

GERMANTOWN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES 2015 - 2016

ABSENCES

Please call our school at (301) 353-8050 before 9:00 A.M., if your child will be absent. The answering machine will take your message between 4:45 P.M. and 7:45 A.M. In addition, a written explanation of each absence is required from the parent or guardian when the student returns to school.

Please note, a monthly list of students' tardiness or absences is generated by the school system and sent to the principal. Students who are late and/or absent more than 3 times each month (excused or unexcused) will receive a letter from the principal. Students who are absent 20% or more days of school are considered habitually absent and may be referred to the Truancy Review Board.

ACCESS CONTROL SYSTEM (ASC)

The system is used as a security enhancement in all MCPS schools. Using the ACS, all visitors will be 'buzzed' into the building. To gain entry, visitors will need to press the red button to the right of the double blue doors (of the main outside entrance). Our main office staff will respond, via a speaker connected to their computer, as quickly as is possible, authorizing access to the building during the school day. Use the LEFT-HAND DOOR to gain entry into the building once a staff member has 'buzzed' you in. Please be patient as the staff will help you as soon as they are able. Also note, if you have never visited our school before you will need to show a license or another form of identification before you are allowed entry into other parts of the building (besides the main office).

ARRIVAL

Students (K-5) will enter the building by the gymnasium and line-up inside the gym each morning. Signs with the teacher's name on it will be placed on the floor or walls. Students will be seated behind their class sign. Supervision will begin promptly at 9:00 AM when students are allowed to enter the building. Students will be sent to classrooms around 9:13AM. Students in PEP & SCB classes will be escorted into the building by the staff that work with them around 9:10 am.

ARRIVING LATE TO SCHOOL AND LEAVING SCHOOL PRIOR TO DISMISSAL

Students arriving late for school, after 9:25 A.M, need to be signed in by a parent, guardian or designated adult. (Adults should not drop off late students at the curb. Please accompany the student(s) inside the building.) If it is necessary for a student to leave the building during the school day, the student must be signed out by the parent, guardian or adult designated in writing before the student will be released. No student will be permitted to leave unaccompanied for any reason. This policy is for the protection of our students.

ASSIGNMENT BOOKS

Assignment books are distributed to each student in grades 3-5 at no cost, thanks to the financial support of our wonderful PTA. This helpful instructional tool provides an area for students to record their HW assignments. Parents should initial the assignment book each day to inform the teacher that you have checked your child's homework assignments.

BREAKFAST AND LUNCH COSTS

Breakfast and lunch prices are listed below and have not increased this year. We continue to encourage parents to put money in their child's SNAP account via cash or check. Items from the "share table" are also available.

Breakfast:	\$1.30	Reduced Breakfast (eligible students)	Free
Lunch:	\$2.55 (includes milk and/or water)	Reduced Lunch (eligible students)	.40
Milk (bought separately):	\$.60	Ice Cream	.50

Breakfast will be served to students at 9:00 a.m. beginning the first day of school. *(Please note - breakfast is not served on days when there is a two-hour delay.)* The school system recognizes the importance of breakfast on a child's ability to learn. Students eligible for reduced priced meals during the school year are able to eat breakfast for free.

Students eligible for free and reduced meals (FARMS) will receive it again until October 1st while new applications are being processed. Once the 2015-2016 applications are processed, that eligibility determination will continue for the rest of the year or until a new application is processed. If a parent's income level changes during the school year, the family is strongly encouraged to resubmit a free and reduced meal application.

AFTER-SCHOOL CLUBS

The school and PTA offer separate clubs for students to participate in after school. Information is sent home via student backpack and updates on the registration process are listed in the parent newsletter. Fees must be paid for club participation.

CLASS & BIRTHDAY PARTIES

If your child would like to share a small treat such as cookies or cupcakes with classmates on his/her birthday, please send in a note a few days before to inform the teacher. Treats will be distributed during your child's lunchtime only so classroom instruction is not interrupted. Please refrain from bringing in other party-like accessories during your child's small lunchtime birthday treat. With the nationwide focus on reducing childhood obesity, please think about sending in healthier treats as much as possible. You must arrange your child's private parties through your own resources as **party invitations are not allowed to be distributed at school.**

MCPS allows two parties to be held during the school day - for Halloween and Valentine's Day. Room parents and/or teachers will be sending information home concerning these parties. Please note, teacher identified parents making purchases for these parties should submit original receipts to the office via the classroom teacher for reimbursement of party refreshments & supplies. Parents will not be reimbursed for any funds spent above what was collected. Also note, a staff member provides an alternative for students who prefer not to attend the designated class parties. In that case, a note requesting the alternate activity should be sent, in advance, to the teacher. (Also note: smoke machines are prohibited!)

