



ELEMENTARY STUDENT HANDBOOK

**NORTHGATE SCHOOL DISTRICT
2022-23 ACADEMIC YEAR**

ADMINISTRATION/OFFICE PERSONNEL

A FULL STAFF DIRECTORY CAN BE FOUND AT NORTHGATESD.NET

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School Hours
8:05 am - 2:55 pm

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INTRODUCTION

The Elementary Schools have an excellent educational program Kindergarten through 6th-grade taught by a talented and dedicated faculty. Our faculty and staff take great pride in the curriculum and instruction offered to our district's youngest learners. We are committed to providing each student with an education in which essential information and skills are learned, knowledge is explored, and ideas are critically analyzed and evaluated.

The effort to meet each child's needs for growth socially, emotionally and academically—is ongoing. We use student assessment data and curriculum review and revision to develop appropriate classroom and differentiated instruction. However, it is the small class environment that fosters our teachers' abilities to get to "know" their students and their individual strengths, challenges, and passions - ensuring each child's positive school experience and love of learning.

Our parents play an important role in our students' lives and success at school. We are fortunate to have an active, strong parent-teacher organization to support and enhance our programs and activities.

The Elementary School Handbook has been designed to give an overview of both the elementary curriculum and the policies and procedures followed in each elementary school.

Your child's elementary school years are a special time in his or her life. Our priority is to engage and excite your child about their entire school experience. Building strong academic and social skills during the pivotal K-6 years provides a pathway for long-term success. We invite you to participate in our school community and to enjoy the excitement of learning.

VISION STATEMENT

We believe that every child can learn and must learn. Each student will demonstrate proficiency in reading, writing, mathematics and computer literacy, while nurtured in a safe, caring and stimulating environment. We believe that a high performing student is the product of vital interacting forces within the school community, including a dedicated staff, a challenging curriculum, a productive school culture, parents who are partners in education and a community that offers learning opportunities, human resources and support. Finally, we cherish each child in both mind and heart. The core values of honesty, integrity, responsibility and respect for others will permeate the school community, encouraging each student to grow in knowledge and virtue.

ACADEMIC GOALS

LANGUAGE ARTS

Northgate's Reading/Language Arts program is based upon State and National standards that integrate reading, writing, listening and speaking. Essential phonics skills are taught through the *Core knowledge Language Arts* program in grades 3-6 and applied in the Write-to-Read computer lab. Process writing and literature circles develop vocabulary and comprehension skills and allow students to practice and apply strategies necessary to build independence. Library instruction supports fiction and non-fiction selections from the regular classroom representing various authors and genres. Research skills are systematically taught utilizing appropriate sources and electronic media. In addition, *Accelerated Reader*, an individualized program that promotes independent reading, reinforces reading comprehension by assigning points to computer quizzes after students have read *Accelerated Reader* books.

MATHEMATICS

Based on the Common Core Standards and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, *Eureka Squared* is a rigorous curriculum proven to build students' mathematical knowledge from the basics to higher order thinking and critical problem solving in grades K through 5. Real-life problems and situations are applied to math concepts so that students experience information to develop mathematical insights and reasoning. In sixth grade they will use *Illustrative Mathematics*, a problem-based core mathematics curriculum that develops students' mathematical thinking skills through questioning, discussion, and real world contexts and connections.

SCIENCE

The Smithsonian Institute science program provides students with an engaged hands-on, inquiry based learning experiences, with an in-depth study of scientific concepts that require higher order thinking skills.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Social Studies concepts are incorporated with reading and literature in grades K-6. The intermediate program stimulates an understanding and respect for our American heritage, fosters the development of responsible citizenship in our democratic society, and emphasizes respect for varying cultures. It is a developmental program which focuses on literal comprehension, critical thinking skills, and vocabulary development, map and globe skills, writing and speaking skills, and the study of chronology. The program prepares the students for responsible citizenship in our American society.

