

**West Mifflin
Area
School District**



**Elementary
Handbook**

WEST MIFFLIN AREA ELEMENTARY HANDBOOK

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PHILOSOPHY

We, the faculty of the West Mifflin Area Elementary School, believe that education must be in accordance with the overall development and understanding of the individual child. Therefore, we recognize the need to meet the intellectual and physical development needs of all children.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of West Mifflin Area School District – in partnership with families and community – is to establish a challenging and safe learning environment, where all students will attain the quality education and life experiences to become responsible life-long learners and contributing members of an ever-changing global society.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information about the West Mifflin Area School District's elementary schools. The complete West Mifflin Area School Policy Manual is available online at www.wmasd.org and in the principals' offices.



ABSENCES

The attendance policy of the West Mifflin Area School District is based on the premise that regular attendance is an important factor in educational success and supports a comprehensive approach to identify and address attendance issues.

Students must meet attendance requirements to be able to fully benefit from instruction, achieve expected progress, and matriculate to the next instructional level. All attendance records are to be maintained and updated using the student information system or such other system as the District may adopt and reported on the Elementary Report Card, permanent record cards, and Dashboard. It is essential that homeroom teachers maintain accurate records of each student's school attendance.

Types of Absences

All school attendance falls into one of the four (4) categories:

- Excused absence
- School sanctioned activity (e.g., field trip, co-curricular activity)
- Unexcused absence (truancy)
- Unexcused absence due to suspension

Excused Absences

The reasons for which absence, tardiness, and early dismissal may be excused are:

- Personal illness
- Health-related appointments
- Quarantine
- Death in the immediate family
- Traditionally recognized religious holidays
- Approved educational travel
- Court appearances
- Other urgent reasons as approved by the District

There may be other reasons for a student's absence which supersede the importance of a day in school. However, the school administrator is obligated to classify the absence according to school regulations.

Pre-Approved Absences Including Educational Travel

Parents requesting permission for such travel must complete a Pre-Approved Absence Request Form at least five days in advance of the proposed trip. All trips must have some educational or family value for the students as predetermined by the building principal to be counted as an excused absence. Students absent ten or more times per semester will be refused permission. Students, who in the opinion of the professional staff, are performing less than satisfactorily, will not be given permission to leave on a pre-approved absence. Any absence denied for such reasons will be treated as an unexcused/unlawful absence. The Elementary Principal's judgment to approve or disapprove this absence for such reasons stated above is final.

Pre-approved absences are strongly discouraged during standardized testing and should be arranged according to our school calendar. Only five days of absence will be pre-approved per student per year.

Re-admittance to School

In every case of absence, a student must bring a written excuse (e-mail excuses accepted) to the homeroom teacher within three (3) school days. This should show the date or dates of absence, the reason for absence, and the parent's signature. Excuses should be submitted in advance when an absence is anticipated. If the excuse is not given to the homeroom teacher by the tenth day after return, the absence will be considered unexcused.

The excuse must include the following information:

- Full name of student
- Date of absence
- Reason for absence

- Signature of parent/guardian (and/or licensed health care provider, where applicable)

Unexcused Absences

The following constitutes unexcused absences:

- Lack of a valid written excuse from the parent/guardian (and/or licensed health care deemed appropriate by the Principal)
- Absence because of parental neglect
- Unapproved educational travel
- Oversleeping
- Working at home
- Other reasons not sanctioned under excused absences

Unlawful Absences

Any unexcused absence for students of compulsory school age is also unlawful. Except as may be provided otherwise by applicable law, compulsory school age is the time from when the student enters first grade (but no later than age 8) to age 17 or graduation from high school, whichever occurs first. There are exceptions: in unusual circumstances, a student may not be able to attend school for severe psychological or medical reasons. In such cases, parents must notify the Principal, provide supporting documentation from a licensed health care provider, and work with school officials to develop a plan to ensure that the child receives an appropriate education and that the parent does not violate state attendance laws. Temporary excuses based on medical, psychological or other urgent reasons may not exceed three (3) months. Excusals anticipated to be over three (3) months shall be reviewed in consultation with the Pennsylvania Department of Education guidelines.

When absent, it is the student's responsibility to complete those assignments deemed necessary by the teacher. Arrangements to have daily work picked up or sent home with another student should be made by calling or e-mailing the office before 11:00 am on the day of the absence.

Penalties for Unlawful Absence for Students of Compulsory School Age

- **First Offense:** When a student has accumulated three (3) days (or their equivalent) of unlawful absence as verified by the Principal or his/her designee, the parent is notified. The First Offense Notice shall advise the parent of the dates of unexcused absences, that if another unlawful absence occurs more than three days after the date of the First Notice, the District will refer the matter to the district justice who may find a parent, guardian, etc. or student, guilty of a summary offense for failure to comply with compulsory attendance laws.

- **Subsequent Offenses:** Any additional unlawful student absence occurring more than three (3) days after the date of the First Notice becomes a Subsequent Offense. The District will file the case with the district justice pursuant to applicable law without further notice.

Early Dismissals

The allowed reasons for early dismissal are the same as for absences. To arrange an early dismissal, the student or parent should bring a written parental request (e-mail requests accepted) which includes the reason for the early dismissal to the school office before school on the day of the dismissal. In emergency situations, the parent may call the school office to arrange the early dismissal. Students will only be released to parents in the school office. Students returning from early dismissals should report to the school office before going to the classroom.

Tardiness

Students who are not inside their homeroom class when the bell rings are considered tardy. Tardiness is considered excused or unexcused for the same reasons as excused or unexcused absences. Students who are tardy without an excuse are subject to academic and/or disciplinary consequences such as loss of recess time, school detention, etc.

ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL

All K-5 students will be admitted to the building at 8:40 am for morning classes. Students are considered tardy starting at 9:05 am. The parent or guardian must accompany their child into the office after the tardy bell. End of the day dismissal is 3:35 pm for all students. Any other issues regarding attendance can be found in the district Attendance Policy.

ATTENDANCE LETTER

Dear Students and Parents of West Mifflin Area School District:

A lot of changes are taking place in the education world, one of which is school attendance regulations. We were required to update and make some changes to our Attendance Policy. We wanted to make sure you were aware of some key changes in an effort to make this school year run as smooth as possible. The full policy is available on our district website: www.wmasd.org for you to review at your convenience.

