

Note to Students and Parents

Students and parents/guardians are responsible for reading and following the rules in this handbook. This handbook has been developed within the framework of the Portland School Committee Policy Manual. In case of a conflict between a School Committee policy and the rules in this handbook, the School Committee policy will prevail. If you have any questions about this handbook, please call the Principal.

Equal Educational Opportunities

The Portland Public Schools are committed to the concept and implementation of equal educational opportunities, as required by federal and state laws, for all students, regardless of race, sex, color, national origin, marital status, religion, age, disability, or sexual orientation.

Students or parents/guardians should direct any questions or concerns to Ms. Joline Hart, Affirmative Action Officer, Portland Public Schools, 196 Allen Avenue, Portland, ME 04103. Telephone: 874-8100.

Absences

- **Excused Absences:** *These are for illness, professional appointments, religious holidays, and family emergencies.*
- **Unexcused Absences:** *Over the past few years there has been an increase in the number of students who are taken out of school for family vacations during times when school is in session. These are considered as unexcused absences. Teachers are not required to give vacation homework or to give make-up assignments, tests, or assessments.*

It is important to be aware that such unexcused absences may make it difficult for students to master concepts taught and reinforced in the classroom program. Vacation or make-up assignments really cannot “replace” specific classroom instruction.

Attendance

Regular and punctual school and class attendance is essential to a student’s educational success. Students are expected to attend school every day unless they have an excused absence. Excused absences are defined by Maine law and School Committee policy as follows: personal illness; an appointment with a health professional that must be made during the school day; observance of a religious holiday; a family emergency; or a planned absence for a personal or educational purpose which has been approved in advance by the school. Other absences are considered unexcused and may result in disciplinary consequences and loss of credit for missed assignments. If an elementary student is absent for fifteen (15) days in a school year, this is a reason for referral to the school’s Promotion/Retention Committee

Parents/Guardians are expected to notify the school office (874-8215, 874-8216, 874-8217) if their child will be tardy or absent. Child watch services are provided through the Volunteer Program. The homes of students who have not called in will be contacted in order to insure that the child is safe at home.

Before and After School Programs

The City of Portland Parks & Recreation Department offers a before and after school recreation program. The Before School Program hours are 7-8:30 a.m. and the After School Program hours are 3-5:30 p.m. Brochures and Registration Forms (including Fee Schedule) can be obtained by calling 756-8275.

Bus Transportation

Bus transportation is provided for all kindergarten students who live more than a half-mile from school. Students in grades 1 through 5 must live one mile or more from school to be eligible for bus transportation. Special education students or students with medical issues who do not meet the distance requirement may be allowed to ride the bus under some circumstances. Riding the bus is a privilege and not a right. Students who do not follow the Student Bus Conduct Code may receive consequences from the Principal and may lose their privilege to ride the bus. If this happens, parents/guardians will be responsible for transporting the student to and from school. Please refer to School Committee policy EEA-R, Transportation of Students for specific

information. Students who will be picked up or dropped off at a stop other than his/her own address must complete "Alternate Bus Stop" form, which can be obtained in the office.

Chapter 104

Chapter 104 is the Portland Public School District's program for gifted children. In accordance with state law, children are selected for this program on the basis of standardized test scores and teacher recommendations in reading, writing, math, science and social studies. District consultants work with classroom teachers to provide extensions to classroom lessons that are appropriate for highly able learners. Most of the Chapter 104 work happens within the context of the regular classroom with small pullout groups meeting on an occasional basis as needed.

Community Partnerships/Volunteers

Parents/guardians are welcome to visit their child's class. Lyseth Elementary School provides many opportunities for parents to become involved with their child's education. Research has proven that parental involvement in schools is key to a child's academic success. We feel that it is important for parents to be involved, to know what is going on at school, and to offer whatever support they feel they are able to. Volunteering at Lyseth can fit your schedule, can be in an area of interest to you, and can be mutually beneficial for both you and your child. In the fall of each year, a volunteer sign-up sheet is sent home for parents to fill out. We try to match up teacher's needs with the volunteer's specific skill and/or interest. The Partnership Developer is available to address your questions. Please feel free to call or stop by the office at any time. The Lyseth Elementary School is very interested in developing more business and community partnerships. Historically, some local businesses have provided donations, discounts, and educational opportunities for our students. If you have any information and/or connections that could enhance this program, we would very much appreciate it if you would share this with us. Please contact the Partnership Developer's office at any time.

For safety reasons, we must know who is in the building at all times. When you arrive at school, please stop by the office to sign in and sign out when you leave. Your cooperation in ensuring the security of our building is appreciated.