ART AND MUSIC

Students are offered rich learning experiences that integrate the arts with the general curriculum. All students in grades K-6 receive formal instruction from certified art and music teachers each week. Our certified art specialists encourage aesthetic awareness through observation and visual re-creation of the world around us. The art curriculum includes sequential lessons in the areas of drawing, painting, sculpting, ceramics, printmaking and crafts. The classroom teachers and the art teacher share themes to create interdisciplinary units. Our certified music specialists provide formal instruction that encourages participation through singing, rhythmic movement, and aesthetic awareness. Music instruction is often integrated with the general curriculum, which both enriches the learning experience and helps children form connections between the arts and other subjects, such as math and science.

CHORUS

Chorus is scheduled once a week as an optional after-school program for students in grades 4-6. General music classroom skills are fortified and proper ensemble singing and performance techniques are taught. Students perform several times through the school year for peers, parents, and the community.

BAND

Students in grades 4-6 are encouraged to join the band. Flute, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, trombone and percussion instruments are taught on a weekly basis during the school day, for lessons of 15-20 minutes. A weekly 30-minute band rehearsal is also conducted to prepare for concerts in December and May. A continuous rent-to-buy program through local music stores is available. The school provides books and sheet music. Elementary instrumental lessons prepare students for membership in the instrumental ensembles at the high school and foster a life-long appreciation of music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Students in grades K-6 receive formal instruction from a certified physical education teacher each week. Students are expected to wear a t-shirt, shorts or sweatpants, and athletic shoes and socks on the days they have class. At the primary level, the program focuses on the development of basic gross and fine motor skills and participating cooperatively in small and large group activities. These skills are further developed at the intermediate level, when students also receive instruction in the rules of various sports. In grades K-6, the arts are integrated in the form of music and dance, while overall physical fitness and wellness remain the focus of the program.

STUDENT SERVICES

TITLE I

Title I Reading is a federally funded program designed to assist qualifying students in the skills necessary to become better readers. The primary goal is for students to be successful in the regular school program, to attain grade level proficiency, and ultimately, to meet or exceed the State Standards in reading. In order to accomplish these outcomes, differentiated instruction is provided by certified specialists in coordination with each student's regular classroom teacher.

SCHOOL COUNSELING

The counselors in both elementary schools are committed to providing all students with a comprehensive program which systematically addresses the three areas of academic, career, and personal/social development. This model allows us to assist students in exploring, planning and realizing their individual interests, abilities, and goals. Our counselors work collaboratively with parents, educators and the community to provide support for student achievement while carefully considering the developmental needs for our students..

SUICIDE AWARENESS, PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

The Board of School Directors is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its students and school community. This policy supports federal, state and local efforts to provide education on youth suicide awareness and prevention; establish methods of prevention, intervention, and response to suicide or suicide attempt; and to promote access to suicide awareness and prevention resources.

In compliance with state law and regulations, and in support of the district's suicide prevention measures, information received in confidence from a student may be revealed to the student's parents/guardians, the building principal or other appropriate authority when the health, welfare or safety of the student or any other person is deemed to be at risk.

The district shall utilize a multifaceted approach to suicide prevention which integrates school and community-based supports. The district shall notify district employees, students and parents/guardians of this policy and shall post the policy on the district's website.

CHILL PROJECT

The Chill Project uses mindfulness-based exercises to equip students, teachers, and parents with a common language and universal skills to identify, discuss, and react positively to stress.

School has always been a source of stress, whether you're taking classes, teaching, or parenting a student. Negative reactions to stress create a significant barrier to learning and growth. The Chill Project features dedicated professionals, a calming space, and regular instruction to help every member of a school's community better handle pressure and anxiety.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

A team of trained professional staff provides assistance and referrals for parents and children who are experiencing difficulties that are barriers to their learning. Please contact the guidance counselor in your child's elementary school for more information.

STUDENT HEALTH

The Northgate elementary schools attempt to provide an environment in which each child will be safe from injury or illness. If a minor accident occurs, the school nurse or school personnel will administer first aid. The parent will be notified if further attention is needed. The school nurse is available to treat children who encounter accidents and illnesses during school hours only. Injuries or illnesses occurring at home are the responsibility of the parent and/or family physician.

