

**J. Ackerman Coles School**  
**Kevin Road, Scotch Plains, NJ 07076**

**Parent Handbook**

**AFFIRMATIVE ACTION**

The New Jersey Constitution and implementing legislation guarantee each child in the public schools equal educational opportunity regardless of race, color, or social or economic status. To assure these basic rights the Commissioner of Education and the State Board of Education have developed regulations which specifically implement N.J.S.A. 18A:36-20 and the State Board of Education Resolution concerning sex equality in educational programs. These regulations have also been developed in conformity with relevant Federal and State statutes concerning discriminatory conduct.

For further information, contact our Affirmative Action Officer: Mr. Peter Pitucco, Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education Evergreen Avenue and Cedar Street Scotch Plains, NJ 07076

(908) 232-6161

**EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY:**

Children are the focus of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools. We believe that each child is a unique and valued individual with varied aptitudes, interests, and needs.

All students need:

- an understanding of themselves and of the world around them;
  - strong feelings of self-worth as well as respect for others;
  - a sense of accomplishment and fulfillment;
  - a supportive and stimulating learning environment; and
  - the knowledge and skills necessary to function effectively in our changing world.
- Recognizing the above, the purpose of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood School system is to provide an education striving for excellence in realizing each student's potential for intellectual and personal growth.

## **GOALS:**

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools aspire to fulfill this philosophy by working toward the attainment of the following goals:

- The basic skills and knowledge necessary for functioning successfully in our society shall be developed.
- The ability to think critically, constructively, and creatively shall be developed.
- Programs shall be developed to help students acquire the knowledge, habits, and attitudes that promote both physical and mental health.
- Respect for self, for authority, and for the rights, opinions, and property of others shall be encouraged.
- Creative talent shall be discovered and nurtured.
- Academic potential shall be developed by encouraging and aiding each student to explore and learn as his/her abilities permit.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### 1. Daily Schedule

The elementary school day begins at 8:35 a.m. and ends at 3:10 p.m. for students in Grades Kindergarten through 4. **Supervision begins at 8:25 a.m.; therefore, all students should plan to arrive between 8:25 and 8:35 a.m.** Upon arrival, children are asked to walk onto the school grounds, line up in an orderly fashion at their assigned locations, and prepare to enter the building at 8:25 a.m. Students enter until 8:35 a.m., at which time the tardy bell is rung and the doors are closed. **Students who are tardy must report to the Main Office for a late pass.** We strongly urge parents to insure that their children arrive on time to guarantee a successful start of the school day. Please consult our time schedules in the tables below.

<b>PRE-K</b>	<b>REGULAR DAY</b>	<b>SINGLE SESSION</b>	<b>DELAYED OPENING</b>
A.M. Student Arrival	8:25 a.m.	8:25 a.m.	9:55 a.m.
Morning Session	8:35-11:20 a.m.	8:35-10:40 a.m.	10:05 a.m.-12:15 p.m.
Dismissal	11:20 a.m.	10:35 a.m.	12:15 p.m.
<b>P.M. Student Arrival</b>	12:20 p.m.	10:40 a.m.	12:55 p.m.
Afternoon Session	12:25-3:10 p.m.	10:40 a.m.-12:40 p.m.	1:00-3:10 p.m.
Dismissal	3:10 p.m.	12:40 p.m.	3:10 p.m.
<b>GRADES K-4</b>	<b>REGULAR DAY</b>	<b>SINGLE SESSION</b>	<b>DELAYED OPENING</b>
Student Arrival	8:25 a.m.	8:25 a.m.	9:55 a.m.
Instruction Begins	8:35 a.m.	8:35 a.m.	10:05 a.m.
Dismissal	3:10 p.m.	12:40 p.m.	3:10 p.m.

### 2. Arrival and Dismissal

There are two drop-off zones adjacent to the building. One is on Kevin Road along the front of the school. The other is on Aberdeen Road at the side entrance. You may drop off your child in a drop-off zone.

Use your blinker when pulling up to the curb. Pull up as far as possible in the drop-off zone to allow others to pull up behind you (but be sure to leave yourself enough space to exit safely). Have your child get out of the car on his/her own. Once your child has exited your car, use your blinker to signal your intention to reenter traffic and proceed cautiously. Do not remain in the drop-off zone. Never double park. Have your child exit curbside - not into the street.

Do not use the drop-off zone if you need to unload items from your trunk or exit your car, or if you want to watch your child walk up to or enter the school.

Very limited parking is available for those who wish to watch children enter the building. Check the diagram and street signs for available street parking.

**Do not use the staff parking lot at arrival or dismissal times.**

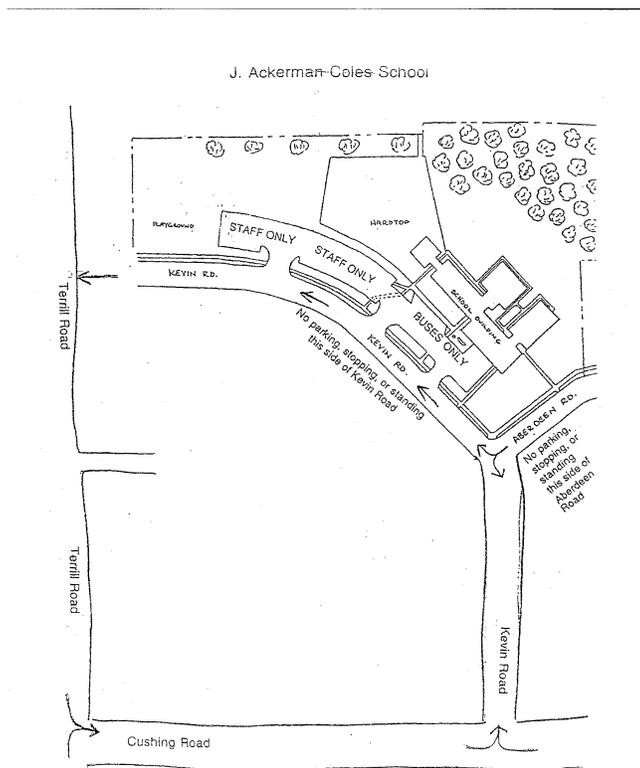
Teach your child to cross only in crosswalks and to check for traffic before crossing any street or parking lot.

Approach the school slowly, and yield to pedestrians and other drivers attempting to reenter traffic.

