



# Wood Park Primary School Parent Handbook



Updated December 2016

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## **Wood Park Mission Statement**

"All children at Wood Park, in partnership with teachers and parents, will have the opportunity to develop self-worth and respect and be challenged in a learning environment where they are actively involved in their own growth and development."

## **I. SCHOOL PROCEDURES AND POLICIES**

All areas of the school are considered to be, by nature, a classroom. It is our intention to maintain a safe and respectful school environment at all times. The following procedures and policies will help us toward that goal.

### School Rules

- Follow directions the first time
- Be kind to others
- Keep Wood Park clean
- Walk in school
- Follow all cafeteria and playground rules
- Respect ourselves and others

### Cafeteria Rules

- Raise your hand before throwing out food scraps
- Use “inside voices” on line or at the table
- Put all paper and garbage into the barrels
- Walk when lining up
- Follow the directions given by the lunch aides

### Lunch and Recreation

#### Lunch

- Each class has an assigned lunch aide and table in the cafeteria
- An experienced cook-manager for the Commack Schools runs our cafeteria kitchen with two assistants
- In the event that a child forgets his/her lunch at home he/she is permitted to charge lunch that day
- Any concerns you have about your child’s lunch program can be addressed through the classroom teacher

#### Recreation

- Outdoor recreation is provided when the wind chill factor is 21°F or above
- During inclement weather, the children may remain in the cafeteria or their classroom where they might play board games, enjoy bingo or movies on our large-screen TV

The following suggestions will help make the lunch and recreation program as rewarding and fulfilling as possible for all of our children:

- Clearly label lunch boxes and jackets
- Send your child dressed appropriately for outdoor recreation
- Children should be dressed comfortably for play
- Avoid open-toe, backless and high-heeled shoes, sneakers are always the best choice!
- Avoid clothing with drawstrings since they can easily get tangled on the equipment
- Hanging earrings are discouraged

#### Supervision/Lunch Aides

Lunch aides are employed by the Commack School District to:

- Supervise our children during lunch and recreation
- Oversee the children's behavior
- Communicate closely with each teacher as they monitor each child on a daily basis

#### Playground Rules

- Do not pick up things on the ground
- Do not push others or pull on their clothing
- Line up when the whistle is blown
- Respect personal space

#### Birthday Celebrations

- Children may celebrate birthdays in their classrooms
- Try to provide a pre-packaged nutritious snack
- Contact your classroom teacher to make the necessary arrangements
- Find out about food allergies
- Party favors and goody bags should be reserved for out-of-school celebrations

Should your child wish to have a party outside of school, invitations may be distributed in school *only* if everyone in the class is invited.

#### Snacks

- Each class has a brief snack period each day. Times will vary due to each teacher's schedule and grade level lunch hours
- Healthy snacks are encouraged and should be packaged separately from the regular lunch
- Children who purchase their lunch at school still need to bring a snack from home on a daily basis

#### Field Trips

- Field trips are planned by the grade levels and may vary from year to year
- A nurse is in attendance on all school trips

### Open House

- Teachers will discuss curriculum and grade level expectations
- Teachers will review their classroom routines and present their goals for the year
- Individual student progress will not be addresses at Open House

### Parent / Teacher Conferences

- Formal Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled at the end of the first and third marking periods (December and March)
- You will be contacted by your child's teacher to set up these December and March appointments

### Homework

- Depending on the grade level, homework should generally be completed within a 5-20-minute timeframe
- When a child is absent due to illness, homework assignments may be obtained by requesting that work be available for pick-up at dismissal, or be sent home with another child
  - Please call the main office as early as possible to give the teacher adequate time to prepare the child's homework for you

### Grade Level Curriculum and Expectations

- A complete summary of the grade specific topics covered in each subject area is available on the District Website

### Assessments

- Portfolios, standardized testing and most importantly, teacher observation and evaluation are the key ingredients used to assess, monitor, and guide a student's academic growth and development

### Kindergarten Screening

- NY State law mandates that every pre-school aged child residing in Commack is screened prior to entering school
- Screening is designed to alert parents and staff to special needs and inform parents about available special programs
- All primary schools in Commack follow this procedure

### Second Grade Standardized Testing

- Cognitive Ability Test (COGAT) – Ability testing

### Portfolios

- A collection of student work and skill surveys that enable the teacher to track a child's growth over time
- Each teacher maintains a portfolio for Language Arts and Math
- This is an ongoing process and a child's portfolio moves with the student each year

### Building Entry

- Student and building security requires that everyone entering and exiting our school must sign in and show picture I.D. at the front desk between the hours of 8:40 A.M. and 3:45 P.M.