EMERGENCY CARDS

Each year, parents/guardians are requested to complete an emergency card. Parents should be sure that the required emergency information has been supplied to the school on the yellow emergency card. **Please keep the card updated by notifying the school of any changes in address or phone numbers. It is very important that you provide notification of these changes in a timely manner.** Transportation for students who must be excused from school because of an illness or accident is the responsibility of the parent. If this should be impossible, other arrangements would be noted on the emergency card.

IMMUNIZATIONS

The following immunizations are required before a child can enter school:

- Four (4) DPT and a fourth dose must be administered on or after the 4th birthday
- Three (3) doses of Hepatitis B
- Four (4) doses of polio (4th dose on or after 4th birthday and at least 6 months after previous dose given)
- Two (2) doses of the MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) immunization
- Two (2) doses of varicella (chicken pox), or evidence of immunity.
- **The universal lead testing regulation went into effect on January 1, 2018. This means that starting in the fall of 2018, every child will need to present a record of being tested for lead before entering kindergarten.**

SCHOOL EXAMINATIONS

- PHYSICAL EXAMINATION – Kindergarten and sixth grades
- DENTAL EXAMINATION – Kindergarten and third grades
- HEIGHT AND WEIGHT – Annually by the school nurse
- VISION TEST – Annually by the school nurse
- HEARING TEST – By the school nurse in kindergarten, first, second and third grades
- SCOLIOSIS SCREENING – Students are screened for scoliosis (curvature of the spine) in sixth grade

You are encouraged to have the physical and dental examinations performed by your child's doctor and dentist. Instructions concerning the procedure to be followed are distributed during the school year.

MEDICATION POLICY

Every effort should be made to administer any required medication to children at home. If it becomes necessary for a student to receive prescription medication or over the counter medication during the school day, a special medication form must be filled out by the attending physician and signed by the parent. These forms are available from the school nursing office.

The school nurse is authorized only to dispense the following non-prescription medications: acetaminophen, ibuprofen, and antacids with parental permission.

- All medications must be supplied by the parent and kept locked in the health office.
- All prescription medication must be in the original labeled pharmacy container.
- All non-prescription medications must be contained in the original packaging and labeled with the student's name.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

REPORT CARDS

Students in grades K-6 receive report cards every nine weeks. An explanation of the grading scales used at each level is included on the report cards.

PROGRESS REPORTS

In grades 4, 5, and 6, if a student experiences difficulty in a subject area, or if grades begin to drop significantly, a progress report is sent home for parent review. These reports may be issued any time prior to the receipt of a report card. **If your child receives a Progress Report, schedule a conference with his/her teacher(s).**

PROMOTION/RETENTION

Students who successfully complete a grade level are promoted to the next grade level at the end of the academic year. Should a student not achieve success, retention may be necessary. Students may be retained for the following reasons:

- Grade 1: Must pass (grade M, S, or N) both Reading and Math to be promoted to 2nd grade.
- Grades 2-4: Must pass (grade A, B, C, or D) both Reading and Math. In addition to Reading and Math, a student must also pass (grade A, B, C, D, M, S, or N) one of the following major subjects: Science or Social Studies.
- Grades 5-6: Must pass (grade A, B, C, or D) three of the major subject areas (one of which must be Reading or Math): Reading, Math, English, Science and Social Studies.
- If a student misses 30 or more days in a year, he/she may be retained.

Recommendations for retention may also be made for other reasons such as social/emotional development or level of readiness. Parents and teachers should discuss any possibility of retention early in the second semester.

STANDARDIZED TESTING

Kindergarten students are screened in August before starting school. Students in grade K- 2 will be administered Dibels Testing in the fall, winter, and spring. Students in grades 3-6 will participate in the PSSA (Pennsylvania System of School Assessment) test for Reading and Math. In addition, grade 4 participates in the PSSA Science test. Students in grades 3-6 are also administered the USA Test Prep Benchmark in ELA, Math, Science three times a year.