COMMUNICATING WITH SCHOOL STAFF

All GES staff can be reached by telephone or in writing (letter or email). If a staff member is not available at the time you call, the office staff will take a message and your call should be returned within 24 hours. If you are experiencing some difficulty communicating with a staff member, it is most appropriate to address your concern with the staff member first. If the issue cannot be resolved, you should then contact the staff member's immediate supervisor in order to help resolve the issue in a positive manner. Please note - email is not always the best form of communication when discussing "difficult" issues or topics. Since miscommunication often occurs in these instances it may be best to schedule a telephone or face-to-face conference in an effort to resolve any issues in a positive manner.

"CONNECT ED" TELEPHONE CALLS

Recorded messages are often sent out to the entire school or selected school community members via a computerized telephone calling system. The home telephone number will receive these calls unless the school office staff is given an alternative or multiple numbers to include in the call receipt list. If your main contact number changes during the school year, please inform the school as soon as possible so we may update our records. (The system also has the ability to send emails as needed. Please be sure to send updated email addresses to the main office as soon as possible.)

DISCIPLINE ISSUES

Misunderstandings between children occur from time to time. Our school staff work to resolve issues in a quick and efficient manner when these issues are brought to our attention. If your child is involved in a situation, in class, a parent should notify the teacher. If there is an issue that occurs on the bus or at lunch/recess or any other areas of the school (and its grounds), please contact the principal.

A thorough investigation (with witnesses if applicable) will take place to determine the series of events and follow-up/consequences. Please note, the staff or principal cannot inform parents of another child's consequences due to confidentiality issues. A comprehensive school behavior management plan is sent home at the beginning of each year that is in keeping with the MCPS Code of Conduct.

EMERGENCY CLOSING/DELAYED OPENING/EARLY DISMISSAL OF SCHOOLS

ALL EMERGENCY CLOSINGS, LATE OPENINGS, OR EARLY DISMISSALS ARE ANNOUNCED PROMPTLY AND REGULARLY ON RADIO AND TV STATIONS (WHICH IS ALSO THE WAY OUR SCHOOL STAFF IS INFORMED).

If schools are to be closed all day, radio and television stations will be notified no later than 6:00 A.M. Please check the media outlets instead of calling the office. We are more than happy to help you, but the volume of calls during the early morning hours can be too much for our small office staff. In the case of a two hour delay, students will be allowed to enter the school building at 10:50 am. On an early dismissal day, students will attend school until 1 pm.

Parents must provide students with breakfast on delayed opening days for it will not be served at school. Parents should plan to make arrangements for their children to cover emergency dismissal, etc. when no one is home to receive students. Students should know what these arrangements are ahead of time. Please fill out the emergency pink forms (distributed at the beginning of the school year or when your child enrolls) so the school staff is also aware of your emergency plans. Please update this information and/or your contact numbers as soon as there is a change. This is in the best interest of your child and his/her safety.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are an extension of the instructional program. Teachers plan these trips months in advance and we encourage all students to attend. Parents are asked to chaperone on most trips. Sometimes we are limited in the number of chaperones that can accompany a field trip. Siblings are not allowed on field trips due to safety concerns. Parents must refrain from smoking during field trips. If you are experiencing a financial hardship, please contact Ms. Bryant directly about a field trip scholarship.

HALF-DAY/EARLY DISMISSAL

Certain days throughout the school year are designated as half-days for students, to provide time for professional days and special conferences with parents. Lunch will be served at school prior to dismissal. The half-day lunch times (without recess) are as follows: 11:50-12:20 noon for grades K, 1, & 3 and 12:30-1:00 for grades 2, 4 & 5

HEALTH ROOM INFORMATION

The direct phone number to the health room is 301-353-0898. Please keep this number for your records.

No medication, including over-the-counter medications such as Tylenol or aspirin or cough medicine, will be administered in school without the parent's/guardian's written permission AND a physician's statement. The medication must be presented to the office/health room by the parent/guardian in the original container bearing the student's name and the name of the medication.

Medical forms are available in the school office and are required for each episode of illness requiring each medication ordered. MCPS policy does not permit staff persons to administer any medications without appropriate medical authorization. Additionally, students are not allowed to bring medication to school and take it on their own - including over the counter medication. If you are contacted to pick up your child because of illness/injury, it is imperative that you come to school immediately.