### Lateness

- If your child is late for whatever reason, you must sign him/her in the Late Book at the front desk
- A pass will be issued to the student to bring to his/her classroom teacher

### Request for Early Dismissal (prior to 3:00 pm)

- Send a note *in the morning* with your child to the teacher
- Upon your arrival, sign out your child at the front desk
- Your child will be called from the classroom to the front desk
- **In the case of an emergency call in dismissal change. We request that all dismissal changes occur prior to 1:00PM**

### Messages of Forgotten Items

- Direct all messages, forgotten lunches, birthday treats or library books, etc., to the reception aide at the front desk
- Items will be sent to the classroom as soon as possible

### Visitor's Log

- All visitors must sign in and show picture I.D, giving the hour and purpose of their visit
- All visitors must wear a "visitor's badge" for the duration of their visit to the building. At the end of the visit all visitors must sign out and hand in his/her badge

## Emergency School Closings

Inclement weather is a factor that we must consider when safety is at stake. The following details the procedures the District has set up to ensure our students' safety during a weather emergency. Complete information on this topic is contained in the Commack School District Calendar.

## Delayed School Opening Procedures

- Applicable when it appears that the schools may open safely at a later time
- A 1 or 2 hour delayed opening will be announced via School Messenger, text messaging and email to parents
- Bus pickups would be delayed accordingly
- The lunch program and dismissal will take place at the regular time

## Early School Closing Procedures

- These procedures will be put into effect on days when the District deems it would be the safest way to dismiss the students
- Decision made by the Central Office is immediately relayed to the individual buildings and to the community through School Messenger phone notification system
- It is imperative that the school has your current and accurate phone number
- Children will follow normal dismissal procedures, whether it is by bus or by parent transportation
- The information on the Early Dismissal cards will be shared with your child so that he/she will know what to do if you are not home

## Early Dismissal Cards

At the start of the school year, parents are required to complete and return the yellow Early Dismissal card.

On this card parents indicate either:

- (A) "If the school is dismissed before the regular dismissal time, I have instructed my child/children to go to either of the following homes (in order of preference). I have also informed these neighbors of these instructions."

OR

- (B) "If school is dismissed before the regular dismissal time, my child/children have my permission to go to our home even if parent(s) are not at home." One copy remains with the classroom teacher and one in the Main Office.

*We recommend that you periodically review these arrangements with your child.*

### School Closing Information

Commack School District announcements will be carried by School Messenger, text messaging, parent emails and indicated on the Commack website.

### Placement Procedure

The placement procedure is a very complex and involves the following factors:

- DIAL screening results (used as a broad indicator for incoming kindergarten students)
- Input from the classroom as well as special area professionals
- Appropriate proportion of boys and girls
- Functional and efficient range of reading, writing and math skills
- Each child's special needs
- Parent communication via letters/conferences with the principal

The principal then assigns teachers to each section.

*It is inappropriate to write a letter requesting teachers by name since a child's placement in a particular class is the exclusive domain of the principal and the Wood Park Professional Team. If a request does not violate the guidelines indicated above, it may be granted. Anyone wishing to write to the principal regarding his or her child's placement should do so prior to May 1st. The final judgment as to a child's placement rests with the building principal.*

## II. HEALTH OFFICE PROCEDURES

The philosophy of School Health Services is to promote good health habits, which will enhance students' abilities within their academic environment.

### Goals/Objectives of the School Nurse

- Give emergency care as the first priority
- Respond in a positive and reassuring manner to the needs of acute and chronic medical problems of each student
- Attend to the everyday occurrences of minor injuries, illnesses, etc.
- Observe and comply with all of New York State and Suffolk County mandates pertaining to health (e.g. vision, audio, and scoliosis screenings, dispensing of all types of medications, and immunizations)

### Medication

New York State Law prohibits the taking of any medication by students during school hours unless the school nurse has been furnished with both a written request from the student's parent/guardian and an order from the doctor. This document can be found on the Commack School District website at [www.commack.k12.ny.us](http://www.commack.k12.ny.us) under the tab: *Parent Resources, forms, Medication Form.*

All Medication must come to school in a properly labeled bottle from the pharmacy.

