

Columbus Public Schools
Elementary Student Handbook



2017 - 2018

Student Handbook/Planner Signature Page

Parents and Students,

Please tear out this signature page and return your completed form to your child's homeroom teacher.

Thank you!

Yes, we have received a copy of the Columbus Public Schools Elementary Handbook.

Yes, we have read the Columbus Public School Elementary Handbook and are aware of the district policies and procedures.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Child's Signature

Date



COLUMBUS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BE DISCOVERERS!

Be Safe
Be Respectful
Be Responsible

MISSION & VISION STATEMENTS

“Engaging All Learners to Achieve Success”

We will continuously and passionately strive to be a high performing **Learning Community** that will effectively meet the unique learning needs of each and every student. To attain this **Mission** we are:

- Committed to maintaining a clear and shared focus on student learning
- Committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for learning and teaching
- Committed to a high level of communication, trust, support, and accountability with all stakeholders



Columbus Public Schools Compact for Learning

CPS Elementary staff, students and families have high expectations. Our mission is to ensure we are engaging all learners to achieve success. In order to provide the highest quality instruction and to support our goal of developing successful life-long learners, we pledge to work together through this compact.

It is our belief that student performance will improve as a result of our cooperative efforts to support this compact. For this three-way partnership to succeed, it is imperative that we all assume these responsibilities.

Parent/Caring Adult:

I understand that my participation in my child's education will help his/her achievement and attitude. I agree to carry out the following responsibilities:

- Make sure my child attends school every day
- See to it that my child arrives to school on time, eats breakfast and is well rested
- Attend all parent-teacher conferences
- Participate in school events
- Monitor my child's progress
- Communicate with the teacher and my child about any concerns I notice
- Provide a quiet work area, supervise and check my child's homework
- Check my child's planner daily
- Read to and listen to my child read

Student:

I know my education is important to me. An excellent education will help me be successful. I agree to carry out the following responsibilities:

- Be a Discoverer by being safe, respectful and responsible
- Attend school regularly and be prepared to learn
- Exhibit a positive attitude towards learning
- Fill in my planner, complete my homework and read every day
- Accept responsibility for my own behavior
- Ask for help when needed

School/Teacher:

I understand the importance of the school experience to every student and my role as a teacher. I agree to carry out the following responsibilities:

- Keep families and students informed of academic progress
- Make sure students understand homework assignments and fill out their planners
- Provide engaging lessons to help students achieve success
- Foster a positive learning environment
- Implement the curriculum developed by the district
- Invite parents into the classroom to observe lessons, volunteer and help with special events
- Implement the school's responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction to enable children to meet state academic achievement standards

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ATTENDANCE POLICY

In order for students to gain the maximum benefit of the educational program provided by Columbus Public Schools, it is necessary for students to be regular and punctual in their attendance at school. It is the belief of Columbus Public Schools that students missing more than 20 days of school per year will not be able to achieve in the school setting. Exceptions may be made to this 20-day maximum only in the event of major illness or accident, which would prevent the student from attending classes. All such major illness or accident-related absences should be verified in writing by the family physician and updated regularly. Arrangements should be made to obtain missing assignments by contacting the student's teachers. **Columbus Elementary Schools will be consistent with State Law and policies established by the Columbus Board of Education.**

5 Day - Any time a student accumulates a total of five (5) or more absences the parent will be contacted and notified of the total number of absences, the dates of these absences, and the time period of accumulation.

10 Days - Any time a student misses a total of ten (10) days of school, that parent shall be contacted and notified of the total number of absences and the current policy relating to attendance at school.

15 Days - When a student has missed a total of fifteen (15) school days, the parents shall be notified of the total number of unexcused absences and a telephone or personal conference shall be held with the parent, principal, and student (if appropriate) in attendance. At 15 days, parents may be told that all future absences will have to be verified by either the school nurse or a written excuse from a physician. The county attorney, attendance monitor and school social worker may be notified of school concerns regarding the student's attendance.

20 Days - When a student misses a total of twenty (20) school days, the parents shall be notified of the total number of absences and a conference may be held. The county attorney, attendance monitor, and school social worker will be notified of school concerns regarding the student's attendance. At 20 days, parents may be told that all future absences will have to be verified by the school health office or by a written excuse from a physician.

Absence - Parents or legal guardians are **REQUIRED** to notify the school by 8:30 a.m. the day of the student's absence or tardiness unless the absence has been prearranged. Parents or guardians who do not call regarding a student's absence will be called at home or work to ensure the safety of the child.

Students who are absent during the school day are not permitted to participate in after school or evening activities.

Tardiness – Students are expected to be on time to school. Students will be counted tardy if they are not in their classrooms by 8:00 a.m. When students arrive late, an adult must check in the student at the school office. Excessive tardies may result in a parent contact, parent conference, and notification to the attendance monitor, school social worker, and county attorney.

Students are counted as tardy if they arrive between 8:00 – 8:30 a.m. Students who arrive after 8:30 a.m. are counted as absent for a quarter of the school day.

Makeup Work – Work missed during an absence **MUST** be made up. Students are responsible for obtaining make-up work from each of their teachers and completing the work in a reasonable amount of time. Parents or siblings may make arrangements to pick up textbooks or other materials by contacting the school office, which is open until 4:00 p.m. Students may be required to stay after school in order to make up the missed instructional time and assignments.

Vacations – We request that parents or guardians notify the school of vacations at least one week prior to the start of the vacation. Students are responsible for getting and completing all work missed during the vacation. Families are strongly encouraged to use scheduled school breaks for vacations whenever possible in order to avoid having their child(ren) miss school. (See Makeup Work)

Leaving During the School Day – Students leaving the building for any reason during the time school is in session must check out through the School Office. In case of illness, the school nurse or other school official will check the student before being excused. Before being released from school, the student's parent or other responsible adult will be contacted and advised of the student's need to be dismissed from school. Students who leave school due to illness during the school day are responsible for getting and completing all missed work. Students who have left school during the school day due to illness may not return for any after school or evening activities.