All assessments, including local assessment data, are utilized to monitor individual student achievement and to guide decisions regarding curriculum and instruction.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Respect... Responsibility... Honesty... Integrity

The Northgate School District believes that student behavior and learning go hand in hand. The purpose of this discipline policy is to promote a positive and safe learning environment and to reinforce appropriate social behaviors in each child.

Northgate Elementary Schools shall base their expectations of student behavior on the core values of respect, responsibility, honesty, and integrity, as in the School Vision Statement. While positive and supportive measures are employed to model, teach, and encourage pro-social behaviors, **any conduct that disrupts the school environment or interferes with learning will not be tolerated.**

Each elementary teacher has specific classroom rules and regulations that may vary somewhat, depending upon the teacher, subject, and grade level. **It is the student's responsibility to abide by, and adjust to the diversity of rules that exist throughout the school.**

Teachers and support staff have the responsibility to model positive and respectful behavior and to use a variety of methods and strategies to effectively modify student behavior before they are referred to the principal.

Parents/guardians also have a responsibility to support the rules and regulations established by the school district. Parents, by their attitudes, strongly influence their children. A positive and supportive attitude toward the schools will help greatly in establishing and maintaining a positive learning atmosphere.

BULLYING PROCEDURE

- Student/Parent provides specific nature of the bullying complaint and a statement of relevant facts.
- Statement is to be written and presented within three days of the incident or recognized behavior pattern of bullying.
- Principal then investigates the bullying complaint by speaking to each student involved.
- Student/Parent who reported the complaint will be notified if the report is confirmed.
- Names of possible witnesses and disciplinary action will not be revealed.
- Once the bullying situation is founded and confirmed, consequences will be issued.

They may include:

- Counseling within the school
- Parent conference
- Loss of school privileges
- Detention
- Change of class
- Suspension
- Counseling outside of school
- Referral to law enforcement
- Expulsion

RESPECT AND CONCERN FOR OTHERS

Students are to show respect towards other students and adults at all times.

- Students will move quietly through the hallways and while using lockers so as not to disturb the learning of others.
- There will be no locks on lockers.
- Individual teachers will establish procedures and times regarding the daily use of the restrooms.
- Students are expected to exhibit appropriate behavior by keeping the restrooms clean and functional.
- Students will not be permitted to bring any electronic devices, including radios, beepers, video games, CD players, or toys to school.
- Behaviors such as bullying, threats, intimidation or any type of harassment will not be tolerated.
- Students are to show respect for the property of others, including school property.
- Students and their parents or guardians will be required to make monetary retribution if a student is involved in any act of vandalism. Charges may be filed with the local magistrate for any crime, including institutional vandalism.

- Challenging the authority of school personnel, using inappropriate language, profanity or offensive language will not be tolerated. Disciplinary or restorative measures will be enacted, which may result in a removal from the general school population.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

- Be prepared to learn.
- Follow school rules and regulations.
- Respect yourself, others, and our school environment.
- Keep your hands, feet and objects to yourself.
- Walk quietly throughout the building.
- Be positive and do your best.
- Act safely and use materials properly.
- Accept responsibility for your actions and attitude.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Attendant upon the rights established for each student are certain responsibilities, which include regular attendance, conscientious effort in classroom work and homework, conformance to Board policies and school rules and regulations, respect for the rights of teachers, students, administrators and all others who are involved in the educational process, and expression of ideas and opinions in a respectful manner.

It shall be the responsibility of the student to:

- Be aware of all policies, rules and regulations for student behavior and conduct himself/herself accordingly. Each student shall assume that, until a rule is waived, altered or repealed in writing, it is in effect.
- Volunteer information in matters relating to the health, safety and welfare of the school community and the protection of school property.
- Dress and groom to meet standards of safety and health, and not to cause substantial disruption to the educational processes.
- Assist the school staff in operating a safe school.
- Comply with federal, state and local laws.
- Exercise proper care when using district facilities, school supplies and equipment.
- Attend school daily and be on time to all classes and other school functions.
- Make up work when absent from school.
- Pursue and attempt to satisfactorily complete the courses of study prescribed by local school authorities.
- Report accurately in student media.
- Not use obscene language in student media or on school property.