Follow the recommended one-way flow of traffic along Kevin Road during arrival and dismissal times (see diagram). Carpool whenever possible - less traffic means greater safety at Coles.

**The driveway to the staff parking area is NOT to be used to drop off or pick up students.** There is also no parking or standing allowed on the opposite side of Kevin Road. **For the safety of all children, please do not park, pick up or drop off your child on Kevin Road across from our school.**

Please refer to the diagram for the designated traffic flow pattern. Your cooperation with this system will be appreciated by all.



### 3. Automated Phone System

To call J. Ackerman Coles School by phone, dial (908) 757-7555. You may then select one of the following options:

- To leave a message for a teacher, please use either the Dial by Name Directory or ask the office to connect you to the voice mail.
- \*To use the Dial by Name Directory, use the keys on the telephone keypad to enter the first three letters of the person’s first or last name who you are calling (press 7 for “Q” or 9 for “Z”).

●  
To reach the .....press

Main Office.....3

Attendance Line.....1

Nurse.....2

Dial by Name Directory.....411

### 4. Staff Parking Lot

Numbered and reserved parking spaces in the school parking lot have **ALL** been designated for J. Ackerman Coles School staff members. **Parents and visitors must refrain from entering or parking in the staff lot between the hours of 7:45 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. even for a brief period of time. Please make use of spaces available on the street.**

### 5. Bus Transportation

The district provides transportation for students in kindergarten through Grade 8 who reside two or more miles from school. Safety on the school bus is not solely the responsibility of the school and the bus driver. Safety requires the constant support and attention of the pupils and their parents, as well. State law allows for the temporary or permanent denial of bus privileges to students whose behavior presents safety hazards.

### 6. Bus Safety

We recommend that parents of bus pupils discuss bus safety with their children and include the following information in their discussions:

Children should wait at the assigned bus stop in an orderly fashion on the sidewalk or on the side of the least traveled street.

When entering the bus, children should immediately take a seat, buckle their seat belts and remain seated throughout the bus trip.

Children should be cautioned that at no time should they put their hands or heads out a window, nor throw anything out a window.

Talking with their peers is acceptable using a voice tone that is respectful towards others and not in any way distracting to the driver. Shouting, loud noises and inappropriate language are

not permitted and will result in a referral to the principal's office.

Students are to demonstrate appropriate behaviors throughout the duration of their trip. These behaviors are consistent with classroom and building rules. Children at all time must be respectful towards others and refrain from any verbal or physical harassment.

Pupils should know what to do if they miss the bus coming to school in the morning (i.e., do they go home or to a neighbor's house).

If for any reason a student will not be going home on the bus on a given day, parents must send a **WRITTEN NOTE** to the main office. In the event of a bona fide emergency, you may call the school office prior to 2:30 p.m. **Without a written note, or notification from the parent, the student will be placed on the bus.**

**It is essential that all students demonstrate appropriate behaviors whenever they are riding on a school bus. Should their conduct be distracting to the driver or behaviors not follow the guidelines that are indicated above, a bus conduct report will be submitted to the principal for review, investigation, and further action.**

## **7. Bicycle Riders**

Before permitting a child to ride his/her bike to school, parents should carefully consider local traffic conditions, distance, and the child's ability and maturity. Children should not be encouraged to ride bicycles to school before the third grade.

Bicycle racks are located on the 4th grade and kindergarten sides of the school. Parents should provide locks. The school cannot assume responsibility for bicycles stolen or damaged. Bicycle riding is not permitted on school property. Children must walk their bicycles on school paths and sidewalks.

For safety reasons, students are required to wear bicycle safety helmets when riding their bicycles to and from school. New Jersey State law requires all children under the age of 14 to wear bicycle safety helmets.

## **8. Scooters and Skateboards**

Razor scooters and skateboards are not permitted on school grounds.

## **9. Walking to School**

When walking to school we require students to use sidewalk areas and practice appropriate safety precautions. It is important to utilize the Scotch Plains and Fanwood crossing guards to safely cross busy intersections. **The crossing guards are on duty from 7:30 to 9:00 a.m., and 2:15 to 3:45 p.m.** Crossing guards are located at the intersection of Terrill and Kevin Roads.

## **10. Attendance**

It is important that students be present each day that school is in session (unless illness prevents their attendance) to insure continuity of instruction. However, attendance should never be stressed to the point where a child is sent to school ill. Please assist us in protecting the health of all our youngsters by keeping your child home if he/she is not well.

***Please note: Children must be free of fever and/or vomiting symptoms for 24 hours, without the assistance of medication before being allowed to return to school.***

Whenever parents keep their child home from school for matters other than illness, the school must be notified. If the period of absence is greater than three days, the parent/guardian should consult with the principal. In any event, if a child is absent from school for any period of time, a written explanation, signed by the parent or guardian, is required.

## **11. Absences from School**

**Parents are asked to call the school attendance line at (908) 757-7555, Press Option 1) whenever their child is absent from school or will be more than 15 minutes late. Calls to this number may be made at any time during the day or night.** Messages will be checked against class attendance reports by the attendance clerk.

Follow-up calls will be made to parents who have not called the answering service about absent or tardy children. If the attendance clerk is unable to reach the family or the emergency contact person of the absent student, Board of Education policy requires the school to notify the local police of the unexplained absence. To avoid unnecessary calls to the police, parents are encouraged to keep the school informed about all of their child's absences by calling the attendance answering service whenever their child is unable to attend school for any reason, including family emergencies.

If a child has attended the morning session and for some reason cannot return for the afternoon session, parents should call the school office as soon as possible. These procedures will assist the school in verifying that students have arrived safely at school each day. Parents should continue to send a written excuse to their child's teacher whenever their child returns to school. Since attendance at school is essential for student learning, the following guidelines have been established to assist parents and guardians to focus on this critical goal.

If a student has accumulated a total of ten (10) absences during the school year, excluding documented medical illness, the school will notify the parents that improvement in attendance is necessary.

If a student has accumulated a total of fifteen (15) absences during the school year, excluding documented medical illness, the parents will be required to attend a conference with the principal or other school personnel.

If a student has accumulated a total of twenty (20) absences during the school year, excluding documented medical illness, the parents will receive notification from the District's attendance officer.