BICYCLES

Bicycles should be parked in the racks as soon as students arrive at school. The school is not responsible for damage to or theft of bicycles. It is recommended that sturdy locks be used with bicycles to discourage theft. Bicycles should not be ridden on the sidewalks around the school. For safety purposes, students need to walk their bike on the sidewalk when approaching the school.

BIST (BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION SUPPORT TEAM)

Columbus Public Schools utilizes the BIST model to support students and the learning environment. When students struggle to make positive behavior choices, the following continuum of support is provided.

Safe Seat: The Safe Seat is a place within the classroom for students to think about their behavior. The Safe Seat is away from the other students (as in the back of the classroom) while still being within the learning environment. When students are asked to move to the Safe Seat, they continue to do their work and listen to the instruction. They do not, however, actively participate in the learning activity. Students remain in the Safe Seat until the teacher has the opportunity to process with them. Processing involves helping the student understand their misbehavior and the appropriate expectations for the learning activity and classroom.

Buddy Room: If students are unwilling to sit in the Safe Seat or sit quietly in the Safe Seat, they move to the Buddy Room. The Buddy Room is another classroom, preferably at the same grade level. Students are asked to complete a Think Sheet while in the Buddy Room. The Think Sheet is a tool to help students identify their misbehavior(s) and feelings, and think about what they need to do when they return to their classroom. A student remains in the Buddy Room until the teacher has time to process with them.

Recovery Room: If students are unwilling to go to the Buddy Room or sit quietly in the Buddy Room, they move to the Recovery Room, which is located in the office. While in the Recovery Room, students must demonstrate that they are calm, ready to learn, and ready to follow directions. Students remain in the Recovery Room only as long as it takes them to demonstrate that they are ready to return to the Buddy Room.

A teacher will notify parents in the event that their child has been moved to the Buddy Room or Recovery Room.

CHECK OUT PROCEDEURES

- The student must present a parental note to their teacher before school starts. Phone calls from parents will also be accepted.
- The student must report to the office in order to be checked out by an adult before leaving the school building.
- The student must report to the office to check in if he/she returns to school before the end of the day.
- Students will not be called out of class until the parent arrives to check them out.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

All adults are required by law to report any suspected case of child abuse or neglect to the authorities. Abuse and/or neglect are defined by Nebraska State Law LB 28-710 as follows: *“Abuse or neglect shall mean knowing, intentionally, or negligently causing or permitting a minor child or an incompetent or disabled person to be: (a) placed in a situation that endangers his or her life or physical or mental health; (b) cruelly confined, or cruelly punished; (c) deprived of necessary food, clothing, shelter, or care; (d) left unattended in a motor vehicle, if such minor child is six years of age or younger; or (e) sexually abused.”*

CLASSROOM SUPPLIES

The school will provide a list of classroom supplies needed by students. Parents will be notified if any additional supplies are needed throughout the year.

CLASSROOM VISITATIONS

Parents/guardians are welcome to visit their child's school during school hours. Please check with your child's teacher regarding the best time to visit. All visitors are asked to report to the school office for a visitor badge when they arrive. Children who do not attend our school may not visit during the school day. Parents who have court ordered supervised visitation with their child(ren) are required to prearrange any school visits through Health and Human Services so that the caseworker can be present.

COMPUTER INSTRUCTION & INTERNET USE NETWORK/INTERNET USE GUIDELINES

Computer Network/Internet access is available to students and teachers in Columbus Public Schools. We believe that an Internet/Network access offers valuable, diverse, and unique resources to both students and teachers. Our goal in providing this service is to promote educational excellence in the district by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication.

Access to the Internet enables students to explore thousands of libraries, databases, and bulletin boards while exchanging messages with users throughout the globe. In addition, the system is used to increase school and district communication, enhance productivity, and assist teachers in upgrading their skills through greater exchange of information with their peers. The system also assists us in sharing information with the local community, including parents, social service agencies, government agencies, and businesses.

With access to computers and people from around the world also comes the availability of material that may not be considered to be of educational value in the context of the school setting. Families should be warned that some material obtained via the Internet might contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or potentially offensive. We have taken precautions to restrict access to controversial materials through the installation of an Internet filtering device. However, on a global network, it is impossible to control all materials and an industrious user may discover controversial information, either by accident or deliberately. We firmly believe, however, that the benefits to students from online access far outweigh the possibility that users may procure material that is not consistent with our educational goals. We strive to ensure that use of Internet/Network resources is consistent with our stated mission, goals, and objectives.

The smooth operation of the network relies upon the proper conduct of the students and faculty who must adhere to strict guidelines and proper ethical behavior when using the Internet/Network. To use our computers, network and Internet connection, all students must conduct themselves in a manner consistent with our educational focus. **If they fail to do so they will be subjected to disciplinary sanctions by the administration and by law enforcement. CPS does not allow any unauthorized video or audio recording during the school day.**

CONTACT INFORMATION

Parents are required to supply the school with current information regarding work, home and cell phone numbers so that the school can contact parents in an emergency. Parents should also provide phone numbers of relatives or friends who may be called in the event that a parent cannot not be reached. **If these phone numbers and/or your address should change during the school year, please notify the school office.**

COUNSELORS, SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS & SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS

Parents can contact counselors, school psychologists and school social workers by calling the building secretary. Counselors and school psychologists are student focused and address concerns that affect the student's academic, behavioral, physical, social and emotional health. School social workers are parent/family focused and address concerns that impact a parent's or family's quality of life requiring community support services.

DATING VIOLENCE

Columbus Public Schools strives to provide physically safe and emotionally secure environments for all students and staff. Positive behaviors are encouraged in the educational program and are required of all students and staff. Dating violence will not be tolerated. For purposes of this policy, dating violence means a pattern of behavior where one person uses threats of, or actually uses physical, sexual, verbal or emotional abuse to control his or her dating partner. Dating partner means any person, regardless of gender, involved in an intimate relationship with another person primarily characterized by the expectation of affectionate involvement whether casual, serious or long term. Consequences may include restriction of privileges, schedule change, activities suspension/expulsion (where appropriate), ISS, OSS, alternative placement and/or expulsion. Incidents of dating violence involving students at school will be addressed as the administration determines appropriate, within the scope and subject to the limits of the district's authority.