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, consistent with the Code of Student Conduct and Board policy.

OUTDOOR RULES

- Move and act in a safe manner.
- Show respect to all adults and students.
- All balls and play equipment must be “teacher approved.”
- Return school equipment to the storage bin.

- Line up promptly at the door when called.
- Stay in the designated play area.

DRESS CODE

An important objective of the School District is to promote a school environment that is conducive to learning and one that fosters responsible attitudes and habits, reflecting community values while also respecting a student's right to express themselves in the way that they dress. Students are expected to respect the school community by dressing appropriately for the K-12 educational environment. Clothing may not state, imply, or depict hate speech/imagery targeting groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious affiliation, or any other protected classification. Clothing or jewelry displaying indecent writing, profanity, depictions or allusions to drugs, alcohol and sex, including slogans, are inappropriate and may not be worn. Apparel of or relating to designation of gang membership, affiliation or promotion is prohibited. The following dress code requirements will be enforced:

- Students must wear clothing including both a shirt with pants or skirt, or the equivalent (for example dresses, leggings, or shorts) and shoes.
- Clothing must cover areas from one armpit across to the other armpit, down to the thighs and tops must have shoulder straps.
- If a person's shirt does not cover the navel area, then a jacket, hoodie, or some type of coverup must be worn.
- Clothing must cover undergarments.
- Fulfillment of the dress code must accommodate clothing worn by students as an expression of religious beliefs (head scarves, for example) and worn by students with disabilities (protective helmets, for example).
- Clothing must be suitable for all scheduled classroom activities including physical education, science labs, wood shop, and other activities where unique hazards exist.
- Specialized courses may require specialized attire, such as sports uniforms or safety gear.
- Articles deemed unacceptable in the school building under this objective are as follows: winter coats, thick jackets, bulky pullovers, etc. may not be worn throughout the normal school day unless administrative permission is extended for special circumstances.

Dress must not interfere with the educational process or the rights of others and clothing should not, in any manner, affect the safety or welfare of the wearer or other students. Students wearing unacceptable clothing may be presented with school owned replacement garments or may be sent home for a change of clothes. Multiple violations may necessitate appropriate disciplinary measures as deemed necessary by the Principal or Assistant Principal. School-directed changes to a student's attire or grooming should be the least restrictive and disruptive to the student's school day. Any school dress code enforcement actions should minimize the potential loss of educational time.

Dress code procedure: When a student is not in compliance with the dress code, the teacher or faculty member will send the student to the nurse without confrontation. Simply say, "the nurse needs to see you." The teacher or faculty member will then send the nurse a message to alert her why the student is being sent to the office.

CAFETERIA RULES

In the best interest of safety for all children it is important that EVERYONE adhere to the basic cafeteria rules. The climate in the lunchroom shall promote healthful eating habits, proper manners, responsibility, and respect for others. It is expected that once seated, children will **remain seated**, unless permission is given otherwise.

- Students shall raise their hands to alert lunchroom supervisors of their needs.
- Students and adults shall use a moderate tone of voice when talking.
- Students shall walk safely at all times.
- Students should keep their table and nearby floor area clean.
- Students should use good table/eating manners.
- Students shall show respect to each other and to **ALL** adults, including cafeteria employees and parent volunteers.
- **Students are expected to be quiet when the lights are turned off.**
- **Carbonated beverages of any kind are discouraged.** Students are not permitted to take food or drinks out of the lunchroom unless they are placed in the appropriate closed container. Glass containers are **NOT** permitted under any circumstances.

Each student will be assigned a seat in the cafeteria at the discretion of the teacher, principal, and/or cafeteria supervisors. However, the principal, working in conjunction with the teachers and cafeteria supervisors, may waive the assigned seating policy for a specific time period based on the positive behavior of the students.

