

# **Wilson School District**



**Elementary**

**Student/Parent Handbook**

**2023-2024 School Year**

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## **ATTENDANCE**

Regular attendance at school is very important and good habits are cultivated early in life. We thank you in advance for the efforts you put forth to see that your child is in school; however, sick children will find it difficult to concentrate and learn, and should remain at home.

**Contacting the office.** As a safety measure, you must contact the school office prior to 9:00 AM when your son/daughter will not be in school on a given day. Please make homework requests at that time. Later requests may not be honored (requested homework may be picked up after 3:25 PM). Although the school office is open from 7:45 AM until 4:15 PM each day, you can call the school office at any time to leave a message on the school voicemail. If we do not hear from you, you will hear from us. An automated message will be sent to your home. We want to be sure your children are safe either at home or school.

**Early dismissals.** Early dismissal of a student before 12:00 P.M. is classified as a half day absence. Students taken out of the building for over 70 minutes (at any time during the day) for an appointment will receive a half-day absence. If a student is late or leaving during the day for a doctor/dentist appointment, a doctor's note must accompany their return.

**Absences.** Compliance with school board policy requires the following:

A note is required from parents for all absences.

A note for the absence(s) is required within 3 days of return to school or the absence(s) will be marked unexcused, which could result in a fine. Kindergarten parents can now be fined for illegal absences.

Accumulation of 3 unexcused days (consecutively or not) will result in a letter warning that each additional unexcused day will result in a referral to the District Magistrate which could result in a fine. Students who are truant may be placed on a School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP)

Student absences from school for reasons other than those allowed by school board policy (allowable include: illness, death of a near relative, religious holiday) will be considered unexcused (see above for ramifications of accumulated unexcused absences).

Parents/guardians will be notified in writing when their child has accumulated seven (7) days of absence not covered by a written physician's excuse or other approved absence to inform them that a written reason from their physician will be required for every day of absence that exceeds ten (10) days. All uncertified days beyond the ten (10) days will be treated as an unexcused absence (see above).

**Tardiness.** As per Board policy, excessive/chronic tardiness may result in making up for accumulated time.

**Non-school sponsored trips.** Wilson School District allows students to take up to five (5) school days per school year for a non-school sponsored trip. Please check with the office **prior** to the trip to

complete the appropriate paperwork. No trips will be approved during the first five (5) or the last five (5) days of a school year or during state standardized testing dates (see below):

**April 24 - 28, 2023 (grade 3, 4, 5 PSSA English Language Arts Test)**

**May 1-12, 2023 (grade 3, 4, 5 PSSA Math Test, grade 4 PSSA Science Test, & Make-ups)**

**NOTE:** A non-school sponsored trip form will need to be completed for students taken out of school to go to work with their parents. This form must be turned into the office before this day is taken. This day (one of the 5 allowable) is considered an excused absence.

## **BICYCLES**

Students in grades 4 & 5 may ride their bike to school after having completed appropriate school paperwork signed by a parent. We will record bike identification, and the use of bike locks is encouraged. As per PA state law, helmets must be worn. Upon arrival at the school property, children must dismount their bike and walk the bike to the bike rack. Students must use the walking path and not ride through the parking lot. A bike rack is located outside of the building. The district is not responsible for lost or stolen property.

## **BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**

Students do not celebrate birthdays in school by bringing in food or treats for other students. Individual classrooms recognize this special day within their own setting without food or individual tokens (stickers, pencils, etc.) from home. However, you are always welcome to make a contribution on behalf of your child's special day by contributing toward a class and/or school need (such as a class or library book). Additionally, invitations for home parties are not distributed in school unless the entire class is invited.

## **BUS SAFETY**

Riding a bus is a privilege for students. Bus students are expected to follow district safety regulations. School rules apply to student behavior at the bus stop and on the bus ride, and disregard for safety measures can result in loss of bus privileges and/or school consequences. Please be aware that students are audio and video recorded while on the bus.