Computer/Internet Use

Please read the School Committee Computer/Internet Use policy and agreement in Appendix A of this handbook. Violation of the policy/agreement may result in loss of computer/Internet privileges and disciplinary action as appropriate. If you have any questions about these guidelines, please contact your child's teacher.

Crisis Plans and Safety-Related Policies

The Portland schools take the issue of student and staff safety very seriously. The School Committee has approved several safety-related policies that are summarized in Appendix C of this handbook.

Many preventive and crisis response measures are in place in our school system to provide for the safety of our students and staff. School Committee policy requires each school to have a crisis plan in place that is very specific and thorough. The plans follow guidelines established

through a joint effort of the Portland School Department and the Portland Police Department. Each school is also required to conduct practice drills to make sure that staff is familiar with the crisis plan.

DAILY SCHEDULE

8:30 Students may enter school grounds
8:40 Students enter building
8:50 Attendance and Morning Announcements
8:55 Classes begin
12:10 First Lunch (K & 1)
12:35 Second Lunch (2 & 3)
1:00 Third Lunch (4 & 5)
2:55 Classes dismissed

Early Release Days

District-wide early release days are scheduled each Wednesday beginning on October 7th and running through May 26th. Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled for November 23 & 24 and March 25 & 26.

Elementary Family Living Program

The Family Living Program is offered in grades 4, 5, 6, 8 and 9 as part of the health curriculum. Portland Public School Family Life Educators will deliver this program. Four lessons will be presented to fourth graders consisting of basic health information: human body systems (including the reproductive system), disease prevention, abuse prevention and safety, and making healthy choices. Grade 5 is a continuum with 7 lessons including puberty changes, harassment, family structures, abuse prevention and a split class. More information will be sent home to parents of 4th and 5th grade students.

Emergency Information Forms

It is very important that parents promptly return the Emergency Information forms so that school staff is aware of your child's medical information and know how to reach you during the school day. **Please let us know whenever you have a change in address, telephone number, and place of employment or emergency contact person.**

Educational Field Experiences

Field trips are planned to provide students with experiences that enrich the educational program. A universal permission form is sent home for parents to sign and return. Children will not be permitted to participate in field trips unless the permission form has been returned. School rules and policies must be followed on field trips. Children who break the rules may lose the privilege of participating in future field trips. It is the district's policy that students ride the bus to and from field trip.

Fire Drills

Fire drills are conducted 10 times a year in accordance with state law. Students are expected to follow their teacher's directions and to leave the building in a calm and orderly way. Fire escape routes are posted in each room.

Fundraising

All fundraising activities must be approved in advance by the principal. PTA fundraising activities are governed by the guidelines of that organization.

Head Lice

In accordance with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Harvard School of Public Health, and the National Association of School Nurses regarding head lice infestations in school children, the following guidelines will direct our actions:

- 1. Children who are symptomatic (scratching persistently) will be referred to the school nurse.*
- 2. The nurse will evaluate the case and take appropriate action, maintaining confidentiality for the child.*
- 2. If the school nurse is not present, the student will remain in class and the school nurse will evaluate the student at the next available visit.*
- 3. In the case of difficult individual cases, the school nurse will develop a plan with the student, the student's family and other staff members as appropriate with a goal of limiting loss of class time.*

Health Screenings

Children in kindergarten and grades 1, 3 and 5 receive vision and hearing screening.

Homework

Homework gives students a chance to practice what they have learned in school and to deepen their understanding of what is taught. Meaningful homework helps students succeed in school and learn good study habits. Homework also provides an opportunity for students to share what they are learning with their parents/guardians. A School Committee policy guides the amount of homework that is given at each grade level:

Grades K-2: Occasional, specific assignments up to 15 minutes.

Grade 3: Assignments up to 30 minutes, four times per week.

Grades 4-5: Assignments up to 45 minutes, four times per week.

In the early grades, the most important "homework" is having your child read to you and reading every day to your child. Teachers send home books to help children practice their reading skills and they can also suggest wonderful books for reading aloud to your child.

Illnesses and Injuries at School

If your child becomes ill during the school day, you will be called to come pick your child up. It is very important that parents/guardians keep emergency telephone numbers up-to-date so that you or your emergency contact can be reached quickly in the event that your child becomes ill or is injured at school.

Accident report forms are completed for injuries that occur on school grounds. Parents/guardians are notified by telephone or note describing the accident, the extent of injury, and the treatment provided.

