinical Support Counseling
- Speech and language, occupational, physical, vision and hearing therapies, as well as assistive devices, are provided to eligible students.
- Services for students receiving support through a Section 504 Service Agreement
- Services for students receiving support through specially designed instruction via an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)
- Services for students receiving support through a Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP)

Student Wellness

We ask that you review these points and keep them in mind when planning classroom and school activities. Please contact your school nurse if you would like a list of non-food items that can be used as rewards, need a list of safe snacks, or have any other questions regarding your child's health and well-being.

- Consideration shall be given to promoting health and reducing childhood obesity when offering food during the school day.
- Fundraising projects shall be encouraged to be supportive of healthy eating and student wellness.
- The use of food as a reward (or punishment) is discouraged.
- Classroom parties can include fresh fruits and vegetables, water or non-fat milk, low fat frozen yogurt or low-fat ice cream as an alternative to regular ice cream, and a selection of peanut/tree nut-free snack choices (there may be times for various reasons that a classroom may not be able to have food items at a classroom party. The classroom teacher will notify their classroom families in such cases).
- Foods containing potentially life-threatening allergens (peanuts, tree nuts, etc.) will be clearly marked.
- Non-food items are suggested as an alternative to food.
- Follow serving sizes.

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Translation and Interpretation Services

The Wissahickon School District offers free language assistance services to limited English proficiency parents or caregivers. Translation and interpreter services are available by contacting the principal of your student's school. If you have not already completed a Home Language Survey, the Home Language Survey is available from the District's Registrar and, upon request, a hard copy or interpretation of the Home Language Survey may be obtained in the language that you can understand. If you have any questions or concerns regarding parent communications or access to interpreter or translation services, please contact your student's building principal.

Transportation

Bus Transportation

Bus transportation to and from school is available for all elementary students who reside within the district boundaries and live beyond one mile of their school of attendance or to students living within one and one-half mile if they walk along or cross a state identified hazardous route.

Resident elementary students will be required to attend the elementary school designated for their area of residence. Requests of parents/caregivers for a student to attend an elementary school outside the area of residence due to educational needs must be submitted in writing to the superintendent of schools. If the request is granted, it will be with the understanding that the parent/caregiver provide transportation to and from school. If the school district recommends that a student attend an elementary school outside his/her area of residence based on educational needs, the district will provide transportation to and from school for that student. Bus information is posted on Infinite Campus for your reference.

Questions concerning bus transportation should be directed to the Transportation Department, 215-619-8114.

Expectations for Riding the School Bus

The school staff will review the following regulations with their students. It also is important that this information be reviewed by the parent/caregiver with the student if the student rides a school bus:

Students are expected to show the same respect to bus drivers as that afforded to their parents and teachers.

- Students should not eat or drink on the bus or chew gum. Younger students are seated toward the front of the bus, and all students are to remain seated with hands and feet out of the aisle.
- The bus driver will familiarize your student with the bus rules. Students should recognize however that the bus and bus stop are still considered to be part of their school day and are therefore subject to the expectations and consequences listed in the District Code of Conduct. Bus drivers have bus incident reports that are issued to the principal if the behavior is serious in nature, and at that time, parents will be contacted, and the principal will issue consequences to the student accordingly.
- Students may ride only that bus to which they are assigned. Riding another student's bus for social purposes will not be permitted (i.e., play dates).
- Standing, switching seats, or moving around on a moving school bus is not permitted. These actions may interfere with the driver's performance.
- Student misconduct on buses will be reported to the bus coordinator or the principal. Bus transportation is a privilege. Repeated infractions of the bus rules may necessitate temporary or permanent denial of bus privileges.
- Students should wait for the bus in a safe place, well off the roadway.
- Students must form lines to board the bus.
- The WSD Board Policy # 810.1 governs the use of video and/or audio recording on school vehicles. Most school buses have video camera systems.

Parent/Caregiver Pick-up and Drop-off

Morning Arrival

Students should not arrive before 8:30 a.m., because supervision is not available prior to that time. The instructional day begins at 8:45 a.m. at all WSD elementary schools.

Afternoon Dismissal

Student dismissal time is 3:25 PM at all WSD elementary schools. If the student is leaving school before the normal dismissal time, the parent/caregiver must come to the school office to sign the student out. If an emergency arises making it impossible to pick up the student at normal dismissal time, please notify the school so that transportation arrangements for the student can be made.

Change of Mode of Dismissal

Changes to dismissal after 2:30 PM may make it difficult to communicate with classroom teachers and students; therefore, it is expected that the parent/caregiver will provide any change to dismissal as early in the day as possible. In the event of an emergency after 2:30 PM, parents/caregivers are expected to contact the main office directly.

If a parent/caregiver wishes to change a student's mode of dismissal (i.e.: walker, bus rider, parent pick up, etc.), it is necessary to write a note or send an e-mail to the classroom teacher and copy the principal's secretary indicating the change. All notes will be kept on file in the main office.

Requests for students to change buses to visit friends after school cannot be honored since most of our school buses are at or near capacity and should not be used for social play dates. However, if they are picked up as car riders or walkers, a note will be needed from both sending and receiving parents. Parents/Caregivers are reminded that students may ride only that bus to which they have been assigned. We thank you in advance for your cooperation and support.

Any individual, to whom students may be dismissed, must be identified in the student information system. Please be sure to keep your information in the student information system updated. If for any reason someone picks up your student other than who is listed in the system, the parent/caregiver must send a dated note to the office of this change.

Title IX & Non-Discrimination Information

The Wissahickon School District affirms that no person shall, on the basis of sex, disability, race, color, age, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, ancestry, veteran's status or genetic information be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in any educational program or activity. In addition, no person shall, on any of these bases, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in employment, or recruitment, or consideration, or selection, therefore, whether full-time or part-time, under any educational program or activity operated by the district. The district shall make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities upon request.

Anti-Harassment/Anti-Retaliation Statement: The district does not tolerate sexual harassment. Any individual who believes they have been subjected to sexual

harassment is strongly encouraged to make a report which will be promptly and thoroughly investigated. Retaliation against individuals who file complaints about sexual harassment, or participate in the investigation of such complaints, is prohibited.

Students or staff found to have engaged in sexual harassment or retaliation will be promptly disciplined, and such discipline may include, if circumstances warrant, suspension, expulsion and/or termination. Students, parents, and staff are encouraged to work together to prevent sexual harassment.

Notice of Non-Discrimination: Pursuant to Title IX of the Education Amendment Act of 1972, the district does not discriminate based on sex in the education programs or activities that it operates. This requirement not to discriminate in the district's education programs and activities extends to employment with and admission to the district.

Designated Title IX Coordinator: In compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendment Act of 1972, the district has a designated Title IX Coordinator who should be contacted regarding any inquiries as to the application of Title IX or filing a harassment complaint.

Please contact Keziah La Torre, Director of Equity and Cultural Responsiveness, Title IX Coordinator/Compliance Officer by phone (215) 619-8000 ext. 1120.