## **COMMUNICATION**

**Reaching the school:** The Wilson School District number is: 610-670-0180.

- Cornwall Terrace office can be reached at Ext. 1710 or 1711
- Green Valley office can be reached at Ext. 2810 or 2820
- Shiloh Hills office can be reached at Ext. 1910 or 1911
- Spring Ridge office can be reached at Ext. 1810 or 1811
- Whitfield office can be reached at Ext. 1610 or 1611

**Reaching a teacher:** If you need to speak to or meet with a teacher, please email your child's teacher directly to make an appointment. If it is an emergency, please contact the school's office.

**Information/Calendar of Events about your school and the district:** This information will be available on the district website at: [www.wilsonsd.org](http://www.wilsonsd.org).

**District email addresses:** These are the first 3 letters of the last name and the first 3 letters of the first name plus @wilsonsd.org.

**Calling staff:** Staff can also be reached via voicemail by dialing the district number 610-670-0180 and their extension. Please do not call classrooms directly during the school day, as it interrupts the learning process for all students. A directory is available through the district number. Please respect that teachers will not answer nor return calls during instructional time with students.

**Change in your child's day:** If this information is known at the beginning of the school day, please send a written note to your child's classroom teacher. If you are contacting the school with information that must be dealt with in a timely fashion (e.g. "Don't send my daughter on the bus. I will pick her up." Or "I cannot attend the meeting today at 2:30."), please do not leave this message on the voicemail. Hang up and call back until you speak with someone to assure that the new information is received. Please provide as much advance notice as possible.

**Change in information:** It is important and necessary to keep your contact information up-to-date. This is all done through the Skyward system. Please make sure any changes are made promptly in the event of an emergency with your student(s). (If you need your Skyward login information please stop by the office with photo identification, we cannot release this information over the phone.)

For a change of address you must make an appointment by calling 610-670-0180, ext. 1152. At this appointment, you will be required to provide documentation. The Wilson School District has a global Skylert system, and keeping your information current helps us to best connect with you should an emergency situation arise.

## **CONCERNS OR QUESTIONS**

Parents often wonder where to turn to with a question or concern regarding their child or other school issues. Starting with the principal or administration often requires information backtracking and can leave valuable allies out of the loop. When you are not happy with a particular situation, there are some handy guidelines listed that you should follow in addressing the issue.

- If it is a classroom problem, start with your child's teacher. He/she is in the best position to address classroom related issues. If the problem is outside the teacher's area of expertise or control, the teacher will refer you to the right person in the building who can be of assistance.
- If you have not been able to resolve your problem with the teacher, you can go next to the principal who will usually be able to resolve your problem or refer you to the right person.
- The Superintendent of Schools and the Wilson School Board address policy matters for the school district. They are not involved in the day-to-day operations of the school. The Superintendent and the School Board will consider issues only after they have already been reviewed and documented by school officials.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

No information concerning any student can be released to any other school, agency or individual until an authorized release form is signed by the parent/guardian. This means that we cannot discuss any student

information (attendance, grades, contact information, assignment, behavior, etc.) with grandparents, step-parents, paramours, doctors' offices, other parents, etc. No information can be released to parents or guardians about a child other than their own. Parents can access their child's school records by arranging an appointment to view the record with the principal or designee. Information can be released to outside agencies if the parent completes the Release of Information form (please contact the office or you may access this form on our website). Please allow two weeks for completion from the date of the receipt of the request.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY OF STUDENTS**

Over the course of the school year, students will be involved in many different types of activities. Often, these activities may be photographed or videotaped by school personnel and/or local media. These photographs, videotapes, or audiotapes may be used for instruction of students, staff, parents, community/district cable TV programming, web pages, social media, and community and district publications.

Should you wish your child to be excluded from the above mentioned media, please go to the Community Relations page at [www.wilsonsd.org](http://www.wilsonsd.org) and complete the Photography Exclusion Form. Please note that this refusal only applies to individual photos and not large group recording at public events such as concerts, athletic competitions, etc.