Students who violate lunchroom rules will be disciplined as follows:

- Verbal warnings
- Change of assigned seat
- Written lunchroom conduct form to the principal
- Lunchroom detention OR after-school detention, as determined by the principal

SAFETY TO AND FROM SCHOOL

Proper habits of safety must be followed. This includes:

- Depart from home so as to arrive at school not more than ten (10) minutes before the entry time. Starting time is 8:05 a.m.
- Walk safely on the sidewalk.
- Cross only at an intersection protected by a crossing guard and school patrols where possible.
- Refuse to enter or approach strange vehicles.
- Proceed directly to school or home.
- **Children are not permitted on the playground before school or within one-half hour after school unless accompanied by a parent/guardian.**
- Be considerate of others, especially children who are smaller.
- Do not engage in teasing, rough play, fighting or use of “put downs” or inappropriate language.
- Do not congregate on sidewalks or lawns, or in front of buildings.

POSSESSION OF WEAPONS OR FACSIMILE - SUMMARY OF BOARD POLICY

Weapons and replicas of weapons, including toys, are forbidden on school property, while traveling to and from school, or at school sanctioned events. Weapons shall include, but are not limited to, the following: firearms,

knives, metal knuckles, straight razors, explosives, incendiary devices (matches, lighters, etc.), or other items fashioned with the intent to use, sell, harm, threaten or harass students, staff members, parents, and patrons.

“Dangerous weapon” means any weapon, device, instrument, material or substance, animate or inanimate, which under the circumstances in which it is used, attempted to be used or threatened to be used is readily capable of causing death or serious physical injury.

Procedures

Any professional staff member or school employee shall immediately inform the principal, who will conduct a complete investigation. Upon confiscation, the principal must immediately notify and/or summon:

1. the local police
2. the Superintendent
3. the parents of any and all students involved in the incident

Upon just cause for suspicion of possession of a weapon, the principal will request the student to volunteer to be searched by a school official (in the presence of a witness). If the student resists being searched, the principal will immediately summon the police and request assistance in this matter from the local police. Parents should be notified as soon as possible. A student who is in possession of any weapon will be removed from the general school setting and the appropriate police department will be notified.

ALCOHOL, DRUGS, TOBACCO

Alcohol, drugs, tobacco, lighters or matches are not permitted on school property. Students will be removed from the general school setting if found to use or be in possession of these products. A substantiated charge against a student shall subject that student to disciplinary action including suspension or expulsion, consistent with the student discipline code.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

It is the policy of the Northgate School District to maintain a learning environment that is free from sexual harassment. It shall be a violation of this policy for any student or adult to harass a student or adult through conduct or communications of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment shall consist of unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other inappropriate verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when made by any student/adult to another student/adult.

Any person who alleges sexual harassment by another may complain directly to a supervisor, principal, guidance counselor, or other individual designed to receive such complaints. A substantiated charge against a student shall subject that student to disciplinary action including suspension or expulsion, consistent with the student discipline code.

GENERAL DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

Teachers have classroom rules and regulations along with a management plan for discipline in the classroom. These rules and regulations shall be distributed to parents during the first part of the school year. The following discipline procedures may apply:

- Teacher and student meet to clarify the rules and regulations.
- Teacher contacts the parent/guardian and documents such.

- Detention by teacher or principal. Students may be required to stay after school or arrive early for a detention session. Students will not serve detention until the parents are properly notified.
- A discipline notice is sent to the parents with follow-up taken by the teacher or principal. Often it is necessary to conduct a meeting with the parents, child, teacher, counselor, and/or principal.
- Removal from the classroom. When the disruption cannot be controlled, students may be removed from the classroom. **All make-up work is the responsibility of the student.** A meeting with the parents, child, teacher, counselor, and/or principal may be required upon the child's return to school.

STUDENT RIGHTS

No student shall be deprived of equal treatment and equal access to the educational program, due process, a presumption of innocence and free expression in accordance with the regulations of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education, Chapter 12.