Immunizations

Maine law requires all students to receive the following immunizations: three polio (one after the first birthday); three DPT (diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus); rubella (German measles); mumps; and measles. Non-immunized students are not permitted to attend school unless the parent/guardian provides a written statement from a physician that immunization against one or more diseases may be inadvisable or the parent/guardian provides a written statement that immunization is contrary to their religious, moral or philosophical beliefs. The Superintendent and/or public health officials may exclude non-immunized students from school if there is a health threat to the student or others. Questions concerning these requirements may be addressed to the principal or school nurse.

Instructional Program

In recent years, the Portland Public Schools have worked with parents, teachers, young people, community leaders and other residents to set clear standards and expectations for those who work and learn in the schools. One set of standards applies to students, another to teachers and a third to administrators.

The Learning Results spell out the knowledge and skills that students need for their future success. The first part sets expectations that students will become effective communicators, involved citizens, collaborative workers, quality producers, self-directed learners, versatile thinkers and knowledgeable people.

The second part of the Learning Results, content standards, are a body of facts, concepts and skills identifying what a knowledgeable person needs to know in each of the following core subjects:

ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS

PERSONAL FITNESS

FOREIGN LANGUAGE

SCIENCE

VISUAL/PERFORMING ARTS

SOCIAL STUDIES

MATHEMATICS

TECHNOLOGY

INFORMATION SKILLS

The third component of the Learning Results, complex-thinking standards, ensure that students learn with deep understanding. Students apply their knowledge and skills using complex thinking processes. Among others, these include: comparing, classifying, investigating, solving problems and analyzing errors.

Late Arrival

It is important for students to arrive at school and be in class on time. Parents/guardians are requested to call in advance if they know their child is going to be late to school. Students who arrive after school starts must report to the office. Tardiness is excused for the same reasons as absences.

Lost and Found

Please put your child's name on his/her clothing, boots, lunch box, backpack, and other belongings so they can be returned if lost. Parents and children are encouraged to check the lost and found periodically to check for lost items. Periodically during the year, unclaimed items will be donated to charity.

Medications

The School Committee has a policy about students receiving medications at school. Please see Appendix B at the back of the handbook.

Open Houses

An open house for parents/guardians is scheduled near the beginning of each school year. Specific information is sent home through the mail or with students.

Parent Conferences

Parent conferences are scheduled at set times during the school year (please see the Portland Public Schools calendar). Parent conferences may also include students and others. Specific information is sent home through the mail or with students. Students are welcome to attend!

Parent Organizations

Parent participation at school is a key to a successful experience for children. There are many opportunities for involvement. Lyseth's PTA (Parent-Teacher Association) is active and supportive of the school.

Personal Property

We encourage students to leave money, toys, electronic games, cell phones and other personal belongings at home. The school is not responsible for lost or damaged belongings. Items that distract students from learning will be taken away until the end of the school day or until a parent/guardian can pick the item up.

Placement Procedures

Student placement is a thoughtful process that involves time and input from classroom teachers and other school staff and administrators. Parents/guardians have the opportunity to give input into the process by discussing placement with your child's current teacher and providing written information on how your child learns best. A child's academic progress, interpersonal

relationships, development pattern, and attendance are reviewed by the placement team (which includes the child's current teacher), and then the team makes the final class placement decision. Further information about specific placement procedures is made available to parents in the spring. **Specific request for teachers will not be accepted.**

Playground

The playground is unsupervised before 8:30 a.m. Parents/guardians are expected to make arrangements for supervising their child prior to this time. At the close of school, children are expected to leave the school grounds promptly. The school does not provide playground supervision after the school dismissal time at 3:00 p.m.

Retention of Students

The School Committee has a policy that guides school staff in considering whether students should be retained. Parents/guardians are involved as early as possible in identifying areas of weakness and possible remedial activities for a student at risk for retention.

Religious Holidays

Please refer to the Portland Public Schools Holiday Observances Guidelines and Holiday Calendar available in each school office.

Progress Reports

The Portland elementary schools are on a trimester schedule and student progress is communicated to parents/guardians three times a year. Parent conferences are scheduled in November and March and at the request of the teacher and/or parent/guardian.

Safety Related Policies

The Portland schools take the issue of student and staff safety very seriously. Please see Appendix C of this handbook for summaries of the Portland School Committee's safety-related policies. The full text of these policies is available online at www.portlandschools.org and in the main office.

School Cancellation or Delay

In the event of an emergency or weather-related school delay, cancellation, or early closing, announcements are made on local radio and television stations, including Channel 3, the school channel. Please do not call the school office for this information, as telephone lines are very busy during these times. School delays or cancellations are announced beginning at approximately 6:00 a.m. Early school closings may require announcements during the school day.