## **DISCIPLINE**

When a student chooses not to follow the district-wide rules, there are consequences. Consequences will be determined by the principal and/or teachers based on the severity of the student's chosen behavior. Following, but not limited to, are a few possibilities of potential consequences, in no particular order:

- Suspension (either in or out of school), phone conference or meeting with parent/child/teacher/principal, written correspondence from school, conversation with the principal, school/community service, loss of one or more privileges, anger management or conflict resolution training.

**Zero tolerance policy:** For the safety of your children, Wilson has adopted a zero tolerance policy for weapons in the schools. Children may not bring weapons/look-alike weapons of any kind to school (including water pistols, rubber knives, etc.). Students who break this rule may be suspended or expelled from school. Please be aware of the potential seriousness of consequences.

**Terroristic threats/act** - shall mean a threat to commit violence communicated with the intent to terrorize another; to cause evacuation of a building; or to cause serious public inconvenience, in reckless disregard of the risk of causing such terror or inconvenience.[5]

The board acknowledges that threats may occur through written communication, verbal communication, cellular phones, and through cyber mediums.

The Board prohibits any district student from communicating terroristic threats or committing terroristic acts directed at any student, employee, Board member, community member or school building.

## **SCHOOL-WIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT SYSTEM (SWPBS)**

Students in the Wilson School District will be encouraged and taught through a positive behavior support approach. Creating a safe and secure learning environment is a priority. Our goal is to develop “expected” behavior choices in students and avoid behavior that is “unexpected” in given situations. For elementary-aged children this is a learning process. All staff, as well as students, are expected to act in ways that are **Respectful, Responsible, and Resourceful** when it comes to making safe choices.

The five Wilson Elementary Schools enforce these 3 important rules:

1. Be **Respectful** to yourself, others, and the property of school and community.
  - a. Follow directions the first time they are given.
  - b. Treat others the way you want to be treated.
2. Be **Responsible** with yourself and your belongings.
  - a. Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
  - b. Avoid arguing or fighting with one another.
3. Be **Resourceful** when you are sad or upset.
  - a. Use appropriate language: Avoid swearing, teasing, or name-calling.
  - b. Tell an adult when you get upset or sad.

## **DRESS CODE**

During the warm weather we experience at the beginning and end of the school year, we understand the need to feel comfortable. However, we do have a dress code in effect at Wilson, which restricts the wearing of tight, short, inappropriate clothing. Please take the time to check what your child has chosen to wear to school to make sure it is appropriate. Choosing to wear inappropriate or revealing attire will result in a change into extra health room attire or a call home for a change of clothes. Please note the following:

- **Tops:** no midriiffs or spaghetti straps shirts. Undergarments and midriiffs need to be covered.
- **Bottoms:** Shorts and skirts must be fingertip length.
- **Shoes:** **SNEAKERS MUST BE WORN ON GYM DAYS** to participate.

Clothing should not be worn that displays messages promoting hate/gangs, alcohol, tobacco, drug use, violence, sexual, or inappropriate language.

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

We do not encourage students to bring electronic devices (iPod, cell phone, portable game systems, etc.) to school. However there are circumstances in which students may need to have them available for use before or after school. These items should not be out of backpacks or being utilized during the school day without teacher permission. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen property.

## **EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS AND DELAYED OPENINGS**

Occasionally, school will need to close early. Discuss this possibility with your child and make a plan of

action with which your child is familiar and comfortable, so that s/he gets home safely.

The Wilson School District is fortunate to have an emergency calling system called Skylert, should the need arise to contact large groups of parents across the district. However, the system is only effective if we have your correct and updated contact information. You may go on Skyward using your login information to change phone numbers at any time.