## **12. Tardiness**

Children in Grades Kindergarten through 4, and morning kindergarten, are considered tardy if they are not in their classrooms ready to begin at **8:35 a.m.** Children assigned to the afternoon pre-kindergarten session are considered tardy after **12:25 p.m.** Unavoidable exceptions, however, caused by weather or transportation, will be excused at the discretion of the school principal. **When a student arrives at school after 8:35, parents are required to escort their child to the office in order to indicate the reason for their child being late.**

Since being prompt to school is essential for developing critical life skills, similar guidelines from our attendance practices have been established to assist parents and guardians to focus on

this critical goal.

If a student has accumulated a total of ten (10) late arrivals during the school year, excluding documented medical illness, the school will notify the parents that improvement in this area is necessary.

If a student has accumulated a total of fifteen (15) late arrivals during the school year, excluding documented medical illness, the parents will be required to attend a conference with the principal or other school personnel.

If a student has accumulated a total of twenty (20) late arrivals during the school year, excluding documented medical illness, the parents will receive notification from the District's attendance officer.

### **13. Early Dismissal**

**Parents are requested NOT to ask that children be excused early except when an emergency makes early dismissal unavoidable.** Early dismissal should be arranged through the principal's office in writing. Students will be called to the office **AFTER** the parent/guardian arrives and signs their child out of school.

### **14. Late (Delayed) Opening of School**

Under certain conditions, hazardous weather or other emergency conditions, it may become necessary to delay the opening of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools. The announcement of delayed opening means that school will **open 1.5 hours later than usual**. Students who are bused will meet their bus at the same bus stop exactly 1-1/2 hours later than the normal time. Elementary students are requested to arrive at school no earlier than 9:50 a.m.; entrance time is 9:55 a.m. with instruction beginning at 10:05 a.m. On delayed opening days, dismissal times will not change and elementary students will remain in school for the lunch period.

Please consult our time schedules in the table above (on page 3).

### **15. Closing of School and Delayed Openings**

If school is closed or delayed because of inclement weather or emergency conditions, the message will be relayed through the Honeywell Instant Alert System. Please check the district webpage at [www.spfk12.org](http://www.spfk12.org) to register for this system, or to make any changes to your account. Please remember that the district uses other sources of communication for school alerts, including [www.spfk12.org](http://www.spfk12.org), Cable TV Channel 34, NJ 101.5 FM radio, NJ 12 TV, and Channels 4, 5 & 7.

The school district is also registered on the Internet at: **[www.weatherclosings.com](http://www.weatherclosings.com)**. To find our notices, enter the address "Scotch Plains, NJ" and scroll through the school sites for Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools.

### **16. Emergency Dismissal**

There may be occasions when students need to be dismissed before or detained after regular dismissal time because of unusual circumstances. In such cases the following procedures will be followed:

The principal will put into operation the PTA emergency call system to alert all parents of the early or delayed dismissal and to obtain specific dismissal instructions from them.

Children whose parents cannot be reached by telephone at home or work will remain in school until alternate arrangements can be made. Information on the blue emergency contact cards will be used to locate a neighbor or a relative who can assume responsibility for the child.

## **17. Emergency Drills**

The school conducts two emergency drills per month, a fire drill and a lock down drill.

In the event of a “lock down” situation, teachers have been instructed to follow the following guidelines:

- Insure that hallways are clear and classroom doors are locked.
- Instruct students to sit on the floor in a specific section of the classroom with window shades drawn.
- If an emergency occurs that requires alternate housing, all children will be moved to safety and then a phone chain will be started. Parents should understand that during emergency situations they may not be able to contact the school by telephone to make dismissal arrangements for their child as the telephone lines may be in constant use. For this reason, parents are advised to discuss emergency dismissals with their children and provide specific instructions to be followed if an emergency occurs. Taking a few minutes each year to make sure your child knows exactly what to do in an emergency dismissal situation will help children take appropriate action if necessary.

## **18. Lunch/Recess Student Management**

Students have a one hour lunch/recess period. Those who stay for lunch spend a portion of that time eating in the multipurpose room and the balance of the time on the playground (weather permitting) or in their respective classrooms. Students are supervised in these areas by lunch aides who are hired within the guidelines provided by Board of Education policy. Children may bring their lunches in bags or boxes, clearly labeled, or they may purchase lunch weekly.

The students' lunch period should be a pleasant and informal experience in the school day. These situations, however, require attitudes and behavior which differ from formal gatherings. In effect, we expect each of our students to exhibit socially accepted behavior.

## Lunch and Recess Schedule

Grades	Lunch	Recess
Kindergarten and 1st	11:20-11:50	11:50-12:20
2nd and 3rd	11:50-12:20	12:20-12:50
3rd and 4th	12:20-12:50	12:50-1:20

### Alternate Lunch Arrangements

If you wish to have your child go home for lunch, please send in a note stating this intention and granting permission for your child to do so. Your child will meet you at Door 1 at their specific lunch time (i.e 11:20, 11:50, or 12:20).

### 21. Lunch

The Board of Education contracts directly with a well-known food service vendor. The lunches feature a choice of a daily hot or cold lunch with four selections of milk. (See the monthly menu for the specific daily lunch.)

For your convenience, we have a secure internet-based payment system: Payforit. This allows you the option of depositing funds for your child's **Cafeteria Account** on-line via credit card or e-check.

The website for access to this system is <http://www.payforit.net>. This website can also be accessed through the District's homepage, [www.spfk12.org](http://www.spfk12.org), under "Information & Forms", "For Parents", "Enter Online Payment System". When visiting the Payforit site for the first time, it is recommended that you review the "Information (FAQ)" tab.

### SPECIFIC INFORMATION APPROPRIATE DRESS:

Pupils are encouraged to wear appropriate dress for school to reflect their participation in all school activities. Check with your child's classroom teacher or the principal if you have any questions about attire being appropriate for school. Temperatures can fluctuate from room to room. Although it may be 85 to 90 degrees outdoors, your child's classroom may be 72 degrees. Please make sure your child dresses to be comfortable during instructional time.

### BACK-TO-SCHOOL NIGHT:

This special event is planned early in the school year and provides parents the opportunity to visit their child's classroom, meet their child's teacher, and listen to a presentation on the curriculum, procedures, and activities for the forthcoming year.

This is not the time to discuss your child's individual educational needs. Such discussions take place during Parent-Teacher Conference week in November, or arrangements may be made at any time a concern arises.