Students are required to submit a written excuse within three (3) days of the absence. ALL absences are recorded as unexcused until the district receives a written excuse.

- Elementary and Middle School students submit excuses to their 1st period teacher, who then submits the excuse to the main office to be recorded by the attendance secretary.
- High School students are to submit excuses directly to the High School main office.

Educational trips MUST be preapproved by a principal at least 5 days prior to the anticipated absence. The district will NOT approve educational trips for the first two weeks of the school year, the last two weeks of the school year and during standardized testing.

The district will allow a maximum of ten (10) days of cumulative excused absences verified by parental notification during the school year. All absences beyond ten (10) days shall require an excuse from a licensed practitioner of the healing arts.

Truancy is defined by the State of Pennsylvania as having three (3) unexcused absences. Please make every effort to ensure that an excuse is submitted when your child is absent.

If you are having trouble with your child attending school regularly, please contact Melissa Wall 412-466-9131 ext. 1006 wallm@wmasd.org or your child's guidance counselor.

Each building has a secretary assigned to recording excuses. You may email excuses to your child's homeroom /first period teacher or the building secretary.

BOOKS AND EQUIPMENT

Each student is responsible for the proper care and return of all books and equipment received from the school. Payment must be made for lost or damaged books and equipment.

BUS REGULATIONS

Bus transportation is a privilege. The principal will suspend bus privileges of any student not following the rules. Additional disciplinary action may also be imposed. The safety of all students to and from school is somewhat dependent on an understanding and cooperative effort of parents, students, school bus drivers and school personnel.

Parents are urged to caution their children to obey the following rules:

- Students must obey bus drivers promptly as they are in full charge of buses and pupils while in transit.
- Students must stay off the roadway at all times while waiting for buses.
- Students must cross in front of the bus when crossing a highway.
- Students must wait until the bus comes to a complete stop before attempting to enter or exit the bus.
- Students must keep their arms and heads inside the bus and remain seated at all times.
- Any damage to the bus should be reported to the bus driver at once.
- Any student causing a disturbance on the bus may be suspended from riding the bus. **NO HORSEPLAY.**
- Students are not permitted to eat and/or drink on the bus.
- Any student damaging a bus may be suspended from riding the bus and is subject to repair costs.
- Students will be picked up and discharged only at their designated bus stop.
- Students may only ride the bus to which they have been assigned by the district.
- Requests to temporarily ride another bus must be made in writing from a parent and approved by an administrator.

- Bus students may not walk home, to doctor's appointments, activities, or another student's home without written permission from a parent.
- Any transportation request must be submitted to the office for approval no later than the morning of the request.
- All school rules apply to and from the home to the bus stop. Failure to abide by any of the above rules will result in disciplinary action.

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C

CALENDAR

The school calendar is posted on the District website at www.wmasd.org.

CELL PHONE USE

Cell phone use is prohibited during the school day. Cell phones may not be visible or in use on school property nor on the school bus. Students who use a cell phone (including the use of a camera phone) or have a cell phone visible will be subject to disciplinary action and confiscation of the cell phone/camera phone. All cell phones must remain in your child's locker and/or bookbag.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE NUMBER

Parents are asked to notify the office immediately of any change in the home address or home cell phone and work telephone numbers. The office will notify the health office of these changes.

CURRICULUM

At the elementary level, students receive the following: English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Art, Library, Physical Education, and Music. Detailed information can be found on the district website.

D

DISCIPLINE/SCHOOL RULES

Being courteous and orderly are the underlying goals of the rules and regulations that govern student behavior at elementary school. Positive reinforcement of desired behavior is provided by the staff through teaching, discussion, and role modeling. Students are expected to demonstrate good citizenship at school as well as during the time they are traveling from home to school and back. In the event that students disobey the rules, disciplinary action may include a reprimand, withdrawal of privileges, or notification to parents. In-school suspension and out-of-school suspension may occur depending on the seriousness of the offense depending on school policy. All school board policies can be reviewed in the principal's office and at www.wmasd.org. For more information, read the Student Conduct section at the back of this handbook.

DRESS CODE

Students should be dressed in an appropriate and acceptable manner in terms of modesty, safety, and personal hygiene as appropriate for instructional activities.

A student's dress should not interfere with the learning process or create danger to the student's safety. It is important for students to be appropriately dressed according to the weather. The list of inappropriate items included, but not exhaustive to:

1. Shorts that fall above the end of the fingertips
2. Excessively tight pants or tops
3. Spaghetti-strap tops
4. Tube tops
5. Muscles shirts
6. T-Shirt undergarments
7. Pajamas (except on pajama days)
8. Flip flops
9. Strapless shoes
10. High-heeled shoes
11. Rompers are cumbersome at restroom breaks for the younger children, however this is your choice

E

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Electronic devices are defined as any item needing batteries or electricity to operate. Students are prohibited from having electronic devices in the school building. Calculators and other educational devices approved by the classroom teacher are the only exceptions. District issued laptops are the only devices permitted in the building. No personal laptops and/or iPads are permitted.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In partnership with the community emergency responders, the West Mifflin Area School District engages in emergency preparedness on an ongoing basis.

Although it is impossible to anticipate every type of crisis that might occur, the District has developed many detailed procedures for use by employees in response to critical incidents.

In the event of a delay, dismissal, lockdown, partial/total building evacuation, parents should follow these procedures:

- Access all information from: the District website at www.wmasd.org; KDKA TV, www.kdka.com; WPXI TV, www.wpxi.com; WTAE TV, www.thepittsburghchannel.com; and KDKA Radio, 1020AM.

- **Students will not be dismissed early.** Do not come to the school as this will interfere with the ability of District personnel to manage the situation.
- Do not call the school as this will disrupt our communication with emergency service providers.
- Email notification will be available to those users who have provided their email addresses on the emergency cards.