Should the district (or your child's school) need to close early, open late, or not open for emergency reasons (usually inclement weather) you would receive a call alerting you to that change. You can also get that information from local TV and/or radio stations (be looking/listening for Wilson-West Lawn) or on the Wilson School District webpage ([www.wilsonsd.org](http://www.wilsonsd.org)).

## **HOMEROOM TEACHER ASSIGNMENTS/CLASS LISTS**

Each year we work diligently to determine student placements for the following school year. Since we consider the placement process to be one of our most important tasks, we would like to share the process with you. Student placement is determined and reviewed by a team of professionals. Each child's academic, social and emotional growth and needs, as well as, peer relations are considered to create classes which provide each child with an educational environment that will meet his or her needs.

In view of the time and consideration taken in the placement of your child, we request that you **DO NOT** ask for a specific teacher placement. If you are aware of additional information that should be taken into consideration when making next year's placement decisions, please submit this information in writing to your child's principal no later than May 15, 2024. Please be assured that we will use our professional judgment to arrange the best match for your child.

## **HOMEWORK**

Homework is an opportunity for students to hone and practice learned skills and/or stretch and challenge their learning.

Long term projects or studying for tests may require students to budget their time accordingly.

Students are expected to complete assignments and/or ask for additional help if needed.

OOPS! It happens occasionally, despite classroom reminders and routine, that a student forgets homework. If she/he returns to school before 4:00 PM and if the teacher is available, the student will be required to sign in at the office before retrieving homework.

## **LUNCH**

The lunch cost during this year will be \$2.85 per day. Students bringing a packed lunch from home may purchase any milk for \$.75. Free or reduced lunch is available to families who qualify and must be filled out each school year. You will have the opportunity to establish an account for your child's lunch purchases which helps minimize forgotten lunch money issues. The breakfast cost during this year will be \$2.00.

Wilson School District implemented new procedures to help us to ensure that student allergies are



documented correctly. This procedure requires a doctor's note to be on file with your student's building nurse for any allergies that are reported in Skyward. The information reported in Skyward regarding food allergies is extremely important for our Food Service Staff so that they are able to provide an additional layer of protection for our students.

Visitors will not be permitted to attend lunches or recesses. The district also does not permit outside food to be delivered or brought from restaurants or other outside establishments beyond the home.

## **NURSE**

All medications (prescription or over-the-counter) require parent and doctor's signatures. Also, students may not carry medications to or from school. Parents must hand-deliver medications to the school nurse. If it is impossible to hand-deliver the medication during your school nurse's hours, special arrangements can be made with the school nurse. Medications not picked up by the parent at the end of the school year will be discarded. Refer to the district website under the School Board tab – Policies - Pupils section for detailed district information on medications, state mandated physical and dental exams, communicable disease reporting, illness, immunization requirements, and other miscellaneous medical information.

## **SAFETY**

Parking: Another safety issue involves parking in front of the building during the school day. If you are picking up your child from school, regardless of the time of day, you need to heed the posted signs so that your vehicle is clear from the bus/fire lane area where students are crossing, boarding or exiting school vehicles, not blocking traffic, or parked illegally along the yellow curbing. Do not expect your child to run across the parking lot to meet you at your car. Please follow the arrival and dismissal procedures pertaining to your building.

Forgot something? Many times during the year, parents will be coming to school to bring forgotten homework, lunch money, etc. You must report to the office and school personnel will make sure your child will get the items.

All parents/guardians picking up your child between the hours of 7:45 AM-4:15 PM will be required to sign your child out at the building office. You will be required to push the button on the intercom system/security panel at the front door and wait to be admitted to the school.

## **SNACK/PARTY GUIDELINES**

Snack breaks MAY be taken as scheduled by the teacher. These daily snacks are brought from home and should include nutritious options. Snacks are not permitted to be shared between students.