Legal Reference: Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 79-2,139 to 79-2,142 / Date of Adoption: May 17, 2010

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

THE DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS THAT A TEACHER AND/OR ADMINISTRATOR CAN ADMINISTER INCLUDE:

1. Guidance: A conversation between the student and school personnel. The purpose of this conversation is not to scold the student, but to inform him/her that his/her behavior needs to change so that he/she does not violate the rights of others, or to help the student improve his/her learning capabilities.
2. Conference: A meeting of student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) and school personnel to discuss the student's behavior or learning progress. The school intends to seek the assistance of the student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) in helping the student to become a better student.
3. Detention: Requiring that a student serve time in the office for a period of time. It is intended that students serving an office detention will be completing classroom work, reflecting on their behavior and creating a plan to change their behavior in order to successfully return to the classroom.
4. School Clean Up: Requiring a student to clean up certain items of the school that the student failed to care for properly. The student may be required to clean more than just the item(s) damaged by himself/herself in order to encourage the student to take better care of school property in the future.
5. The Use of Force: Teachers, administrators, and other school district employees may use force to restore order to the educational environment or to protect students and staff from physical harm.

THOSE DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS THAT ONLY ADMINISTRATORS MAY ADMINISTER INCLUDE:

1. Rearrangement of School Schedule: Assigning a student a new schedule of classes, which may be shortened from a regular schedule due to academic and/or behavioral needs and/or in-school suspension when the behavior of the student is such that the student cannot conduct himself/herself in an acceptable manner. A student assigned to a shortened schedule will be required to check into the office before his/her school day begins and out of the office after his/her school day ends. A student assigned to in-school suspension for the reasons of usage of alcohol, tobacco, controlled substances, extortion, possession of firearms, setting off false alarms or bomb threats, or at administrative discretion, shall not be allowed to participate in school-sponsored activities until he/she is reinstated to school. The intent of this action is to improve the student's behavior.
2. Restriction of Extracurricular Activities: Informing a student that he/she cannot participate in certain activities because of his/her past or present behavior. Such actions as this are intended to improve student behavior at home and at school.
3. Loss of Privileges: Action taken by the principal and/or assistant principal(s) to assist a student in resolving his/her behavioral problems. The action is in the form of certain stipulated conditions agreed to by the school, the student, and parent(s) or legal guardian(s).
4. Requirement That a Student Receive Counseling/Educational Evaluation: An action that may require a student to visit a guidance counselor, medical counselor, or psychological counselor to assist the student in resolving his/her problem.
5. In-School Suspension: Students are placed in the detention room rather than their regularly scheduled class(es). Students are supervised and expected to carry on their studies, as well as abide by the rules set down for in-school suspension. Assigning students to in-school suspension is at the discretion of the principal.

6. Suspension and Emergency Exclusion:
 - (a) Short term: A forced withdrawal of a pupil from school. Such action will comply with state statutes. A short-term suspension will not exceed five school days in length.
 - (b) Long term: A forced withdrawal of a pupil from school. Such action will comply with state statutes. A long-term suspension will not exceed twenty school days in length.

Any student who is suspended from school will not be allowed to participate in any after school or evening activities or be allowed on any school property until he/she is reinstated to school.

Expulsion: The permanent withdrawal of a student from school. Such action will comply with existing state statutes.

1. Exclusion: Immediate withdrawal of a student from school for:
 - a. (a) presenting a clear threat to the physical safety of himself/herself or others, or for being so extremely disruptive as to make temporary removal necessary to preserve the rights of other students to pursue an education.
 - b. (b) a dangerous communicable disease 79-4177
2. Legal Action in Court of Law: Any disciplinary action taken against a student will comply with existing state and school board policies and shall afford the student due process.

PROTOCOL FOLLOWED FOR STUDENT THREATS

1. Principal is informed of the threat.
2. Threat assessment is conducted.
3. If the threat is deemed viable, parents of the student making the threat are called. The School Resource Officer (SRO) or Police and HHS may be called to assist with the initial investigation.
4. Student may be suspended under emergency exclusion if deemed appropriate.
5. If the student is suspended under emergency exclusion, the student may return to school after a psychologist has evaluated the student to determine the child is no longer considered a threat to themselves or others. This evaluation is at the cost of the parent.

SHORT-TERM SUSPENSION PROCEDURE (1-5 DAYS)

The essential ingredients of due process afforded the student in a short-term suspension (1-5 days) and set forth in School Policy 505.02 are as follows:

1. Notice of the charge against the student.
2. An explanation of the charge against the student.
3. An opportunity for the student's explanation of the incident(s), issue(s), and/or event(s).
4. Written notification within 24 hours, or such additional time as is reasonably necessary, to the parents or guardians of the student stating:
 - (a) the reason(s) for the short-term suspension.
 - (b) dates of the short-term suspension.

The decision of the administrator shall be final.

LONG-TERM SUSPENSION PROCEDURE (6-20 DAYS)

Due process afforded the student in Long-Term Suspension, Expulsion or Exclusion, and covered in detail in School Policy 505.02. Written notification to parent(s) or legal guardian(s) indicating the following:

1. The rule(s) or standard(s) of conduct allegedly violated.
2. The penalty recommended by the school official in charge.
3. A statement indicating the student has a right to a hearing on the specified charges upon request.
4. A description of the hearing process and appeal procedure.
5. A form for parents to fill out in order for parents to request a hearing (to be signed and returned to the Superintendent of Schools).