Safety Drills

State law requires drills for fire, severe weather, and evacuation emergencies. A fire evacuation plan is posted in each room. Teachers will instruct students on these procedures.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER (ELL)

ELL instruction is provided to students with limited proficiency in speaking, listening to or reading or writing English due to their status as immigrants, refugees, foreign exchange students or American born students from non-English speaking homes. Parents of students who may require ELL instruction should alert the principal when enrolling the student in school. The principal will refer the student for an ELL evaluation, and if eligible, the student will be scheduled for services. At registration, each parent will complete a Home Language Survey to determine English as a Second Language eligibility. A special note about student participation in the district sponsored ESL program for the Pennsylvania Department of Education website:

- The Pennsylvania State Board of Education regulations requires school entities to adopt policies that permit parents to have their children excused from specific instruction only in the limited circumstance described below: *The right to have their children excused from specific instruction that conflicts with their religious beliefs, upon receipt by the school entity of a written request from the parents or guardians.*
- Consequently, a parent may not seek to have his or her child excused from a LEA 's ESL/Bilingual program unless the instruction conflicts with the family's religious belief.



FOOD AND SNACKS

If food of any kind is brought into school for a classroom party or birthday celebrations, the items must be pre-packaged or store bought. Due to allergy concerns of individual students, we must be able to see ingredients. Any questions, please consult the child's teacher and/or school principal.

HEALTH SERVICES

Child Abuse

The Child Protective Services Law in Pennsylvania requires all school employees to report suspected child abuse. Any school district employee who has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is the victim of child abuse must make a report of suspected child abuse to the Childline

and Abuse Registry (per state law). It is not the responsibility of school officials to determine if there has been abuse or neglect. The principal may permit authorized personnel from the Department of Public Welfare or Child Protective Services to interview the student at school without prior parental consent if the suspected abuser is unknown or may be the parents. If the student has suffered injuries so severe that immediate medical attention is needed, the principal will call the police and/or paramedics to take the child to the hospital. The police will investigate the matter if the suspected child abuse involves law violations under the Crimes Code.

Emergency Information for Sudden Illness or Injury

The Health Office maintains an Emergency /Release Information Sheet for each student. This information facilitates the care of the ill or injured student. Only those persons indicated on the sheet will be contacted and can give permission for the student to leave the building. It is essential that parents keep this information current. If a parent's routine is permanently or temporarily changed, be sure that the child and school office has accurate information as to where the parent can be contacted. Facilities are available for temporary care only. Parents should develop a plan that would allow their child to be picked up from school within a half hour of notification of an illness or an injury.

Food and Environmental Allergies

Students with food allergies will need to have a completed Dietary Permission Form on file with the school health office which includes information about the alternative snack that will be provided by the parent. An Allergy Action Plan is established in collaboration with the student's parent, physician, and certified school nurse for students with potentially life-threatening allergies. Parents are asked to contact their certified school nurse to discuss the health and safety procedures for their child at the beginning and as needed throughout the school year.

Homebound Instruction

When lengthy illness (more than 10 days) prevents a student from attending school, homebound instruction may be requested by the parent. The parent must

obtain a written statement from a physician describing the need for homebound instruction. When approved, the school arranges for certified teachers to instruct a student at home or in the hospital for up to five (5) hours per week. During homebound instruction, the student is considered present in school for purposes. Forms to request instruction are available in the principal's office. Homebound instruction is intended for short term absences of a month or less.

Illness or Injury

Emergency care is available in the Health Office for any illness or injury that is sustained during school hours. The health office cannot address injuries that occur at home. By law, a nurse is not permitted to make a diagnosis or prescribe treatment. Students who have an elevated temperature, vomiting or diarrhea, should remain at home until symptom free for 24 hours. Students that have a suspected contagious disease will be sent home with a diagnostic referral. The school district follows Allegheny County Health Department Guidelines for re-admittance to school following a contagious disease referral. The diagnostic referral must be completed and the student cleared for re-admittance to school by a physician prior to the student returning to school.

The District is not equipped to provide advanced emergency care. Students needing urgent medical attention will be transported to an emergency care facility by the Baldwin EMS. Please notify the certified school nurse if your child has any health concerns that could result in the need for emergency services, or that need to be communicated to emergency personnel.

The district maintains a policy of Universal or Standard Precautions (procedures that are designed to reduce the risk of transmission of blood-borne pathogens regardless of the presumed infection status of the individual) to insure the health, safety, and welfare of our students and staff. Students and faculty/staff are taught about possible disease transmission through exposure to blood/body fluids. Students and faculty/staff are to report any blood or body fluid spill to a teacher and are never to touch or clean-up another person's blood/body fluid.

Immunizations

ALLEGHENY COUNTY SCHOOL IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Pennsylvania and Allegheny County Health Departments as per 28 Pa. Code, Chapter 23, Subchapter C, require that all children show proof of immunization **before** they can attend any public, private, charter or home school in the Commonwealth. **Your child will not be permitted to attend school until you have submitted documentation of the required immunizations.**

Medical exemptions: If the physical condition of your child is such that immunization would endanger life or health, a medical exemption must be submitted. Only licensed medical doctors and doctors of osteopathy and designated Health Department personnel may waive immunization requirements. Chiropractors' certifications for medical exemptions are not acceptable by law. If a medical exemption is for a specific antigen(s) this should be indicated in the statement of exemption. All other immunizations will still be required. These statements of exemption must be written by the appropriate medical personnel and submitted to the school nurse.

Religious exemption: This includes a strong moral or ethical conviction similar to a religious belief. The school nurse must be notified by the parent or guardian in writing of the reasons for this exemption.

If a child is exempt from immunizations and a vaccine preventable disease outbreak occurs, he/she may be excluded from school per the direction from the Allegheny County Health Department.

Entering from Outside our District

Students entering the district from other countries, states or districts, may be enrolled provisionally if evidence is provided that the child has received at least one (1) dose of each vaccine and a plan is provided to complete the remaining doses within the timeframe mandated by the state. The exception to this rule is for the Tdap and Meningitis vaccine - both **MUST** be completed prior to a student entering the mandated grades for these. If requirements are not met within the mandated timeframe, exclusion procedures will be taken.

Allegheny County Health Department (412 578-8060) will provide school required vaccines, free of charge, to children if they are uninsured, have Medicaid, or are an American Indian or Alaskan Native.