## **STUDENT SUPPORTS**

We believe that all students can learn...at different rates and/or with different levels of support. If a parent is concerned with student progress, she/he should contact the teacher. Additional supports could include:

Instructional Support Teachers

School Counselors

Special Education and Related Services

Reading Specialists

School Social Worker

Teacher on Special Assignment

## **Youth Homelessness**

The Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness program (ECYEH) is an initiative of the Pennsylvania Department of Education and is based on the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. This federal legislation ensures that homeless children and youth have access to a free, appropriate, public education.

Children and youth are eligible for services under the McKinney-Vento Act if they have been displaced from their homes and are living in a place that is not fixed, regular, or adequate, such as:

- *Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason*
- *In a place not designated as regular sleeping accommodation, such as a vehicle, park, hotel, or campground*
- *In a homeless or domestic violence shelter or transitional housing placement*
- *Outside of his/her home as an unaccompanied youth*
- *In any of the situations listed above as the child of a migrant family*

The McKinney-Vento Act defines unaccompanied youth as “a homeless child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian and lacking a fixed, regular, or adequate nighttime residence.” Unaccompanied youth have the same rights as other displaced students plus:

- *The right to enroll in school as an independent student.*
- *The right to the same challenging academic standards as housed students, including partial credit and credit recovery when needed.*
- *The right to be informed of their status as independent students for FAFSA and receive verification of that status.*

Children and youth experiencing homelessness have the right to:

- *Continue their education in their current school, and receive transportation OR enroll immediately in the school where they are temporarily housed, even if lacking the paperwork normally required*
- *Participate in all applicable school programs, including supplemental services*
- *Receive free lunch*
- *Receive assistance with school-related expenses such as supplies, clothing, uniforms, etc.*

You can access more information on Youth Homelessness, family rights, and resources at <http://www.education.pa.gov/Documents/K-12/Homeless%20Education/ECYEH%20General%20Guide.pdf>.

For more information about Supports for Students Experiencing Homelessness in the Wilson School District, please view our Website Here - [Wilson SD - ECYEH Page](#)

If you believe that you meet criteria for Homelessness, or need some assistance, please contact the ECYEH Liaison, Dr. Andrew Hoffert, in the Student Services Office

Dr. Andrew Hoffert - [hofand@wilsonsd.org](mailto:hofand@wilsonsd.org) - x 1135

Ms. Beth Schoener - [schbeta@wilsonsd.org](mailto:schbeta@wilsonsd.org) - x 1124

## **VOLUNTEERS/VISITORS**

All volunteers/ visitors must have all three clearances in order to be in the school building.

## **IMPORTANT EVENTS**

Elementary Staggered Start Dates	August 23, 24, 25, 2023
First Day with all students	August 28, 2023
Parent/Teacher Conferences	November 20-21, 2023 and Feb 29- March 1st, 2024
PSSA Testing Dates	April 22- 26, 2024 (grade 3, 4, 5 PSSA ELA Test) April 29-30, 2024 (grade 3, 4, 5 PSSA Math Test, grade 4 PSSA Science Test, & Make-ups)
Last Day (tentative)	May 31, 2024

### **EARLY DISMISSAL AT 1:45 PM FOR TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:**

9/27 (Wed)  
10/31 (Tues)  
3/20 (Wed)  
4/17 (Wed)

### **HALF DAY DISMISSAL AT 1:45 PM FOR TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:**

11/20 & 21 (Mon-Tues)  
12/23 (Thurs)  
6/1 (Thurs)  
6/2 (Fri)

### **NO SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS:**

9/1 & 9/4 (Friday-Monday) Labor Day  
9/15 (Friday) Professional Development  
10/9 (Monday) Columbus Day  
11/22-11/27 (Wednesday-Monday) Thanksgiving Break  
12/22 (Friday) Professional Development  
12/25-1/2 Winter Break  
1/15 (Monday) Martin Luther King, Jr. Day  
2/16-20 (Friday-Monday) President's Weekend  
3/1 (Friday) Parent Teacher Conferences  
3/27-4/1 (Wednesday-Monday) Spring Break  
5/24 (Friday) Professional Development  
5/27 (Monday) Memorial Day