- These requirements apply to aspirin, Tylenol, cough drops, cough medicines, any lotions or creams, as well as prescription medication
- All medication will be safeguarded in the health office and dispensed by the school nurse according to written instructions only
- A medication release form may be obtained from the Nurse's Office

### Absences

In the event that your child has had fever, diarrhea or vomiting over the past 24 hours, ***please do not send him/her to school.***

- Parents are to call the school nurse if their child is going to be late or absent from school. The contact number for the nurse is (631) 858-3687
- If you should you contact the nurses' office before school, messages may be left on the answering machine
- Upon returning to school, a note is also required and must be sent to the classroom teacher
- Absences other than those due to illness, serious family situation, or religious observances are considered illegal

### Notification of Communicable Diseases

- Wood Park Primary School follows New York State guidelines regarding notification of communicable diseases
- A flyer will go home in your child's backpack when one of the diseases requiring parental notification is present in the school

### **III. TRANSPORTATION**

Primary school children within the district are transported between home and school if they live more than 1/4 mile away. Transportation department issues bus passes to those children riding the bus.

#### **Bus Safety**

- This program helps to increase positive student behaviors while decreasing inappropriate behaviors on our buses
- Children are expected to observe bus safety procedures and to conduct themselves in an appropriate and respectful manner while traveling on the bus
- If a child violates the Peaceful Bus safety rules, the bus driver will complete a Bus Conduct Report. The principal and the parents will receive a copy
- If three such reports are filed for a particular student, he/she will then be suspended from using the bus for a period of two days. Such suspensions may be repeated and extended should the cited behavior continue



#### **Peaceful School Bus Rules**

**S**tay seated at all times; the driver may tell you where to sit.

**A**lways respect others, the bus, and yourself.

**F**linging things in or out of the bus is not allowed.

**E**ating, drinking, and writing on the bus are not allowed.

**T**alk quietly; no hurtful words.

**Y**ou are responsible for your actions.

Parents are encouraged to discuss the necessity of safety procedures and to promote positive bus behavior. Video camera boxes have been installed to assist in monitoring bus activity at different intervals throughout the year.

#### **Seat Belts**

- It is not a requirement that each child be strapped in a seat belt whenever the bus is in motion
- The use of seat belts is encouraged if the child is able to buckle and unbuckle the belt by themselves

## Bus Notes

- According to revised district policy, bus changes will be for emergency reasons only
- Play dates are not considered an emergency
- Should you require a bus change, send a note to the teacher *that morning* indicating the bus number, bus stop location and who will be taking your child off the bus
- A temporary bus pass will be issued for that day
- Your child will give it to the bus driver
- Children are not permitted to change buses without a note. The note must indicate the bus number, the stop and the name of the person/s responsible for taking your child off the bus
- Due to insurance restrictions, walkers are never permitted to ride the bus

## Special Transportation Requests (Bus Stop Release Designee Form)

- The Board of Education established the following guidelines for use when parents request that their child be dropped off at a different bus stop other than their regular stop
- Passes are given on either an occasional basis or for a given period of time
- Permission may be granted for a child to receive a Designee Form if:
  - The child is an eligible bus rider
  - No additional cost is incurred by the district
  - The requested bus stop is a regular stop
  - No change in bus route is required
  - Prior written request/authorization is received from the parent/guardian by the principal of the school stating bus number and location of bus stop for that day
  - There is room on the bus

## **IV. SCHOOL ROUTINES**

To make the transition from home to school run more smoothly, daily routines give children a sense of security.

### Arrival Procedures for the First Three (3) Days of School

- Kindergartners will be guided into the cafeteria by teachers and PTA parents
- First graders will be guided into the gym by teachers and PTA parents
- Second graders will be guided directly to their classes by teachers and PTA parents

### Arrival Procedures

#### Bus Children

- Buses are unloaded at 9:05 on a signal from the teacher on outside bus duty
- Children walk to their individual classrooms

#### Walkers

- Please do not drop your child off at school before 9:00
- At 9:05 a teacher and security will be on duty in the back parking lot
- Parents dropping off children in the parking lot will have a staff member and security outside to direct and assist with a safe drop off
- If parents walk their children to the front door, they will be able to enter the building when the bus children begin to enter the building

*Parents are not permitted to walk children to their classrooms.*

### Dismissal Procedures

- Dismissal time is 3:30 on full days and noon on half days

#### Bus Children

- Bus numbers are called and those children leave classrooms, walk to front lobby and line up on bus number line

#### Walkers

- Kindergarten walkers are picked up by a staff member on duty in the kindergarten hallway. They are brought to room 20
- An announcement is made for all 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students to report to room 20
- Students remain in room 20, until a staff member releases the student to their parent or person that is picking them up

If you are planning on picking up your child from school, please be sure to write a note to the classroom teacher.