## **BASIC SKILLS INSTRUCTION:**

Supplemental help in reading, math and writing is given to children in Grades 1 through 4 who do not yet meet district standards in these subjects. At each grade level, the Basic Skills instructors meet with small groups of children several times a week to strengthen skills in reading, math and writing. Participation in these programs is mandatory unless parents meet with the principal, acknowledge the need, and sign a form rejecting these services for their child.

## **BIRTHDAY PARTIES:**

We recognize the joy and excitement that birthdays can bring. In order to keep an instructional focus during the school day, parameters have been established so that the students can have an enjoyable celebration in their classrooms. This practice has been instituted because the staff and administration recognize the importance of instructional time and do not wish to disrupt it. Therefore, the following guidelines have been established:

Birthday celebrations will take place in the child's classroom under the direction of the classroom teacher. The teacher must be notified three days in advance of birthday celebration.

**Birthday treats must be from the approved list only. Goody bags are not permitted.**

**Children may NOT distribute birthday party invitations at school unless every child in class receives one. The classroom teacher should be consulted first.**

**CLASS PARTIES:** PTA room parents plan several parties during the school year in consultation with the classroom teacher. These parties range from 30 - 40 minutes and follow specific guidelines. Goody bags are not permitted.

## CURRICULUM

Over the years our curriculum has been reviewed to place increased content in areas of mathematics and science. These times are not reflected in the table below since it requires a total reallocation and approval by the Board of Education. Teachers are expected to make a genuine commitment to these time allocations, but may deviate from the guide in order to meet the needs of a particular learning situation or special interests of the children. Teachers are also encouraged to use interdisciplinary approaches whenever learning can be enhanced by it.

<b>Subject Areas</b>	<b>Grade 1 (minutes)</b>	<b>Grade 2 (minutes)</b>	<b>Grade 3 (minutes)</b>	<b>Grade 4 (minutes)</b>
Language Arts Literacy	990	910	745	650
Mathematics	300	300	320	325
Science	70	70	150	150
Social Studies	85	85	150	200
Music	40	40	40	40
Choral Music	--	--	--	40
Art	40	40	40	40
Physical Education, Health & Safety	150	150	150	150
Spanish	--	80	80	80
<b>Total Minutes</b>	<b>1675</b>	<b>1675</b>	<b>1675</b>	<b>1675</b>

### **Total Minutes:**

There are 335 minutes of instructional time daily or 1675 minutes total instruction time per week in grades 1 through 4. Language Arts Literacy includes reading, writing, speaking, viewing, and listening skills based on the requirements outlined in the NJ Department of Education Core Curriculum Standards.

On shortened days or days when there is a program in school, instructional schedules are to be so arranged as to include language arts literacy and math instruction.

The Preschool Programs offer 165 minutes of integrated instruction daily.

In grades 2, 3, and 4, formal Spanish instruction will be held for 80 minutes per week. The 80 minutes of formal instruction in Spanish will be evenly distributed among the core content subject areas.

Some health and safety instruction has been integrated into science and social studies.

**ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL):** Children entering school from another country are tested to determine their level of English proficiency. State criteria are used to determine eligibility for assistance. All services are provided at School One; therefore, any student who falls below the cutoff score will attend School One for his/her total instructional program. Direct instruction in English is provided by a certified English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher for a minimum of 30 minutes per student per day. It is the responsibility of the ESL teacher to serve as a resource person for the entire staff and to provide materials and suggestions to classroom teachers who have non-English speaking students in their classes.

**ENTRANCE AGE—PRE-SCHOOL DISABLED, KINDERGARTEN AND FIRST GRADE:** Resident students must be five years of age by October 1st to be admitted to kindergarten. No entrance readiness assessment will be given to resident students who do not meet the October 1st grade requirement. A student who becomes a resident of the school district after October 1st and was previously enrolled in a formal accredited kindergarten program in his/her prior district will be allowed to complete the balance of the school year in kindergarten, with the Superintendent's approval. Resident students must be six years of age before October 1st to be admitted to first grade. No entrance readiness assessment will be given to resident students who do not meet the October 1st requirement. A student who becomes a resident of the school district after October 1st and who was previously enrolled in a formal accredited first grade program in his/her prior district will be allowed to complete the balance of the school year in first grade, with the approval of the Superintendent.

Students who have been classified as preschool disabled, and who are at least three years of age, may be registered for placement in a class for preschool disabled children.

Parents/Guardians must provide: (1) original birth certificate; (2) Certification of Residency form with supporting documentation; (3) Certification of Tenant's Residency form (if applicable) with supporting documentation; (4) Medical Examination Record (exemptions made only for verified medical conditions or based on the free exercise of the child's religious rights) and a physical examination from January and on of the year required with proof of immunization/testing for: diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus; polio; measles, rubella and mumps; hemophilis B (HIB); hepatitis B; varivax (chicken pox vaccine); and skin test for tuberculosis; (5) Health/Developmental History; and (6) Home Language Survey.

Kindergarten orientation and screening takes place in the spring. Parents of registered children receive information about these programs in separate communications.

## **FIELD TRIPS:**

Individual teachers may plan field trips, which directly relate to the instructional program. These class trips are always of an educational nature and make a valuable contribution to the curriculum. Each teacher decides which trips, if any, are appropriate for his or her class. Parents will be notified in advance of trip arrangements, and must sign and return a permission slip prior to the trip. The role and responsibilities of parents/guardians and students are outlined below:

### **A. Parent/Guardian:**

Permission to attend a given field trip will be contingent upon receipt of a permission slip signed by the student's parent or guardian, stating that they are aware that all back packs, duffel bags, and other personal luggage will be subject to search and that they (the parent/guardian)

have signed the permission slip thereby giving their permission for a search of the student's back pack, duffel bags, and other personal luggage.

The school nurse, in consultation with the principal and the Director of Special Services, will determine whether the presence of a duly authorized, registered nurse is required on a given trip.

Parents/guardians present on a trip may administer medication to their child on trips occurring within the school day.

A parent or guardian must provide a written request to the principal prior to the field trip, in order for a student to be permitted to leave the field trip group during the trip.

### **B. Student:**

Students are responsible for obtaining and returning a permission slip signed by their parent/guardian in order to participate in a field trip. Students who are 18 years of age or older must provide a permission slip signed by a parent/guardian. For the purpose of this regulation, the term guardian includes a student who is 18 years of age or older.