Mandated Procedures

Pennsylvania school code 28; section 23 mandates the following screenings on school age children - public, private and homeschooled be completed

- Vision – Grades K-12 annually
- Hearing – Grades K-3, 7, 11. Also per parent or teacher referrals and students who have a known hearing loss.
- Height & Weight – Grades K-12 annually
- Scoliosis – Grade 6 & 7

Parents/Guardians are notified only if a student does not pass the school screening. A referral is then sent home for the student to have a more thorough examination by his/her private health care provider.

Pennsylvania school code 1402 mandates the following examinations be completed:

- Physical – Grades 1, 6, 11
- Dental – Grades 1, 3, 7

New students are required to provide proof of being up to date on their Pennsylvania school mandates.

Parents are encouraged to have the physical/dental examinations performed by their child's healthcare provider, since he/she is aware of their child's health history and status. Proof of these examinations are required to be on file in the student's health record. Only the following licensed personnel in Pennsylvania may complete and sign a child's physical: Medical Doctor (MD); Doctor of Osteopathy (DO); Certified Registered Nurse Practitioner (CRNP); Physician's Assistant (PA). These examinations are at the parent/guardian expense. If you prefer, the school doctor or dentist will complete these examinations during the school year at the expense of the district. If you choose this option, a parent/guardian will be required to sign for his/her child to have the required examinations completed at school.

Medication (prescription & nonprescription)

The administration of student medication, both prescription and nonprescription, (including herbal forms), during school hours is strongly discouraged as there are safety concerns about students forgetting to take the medication, having a reaction to the medication or another student taking the medication. If a physician deems it medically necessary for a student to take medication, either prescription or nonprescription during the school day, the Authorization for Medications Form, signed by the parent and completed by the physician must be returned to the Health Office with the medication in a pharmacy labeled container or unopened bottle. The medication must be FDA approved for the use it is being prescribed for. If it is not FDA approved for the specific prescription use, the certified school nurse will contact the physician, parent/guardian/pharmacist, chairman of health services and the superintendent to review the specified usage and a determination will be made for its usage. A new form is required for each medication change, dose change, time change and for each school year.

Staffing

The health office is staffed by a certified school nurse and/or a health aide. The health aide is either a registered nurse or licensed practical nurse. The certified school nurse is responsible for the building and is on call for her/his assigned buildings during school hours.

Health Care Treatments:

First Aid care is available in the health office for any illness or injury sustained during school hours. The nurse cannot address injuries that occur outside of the school day. By law, a nurse is not permitted to make a diagnosis or prescribe treatment. Children may be sent home for the following reasons: (including but not limited to):

- Elevated temperature - 100 degrees or above
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Undiagnosed Rash
- Communicable Disease

Children are required to be home 24 hours fever free without the use of fever reducing medication or 24 hours symptom free to help prevent the spread of any illnesses. The school district adheres to the Allegheny County Health Department Guidelines for Schools. The school district is not equipped to provide advanced emergency care. Children needing emergent medical attention will be transported to an emergency care facility by Baldwin EMS Ambulance Service. Please notify your child's school health office of any health concerns your child may have.

HOMEWORK

Homework is extra practice/review which develops responsibility and good work habits and increases parent involvement. Assignments should accomplish one or more of these purposes:

- Provide a review of class activities,
- Provide systematic practice,
- Provide students with opportunities for original work, and/or
- Provide for exploration of special interest through appropriate research.

To request homework for a student who is absent due to illness, call the office to arrange pick up for homework. When students have received assignments for pre-approved absences, they are expected to complete them before returning to school (unless there are extenuating circumstances approved by the principal).



KINDERGARTEN

The district offers a full-day kindergarten program which provides opportunities for children to grow cognitively, physically, socially, and emotionally. Every content area is begun in kindergarten with specific goals and objectives geared to the different developmental levels of the children.

L

LOST AND FOUND

All articles which are found at school are taken to a depository in the building where they may be claimed.

LUNCH PERIODS

The elementary lunch period varies depending upon the specific building, please check with building principal for lunch periods. Children have the opportunity to bring a lunch from home or one from the cafeteria provided free of charge.

LUNCH ACCOUNT

You may deposit money into your child's lunch account by sending cash or check (payable to WMASD) in a sealed envelope with your child's name to give to the homeroom teacher. You may also deposit money online at www.wmasd.org, food service department. One lunch is free for all children. Extra lunches cost: \$2.05 Extra entrees cost: \$1.75 Snacks range from \$.0.50 to \$1.00.

M

MIDDLE SCHOOL 4th/5th GRADE ORIENTATION

Orientation programs are conducted for all fourth students who will attend the West Mifflin Area Middle School. In order for student to participate in monthly incentives at the Middle School grades4/5such as field trips, dances etc., the students must be in good behavioral standing. Any students that has been suspended and/or has had three or more discipline referrals are not eligible.

O

P

PARENT/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Research has proven that students whose parents are involved in their education are more successful at school. Listed below are a variety of ways for parents to access school and student information.

Calendar

A comprehensive District Activities Calendar is available at www.wmasd.org.

Email

Email communication is intended as an efficient way for parents to contact teachers regarding specific class/student information.

Voicemail/All-Calls

All elementary schools have voicemail. Parents may leave voicemails for teachers. Building administrators will communicate important information to parents via all-calls, email, text, and building level Facebook.

Website

The school website provides constantly updated information about our schools. Notice of a late start or school cancellation due to the weather will be posted on the website. The website is also a valuable source of information for parents during a school emergency.

PARENTAL RIGHTS – Separated and Divorced Parents

The District recognizes the wide responsibilities parents have with respect to the education of their children. In instances of separation and divorce, the following procedures govern communication practices with parents:

- **It is the responsibility of the parent to keep the school informed of court decisions regarding custody.**
- Unless there are court-imposed restrictions, the non-custodial parent may request and receive copies of all progress reports, scholastic records, and any other information provided to the custodial parent. Non-custodial parents wishing to receive such materials should contact the school office.
- Should a court order curtail the right of the non-custodial parent, the custodial parent must provide the principal with a certified copy of the court order. If a parent falsely claims restriction of the other parent's rights concerning the child, the non-custodial parent may file with the principal a certified copy of the most recent court order on the matter. At all times, the school abides by the most recent court order.
- Unless there are court-imposed restrictions, the non-custodial parent is entitled to participate in all school activities to which the custodial parent is invited, but only the parent who has been awarded legal custody by the court has the right to be involved in decisions regarding the education of the child.