Nothing in the above procedure precludes the student, student's parent(s), legal guardian(s), or representative from discussing and settling the matter with the appropriate school personnel prior to the hearing. In the event the school does not receive a request for a hearing within five (5) school days following the receipt of the written notice, the punishment shall go into effect. A hearing can still be requested prior to thirty (30) calendar days after the actual receipt of written notice; however, the punishment imposed may continue in effect pending the final determination. The appeal procedure shall be as set forth in School Policy 1005.02.

DRESS CODE

Students may wear any clothing that does not interfere with the purpose of school or break one of our school rules. Clothing which creates a distraction to staff or students or disrupts the learning process in any manner will not be allowed. Any piece of clothing or any item brought to school should not contain any reference to violence, gang affiliation, profanity, sexual innuendoes, or promote the use of tobacco, alcohol, or drugs. **Students who wear inappropriate clothing to school will be asked to change into appropriate clothing provided by the school, parent, or guardian.**

The dress code specifically prohibits the following kinds of clothing:

- Any piece of clothing or any item brought to school containing any reference to violence, gang affiliation, profanity, sexual innuendoes, or promotes the use of tobacco, alcohol or drugs.
- Clothing identified by police or other law enforcement agencies as gang-related apparel. Some of these items would be sagging pants, long baggy coats, specific colors that promote gang activity with slang symbolism.
- Clothing which is disruptive to the learning environment because it is too tight, too short, has holes in inappropriate places, or exposes bare midriffs.
- Girls may be asked to wear a sweater or shirt over tops with spaghetti straps, halter-tops or tank tops if it is determined to be inappropriate by an administrator.

If parents or guardians are unsure as to whether clothing is appropriate, they are welcome to call the school and visit with the counselor or principal.

FIELD TRIPS

Classes may take educationally based field trips during the school year under the direction of the classroom teacher. **Permission slips need to be signed by parents/guardians prior to field trips that are outside of Platte County.** Parents will be notified of any field trips within Platte County.

Elementary students not participating in a field trip due to parent request should remain at home during the field trip time. Students remaining at home will be regarded as absent from school. Children who arrive after the bus departs will be the responsibility of the parent. The same expectations regarding student behavior that are enforced at school shall also be enforced during the field trip.

On occasion, parents are asked to help supervise groups of students on field trips. If selected, parents are expected to ride the bus to help with supervision as students travel to/from the field trip. We want parents to keep in mind that their first priority when taking on this responsibility is for the safety of the children they have been designated to supervise. For this reason parents may not bring younger siblings or extended family members on school field trips. It is our belief that the parent would not be able to adequately supervise our students if they also have to care for younger siblings or extended family members.

Parent volunteers shall conduct themselves in a manner fitting to their age level and maturity and with mutual respect and consideration for the rights of others while attending school events. Parents failing to conduct themselves accordingly will not be selected to supervise field trips or school activities.

GOOGLE APPS FOR EDUCATION

The Columbus Public Schools district utilizes Google Apps for Education for students, teachers, and staff. This permission form describes the tools and student responsibilities for using these services. As with any educational endeavor, a strong partnership with families is essential to a successful experience.

THE FOLLOWING SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE TO EACH STUDENT AND HOSTED BY GOOGLE AS PART OF COLUMBUS PUBLIC SCHOOLS ON-LINE PRESENCE IN GOOGLE APPS FOR EDUCATION:

Mail - an individual email account for school use managed by Columbus Public Schools

Calendar – an individual calendar providing the ability to organize schedules, daily activities and assignments

Docs – a word-processing, spreadsheet, drawing, and presentation toolset that is very similar to Microsoft Office

Sites – an individual and collaborative website creation tool

Using these tools, students collaboratively create, edit and share files and websites for school related projects and communicate via email with other students and teachers. These services are entirely online and available 24/7 from any Internet-connected computer. Examples of student use include showcasing class projects, building an electronic portfolio of school learning experiences and working in small groups on presentations to share with others.

TECHNOLOGY USE IN THE COLUMBUS PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT IS GOVERNED BY FEDERAL LAWS INCLUDING:

Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA)

COPPA applies to commercial companies and limits their ability to collect personal information from children under 13. By default, advertising is turned off for Columbus Public School’s presence in Google Apps for Education. No personal student information is collected for commercial purposes. This permission form allows the school to act as an agent for parents in the collection of information within the school context. The school’s use of student information is solely for educational purposes.

--COPPA <http://www.ftc.gov/privacy/coppafaqs.shtml>

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

FERPA protects the privacy of student education records and gives parents the rights to review student records. Under FERPA, schools may disclose directory information (refer to Board Policy 507.02), but parents may request the school not disclose this information. Parents are provided the opportunity annually to opt out of disclosing their student’s directory information on the District’s Enrollment Form.

--FERPA <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa>

Guidelines for the responsible use of Google Apps for Education by students:

1. **Official Email Address.** All students will be assigned a *username@discoverers.org* email account. This account will be considered the student’s official CPS email address until such time as the student is no longer enrolled with Columbus Public Schools.
2. **Prohibited Conduct.** Please refer to student handbook and Acceptable Use Policy.
3. **Access Restrictions.** Access to and use of student email is considered a privilege accorded at the discretion of the Columbus Public School District. The District maintains the right to immediately withdraw the access and use of these services including email when there is reason to believe that violation of law or District policies have occurred. In such cases, the alleged violation will be referred to a building Administrator for further investigation and adjudication.
4. **Security.** Columbus Public Schools cannot and does not guarantee the security of electronic files located on Google systems. Although Google does have a powerful content filter in place for email, the District cannot assure that users will not be exposed to unsolicited information.
5. **Privacy.** The general right of privacy will be extended to the extent possible in the electronic environment. Columbus Public Schools and all electronic users should treat electronically stored information in individuals’ files as confidential and private. However, users of student email are strictly prohibited from accessing files and information other than their own. The District reserves the right to access these Google systems, including current and archival files of user accounts when there is reasonable suspicion that unacceptable use has occurred.