Students who have a self-medication form on file in the school health office may self administer such medication on a field trip.

Students are responsible for making up all assignments missed (in other classes), due to a field trip.

### **C. Shared Responsibilities:**

The principal and teacher/advisor will share responsibility for the safety and educational relevance of field trips.

The principal, teacher/advisor, nurse and parent will be responsible for the coordination of the health and safety of all students under their supervision on a field trip.

Out-of-pocket expenses for field trips shall be borne by all participants' parents or legal guardians with the exception of students with financial hardship as identified under guidelines of statewide eligibility standards for free and reduced-rate meals under the state school lunch program (NJAC 6:79-1.1 et. seq.) who will have funds available through the principal.

When a commercial vehicle is necessary for a field trip, the cost will be shared by the participants as part of the field trip expense. A Board of Education vehicle may be available between the hours of 9 a.m. and 2:15 p.m. on a limited basis. If a commercial carrier will be used, the carrier shall be selected from a list provided by the business office.

### **GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM (QUEST):**

The district's elementary gifted program, called "Question, Understand, Explore, Seek, Think" (QUEST), is for academically talented students in Grades 3 through 5. Multiple criteria are used to identify children for this program, including IQ scores, standardized tests, and teacher and parent checklists. The program stresses creative thinking, problem solving, and critical thinking. It is a pullout program, and identified children meet with a special teacher in a separate classroom for approximately 2.5 hours weekly.

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## **HEALTH:A. Health Examinations**

### **• Auditory Examinations**

Each year, hearing screenings are done by the school nurse for all students. Students can be screened at the request of the classroom teacher, parent, or physician.

### **• Physical Examinations**

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A medical examination is required for all children entering kindergarten, all pupils in second and fifth grades, and all transfer pupils who have not had a recent medical examination.

### **• Scoliosis Examinations**

Each year the school nurse will conduct a spinal screening program for all pupils who are ten years of age or older. Screening identifies spinal problems (scoliosis, lordosis, kyphosis) in their earliest stages. Scoliosis, the most frequent spinal problem, is defined as a condition of the spine in which the spine may curve to the left or right. It is most commonly found during the time of rapid growth and may progress if not treated.

### **• Visual Examinations**

Each year the school nurse will conduct visual screenings for all students. Visual screenings are also given upon teacher, parent, or physician request.

## **B. Health Record Requirements**

To be enrolled in school, each student's health record must contain the following information with dates for each:

- A complete immunization series against diphtheria, pertusis, and tetanus (DPT).
- A complete series of oral polio vaccinations (Sabin).
- Vaccination against measles, German measles, mumps and varivax (chicken pox).
- An intradermal test for tuberculosis (Mantoux test) within one year of enrollment.
- Students born on or after January 1, 1996 and entering kindergarten or Grade 1 must present documentation of having received the Hepatitis B series.
- A recent physical examination. **C. Medication at School** The school nurse should be notified of any medication being taken by a child attending school, particularly those which might cause a change of behavior. It is the policy of the Board of Education that the school staff may NOT provide students with aspirin or any other type of medication. The administration of any medication received from home to a pupil shall be done by a nurse only in exceptional circumstances, wherein the child's health may be jeopardized without it, or as in the case of medication being given to modify behavior. **Pupils**

**requiring medication (prescription or over the counter) during school hours must have a written statement from the family physician which identifies the diagnosis, the type of medication, the time(s) for administration, and the number of days that medication is to be administered. In addition, a written statement from parents giving permission to the nurse to administer the medication as prescribed by the family physician is required. This statement will also remain on file with our school nurse. Each prescription must be in the original correctly labeled prescription bottle. It is district policy that the parent/guardian or a responsible adult bring the medication to school. Children must NOT handle any medication and there can be NO exception to this provision.** A form for the required information is available on the school website ([www.spfk12.org/coles](http://www.spfk12.org/coles)) or from the nurse. The nurse must always be notified in writing of any change or adjustment of any medication being given to a child by both the attending physician and parents.

#### **D. Head Lice (Pediculosis)**

Periodically we have had reported or identified instances of head lice. A procedure for informing parents has been established in order to provide consistency in all district elementary schools. This procedure includes a newsletter article in the fall and spring, which will be posted on the website of each year to provide parents with general information on this topic. In addition, as a case is reported or identified a letter will be sent home to the parents of all pupils in that class. It is hoped that this procedure will provide parents with the needed information. More in-depth information about head lice is always available from the school nurse.

Head lice are passed from person to person by direct contact or on shared objects, such as hats, combs, towels, barrettes, headphones, etcetera. Parents should encourage their child to keep these items to him or herself. Early identification and immediate treatment are essential in reducing transmission. Some common clues to look for include:

- Excessive itching of scalp with persistent scratching.
- Areas of skin irritation of the scalp, especially around the region of the ear and the back of the neck.
- Close observation for nits (the eggs of lice) that resemble opaque oval-shaped particles that cling to the hairs near the scalp and cannot be easily dislodged.
- Close inspection for lice by separating the hair and carefully looking on the scalp or individual hairs for movement of tiny, grey-brown flat insects less than 1/4- inch long. If you do find head lice, follow the steps below to easily take care of the problem.
- Call your doctor for advice.
- Check every member of the family.
- Use an effective head lice treatment.

- Remove all nits.
- Wash clothes, bed linens and towels.
- Soak combs, brushes, et cetera, in hot water.
- Vacuum everywhere.

Parents are urged to periodically check their child's hair and scalp. Call the school nurse if there are any questions or suspicions. There will be periodic surveillance for this condition at school.

When a case is reported or identified, the nurse examines the student. If the student is affected, the parents of the affected student are notified of the situation. Any identified student is removed from the school setting to receive treatment.

### **E. Injuries or Prolonged Illness**

Please inform the school nurse if your child has a serious injury or a prolonged illness. A note from the attending physician outlining specific restrictions, if any, must be presented to the school nurse when your child returns to school. This is particularly important in orthopedic injuries as limited physical mobility may restrict participation in school activities.

### **F. Communicable Diseases DISEASE AND SYMPTOMS**

**Chicken Pox**—small, clear pimples on covered parts of body; occasional low fever

**German Measles**—slight cold followed by red rash on face and body (prickly heat type)

**Measles**—watery eyes and nose; eruptions in mouth, rash on face and body

**Mumps**—fever; painful swelling of salivary glands located just under the ear

**Scarlet Fever**—sore red throat, bright red tongue, vomiting, fever, rash (first on neck and chest)

### **PERIOD OF CONTAGION**

Until 7 days after the application of blisters, rash, or no new evidence of rash; also contagious the day before rash appears.