- When the court has awarded legal custody to both parents on a shared basis and when no legal custody arrangements have been awarded by the courts to either parent of a disabled child enrolled in special education, both parents are encouraged and permitted to be involved in all educational decisions affecting the child.
- The non-custodial parent may not visit the child during school hours, nor will the child be released to a non-custodial parent unless such visits or releases are specifically permitted by court order and a certified copy of the order is on file with the principal.

PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)

PTA's mission is to foster the health and well-being of all students. Research has proven that students whose parents are involved in their education are more successful at school. West Mifflin Area PTA is committed to strengthening meaningful parental involvement in the schools. Each PTA unit holds regularly scheduled meetings at their school. PTA funds provide academic enhancements, Cultural Art programs, and many other activities for all students. Meeting information can be found in each individual building website and/or calendars.

PARTIES

There are three school sponsored parties a year (Halloween, Christmas and Valentine's Day) which occur at the end of the instructional day i.e. 2:00-3:00. Requests for parties at other times must be approved by the principal.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEOTAPES OF STUDENTS

Parents who do not wish to have their child photographed or videotaped should notify the principal, in writing, of this request.

POLICIES

For copies of the School District Policies, contact your principal or visit the School Board link at www.wmasd.org.



RECESS

Recess is an opportunity for students to interact with their peers. Recess may occur in or outdoors. Students need to dress appropriately for recess. Lunchtime recess is typically 30 minutes daily.

REPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS

Student progress is reported once every nine weeks in grades K-5. Student report cards are available via the student and parent PowerSchool accounts. Student

report cards are sent home at the end of each nine-week grading period. Parent-Teacher Conferences are held once a year and when deemed necessary by teacher and/or principal. Parents and teachers are encouraged to schedule conferences as needs arise throughout the year in order to discuss academic/behavioral concerns.

S

SAFETY

West Mifflin Area School District has an emergency management plan with specific details pertaining to each school available to view in the school office. The safety of the children is our highest priority.

SCHOOL COUNSELORS

What is School Counseling?

Elementary school counselors are professional educators who understand and respond to the challenges presented by today's diverse student population. Elementary school counselors do not work in isolation; rather they are integral to the total educational program. School counseling services focus on academic, social/emotional, and behavioral concerns related to academic success.

What do School Counselors do?

School counselors are an integral component of the District's total educational system. Through a comprehensive school counseling program, all students have the opportunity to recognize their significant role in the school community and learn the skills necessary to maximize their educational potential. School counselors implement comprehensive supports in the realms of personal/social development, academic development, and career development by teaching classroom guidance lessons based on developmental skills necessary for student success.

School counselors provide short-term small group and individual counseling for students, including those identified through the SAP/RTI-I or an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) process. In addition to the SAP/IEP referral process, parents, teachers, and students may make referrals to the school counselor. Counselors also work collaboratively with teachers and administrators to support students and families. Additionally, school counselors provide referrals for community medical/mental health resources as requested by parents. Finally, school counselors collaborate with community medical/mental health professionals to support students in the academic environment.

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE PROFILE

The Pennsylvania School Performance Profile (SPP) offers a web-based resource for districts and schools to communicate performance results to various constituencies and assist districts and schools in aligning and focusing resources for continuous improvement.

The PA School Performance Profile also serves several other purposes:

- Provides a building level academic score for educators as part of the Educator Effectiveness System as required by 24 P.S. § 11-1123 – Act 82 – 2012
- Provides information used in determining federal accountability status for Title I schools as required by the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act section 1111(h)(1) and (h)2
- Informs the public of the academic performance measures of each school, comprehensive career and technical center, cyber charter and charter school in Pennsylvania
- Provides resources to support schools as they seek to improve academic performance

To review your school's most current School Performance Profile (SPP), visit paschoolperformance.org.

STANDARDIZED TESTS

At the elementary school, group standardized tests are utilized to supplement teacher evaluation. The Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) will test all third, fourth, and fifth grade students in reading and math. Terra Nova is another standardized assessment utilized in second grade. A testing calendar can be found on the district website.

STUDENT EVENTS

Field Trips

Field trips are an important part of the educational program. They are arranged by classroom teachers to provide a first-hand educational experience designed to enrich classroom teaching. Prior to the scheduled trip, parental consent forms are sent home with students, along with an explanation of the specific details. All students must be in good behavioral standing to attend a field trip. Any student that has been suspended and/or has had three or more discipline referrals is not eligible. Some trips require a nominal fee, which is the responsibility of each student. The permission form and any fees will need to be returned to school before the trip occurs.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

West Mifflin Area School District provides support for students with a broad range of educational needs. The majority of students are educated without any modifications to the regular education program. A small percentage of students may need minor accommodations to enable them to progress in the regular classroom. Other students may need more extensive support offered through a special education program. For additional information, contact the building principal or the Director of Pupil Services at 412-466-9131.

Special Education Services

Special education at each elementary school consists of services and programs designed to meet the educational needs of students who meet state and federal eligibility criteria. The District maintains a continuum of services for students with disabilities which include autistic support, blind or visually impaired support, deaf or hearing-impaired support, emotional support, learning support, life skills support, multiple disabilities support, physical support, and speech and language support. The District also provides related services such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech and language support, and transportation required for the student to benefit from the special education program.

To identify a student with a disability, various screening activities are conducted. When screening results suggest a student might be a student in need of specially designed instruction, the District secures permission to evaluate from parent(s). A team comprised of District staff and the parent(s) gathers information for the evaluation. The evaluation report (ER) is written and reviewed by the team. If it is determined the child has a disability and also has a need for specially designed instruction, an individualized education plan (IEP) is developed.

The type of special education services, the amount of special education support, and the location of special education services are determined by the IEP team and based on the least restrictive environment in which the student's needs can be met.