HEALTH SERVICES

EMERGENCY HEALTH SITUATIONS

In the event of a student needing emergency medical attention, 911 will be called first and then the parents will be notified.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO LIFE-THREATENING ASTHMA OR SYSTEMIC ALLERGIC REACTIONS

State regulation, which became effective on October 1, 2003, requires that our school (or any early childhood education program) be prepared to implement an emergency treatment plan, called a protocol, anytime a student or staff member experiences a **life threatening** asthma attack or systemic allergic reaction (anaphylaxis). The protocol requires that 911 is called first. After that call is made, an EpiPen injection will be given and then albuterol is provided through a nebulizer. An EpiPen is a small pre-filled, automatic injection device that resembles a highlighter. It is used to deliver epinephrine. Epinephrine is a medication that is used to bring quick relief by improving breathing and lung function. Albuterol is another medication that is used to bring breathing relief (commonly found in metered-dose inhalers). The nebulizer is a machine that mixes the albuterol with air to provide a fine mist (aerosol) for breathing in through a mask or mouthpiece.

The protocol steps are designed to provide quick, effective care in order to prevent death from occurring due to severe asthma attack or anaphylaxis. Staff members have been trained to recognize signs and symptoms of a life-threatening “breathing” emergency and to properly administer the medications.

If you know that your child has asthma or a known allergy, it is **critically important** that you communicate this information to our school staff. You may also contact health personnel at your child’s school. For each student with a known allergic condition or asthma, you must provide the school with (1) written medical documentation, (2) instructions, and (3) medications as directed by a physician. In the event that your student experiences a life threatening asthma attack or systemic allergic reaction, we will defer to the specific documents and medication that you have provided. If you do not have medical documentation and instructions on file with the school for your students, we will defer to the regulatory protocol described above. If, for whatever reason, you do not want your student to receive the life-saving emergency treatment under the protocol, you must file your written objection with the schools.

HEAD LICE

When it is reported or suspected that a student may have head lice, the student will be discreetly sent to the health office. The Health Aide or School Nurse will examine the student’s head for evidence of live lice. If a student is found to have live lice, the student will be sent home for treatment. The student may return to school once treatment has been initiated. The Health Aide or School Nurse will examine the student upon reentry to school.

All students with evidence of live lice will be excluded from school until treatment has been completed. If treatment is evident and progress is being made toward removal of nits and casings, students may be in school and periodically reexamined.

Extended absences due to head lice infestation will be referred to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services.

IMMUNIZATION

Nebraska law requires that students receive the following immunizations prior to admission into school: Mumps, Measles, Rubella, Hepatitis B, Polio, Varicella or date of disease in case of varicella (chicken pox) and DPT. Exceptions to this requirement are based on religious beliefs or medical waiver from a physician. In addition, students must have a physical exam and vision exam prior to kindergarten entrance or when enrolling from out of the state.

KEEPING STUDENTS AT HOME

Students should not be sent to school if the student has a fever, is vomiting, has a contagious disease or contagious skin condition or has diarrhea. The child should remain at home until they are fever or symptom-free for twenty-four (24) hours.

MEDICATIONS

In the event that a student needs to be given a prescribed or “over the counter” medication at school, parents need to complete the proper form, which is available at the school office. This form includes the dosage and the frequency with which the medicine is to be given. Normally, no more than a week’s supply should be sent at any time. Prescription medications must be in a properly labeled container dispensed by a pharmacy.

Any non-prescription medications such as aspirin, Tylenol, or cough drops must be in their original container. Aspirin or Tylenol is not routinely given to students at school. In the event of a headache, parents will be notified and they may bring medication to their child.

HOMEWORK

Homework refers to tasks that a student is assigned to do on his/her own time after school hours. It may be work for which the student needs additional practice due to absence or lack of attention or effort at school. Homework assignments serve as a means of providing a bond of common effort between parent, child, and teacher. In order for homework to be effective, each participant – teacher, student, and parent – must understand and be committed to carrying out his/her responsibility. If any of the three (teacher, student, parent) do not fulfill their responsibilities, then the positive effects of homework will be reduced.

Homework Responsibilities of Teacher

1. Communicate to students and parents homework goals and expectations.
2. Set clear and concise expectations concerning assigning, returning, and evaluating homework.
3. Coordinate homework assignments with other teachers with whom students work, and who may assign homework.
4. Assign appropriate homework.

Homework Responsibilities of Students

1. Know and understand what is required for completion of the assignment.
2. Assume responsibility for completing and returning assignments.
3. Complete assignments neatly and do quality work.

Homework Responsibilities of Parents

1. Maintain a positive attitude towards learning and the value of homework.
2. Be aware of the homework policy and individual teacher requirements.
3. Help your child find a study area that is quiet and relatively free of distractions.
4. Be patient with your child and praise him/her for any effort made.
5. If your child has difficulty understanding the directions, help them with explanations. **Do not do the homework for your child!**
6. Look over the assignment when your child reports the work is complete to affirm completion and quality.

LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER

Students may check out materials (books ~~videotapes, filmstrips,~~ or magazines) for a period of two weeks and may renew the materials once. No fines are charged for overdue materials, however, students are expected to pay for damaged or lost materials. If the item is not returned, a letter will be sent to parents requesting that the material be returned. In the event that materials are not returned or paid for, or if a student repeatedly returns items in a damaged condition, the student may have library media center privileges restricted or report cards withheld. Money will be refunded for materials that were lost and paid for, then later found and returned to the library media center.

NONCUSTODIAL PARENTS

The School District assumes that non-custodial parents have all the rights and privileges of custodial parents unless presented with a certified copy of a court order or decree limiting those rights.

PARENT APPEAL PROCEDURES

In the event a parent is denied access to any topic listed in Board Policy 1005.02 or who is unsatisfied with the solution presented by the administration in accordance with the Parental Objection Provisions of 1005.02, said parent has the right of appeal as listed below:

1. Upon receipt of the administrator's decision, the parent has five (5) school days to appeal that decision by contacting the Office of the Superintendent of Schools.
2. The Superintendent of Schools shall inform the Board no later than the next regularly scheduled Board meeting that an appeal has been made. The privacy of the individual filing the appeal shall be maintained.