Until rash disappears (about 4 days)

From diagnosis until 7 days after appearance of rash

Until all swelling of salivary has subsided

Forty-eight hours after the start of treatment by physician; if contacts are symptom free, may return to school while antibiotic therapy for

ten days

**Impetigo**—purple with tan, yellow, or whitish blisters; scabs or crusts (as the common cold sore)

**Ringworm**—highly contagious; spreads in a circular fashion, forming lesions up to 2 inches

**Pediculosis (Lice)**—highly contagious

Exclusion until after treatment has been started by physician

Exclusion until receiving medication under the supervision of a physician

Exclusion until medicated shampoo has been administered and free of lice and nits

**NOTE: Children showing symptoms of sore throat, ear ache, runny nose, fever, cough, stomach upsets, vomiting, rash, diarrhea, or reddened, watering eyes during the preceding 24 hours, should remain at home until total recovery.**

### **HELPING HANDS:**

The Helping Hands is a voluntary organization open to fourth graders who are interested in promoting safety in our building and on school grounds. The primary objective of the patrol is to foster qualities of leadership and good citizenship among those who participate. Patrol activities are coordinated by teacher advisors.

### **HOMEWORK:**

The Board of Education adopted the following policy regarding homework on May 28, 1992 (File code: 6154 - R):

#### **Homework Practices, Grades 1 - 8**

##### **Guidelines:**

Homework will serve a purpose and reinforce learning.

Homework will be assigned regularly with the amount increasing in relationship to grade level and the ability of the student.

Homework will be a meaningful extension of classroom experience. Homework assignments must be understood by the children.

Homework may serve as an enrichment or supplementary experience if given on an individual or small group basis.

Homework assignments will be given with careful consideration to the physical and emotional needs of students.

Homework assignments must be planned in relationship to the supply of books, reference materials, etc., needed to complete the assignments (materials available in either the schools, homes or local libraries).

## **Role of participants:**

### **Teachers:**

It is the responsibility of the teacher to: Implement homework practices that are consistent with the Board of Education policy.

Make the assignment clear to all students by explaining exactly what is to be done, when it is due, and what its purpose is.

Relate the homework to class work. Students should understand the relationship between what he/she is to do for homework and what has been done in class.

Vary the assignment according to the needs of each student rather than assigning a blanket task for all.

Make sure the students have the materials they need to do the work or know where to get them.

Check to see that homework assignments are completed and evaluate all homework assignments, giving specific comments where appropriate.

Plan and implement a procedure for make-up assignments.

Inform parents when students are not meeting homework obligations.

### **Students:**

Students must be helped to share responsibility for their own academic progress. It is the responsibility of the students to:

Keep a record of all homework assignments. Obtain the assignments in the event of absence. Complete all homework assignments on time. Communicate to teachers any problems encountered with homework.

Read, study or work on ongoing projects every week night when no other homework assignment is given.

### **Parents:**

Inherent in the concept of homework is the fact that each parent must play an active role in helping the child accept his/her responsibilities regarding homework. It is the responsibility of the parent to:

Provide a suitable location and environment for homework.

Provide for adequate, reserved time for homework each day.

Monitor whether or not the child is meeting his/her homework responsibilities.

Assist, support and encourage the child, without "taking over" or doing the work for the child.

Communicate with school to account for any missed assignment, particularly if there was a good reason for the child not completing assigned work.

Make time to discuss with the child a broad range of topics, including school, friends, books, TV shows and current events.

### **Time:**

One of the most difficult facets of homework to judge is the element of time. Generally speaking, the following should be considered.

Students vary in their ability to complete homework based upon their developmental readiness, learning style, and study and work habits thus, the length of time for a singular assignment will vary among pupils in the same class. This is an important consideration since the child who will need a greater length of time usually is the one least likely to devote the necessary time.

It is important for teachers to use their understanding of early childhood development when providing assignments for kindergarten children. Teachers should be encouraging parents to read with their child on a daily basis. In addition, there may be other extension activities from their classroom lessons that can be reinforced through homework. Providing homework three times a week for an average range of 10 to 20 minutes is a general guideline that the teacher may follow.

First grade teachers may also use the same practice of kindergarten teachers; however, there should be a greater emphasis on literacy development as children become emergent readers and writers. The time period for homework can be extended to be no greater than 30 minutes per day to reinforce the skills and concepts that students need to become proficient in.

Beginning in second grade a child should begin experiencing regular, short-length homework and some longer-range assignments. It is recommended that homework not exceed one hour and that these extension activities be given on a daily basis.

Students in third and fourth grade should also receive daily homework assignments based upon the curriculum and the established proficiencies from our curriculum guides. Homework time for children in third grade should be between one hour and one hour fifteen minutes. As children progress into fourth grade homework should take no longer than one and one half hours.

No homework should be assigned prior to holidays or due on the first day of return from a holiday.

Noncompliance should be reported to parents immediately to gain their support.

### **HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT REQUESTS DUE TO ILLNESS:**

#### **1. Requesting Assignments Due to a Child's Illness**

When a child is absent from school, parents/guardians often call to request assignments and work missed. If a child is absent for a short-term illness, which constitutes one or two days, teachers, at their discretion, will provide assignments upon the child's return to school. Our practice is based upon the philosophy that if a child is experiencing an illness, it is essential that they rest so that they may return to good health as soon as possible. When the child returns to school, the teacher will be able to explain the assignment and/or provide the necessary instruction so that the student's understanding will be enhanced. In addition, the teacher will also be able to determine a reasonable time frame for the work to be completed based upon other assignments that are planned during the week.

In the event that a child is well enough to complete school-related activities on a day of illness, we recommend that the student read for short periods of time, write a story on a topic of their choice, or work on a long-term project that has already been assigned. We encourage parents/guardians not to worry about a few missed assignments if a child is home for a short-term illness. Whatever work is missed can be made up in a short amount of time when the child is in good health and able to give it his/her best effort.

## **2. Long-Term Illness: Three or More Days**

When a long-term illness of three or more days requires a child to be absent from school, the following guidelines have been established to reasonably maintain the student's skills, keep him/her abreast of classroom assignments and not place the student in a position of being overloaded upon his/her return.