School Lunch

A nutritious lunch is available daily to all students. The cost for lunch is \$2.00, or milk (chocolate or white) can be purchased separately for 30 cents. Free and reduced cost lunches are available to qualified students. Application forms are sent home during the first week of school or can be picked up at the school office any time during the school year.

School Pictures

School pictures are taken each year in the fall. Parents/guardians will have the opportunity to purchase picture packages from the photographer, but this is strictly optional. School pictures will be taken by LifeTouch on September 25, 2009. Spring school pictures are offered in May.

School Supplies

Parents/guardians are notified by teachers about the basic supplies each child should have for class use. Please label your child's supplies so that your child can keep track of them. Teachers may occasionally request parents/guardians to provide materials for class use or special projects.

Searches

Lockers, desks and other school storage facilities are school property, and remain under the control, custody and supervision of the school even when they are assigned to individual students. Students have no expectation of privacy in school storage facilities or for any items placed in such facilities. School officials have the authority to inspect and search storage facilities and their contents on a random basis, with or without reasonable suspicion, and without notice or consent. Only locks provided by the school may be used on lockers and all other locks will be removed.

School officials may also search students' wallets, purses, backpacks, pockets, automobiles, and other property when they have a reasonable suspicion that the search will reveal evidence that the student has violated or is violating the law, School Committee policies, and/or school rules.

Illegal and/or prohibited items such as firearms, weapons, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, stolen property, or other items determined to be a threat to the safety or security of the school will be seized and the student's parent/guardian notified. Evidence may be forwarded to law enforcement as deemed appropriate by school officials, even if the search was initiated for school purposes.

Sign-In

Please help us to keep the school safe by always checking in at the office upon your arrival at the school. For the safety of your child and other children, we ask all visitors (parents, guardians, family, community members, etc.) to the school to sign in at the office

Snacks

Most classes have a morning snack period. Parents/guardians are encouraged to send a healthy snack with their children each morning. We strongly discourage students from bringing candy, soda and other non-nutritious snacks. Please do not send food or drinks in glass containers.

Special Education

The Portland School Committee has adopted a complete set of policies related to special education services. If you need more information, please contact the Principal, learning strategist or your child's teacher.

Standardized Testing

A formal testing program allows the schools to look at student performance trends over time. It is very important to remember that testing of any kind is only one piece of the puzzle. Scores are indicators of performance but they are only one method teachers use to assess your child. Your child's teachers can provide you with complete information about your child's performance.

Students in grades 3-5 participate in the NECAP (New England Common Assessment Program) as required by law.

Student Clothing

Students are expected to wear clothing appropriate to a school setting. Shirts which expose the midriff, shorts and skirts that are extremely short, and beach wear are not permitted. Hats are to be removed in the building. Clothing suggesting alcoholic beverages, tobacco, or inappropriate messages will not be worn at school. Proper footwear is essential for physical education classes and playground.

Student Dismissal

Dismissal at the end of the school day is a very busy time. For safety reasons, and to make dismissal an orderly process, we ask that you cooperate with the following procedures. If your child normally walks or takes the bus, but you are planning to pick your child up at the end of the day, please send a note or call early in the day. Parents/guardians are asked to wait for their child in designated areas. All early dismissals (prior to 3:00 p.m.) must go through main office.

The School Committee has adopted a policy on this subject. Please see the summary of policy JL1B - Student Dismissal in Appendix C of the handbook.

Student/Family Services

Schools social workers help students with problems so that they are better able to access their education and adjust to the school environment in a successful manner. The social worker provides individual counseling for students to help them deal with the above-mentioned problems. Social work services are available to all students and families at Lyseth School. The social worker works with individual students, small groups of students, and also with classrooms. The social workers also provide services to families as well. Some of the difficulties that students experience are: divorce, death of a loved one, low self esteem, difficulties getting along with peers, behavioral problems either at home or school, adjustment to a new school, etc.

Student Insurance

A student accident insurance program is available that provides broad coverage at low cost. Information about this program is sent home at the beginning of the school year.

Parents/guardians are responsible for payment of all medical bills for students who are injured or become ill at school.

Student Records

The Portland School Department complies with all federal and state laws concerning confidentiality of student records. A notice is sent home with students at the beginning of the school year about parent and student rights concerning student records. If you need more information, please contact the Principal.