3. The Superintendent of Schools shall meet with the parent and administrator in an attempt to resolve the matter within ten (10) school days of receipt of such an appeal.
4. The parent shall receive from the Superintendent his/her decision within five (5) school days of the meeting stated in #3.
5. Upon receipt of the Superintendent's decision, the parent shall have five (5) school days to appeal this decision to the Board of Education to be considered at its next regularly scheduled meeting. Such requests are made by contacting the Office of the Superintendent of Schools. Appeals to the Board will include the parent's/guardian's name and the nature of the objection.
6. Final decision will rest with the Board of Education.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

We welcome parent volunteers at each of our elementary schools. Volunteers help students and teachers with various tasks in the classrooms. Parents can volunteer any amount of time that they have available. All volunteers are requested to check in/out at the school office when entering and leaving the building. Parents who volunteer on a regular basis will be subject to a background check.

PETS IN SCHOOL

Due to allergies and safety issues, family pets are not allowed in the school building. Due to student safety, family pets are not allowed on school grounds during school hours, including drop off and pick up times.

PROGRESS REPORTS TO PARENTS

The school year is divided into four grade report periods. Report cards are distributed at the end of each grading period. Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled twice during the school year. Dates and times of these conferences will be sent to parents prior to conferences being held. Parents or teachers may arrange additional conferences when they are necessary.

RIGHT TO DUE PROCESS

The policy of the Board of Education states: *"The Board of Education of the Columbus Public Schools views the establishment of rules and responsibilities governing student behavior as a necessary element of the educational process."*

The rules and responsibilities governing student behavior established pursuant to this policy and other School Board policies affecting student personnel shall be approved by the district's established procedure prior to their use. All rules and responsibilities established by the school district and any rules established by individual buildings governing student behavior at the school shall be publicized.

The Board recognizes that each classroom teacher needs to establish certain rules governing the educational process he/she is in charge of. Any rules established by individual teachers are to be reflective of school policies and rules. Such rules are exempt from Board approval and need only to be made known in each individual class of which he or she is in charge. Any behavior on the part of a student that violates school policies, rules, or regulations may be subject to disciplinary action. Any disciplinary action shall be administered within the fundamental framework of due process.

SCHOOL HOURS

- School Day: 7:55 a.m. – 3:25 p.m. (2:15 p.m. on early dismissal Wednesdays)
- Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
- Breakfast: 7:25 a.m. – 7:45 a.m.
- After School Program 3:25 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. (2:15 p.m. on early dismissal Wednesdays)

Supervision is provided before and after school from 7:45 a.m. – 3:35 p.m. ***Students need to be picked up by 3:35. On early dismissal Wednesdays students need to be picked up by 2:25.***

SCHOOL INITIATED PHONE CALLS AND TEXT MESSAGES

Columbus Public Schools does send a lot of information to parents regarding upcoming events and activities in order to keep parents informed. The *Federal Telephone Consumer Protection Act* states: **"All phone calls—whether live, automated, or prerecorded voice calls or text messages—made to cell phones using an auto-dialer or other automated dialing technology; are prohibited unless the calls are made for emergency purposes or made with the prior express consent of the cell phone subscriber. "**

In order to conform with the new regulations within the *Federal Consumer Protection Act*, schools need to obtain the “prior express consent” of the parent prior to making calls to the parent’s cell phone number.

The Federal Communications Commission has stated, “People who knowingly release their phone numbers have given permission to be called at the number which they have given, absent instructions to the contrary.”

By signing receipt of this handbook, you are giving Columbus Public Schools permission to call all cell phone numbers that are registered in PowerSchool for school and student purposes.

SCHOOL MEALS

The schools provide daily breakfast and hot lunch through Lunchtime Solutions. Children who bring cold lunches may purchase milk.

Families are encouraged to keep account balances in the positive at all times. Deposits are accepted at each school building and at the Administration Building. Deposits may be made by cash or check. Account balances may be obtained through the parent access portal in PowerSchool. If online access is not available, the District Food Service office may be contacted at (402) 563-7055. Each day that a student eligible for reduced price or paid meals brings the actual amount of the cost of the meal, that student will be provided a breakfast and/or lunch and the amount received will be applied to the cost of that meal rather than to reduce a prior negative balance.

In the event that a student's account balance reaches -\$15.00, the student will be offered an alternate meal meeting reimbursable requirements of the USDA school nutrition program. The District will also provide the necessary forms for the student's parent or guardian to apply for free or reduced price meals. Such benefits may be applied for at any time during the school year.

To the extent possible, all actions pertaining to students with negative account balances will be handled as confidentially as possible. Communications regarding account balance concerns will be provided in writing by an assigned District Food Service staff member and/or by automated phone calls. Students will not be used as couriers of such information.

Parents should contact the school if their child has any food allergies or requires a special diet as specified by a doctor. Any student going home for lunch needs written permission from a parent/guardian. Students that require a special medical diet, as specified by a doctor, may request that it be prepared in the cafeteria.

No student or parent may bring in commercially prepared food such as Pizza Hut, Subway, Burger King, McDonald’s, etc, during CPS breakfast or lunch periods. Students and parents may bring in sack lunches that are made at home. Students or parents who bring a cold lunch to school are asked to drink juice or water, or purchase a carton of milk. Pop is discouraged.

SOCIAL MEDIA

In an effort to better inform parents and the community, Columbus Public Schools will be using social media to share information. Social media includes but is not limited to Facebook, Twitter, blogging and podcasting. When posting information on social networks sites (such as Facebook), the district will only post group photos/videos with no student names. If a student’s name is used, there will be no photo. Students will not be allowed to post on any social media pages from the district. Social media will be monitored by each building principal and only be used with their approval. Parents who assist with field trips or school activities are required to follow these same social media guidelines.