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Parents should notify the teacher if their child is absent for three or more days.

The classroom teacher will prepare appropriate assignments based upon his/her discretion and notify the parent when the assignments are ready. A brief meeting or telephone conference may be necessary to insure that the assignments are understood and proper directions are provided.

When the child returns to school, the assignments will be reviewed by the teacher to insure that the student has completed the work and to determine if further guidance and support is necessary. Once again, a reasonable amount of time will be provided to the student for all missed assignments.

## **3. Family Vacation**

When planning family vacations, we respectfully request that you honor the Scotch Plains-Fanwood School District calendar. We strongly believe that it is essential for your child to be in attendance every day and only be excused when there is an illness or extenuating circumstances. If there should be an occasion that necessitates a family trip, the teaching staff and administration recommend that you engage your child in the following ways to maintain your child's reading, writing and basic computation skills.

- Read on a regular basis
- Write a creative writing piece
- Keep a vacation log or journal
- Practice math facts and spelling lists

Please do not request additional assignments from the teacher since many of the activities generated in the classroom require teacher direction. Such instruction, where necessary, will be provided when the student returns to school.

## **INTERNET SAFETY POLICY**

Approved: March 21, 2002

It is a primary goal of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education to promote and ensure the welfare and safety of children and young people when using the Internet. It is further our goal to provide Internet access, so all staff and students can become effective and safe users of the Internet and will extend their awareness and knowledge of the Internet while at the same time becoming motivated, responsible, independent users of the Internet.

Use of the Internet facilities in the Scotch Plains-Fanwood School District is primarily for educational purposes. This includes personal use and use for professional development of staff.

All students must sign the Acceptable Use Policy AND have the signed permission of a parent/caregiver before using the Internet at school. These documents must be kept on file by the appropriate staff member.

All student access to the Internet must be supervised by an instructor, media specialist, or other staff member. This also applies to any special use before or after school hours.

Staff will be provided with Internet e-mail accounts on the district's e-mail server. Any student may have an Internet mail account, but this is to be set up via an http Internet mail provider such as Hotmail. All messages sent and received on the district's computer network are subject to review.

**Names and photographs of students will only be used with parental permission, as granted on the Publicity Release Form.** No other personal information shall be posted. Student work, including their names and grade level, may be posted on sites hosted on the District Web Servers. Photographs of students will not be identified by individual names.

Only authorized district web masters may post on sites hosted on our District Web Server. No student may directly post to these sites.

All student workstations must have filtered access to the Internet. The level of filtering is determined by the building principal. Since no filtering system is 100% foolproof, if inappropriate sites are inadvertently accessed, then the student must notify their instructor immediately. In turn, instructors must contact the building principal so that the offending URL can be submitted to the technology department for blocking.

The Internet Safety Policy will be clearly displayed in the media centers and all labs. Violators are subject to disciplinary actions in accordance with District Policies and Regulations.

Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools

Cross Reference:

6142.10 Acceptable Use Policy for Staff and Students for Computing and Information Technology Resources (Publicity Release Form (dated

3/21/02)

### **INTERVENTION AND REFERRAL SERVICE (I&RS COMMITTEE):**

The Intervention and Referral Service ((I&RS Committee), previously known as The Pupil Assistance Committee (PAC), is a school-based, problem-solving group whose purpose is to assist teachers with strategies for dealing with learning and/or behavior problems. This group seeks creative ways to maximize the use of regular education resources. Members of the I&RS Committee function in collaboration, capitalizing on the strengths of each individual to enhance the total skill of the team. The composition of the team shall include, but not be limited to, the principal, professional teaching staff, school nurse and a representative from the Child Study Team.

When a student is identified by the classroom teacher, forms are prepared and a meeting is scheduled. At this meeting, the teacher presents a profile of the child, school records are reviewed, and recommendations are made to remediate the concern. Suggestions might include specific strategies and/or follow up to be used in class and at home, supplemental help in school via basic skills, speech, Resolve or a Child Study Team evaluation if a learning disability is suspected.

### **LIBRARY-MEDIA CENTER:**

Each class is assigned one library period every week for formal instruction in library skills taught by the media specialist. In addition, children may go to the library during the school day to borrow or return books, do reference work, use non-print audiovisual materials, or read periodicals. All students have a chance for "book exchanges" each week. Library materials may be borrowed for one week. Each child borrowing a book is responsible for keeping it in good condition and returning it promptly. Children will be fined for damaged or lost books. Parents are welcome to browse in the library and to check out books.

### **LOST AND FOUND:**

Lost and found articles are collected in the lobby, with the exception of jewelry, glasses and keys, which remain in the office. Parents and children may check for lost articles at any time during the school year. To reduce the number of lost items, clothing and personal possessions should be marked with the child's name.

In January and at the end of the school year, items that have not been claimed will be displayed on a table in the main lobby or the multipurpose room. Any items remaining at that time will be donated to local charities.

### **MOVING:**

Please notify the office at least two weeks in advance if you plan to move out of town or to another location in Scotch Plains or Fanwood. A transfer card will be mailed directly to your child's new school on the day after your child's last day at Coles. Your child's permanent records will be forwarded when the new school sends a written request.

### **PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES:**

At the close of the first marking period in November, parent-teacher conferences are scheduled. Children attend school for a single session in the morning and conferences are scheduled in the afternoon. Whenever possible, consecutive conferences are scheduled for parents with more than one child in school. Conferences may be arranged at other times during the year by sending a note to the teacher. If a conference with the principal is desired, an appointment may be made by contacting the school secretary.

**PROBLEMS OR QUESTIONS:**

If you have a question or problem concerning your child, we suggest you first contact:

- Bus .....Principal
- Curriculum .....Teacher
- Discipline .....Teacher
- Health .....Nurse
- Homework .....Teacher
- Instruction .....Teacher
- Lunch/Milk Money.....Monthly Newsletter
- Lunchtime .....Teacher
- Moving.....Office
- School Calendar .....School and PTA website
- School Procedures ..... School Handbook
- School Records .....Office
- Special Subject .....Special Subject Teacher
- To and From School..... Principal

Principal Teacher Teacher Nurse Teacher Teacher

Monthly Newsletter/Teacher TeacherOffice

School & PTA Handbooks, Website Principal & School Handbook OfficeSpecial Subject Teacher

Principal

**REPORT CARDS:**

Report cards are prepared and sent home four times a year in Grades 1 through 4 as indicators of student progress. The first report card is received and discussed during parent-teacher conference week in November.