- Clearly indicate the day and date in which you intend to pick up
- Include the first and last name of the adult responsible for picking up your child
- All walkers will line up in room 20 by 3:20
- The door for the walkers (outside the second grade wing) will open at 3:20 p.m.
- Parents may enter the building one at a time and sign-out their children

### Assessments

Portfolios, standardized testing and most importantly, teacher observation and evaluation are the key ingredients used to assess, monitor, and guide a student's academic growth and development.

### Kindergarten Screening

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## V. SPECIAL AREA CLASSES

### Art

- Using a variety of art materials and techniques students explore the basic elements and principles of art which include line, color, form, shape, texture, value and space
- The art room is a place that is conducive for exploring ideas, being an individual and creative decision making through the study of art techniques, artists, art styles, cultures

### Computer

- Children visit the lab weekly with their classes
- District purchased software, subscription, and web based programs are used reinforce skills taught in the classroom
- The computer curriculum prepares the children for future courses of study

### Library

- The WP School library-media curriculum is taught during a regularly scheduled 40-minute class that consists of 30 minutes of library lesson and 10 minutes of book selection
- Library lessons support; Common Core, English Language Arts, and Grade Level Curriculums as outlined below:
  - **Kindergarten:** Orientation, Library Citizenship, parts of a book, book care, jobs of authors and illustrators, author and illustrator study, ABC Order and skills, literature appreciation, literature response, and self-selection of appropriate materials
  - **First Grade:** Orientation, Library Citizenship, basic organization of the library, parts of a book (Title Page, Table of Contents, Glossary), authors and illustrators, Reinforcement of alphabetizing skills, location skills in Easy Fiction Section, Fiction vs. Non-Fiction, understanding facts as true statement, recognizing Non-Fiction as a source of information, literature appreciation and response, Caldecott Award, Online Databases, and self-selection of appropriate materials
  - **Second Grade:** Orientation, Library Citizenship, basic organization of the library, parts of a book (Captions, Sub-headings, and Index), authors and illustrators, Reinforcement of alphabetizing skills, location skills in Easy Fiction Section (Location skills in Easy Fiction, Easy Non-Fiction, and Chapter Books), introduction to easy periodicals, Introduce sections of the Library, introduce information gathering and note taking skills in support of regular classroom instruction, introduce Basic Works Format (author, title,

publisher, copyright date), introduce Spine Labels, Use Destiny: Online Catalog and keyword skills related to the program, Caldecott Award, Authors and Illustrators, Genre (Fairy Tales, Fables, and Folklore), Compare and Contrast two or more versions of the same story, Dictionaries and Online Databases, Introduction to multi-media presentation tools, Social Media, Introduction to Internet Safety and self-selection of appropriate materials

### Music

- Musical Awareness is the guiding principle of the music program
- Awareness of melody, rhythm, instruments, and sounds, singing styles, song writing and dance movement is its goal
- The basic philosophy is that the child's natural instrument is his/her voice
- Singing is the child's best expression of music

### Physical Education

- The primary school P.E. curriculum introduces students to basic motor development skills
- The children are taught the importance of staying active, cooperating with one another and teamwork
- By mastering basic physical skills and concepts, children will feel better about him/her and be more likely to participate in an activity that will keep him/her physically fit throughout their lifetime

### Science

- The science room is a space of discovery where students will have the opportunity to explore a variety of topics including magnets, properties of matter, weather, the five senses, animals and plants
- Children visit the Science room once a week
- The 5E Model is used when teaching science. Learning through engagement, exploration, explanation, elaboration, and evaluation support hands on learning

## **VI. Related Services**

Instructional Support Team (IST) The Instructional Support Team is composed of a mental health professional (e.g. school psychologist, school social worker), resource room teacher, reading specialist, speech pathologist, school nurse, classroom teacher and the Principal.