Programs and Services for Student Identified as Mentally Gifted

All elementary schools located within the District provide services for mentally gifted students using the conceptual framework of continuous progress through the mainstream curriculum. A student

may qualify for the mentally gifted program based on ability and/or achievement test scores, student performance, teacher input, and parent input. When a student qualifies for gifted programming, school staff and parent(s) develop a program to address the student's needs. The team, assisted by the gifted coordinator, work together to provide the student with options that may include differentiated instruction, enrichment, acceleration, special academic events, or independent study.

Protected Handicapped Students

Each elementary school provides a protected handicapped student an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the school program and extracurricular activities, to the maximum extent appropriate to the student's abilities, by offering the services and accommodations needed by the student. In order to qualify as a protected handicapped student, a child must be of school age and have a physical or mental disability which substantially limits or prohibits his or her participation in or access to a part of the school program. Services and accommodations, which are developed by the school staff and in collaboration with parent(s), are provided without discrimination or cost to the student or the family.



Title 1

We are a Title I school, meaning, we receive federal funding to supplement our programs to help children. Our schools run a School wide program (SWP) so that we can use the funding to enrich the academic experience for all children within the school. Each year, we will hold meetings to discuss the SWP and our plans to help children learn. As a parent you are entitled to specific rights, such as the Right to Know explained in this section of the handbook. We also value your feedback. At our meetings, we will ask for your input as to how to improve our program. Your feedback is very important to us as we work together to maximize your child's education.

Title I Complaint Resolution Policy

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) legislation requires State Educational Agencies (SEAs) to adopt written procedures for "receiving and resolving any complaint alleging violations of the law in administration of programs." In accordance with this legislative requirement, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) has also required Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) to adopt written procedures for resolving complaints filed.

Definition

A “complaint” is a written, signed statement filed by an individual or an organization. It must include:

- a) A statement that a school has violated a requirement of federal statute or regulation that applies to Title I.
- b) The facts on which the statement is based.
- c) Information on any discussions, meetings or correspondence with a school regarding the complaint.

Complaint Resolution Procedures

1) **Referral** – Complaints against schools should be referred to the District’s Federal/State Programs Office:

Jeffrey Solomon- Federal/State Programs Director
1020 Lebanon Road, Suite 250
West Mifflin, PA 15122

2) **Notice to School** – The Federal/State Programs Office will notify the school Superintendent and Principal that a complaint has been received. A copy of the complaint will be given to the Superintendent and Principal with directions given for the Principal to respond.

3) **Investigation** – After receiving the Principal’s response, the Federal/State Programs Office, along with the Superintendent, will determine whether further investigation is necessary. If necessary, the Federal/State Programs Director and the Superintendent may do an onsite investigation at the school.

4) **Opportunity to Present Evidence** – The Federal/State Programs Director may provide for the complainant and the Principal to present evidence.

5) **Report and Recommended Resolution** – Once the Federal/State Programs Director has completed the investigation and the taking of evidence, a report will be prepared with a recommendation for resolving the complaint. The report will give the name of the party bringing the complaint, the nature of the complaint, a summary of the investigation, the recommended resolution and the reasons for the recommendation. Copies of the report will be issued to all parties involved. The recommended resolution will become effective upon issuance of the report.

6) **Follow up** – The Federal/State Programs Director and the Superintendent will ensure that the resolution of the complaint is implemented.

7) **Time Limit** – The period between the Federal/State Programs Director receiving the complaint and resolution of the complaint shall not exceed sixty (60) calendar days.

8) **Right to Appeal** – Either party may appeal the final resolution to the Department of Education. Appeals should be addressed as follows:

Ms. Susan McCrone, Chief
Division of Federal Programs
Pennsylvania Department of Education
333 Market Street, 7th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

Right to Know

Parent Right to Know Information as Required by The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) [Section 1112(e)(1)(A)] and the Every Student Succeeds Act [Section 1112(e)(1)(A)]

Your child attends one of the elementary schools within *West Mifflin Area School District* which receives Federal Title I funds to assist students in meeting state achievement standards. Throughout the school year, we will be providing you with important information about this law and your child's education. This letter lets you know about your right to request information about the qualifications of the classroom staff working with your child.

We, the West Mifflin Area School District, are very proud of our teachers and feel they are ready for the coming school year and are prepared to give your child a high-quality education. As a Title I school, we must meet federal regulations related to teacher qualifications as defined in ESEA. These regulations allow you to learn more about your child's teachers' training and credentials. We are happy to provide this information to you.

At any time, you may ask:

- Whether the teacher met state qualifications and certification requirements for the grade level and subject he/she is teaching,
- Whether the teacher received an emergency or conditional certificate through which state qualifications were waived, and
- What undergraduate or graduate degrees the teacher holds, including graduate certificates and additional degrees, and major(s) or area(s) of concentration.

You may also ask whether your child receives help from a paraprofessional. If your child receives this assistance, we can provide you with information about the paraprofessional's qualifications.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) which was signed into law in December 2015 and reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1956 (ESEA) includes additionally right to know requests. At any time, parents and family members can request:

- Information on policies regarding student participation in assessments and procedures for opting out, and
- Information on required assessments that include
 - o subject matter tested,
 - o purpose of the test,
 - o source of the requirement (if applicable),
 - o amount of time it takes students to complete the test, and
 - o time and format of disseminating results.

Our staff is committed to helping your child develop the academic knowledge and critical thinking he/she needs to succeed in school and beyond. That commitment includes making sure that all of our teachers and paraprofessionals meet applicable Pennsylvania state requirements.

If you have any questions about your child's assignment to a teacher or paraprofessional, please contact your child's principal.

Teacher Certification

On December 10, 2015 a new Federal education law was signed by the President. This law, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), requires schools that receive federal Title I funding ensure that all teachers teaching in a program supported with Title I funding must hold appropriate state certification and licensure requirements, including any requirements for certification obtained through alternative routes to certification.

The new law also requires us to notify parents if their child is being taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher in a Title I school or program who does not yet meet the definition of "appropriate state certification." It is the intent of every school in the district to employ highly qualified teachers to provide the best education possible for your child. A highly qualified teacher has attained the required certification and demonstrates the skills necessary to help every child attain high academic standards.

It is sometimes necessary to employ and place skilled teachers in positions for which they do not hold required certification due to shortage of qualified teacher candidates. If our school is ever in this situation, to comply with the law, you will receive a letter notifying you after four or more consecutive weeks.