Kindergarten report cards are issued twice a year, at the close of the second marking period and again at the end of the school year. Parents will also have the opportunity to confer with their child's teacher during Parent-Teacher Conference Week in November.

## **RESOURCE ROOM:**

Resource Center instruction is available to students who require special education instruction for up to one half of the instructional day. This replacement or support instruction may be provided in class or in a pullout program. Special education Resource Center teachers meet with small groups of children in Grades K through 4 to provide assistance in identified academic, social, behavioral and study skills, as specified in the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Related services of speech, occupational and physical therapy are provided to students whose needs for such services are documented in their IEP.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION:**

Special class programs are available to district students who require special education instruction. These programs provide an environment where the nature of the student's impairment is the primary focus. Special class programs provide a full continuum of alternative placements to meet the needs of students with disabilities for special education and related services. The instructional program for students in a special education class is individualized in accordance with the educational program developed by the Child Study Team. Students are integrated into the mainstream program for academic subjects, specials and/or activities, whenever appropriate, as specified in the students' IEP (Individualized Education Program).

## **STUDENT INSURANCE:**

Application forms for student accident insurance are sent home in September. Parents interested in additional accident coverage may purchase this insurance at a nominal cost, and should contact the insurance carrier directly.

## **TECHNOLOGY:**

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education believes that the use of technology and computer-assisted communications is vital to our students' success. It is the responsibility of our educators to foster an understanding of appropriate technology and to teach those technological skills which are necessary to promote academic excellence. The proper use of technology and technological skills will be integrated into our instructional programs when learning is enhanced by its use.

## **FILE CODE: 6142.20**

## **TELEPHONE MESSAGES TO AND FROM HOME:**

While we fully understand that there will be times when a student must call home or a circumstance that requires a child to receive a message, this will only be allowed in a bona fide emergency situation. Since one of our objectives is to instill responsibility in our students, they should be prepared for school with all of their instructional materials, such as homework, musical instruments, library books, snack, and lunch.

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In the event that a student forgets any one of the above, permission will **NOT** be given to call home. If a child should fail to bring his/her lunch or milk money to school, the child will be given permission to call home on the first and second occurrence; but on the third incident,

other arrangements will have to be made. This will also hold true for a child who brings lunch to school. We will permit one or two incidences, but on the third occurrence, other provisions will be made.

After-school plans and pickup arrangements should be made with your child **BEFORE** he/she arrives at school. Classroom instruction will be interrupted only for true emergency messages.

We understand that this policy may be difficult to adjust to in the beginning; however, we believe that it will instill in each child a level of responsibility, and will minimize disruptions in the instructional program.

In addition, we ask that parents make all necessary arrangements for their child's dismissal from school in the morning before they leave for the day. We realize that **occasionally** an emergency arises and you must get a message to your child during the school day, but we request that you keep these interruptions to a **minimum**. There is a concern about messages received at the end of the day when we cannot guarantee that the message will be received by the student in time.

### **TEXTBOOKS:**

Pupils are responsible for maintaining the textbooks issued to them during the year.

**Fines will be charged for books that are lost, defaced, or badly damaged.**

### **VISITORS:**

Visitors are always welcomed at Coles. To insure the safety of our students and staff, and to keep our building secure, the practices listed below will be employed:

Board of Education Policy requires all visitors to sign in at the main office and obtain a visitor's badge that must be worn while in the building. It is imperative that every parent/guardian who enters the school adheres to this policy. When entering the building between 8 AM and 4 PM, visitors must report to the office, indicate the purpose of the visit, and sign the visitors' log book. Visitors will receive a badge that must be worn while in the building and must be returned to the main office upon their departure. Visitors should enter the time that they leave the building in the visitors' book as well.

The front door is equipped with a monitoring system that enables visitors to gain entrance to the building through an electronic locking device. Upon arrival, visitors should approach the outside speaker (which is connected to an indoor video camera). This equipment will enable office personnel to speak to, as well as see, the visitor. A staff member will disengage the locking system to allow the visitor entrance to the building.

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Visitors must report directly to the main office in order to sign in. Procedures stated above should then be followed.

Parents/guardians should NOT escort their child to the classroom. Teachers are present in the hallways, should assistance be necessary. If a parent/guardian is uncomfortable with this practice, the child should be brought to the main office. A phone call will then be made to have a classmate or support staff member bring the child to the classroom.

Once school has been dismissed, all doors will be locked at 3:20 p.m. If children are involved in after-school programs, parents should wait for them in the front of the school. Children will exit via the front doors.

We ask parents of children in the “Y” aftercare program to use the multipurpose room door that is by the side parking lot after 4 p.m. After you have signed your child out, please leave via this same door.

Children involved in any after-school activities sponsored by the town recreation department or various sports leagues should use the multipurpose room door for entering and exiting the building.

**To reduce the number of classroom interruptions, parents should leave all items to be delivered to their child/children at the school office.** Items will be placed in the teacher’s mailbox. The office will not call the classroom to relay such messages.

### **WHAT TO DO IF:**

I need to contact my child: **Classroom instruction cannot be interrupted to deliver routine telephone messages to a teacher or a child.** These matters can be handled more effectively before or after the school session. Emergency messages will be delivered immediately. During school hours, students are not permitted to make telephone calls except in an emergency; forgotten homework, snack, library books, etc., are not considered an emergency.

My child needs medication at school: See section under medication in this handbook and contact the school nurse.

I cannot pick up my child after school: Contact your emergency card friends or relatives to make arrangements, and notify the school office so your child is informed. **However, we do ask that parents make the necessary arrangements for their child's dismissal from school in the morning BEFORE their child leaves for school.** We do realize that **occasionally** an emergency arises and you must get a message to your child during the school day, but we ask that you keep these interruptions to a **MINIMUM** (especially at the end of the day when we cannot guarantee that the message will be received on time).

I need to speak to my child's teacher: Leave a message on the voice mailbox of your child’s teacher.

My child has a problem in school: Always contact your child's teacher as an initial step to gain information and develop strategies to resolve the situation. If resolutions are not satisfactory, contact the Principal.

Thank you!