HOME/SCHOOL FOLDERS

These folders should go home and be checked by parents daily. The Home/School folders may contain HW, corrected work, a note from school staff, newsletters, fliers, etc. New folders will be distributed in late January. Thanks, PTA for purchasing these valuable communication tools for our families!

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Please be alerted to the Maryland State law concerning immunization requirements. *"Beginning with the 1993-94 school year, students entering kindergarten, first, sixth and seventh grade are required to show proof of having two doses of the measles vaccine and one dose of the mumps vaccine after their first birthday."* These vaccines are usually given together as Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR) vaccine. The second dose of MMR is to be given no less than one month after the first. Additional vaccinations must include the following: DPT (Diphtheria-Pertussis-Tetanus), TD (Tetanus-Diphtheria), OPV (Oral Polio Vaccine), Mumps, and Rubella. Dates for these immunizations must be provided. Immunizations for children of all ages are available at the Germantown Health Center, 12900 Middlebrook Road, Monday through Thursday; 1 to 3:30 P.M. Call (240)777-3380 for further information.

The Maryland State Law states that children enrolled in Kindergarten will have **ALL REQUIRED IMMUNIZATIONS BY THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL, AUGUST 31, 2015**. Please make sure that your child's immunizations are completed and that the school has a copy for the complete record.

- SPECIAL HEALTH CARE NEEDS - There are some children who have very specialized health needs that require a written health care plan. This plan is developed in a conference with you (the child's parent or guardian), the school nurse, and your child's teachers. Every person working with your child in the school will be made aware of the plan. If you believe that your child has such a condition (i.e., severe allergic reactions, recurrent infections requiring medication, juvenile diabetes), please alert the office staff and/or health technician so we can have the school nurse contact you. If your child had a health care plan last year, you will be contacted to update it. It is very important that you alert the teacher to changes in your child's health status to assist us in monitoring what is happening in the learning process.
- STUDENT ACCIDENT INSURANCE - Forms for Student Accident Insurance are included in this newsletter. **Do not return the forms to school**, but please follow the directions within the insurance application. A prompt return of these forms using the US mail system will be greatly appreciated by the agency.

LENDING MONEY

Parents can send money to school or put a larger amount of money in their child's SNAP account for breakfast, lunch and/or snack purchases from the cafeteria. The school does not lend money since students are allowed to debit their accounts up to \$10. If a child has reached his/her debit limit, a cheese sandwich will be provided by the cafeteria. Side items and milk are often available from the share table.

LOST AND FOUND

All stray articles are placed in the Lost and Found Collection which is located between the cafeteria and gym. Inquiries may be made at the school office regarding articles lost or found. Occasionally, unclaimed articles will be displayed at school functions. It is recommended that all coats, hats, gloves, boots, and lunch boxes be **labeled with the child's name**. This will reduce the amount of unclaimed articles in the Lost and Found. Unclaimed articles are donated to a charitable organization at the end of the winter and/or at the end of the school year.

LUNCHROOM AND RECESS

Lunchroom/playground aides supervise lunch and recess so that professional staff may have a duty-free 30-minute lunch. Parents can help us by volunteering in these areas and/or by regularly reviewing expectations for appropriate cafeteria/playground behavior and following up with students when there are problems at lunch or on the playground. Lunchroom and playground aides will be proactive in managing student behaviors. Lunch times are as follows:

Grades K, 1 & 3: 12:35 - 1:05; Grades 2, 3, & 4: 1:15 - 1:45; PEP Comprehensive & Classic classes will eat in their classrooms

NEWSLETTERS

The PTA publishes a monthly newsletter called the *Patriot*. Important information, article from the principal, as well as a calendar for upcoming events, is listed in this weekly publication. (Copies can also be found on the school's website and in the main office.)

Grade level newsletters will be distributed by teachers on the last Monday of each month. If that date is a holiday, the newsletter will go home on the following day. A summary of curricular areas of focus, a section on volunteer opportunities, and a section summarizing what students are learning in specials will also be included, etc.

OBSERVING YOUR CHILD IN A LEARNING SITUATION

Parents may wish to see their child in a learning situation. We are proud of our program and are happy to have you observe for a short period of time. Please contact your child's teacher to arrange the observation.

PRINCIPAL'S CHATS

This is a monthly assembly program for grades K-2 and 3-5. During these monthly meetings, Ms. Bryant will recognize the Students of the Month and students who are successful with completing their Mad Minute quizzes. The specialists recognize Classes of the Month. The school counselor leads a skit on demonstrating good character based on monthly themes and recognizes individual students (in each class) who exceptionally demonstrate the same character theme for the previous month. Ms. Bryant will also discuss other important information on an as needed basis.