Three-Way School Compact

We will send a copy home for you to sign.

Staff Pledge: We understand the importance of the school experience to every student and our role as educators and models. Therefore, we agree to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of our ability:

- Teach grade level skills and concepts.
- Strive to meet the individual needs of your child.
- Communicate with you regarding your child's progress.
- Provide a safe, positive and healthy learning environment for your child.
- Communicate homework and classwork expectations.

Student Pledge:

I realize that my education is important. I know I am the one responsible for my own success. Therefore, I agree to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of my ability:

- Get to school on time every day.
- Complete and return homework assignments on time.
- Be responsible for my own behavior.

- Attend school regularly.
- Respect and cooperate with other students and adults.
- Ask for help when needed.

Parent/Guardian Pledge:

I understand that my participation in my child’s education will help his/her achievement and attitude. Therefore, I will continue to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of my ability:

- See that my child attends school regularly and arrives on time.
 - Make sure that my child gets enough sleep each night.
 - See that my child’s homework is completed and returned on time.
 - Provide a quiet place/time for my child to do homework.
 - Attend my child’s school conferences.
 - Communicate and work with school staff.
-



VISITORS

It is the policy of the District that all persons visiting any school building during school hours, other than students or employees assigned to such school building, shall promptly register at the security booth located at the main entrance of the school. All visitors must present identification along with the reason for visit.



WEATHER DELAYS/CLOSING

When emergencies such as weather conditions or power failures require the delay or closing of school, notice is given as early as possible. Typically, when school is canceled, after-school and evening activities are not conducted. Information sources for a delay or closing are: School District Website – www.wmasd.org; KDKA TV, www.kdka.com; WPXI TV, www.wpxi.com; WTAE TV, www.thepittsburghchannel.com; and KDKA Radio 1020 AM

Phone Alert System

In the event of a school delay or closing, parents will receive a phone call from the District’s Emergency Phone Alert System to the primary phone number listed with the school. Only one call per family is made. Please

update your contact information in PowerSchool or with your building secretary.

STUDENT CONDUCT AND BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES

A. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

According to the policy of the West Mifflin Area School District, the following acts on school premises or activities are punishable by withdrawal of privileges including but not limited to extracurricular activities and other disciplinary action and by suspension and/or possible expulsion from school. In addition, students are prohibited from engaging in any conduct or activity contrary to, or in violation of, the Pennsylvania Crimes Code, the School Code, ordinances of West Mifflin, published policies or regulations of the School District, or any other applicable statutes, regulations, ordinances, policies or rules. No student has the right to interfere with the education of fellow students. It is the responsibility of each parent, guardian, and student to respect the rights of teachers, students, administrators, and all others who are involved in the educational process. Students should express their ideas and opinions in a respectful manner. It is the responsibility of students to conform with the following:

1. Be aware of all rules and regulations for student behavior and conduct themselves in accord with them. Students should assume that, until a rule is waived, altered or repealed in writing, it is in effect.
2. Provide information in matters relating to the health, safety, and welfare of the school community and the protection of school property.
3. Dress and groom to meet fair standards of safety and health, and not to cause substantial disruption to the educational process.
4. Assist the school staff in operating a safe school for all students enrolled.
5. Comply with Commonwealth and local laws.
6. Exercise proper care when using public facilities and equipment.
7. Attend school daily and be on time at all classes and other functions.
8. Make up work when absent from school.
9. Pursue and attempt to complete satisfactorily the courses of study prescribed by Commonwealth and local school authorities.

B. BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES

According to the West Mifflin Area School District Board of Directors, the following behaviors/acts on school premises, or in relation to school premises or activities, are punishable by withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action such as mediation, detention, suspension and/or possible expulsion from school. Students are prohibited from engaging in any conduct or activity contrary to, or in violation of the Pennsylvania Crimes Code, the School

Code, ordinances of West Mifflin, or published regulations of the School District, or any other applicable statutes, regulations, ordinances, policies, or rules. Further information and details about the current policies of the West Mifflin Area School District Board of Directors can be located at www.wmasd.org or in the school offices.

Abuse/Bullying/Harassment

Students are prohibited from engaging in violent, aggressive or abusive behavior, physically abusing an individual or harassment of an individual, including sexual harassment through conduct or communications. Students are prohibited from intimidation or bullying, including physical or verbal behavior. Incidents of bullying shall be reported by students, school personnel, and parents to a school official. The principal or designee shall interview students or others involved, undertake an investigation, and then contact parents. If the investigation results in a substantiated finding of bullying, the principal will administer disciplinary actions which may include but is not limited to: mediation, detention, suspension, and/or recommendation for expulsion.

Bomb Threat/Fire Alarm

Students are prohibited from turning in a bomb claim, false fire alarm, or any other false safety-related claim or report, or otherwise improperly causing or risking panic, injury or damage to property or disruption of school activities. State and federal laws could result in expulsion and/or criminal prosecution.

Defacement/Destruction/Theft of School or Private Property

Students are prohibited from littering, defacing school property, causing or attempting to cause willful destruction of school or private property, vandalism or attempted theft of school or private property on school grounds.

Drug & Alcohol Use

Students are prohibited from distributing, dispensing, possessing, using or being under the influence of any alcoholic beverage, malt beverage or fortified wine or other intoxicating liquor or unlawfully manufacturing, distributing, dispensing, possessing or using or being under the influence of any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, anabolic steroid or any other controlled substance, either before, during or after school hours in any school building or on any school premises, on any school-owned vehicle or in any other school-approved vehicle used to transport students to and from school or school activities, off school property at any school sponsored or school-approved activity, event or function, such as a field trip or athletic event where students are under the jurisdiction of the

school district. Students who fail to follow proper procedures for possession/use of medications are subject to discipline.

Fire/Explosion

Students are prohibited from carrying or possessing explosives or from intentionally starting a fire or causing an explosion and thereby recklessly placing a person in danger of death or bodily harm or intentionally frightening persons or with the intention to destroy or damage property.

Food/Beverages

Students are prohibited from consuming or taking food or beverages outside of the cafeterias unless permitted by the classroom teacher or the building principal.