- IST meetings provide a structured forum to discuss individual student needs and develop intervention and support plans as necessary

### Academic Intervention Services (AIS) for Reading and Math

- Children in kindergarten, who are having difficulties in readiness skills, will receive focused instruction on their individual needs
- Children in first and second grade, who qualify for reading support, will receive small-group instruction from a reading teacher
- Children in second grade, who need math remediation, will receive small-group instruction
- If it is determined that your child would benefit from support services, a letter will be sent home for your approval

### English as a New Language (ENL)

- The ENL program services children in our school community who are English Language Learners. They may speak languages other than English in their homes
- Students are taught how to communicate effectively through listening, speaking, reading and writing

### Special Education

- Students with Individualized Education Plans are placed along the continuum of Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
- Resource Room is considered the least restrictive followed Indirect/Direct Teacher Consult, Special Class-Integrated and Special Class

### School Psychologist

- School Psychologist's collaborate with teachers, parents, and administrators to find effective solutions to learning and behavior problems
- They may also conduct comprehensive psycho-educational and social/ emotional evaluations to determine eligibility for special services
- They provide school-based counseling to address a variety of problems that may interfere with school performance (e.g. social skills, anger management, interpersonal or family problems, anxiety, crisis, etc.)
- School Psychologists are also often involved in the development and implementation of prevention and intervention programs to makes schools safer, healthier and more effective learning environments
- School Psychologist's are members of both the Instructional Support Team (IST) and the Committee on Special Education (CSE)

### Speech and Language Services

- The role of the Speech/Language Pathologist is to provide therapy to those children who have been identified as having speech/language impairment
- A speech and language impairment can be defined as a communication disorder such as stuttering, impaired articulation, or an expressive or receptive language which adversely affects educational performance

### Resource Room

- Resource Room offers a balance of child-centered pull-out services and in class support for Special education students in Kindergarten through Second Grade
- Services depend on the student's individual needs as outlined in their Individual Education Program (IEP) and may range from ELA, math support, organizational, and study skills
- The Resource Room Teacher is a special education teacher, who works closely with the student's teacher and parents

### Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT)

- In the ICT Class, students are placed in a general education classroom
- Additional support, in the form of a full time Teacher Assistant and a part-time Special Education Teacher, is provided to that class to meet the needs of all the students

## Special Class

- In the Special Class the students follow the general education curriculum with a focus on meeting their individual goals
- The students gather with all their grade level peers for lunch, trips, shows and all school wide activities
- The Special Class consists of no more than 12 children, a full time Special Education teacher and a full time Teacher Assistant

## **VII. GETTING INVOLVED**

### **School Based Management (SBMT)**

The School Based Management Team is defined by the district as “a group of teachers, parents, administrators and support staff sharing the decision making at the school level to improve the quality of learning for all children making education more effective and efficient”.

The Wood Park SBMT includes:

- 1 - Principal
- 1 - Commack Teacher Association Teacher Representative
- 1 - Support Staff Representative
- 5 - Teacher Representatives
- 3 - Parent Representatives

Members are chosen and elected by the groups they represent and serve for a maximum of two years.

### **Volunteers**

Volunteering is the best way to get involved in your child’s school experience and provide enrichment for our educational program. Examples of opportunities to volunteer include:

- Art Room
- Classroom – by teacher’s invitation
- Special events
- PTA committees

If you are interested in learning about ways to volunteer, please contact our PTA Volunteer Coordinator listed in the Wood Park School Directory.

## PTA

The purpose of the PTA is to promote the welfare of our children in the home, school and community. Through PTA, we all become one voice working together to see that each child reaches his/her potential physically, mentally and socially.

### PTA Communications

- Meetings are typically held once a month with alternating morning and evening meetings to accommodate all members

The lines of communication are kept open between home and school through a variety of printed materials:

- Monthly PTA flyer with a calendar of events
  - The first issue contains the names and contact numbers of the PTA Executive Officers
- Wood Park Publication
- Backpack News
- Wood Park PTA Facebook Page
- PTA website
- PTA mailbox located in the main office

## Special Education PTA (SEPTA)

SEPTA is devoted to the advocacy for and support of children and families receiving special education services.

- Out-of-District services
- Special Class placement, 12:1, 8:1, 6:1
- Integrated Co-Teaching Class placement
- Resource Room
- Speech Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Vision Therapy
- Hearing Services
- Counseling

### SEPTA-Sponsored Programs for classified students

- Summer reinforcement
- Social skills
- Recreational activities

### SEPTA Communications

- Monthly newsletter
- District-wide meetings
- Monthly meetings are held at Wood Park and North Ridge

## Suggestions for Parents

- An active parent-teacher partnership linking the home with school is an essential component of your child's early education
- Maintaining an ongoing dialogue will improve his/her chance for success
- Positive reinforcement in the home and school can go a long way
- Provide consistency with redirection and consequences
- Encourage your child to share his/her feelings and ideas
- Setting routines for good work habits and procedure at home
- Provide a specific time and a quiet place for homework
- Provide opportunities for shared reading experiences
- Check your child's backpack to help ensure good school – home communication
- Tell your child that mistakes are a natural part of the learning process