Telephone Use

*The office telephone is for school business and students may only use the telephone with the permission of their teacher and office staff. The telephone may not be used to call home for forgotten homework, lunches, and musical instruments or to make after school plans without permission. **Students are not permitted to carry or use cell phone at school.***

Traffic Safety

The movement of children on the school grounds and sidewalks can be unpredictable and drivers are reminded to be alert at all times. For the safety of our children and staff, please observe all traffic and parking rules. A speed limit of 15 miles per hour is in effect during school opening and dismissal times. Signs clearly mark bus zones, staff parking and car zones. Cars should approach all areas slowly and with caution. Do not drive into the bus zone. Just a reminder – it is illegal to pass a bus with flashing red lights, whether on or off school grounds.

Transfer Students

Students Transferring to Portland

- *Parents/guardians of students transferring to Portland from outside the school system are required to complete a Transfer Student Application Form and to provide all required documentation.*

Students transferring out of Portland or to another Portland school

- *Parents/guardians who move out of Portland or to another Portland school are required to sign a Student Transfer Form at the new school. The Portland school office will then send the student's educational records to the new school. All library books, textbooks, and other school property assigned to the student must be returned before the student transfers or the parents/guardians will be billed for them. In order to make the transition as smooth as possible, we request that parents/guardians notify the school office of a transfer at least one week in advance.*

Walkers/Bicyclists

Parents/guardians are requested to talk to their child about traffic safety. It is important that children use sidewalks and cross streets at locations where a crossing guard is on duty wherever possible. We discourage children from riding bicycles, skateboards or roller blades to school due to the risk of student injury and/or theft or damage to these items. Children who ride bikes

to school (upon reaching school grounds, must walk their bike) must leave them in designated areas and lock them. The school does not assume any responsibility for bicycles.

Elementary School Student Code of Conduct and Discipline

In order to maintain a safe, respectful, and orderly school environment, it is very important for students to learn and follow all school policies and rules. Summaries of the School Committee's policies about student conduct are included in Appendix C of this handbook. These policies address issues such as violence, weapons, threats, harassment, bus conduct, use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco, and other serious misbehavior.

The Portland elementary schools also have the following rules for student behavior:

General Rules

- *Come to school prepared to listen and learn*
- *Do your best work at all times*
- *Be respectful of school property and property of others*
- *Dress in a neat, appropriate manner.*
- *Follow all established classroom rules*

Cafeteria Rules

- *Clean up after yourself*
- *Speak in quiet voices*
- *Leave tables free of trash/food*
- *Use good table manners*
- *Eat only the food you brought or purchased*
- *Raise your hand to ask permission to leave your seat*

Rules for School Grounds

- *Use all equipment safely*
- *Stay in the designated areas*
- *Safe play*
- *Take turns and share equipment*
- *Include everyone who wants to play*
- *Stay away from any parked cars*
- *Follow directions from all school staff*
- *Use only equipment supplied by the school department. **Do not bring the following to school: Bats (wooden), hard balls, skateboards, roller blades, electronic games, cell phones, iPods, and/or MP3 players.***

Unacceptable Behavior

Students who break the rules or policies will face consequences which may include:

- *notifying parents/guardians*
- *a request for a meeting with parents/guardian*
- *loss of recess or other privileges;*

- *writing an apology or in cases of serious or repeated misbehavior, students may receive detention or be suspended or expelled from school. Parents/guardians are responsible for paying for any school property that is lost or damaged by their child.*

Parents/guardians will be informed when school staff is concerned about your child's behavior. You can support your child's efforts to improve behavior by communicating with school personnel.

Contents of Appendices

- A - School Committee Student Internet Acceptable Use Policy, Parental Consent and Waiver*
- B - School Committee Medication Policy, Instructions and Authorization Form*
- C - Annual Notification of Rights Under FERPA*
- D - Safety-Related Policies Summaries:*
 - ACAA - Harassment*
 - EBCC - Bomb Threats*
 - EBCC-R - Bomb Threats Administrative Guidelines*
 - JIC - Student Conduct*
 - JICC - Student Bus Conduct Code*
 - JICFA - Student Hazing*
 - JICG - Student Tobacco Policy*
 - JICG-R - Tobacco Administrative Procedures*
 - JICH - Drug and Alcohol Use by Students*
 - JICH-R - Drug and Alcohol Use Administrative Procedures*
 - JICI - Weapons, Violence and School Safety*
 - JK - Student Discipline*
 - JKD - Student Suspension*
 - JKE - Expulsion of Students*
 - JKE-R - Expulsion of Students - Guidelines*
 - JLIB - Student Dismissal Precaution*