PTA MEETINGS

PTA meetings are generally held on the first Tuesday of the month from 7:00-8:30 PM. Reports from PTA board members, committee chairs and the principal are shared during each meeting. Periodically, school staff may share presentations on various topics at PTA meetings as well. All GES parents/ guardians are welcome and encouraged to attend. The PTA often provides child care during meetings.

RECESS

If a child is well enough to attend school, s/he is well enough to participate in all school activities, including recess. If there are unusual circumstances where a parent is concerned about a child's participation in recess or other activities, the child's teacher should have a written note from the doctor.

Rainy Day or Inclement Weather Recess

- Blacktop Only Recess: When the field is very wet, we will have a blacktop only recess, and all students must remain on the blacktop area.
- Indoor Recess: On rainy, bitterly cold, or poor air quality days we will have indoor recess; all students will remain in their classrooms under adult supervision.

REPORT CARDS AND CONFERENCES

Kindergarten report cards are distributed twice each year at the end of each semester (January and June). Report cards for grades 1-5 are distributed four times each year in nine week cycles.* (Non-custodial parents may submit self-addressed stamped envelopes to receive copies of their child's report card.) Standards-based report cards are utilized in grades K- 5 with no report card comments (except for students enrolled in ESOL classes).

Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled at the end of the first marking period (in November) for each student in grades K- 5. A sign-up will be available during Back-to-School Night. It is requested that appointments for other conferences with teachers and/or the principal be scheduled in advance.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANS (SIP)

Every school in the state of Maryland has a School Improvement Plan. This plan documents academic goals as measured by the Maryland State Assessment (MSA) and other data points. Our SIP is focused on refining our instructional planning processes in the areas of math and balanced literacy (reading and writing) to meet the needs of all of our student learners. We meet, as a school improvement team, to discuss our progress toward meeting goals 3-4 times each school year. Parents are invited to join the team each school year. Robin Hernandez is our parent representative on the School Improvement Team again this school year. (Thanks, Mrs. Hernandez! ☺)

STUDENT RECOGNITION

We recognize students for a variety of positive behavioral and academic behaviors. The criteria for each are as follows:

- **Student of the Week:** The student must follow school rules and behavioral expectations; put his/her best effort into work; demonstrate excellent or improved social skills; and additionally the teacher will obtain student in-put.
- **Student of the Month:** The student must show long-term, consistent effort to follow the school rules and behavioral expectations; goes above and beyond the call of duty; and additionally the teacher will obtain student in-put.

TAKING PICTURES FOR PERSONAL USE

Parents and visitors are to refrain from taking pictures within the day to day functions of the school day. Parents may take pictures during public events at school such as the Halloween Parade, music concerts, etc., however they should use caution and not post pictures of other people's children on various social media sites without consent from the parents of the child(ren).

VISITORS TO SCHOOL/VOLUNTEERISM

Montgomery County Public Schools Policy and Procedures COA-RA requires that all parents, visitors, and volunteers report directly to the school office any time they arrive at school during the day. **You must stop in the office when you enter the building to sign in and wear one of our badges.** An office staff member will sign in each volunteer in using a computerized system and print a badge for each person to wear. It is just as important for each visitor to have the office staff member sign you out at the end of your visit with us.

If you're on an "I forgot" errand for your child, please leave the article in the office and we will see that it gets to the classroom. It is not appropriate for parents or visitors to "drop in" on a classroom when teachers are instructing and students are learning in order to deliver messages, lunches, medications, etc. or to "ask a quick question." Your complete cooperation with this policy is essential. The consistent use of these procedures is an important component of our school's ability to maintain a safe and secure learning environment as well as a rigorous instructional program.

We look forward to and need the support of parent volunteers. Parents should let the teacher (or other staff member) know, in advance, that s/he is available for volunteer work. This will ensure that the teacher is ready to utilize the parent's skills in the most productive way.

YELLOW "CARDS"

Within the first few days of school, you will receive a pre-printed form with your last known contact information. Please make corrections/revisions to those cards and return to the school as soon as possible. Please return these cards promptly. In order that we may bring our records up to date, **please notify the school of any changes in address, telephone numbers, and emergency information as soon as the change occurs.** If you designate that there are custody concerns on your contact information sheet, court documentation must be brought to the principal. Without court documentation, the school may not keep a child from being picked up by a non-custodial parent.