STUDENT BIRTHDAYS

Parents may send treats to school to celebrate a student’s birthday. **All treats should be restricted to commercially pre-packaged items that require no food handling or purchased from a licensed food facility such as a grocery store or bakery.** Parents who wish to provide treats must adhere to this policy concerning food items. Treats should be limited to one item per student. Parents should inform the teacher prior to sending treats. Due to our students’ busy schedule, we are not able to take time out of the school day for birthday parties. Store bought treats brought to school for a student’s birthday will be handed out at the end of the school day.

Birthday party invitations should not be distributed at school unless they are given to all the boys and/or girls in the classroom. The school is not allowed to share student contact information, which includes home address and phone numbers. Gifts sent to students at school on birthdays or other occasions will be kept in the office and given to students at the end of the school day in order to minimize disruptions during instructional hours.

STUDENT CONDUCT

The following rules have been established and approved by the Board of Education of the Columbus Public Schools for use in all schools within the school district and at all school-sponsored events. **Compliance with the following standards of conduct is mandatory.** These rules may be changed during the school year by the Board of Education, and students and parents/guardians will be informed if and when there are any changes.

ACTIVITIES FORBIDDEN BY LAWS OF NEBRASKA OR THE UNITED STATES

Students, as citizens of the United States and the State of Nebraska, are to obey all laws established by these respective governmental agencies. The school, in addition to any action taken by law enforcement agencies, may discipline students who violate these laws during the school hours or at school-sponsored events.

ALCOHOL, DRUGS, AND TOBACCO

Students are not to consume, possess, sell, or distribute any drug (including tobacco), narcotic, alcohol, or substance purported to be a drug, narcotic, or alcohol, at school, on school grounds, or at school-sponsored events. This rule does not prohibit possession or consumption by a student of a substance that has been prescribed to him/her by a person licensed to prescribe.

Students are prohibited from consuming any drug, narcotic, controlled substance, alcohol, or substance purported to be a drug, narcotic, alcohol, controlled substance or any facsimile of any substance in any quantity immediately prior to coming on school grounds or to a school-sponsored event. Disciplinary action will be in accordance with District Policy 504.14.

BEHAVIOR TO AND FROM SCHOOL

Students are not to interfere with the ability of other students to travel to and from school safely and without verbal, physical, or sexual harassment. Students are not to participate in activities, which are potentially dangerous to themselves, other students, or the public while on their way to and from school.

BULLYING, EXTORTION & INTIMIDATION

Threatening, bullying or intimidating another student(s) or school personnel is prohibited at school, on school grounds, at school-sponsored events, or going to and from them.

CHEATING

Students who cheat, plagiarize, or forge in connection with academic endeavor and/or school procedures are subject to disciplinary action.

CLASSROOM RULES

Teachers may establish reasonable rules in their classrooms to assist them in providing a positive environment for learning. Students are expected to follow these rules and may be disciplined for noncompliance.

DAMAGE OR THEFT OF SCHOOL OR PRIVATE PROPERTY

Students are not to participate in any activity not properly supervised by school personnel that could possibly damage or deface school or private property. If a student damages school or private property, he/she is financially responsible for all damages and may be disciplined. Students are prohibited from borrowing without permission, or stealing private or school property. Students who do either of these things may be disciplined.

FALSE FIRE ALARMS AND/OR BOMB THREATS

Students are not to falsely set off fire alarms or falsely report bomb threats.

FIGHTING

Students may not engage in verbal or physical fights in school buildings, on school grounds, at school-sponsored activities, or on their way to and from school. Students are prohibited from hitting, striking, kicking, or in any other way harming another student or school personnel.

INSUBORDINATION

Students are to comply with reasonable directions or requests from teachers, student teachers, substitute teachers, teacher aides, secretaries, principals and other school personnel during any period of time the student is properly under the authority of school personnel. Any student who fails to comply with directions or requests of school personnel will be considered insubordinate.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

Students possess the right of privacy of person as well as freedom from unreasonable search and seizure of property guaranteed by the Fourth Amendment of the Constitution. This individual right, however, is balanced by the school's responsibility to protect the health, safety, and welfare of all students.

School employees may conduct searches when they have reason to suspect that the health, safety, and welfare of students may be in danger. Any school employee making a search or a seizure will follow these guidelines:

1. General searches of school property (including personal items found on school property) will be conducted at any time when there is a reasonable cause for school employees to believe that something that violates a law or school rule is on school property. This search of school property may be made without the student being present.
2. Illegal items (firearms, weapons, drugs) or other possessions reasonably determined to be a threat to the safety or security of others, or may possibly interfere with school purposes, may be seized by school personnel.
3. Items, which are used to disrupt or interfere with the educational process, may be temporarily removed from a student's person.
4. A student's person may be searched by school employees when there is reasonable cause to believe that the student has on his/her person illegal items or other items that may interfere with school purposes.

SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION

It is the policy of the Columbus Public School District to comply in spirit as well as in fact with the regulations implementing Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination in federally assisted education programs. Specifically, Title IX states: "*No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.*"

Any student who has a grievance should complete a grievance form and forward it to the Superintendent.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment in any form will not be tolerated. If violations occur, disciplinary action will be taken. Any discrimination on the basis of race, creed, national origin, sex, age or handicap will not be tolerated.

WEAPONS, EXPLOSIVES, AND MATERIAL THAT CAN BE IGNITED

The before-mentioned material items are prohibited on school property or at school-sponsored events unless authorized by proper school authorities. A student shall not knowingly possess, handle, or transmit any object or material that is ordinarily or generally considered a weapon or any look-alike or facsimile of a weapon.

STUDENT PLANNER

Every student in grades 1–4 is issued a planner. One planner is issued FREE to each student. Lost or misplaced planners MUST be replaced and purchased by the student for \$3.00.

STUDENT RECORDS

School Board Policy 507 and its accompanying rules govern the maintenance of student records. These records are maintained to assist the instructional, guidance, and educational progress of the student and for legitimate research to better the educational programs of the school district. Parents and/or legal guardians may request in writing that information contained in student records be released for their purposes. In the event of a student transfer out of the district, student records, including academic, attendance, and discipline information will be sent to the requesting school district.