Gambling

Students are prohibited from gambling on school property, including betting pools, card playing, pitching coins, etc.

Hazing

Students are prohibited from organizing, soliciting, aiding or participating in any type of hazing for any class, school-sponsored club, activity or athletic team. Hazing is any intentional knowing or reckless act directed against a student for the purpose of being initiated into, affiliation with, holding office or maintaining membership in any class, school-sponsored club, activity or athletic team. Hazing is any activity expected of someone joining or belonging to a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses or endangers, regardless of the person's willingness to participate. Students are required to report any known or suspected form of hazing to a principal immediately. Disciplinary action including, but not limited to, permanent removal from the class, club, activity or athletic team, may be taken against any students who organize, participate in, and/or fail to report a hazing rite.

Insolence/Disrespect

Students are prohibited from showing insolence or callous disrespect, including indecent or obscene language to a member of the faculty, staff or other school district employees, guest of the school district, or other persons with whom the student has contact in connection with a school-related event.

Insubordination/Defiance

Students are prohibited from insubordination or defiance relating to directions from faculty, staff or other school district employees, guest of the school district, or other persons designated to be in a position of authority for school-related events.

Leaving School Grounds

Students are prohibited from leaving school grounds during the school day (except when going home for lunch) without administrative approval.

Loitering

Students are prohibited from loitering in the restrooms, halls, or stairwells at any time during the school day, including the lunch periods.

Slurs

Students are prohibited from racial, ethnic or religious slurs or other such comments that are insulting, disparaging or derogatory, whether made directly or by innuendo, regarding a person's race, ethnic origin or religion.

Stalking

Students are prohibited from stalking or persistently following, contacting, watching or any other such threatening actions that compromise peace of mind or personal safety.

Threats

Students are prohibited from engaging in conduct constituting a terroristic threat or terroristic Act.

Tobacco Use and Possession

Students are prohibited from smoking or the use of smokeless tobacco in any form before, during, or after school hours at school or in any other school district location or during activities under the direct supervision of the school district. School district location means in any school building or on any school premises, on any school-owned vehicle, or in any other school-approved vehicle used to transport students to and from school or school activities. Possession of a cigarette, cigar, pipe, smokeless tobacco, or smoking equipment is also prohibited.

Weapons

It is the policy of the School Board of Directors that possession of a weapon by students is prohibited in any West Mifflin Area School District building, on any grounds of the District, by a student on his or her way to or from school, in any vehicle providing authorized transportation to or from any West Mifflin Area District building or District sponsored function, activity or event and at any school function, activity or event, whether or not held on West Mifflin Area District grounds. The term "weapon" or "look-alike" includes any item that can provide harm to another person.

Student Bus Contract

The principal will suspend bus privileges if any student is not following the rules. Additional disciplinary action may also be imposed. The safety of all students to and from school is dependent on an understanding and cooperative effort of parents, students school bus drivers and school personnel.

- Students must obey bus drivers promptly as they are in full charge of buses and pupils while in transit.
- Students must be on time at the designated bus stops. Buses cannot wait.
- Students must stay off the roadway at all times while waiting for buses.
- Students must cross in front of the bus when crossing.
- Students must wait until the bus comes to a complete stop before attempting to enter or exit the bus.
- Students must keep their arms and heads inside the bus at all times.
- Students must remain seated at all times when the bus is in motion.
- Any damage to the bus should be reported to the bus driver at once.
- Any student causing a disturbance on the bus may be suspended from riding the bus.
- Any student damaging a bus may be suspended from riding the bus.
- Snowballs and/or snow throwing will not be permitted while waiting for the bus. Violation of this regulation will result in disciplinary action.
- Students will be picked up and dropped off only at their designated stop.
- Students may only ride the bus to which they have been designated by the district. No unassigned students are permitted to ride the bus.
- Requests to temporarily ride another bus must be made in writing from a parent and approved by an administrator
- Any transportation must be submitted to the office for approval on the morning of the request.

The building principal has the authority to implement some or all of the following consequences for notification of inappropriate behavior. Infractions may result in the assignment of alternate transportation for the school year:

THREAT OR USE OF WEAPON

- ❖ **FIRST OFFENSE: Immediate loss of bus privileges and expulsion from school**

PHYSICAL ALTERCATIONS AND THREAT OF HARM INFRACTIONS

- ❖ **FIRST PHYSICAL ALTERCATION: 3-Day bus suspension**
- ❖ **SECOND PHYSICAL ALTERCATION: 5-Day bus suspension**
- ❖ **THIRD PHYSICAL ALTERCATION: 10-Day bus suspension**
- ❖ **FOURTH PHYSICAL ALTERCATION: 9-Weeks bus suspension**
- ❖ **FIFTH PHYSICAL ALTERCATION: Additional suspensions, alternate transportation or a permanent loss of bus privileges**

ALL OTHER INFRACTIONS

- ❖ **FIRST OFFENSE: Warning and phone call home.**
- ❖ **SECOND OFFENSE: Lunch/Recess Detention**
- ❖ **THIRD OFFENSE: 1-Day bus suspension**
- ❖ **FOURTH OFFENSE: 3-Day bus suspension**
- ❖ **FIFTH OFFENSE: 5-Day Bus Suspension**
- ❖ **SIXTH OFFENSE: Additional suspensions, alternate transportation or a permanent loss of bus privileges**

I understand that any violation on the bus that also violates the Student Code of Conduct will also result in school consequences.

I have read, understand and shared this contract with my parent/guardian.

West Mifflin Area School District

Elementary Handbook

2021-2022

This official document certifies that I have received the West Mifflin Area School District's Elementary handbook and Code of Conduct, read its contents carefully, and have had it explained to me in classrooms.

If at any time, I am unsure of the practices, procedures, responsibilities, or expectations as explained in the handbook, I will meet with my guidance counselor, principal or teacher to clarify the matter.

I understand the contents of the handbook, I agree to abide by all of the school rules. I also understand the Compact, in which, I pledge to do my best in and out of school.

Please sign and return this page to your child's homeroom teacher.

My child, _____ (Student Name) and I have reviewed the West Mifflin Area School District's Elementary handbook for the 2021-2022 school year.

Parent Name: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Student Name: _____