Schools may make public certain non-confidential “directory information” in association with recognition for such things as academic excellence, extracurricular honors and awards, or participation in officially recognized school sponsored activities. “Directory information” may include such things as name, address, date and place of birth and dates of school attendance. Any parent or legal guardian who does not wish the school district to release such “directory information” must notify the principal of the school that the student presently attends.

STUDENT RETENTION

Parents are included in the retention process. The school will notify parents as early as possible if retention is being considered. Parents, teachers, support staff, and the principal discuss any retention that is considered. The building principal makes the final decision regarding student placement.

STUDENT RIGHTS, RULES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

State rules, rights, and responsibilities are automatically school district policy as well as building level policy. Therefore, we must be sure that students and parents have been given the opportunity to read them. **Parents and students are required to sign the SIGNATURE SHEET found at the beginning of this handbook.** This information is reviewed with students at the beginning of each school year.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHT TO AN EDUCATION

A student’s right to an education in Nebraska is granted because of provisions in the state’s Constitution. There are two very important things a student must do faithfully to protect this constitutional right. Those two things are: attend school and participate in the learning activities.

There are many other things responsible students do while they are students, but nothing is more important than doing the schoolwork assigned by their teachers and being in school on a regular basis.

The policy of the Columbus Public Schools regarding the right to an education states: *“The State of Nebraska, as provided for in Article VII, Section I of the Nebraska Constitution, established public schools to provide free education for students between the ages of five and twenty-one. All residents of the Columbus Public Schools from ages five through twenty-one are entitled to attend public schools without tuition. All students are entitled to equal educational opportunities.”*

Along with one’s right to equality of educational opportunity, each student has a commensurate responsibility to act in such a way as to not interfere with the rights of others to the same opportunity.

Essential to the fostering and maintaining of educational opportunity, is reasonable and necessary order in the schools. A student may forfeit his/her right to educational opportunities when his/her conduct is such that it substantially disrupts the educational process and deprives others of their rights. The most important things a student must do to protect his/her right to an education are stated as Responsibilities. These Responsibilities include:

RESPONSIBILITY AND RIGHT OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

The right to freely express oneself is justifiably tempered with responsibilities to ensure that the expression made does not interfere with the rights of others. The official school policy and the responsibilities students have when expressing themselves are contained in this handbook to promote reasonable communication to reflect one of the purposes of Columbus Public Schools. **That purpose is to encourage the use of good language skills while providing educational experiences for students.**

The official school policy in regard to Freedom of Expression states: *"The Board of Education of the Columbus Public Schools recognizes the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America as being an essential part of the learning process. The Board of Education further recognizes that students need guidance in exercising the right of Freedom of Speech so that they do not interfere with the rights of others. The following statements are made to guide students in exercising their constitutional right of Freedom of Speech."*

RESPONSIBILITY AND RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

Official school policy states: "The Board of Education of the Columbus Public Schools recognizes that Freedom of Assembly is a right protected by the First Amendment of the constitution of the United States. The exercise of this right must be conducted in a responsible manner so as not to interfere with the educational activities of the school district."

The right to assemble in a school building, on school grounds or at school activities can be protected by following the responsibilities listed below.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS WHEN EXPRESSING THEMSELVES

When students express themselves at school, at school-sponsored activities, or in public places away from school, they must abide by the following rules:

1. The expression shall not contain words that are considered indecent, lewd, obscene, profane, vulgar, off-color, fighting or gutter words (four-letter words); phrases which contain threats, or physical gestures which are offensive or threatening to anyone seeing or hearing the expression; and expressions which undermine or are disrespectful to school personnel.
2. The expression of the student shall not contain words, phrases, or gestures that ridicule or belittle others.
3. The expression of the student shall not encourage other persons to violate school rules.
4. The expression of the student shall not be unusually loud, or interfere with or obstruct any lawful mission, process, function, or purpose of the school.
5. The expression of the student shall not be slanderous.
6. The expression of the student shall not be libelous.
7. The expression of the student about, or directed to, any teacher, administrator, or other school employee at any time in a public place shall comply with the six previously stated rules governing student expression. (Example: Any student who shall refer to a teacher in a public place at any time by a lewd or obscene name in such a loud voice that the teacher and/or others hear the insult may be disciplined by the school authorities.)

Any student who fails to meet these requirements when expressing himself/herself may be disciplined.

SYMBOLIC EXPRESSION AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

Symbolic expression is defined as that type of expression, exclusive of verbal and written expression, which conveys the personal ideas, feelings, attitudes and opinions of an individual. Length of hair, choice of clothing, buttons, badges, armbands, and physical gestures are some examples of symbolic expression.

Each student has the right to express himself/herself by way of symbols subject only to the restrictions that such expression does not result in over exhibitionism, disruption of the educational process, obscenities, disrespect, or obvious annoyance to others.

SUPPORT SERVICES

A variety of support services are offered by Columbus Public Schools. In order to be eligible for these services, students must meet criteria established by the district or state.

TELEPHONE USAGE

The telephone at the school is a business telephone. Therefore, the use is limited to students. If the reason to use the telephone is legitimate, the teacher will give the student permission to use the telephone. These calls should be kept to a minimum and be kept brief. Calling to make arrangements to go to or play at another student's house is not a legitimate reason.

UNNECESSARY STUDENT ITEMS

Students should not bring items to school that may interfere with learning or endanger the health and safety of others. This includes but is not limited to cell phones, fidgets spinners, hand-held games, i-pods, trading cards, etc. The school is not responsible for the lost, theft or damage of any unnecessary items brought to school. The teacher or principal may confiscate such items. The return of confiscated items is at the discretion of the teacher or principal. **If an item is not on the school supply list or directly requested by a teacher or staff member, please do not bring it to school.**

The Columbus Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, sex, marital status, age or handicap in administration or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities. If you have any special needs request that will assist you in participating in services, program and activities of the Columbus Public School District, please contact your building principal or the superintendent of schools.