PARENTAL/GUARDIAN RIGHTS

A parent/guardian who has a concern should bring the matter directly to the teacher, and not rely on hearsay or "second-hand" information. Both oral and written complaints must clearly acknowledge who is making the complaint.

Parents should make an appointment to ensure adequate time to discuss the problem with the teacher. All teachers have time in their daily schedules to meet with parents. Unresolved issues should be brought to the attention of the principal. All parties are expected to conduct themselves in a courteous, cooperative manner that is conducive to communication and conflict resolution.

GENERAL INFORMATION

ATTENDANCE

Elementary school hours are from 8:05 a.m. to 2:55 p.m. Elementary teachers are available for parent conferences during their preparation period and also from 2:55 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. daily by appointment.

IMPORTANCE OF ATTENDANCE

There is a definite relationship between good attendance and student achievement. The academic records of those students who are excessively absent from school will be reviewed at the end of the school year to determine if promotion to the next grade is appropriate. Excellent attendance is recognized and rewarded each quarter.

ABSENCE

When a student is going to be absent from school, the parent/guardian should call before 8:05 a.m., if possible, and leave a voice message, including the reason for the absence.

ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES

Excused Absences

Students are required by law to be in full attendance each school day unless absent for an approved reason. State law requires that a student's parent or guardian send to school a written excuse for each absence within three (3) school days. This excuse must indicate the reason for the absence and be signed by the parent/guardian and submitted no later than the second day after the student returns from the absence. If such an excuse is not

submitted to the homeroom teacher on or before the third day, the absence(s) shall be marked as unexcused/illegal.

Approved reasons for absence are listed below:

- Illness
- Physical injury
- Bereavement
- Observance of a bona fide religious holiday in accordance with the student's religious beliefs
- Healthcare from a licensed practitioner when it is not practical or possible to receive care outside of school hours
- Approved school activity or field trip
- Out-of-school suspension

A maximum of ten (10) days of cumulative excused absences verified by parental notification may be permitted during a school year. All absences beyond ten (10) days require a doctor's excuse.

Unexcused Absences

Examples of unexcused absences are listed below:

- Oversleeping
- Automobile failure
- Failure to produce written excuse(s) within outlined time period for day(s) absent

When the student returns to school, he/she must present to the Guidance Office a written excuse completed and signed by the parent/guardian including: date(s) of absence, reason for absence, child's name and parent/guardian's signature. Notes from doctors or hospitals, if applicable, should be attached to the written notice.

Excuses must be turned in to the homeroom teacher no later than the third day after the student returns to school or the absence will be considered unexcused/illegal.

If a student does not present a written excuse, the following procedures will be followed by the Principal:

After three (3) unexcused/illegal absences the parent will receive a notification letter by mail. If the student continues to accumulate unexcused/illegal absences, parent/guardian will receive another notification letter after six (6) unexcused/illegal absences. In this letter, the school district will coordinate a school/family conference to discuss the cause of the child's truancy and develop a mutually agreed upon Truancy Elimination Plan (TEP) to resolve truant behavior. Issues to be reviewed at the school/family conference include the appropriateness of the child's education environment, current academic difficulties, physical or behavioral health issues and family/environment concerns. At the end of the conference all parties should sign a comprehensive TEP that is agreed to by the school representative, the child and the parents and/or family. The plan could include assessing academic and social/health supports from the school and community organizations, an outline of family/parent and student responsibilities and levels of performance monitoring that include rewards and consequences.

Cumulative Absences

A maximum of ten (10) days of cumulative unexcused/illegal absences will be permitted during a school year. All absences beyond ten (10) cumulative days require a doctor's excuse or a citation will be sent to the District Magistrate.

TARDINESS

Students arriving at school after 8:10 a.m. are considered tardy. Students arriving at 8:15 a.m. or later must obtain an office pass before proceeding to class. Parents/guardians are required to send in a note explaining the reason for the tardy as mandated by PA school attendance regulations.

Excused Tardy

Students must present an excuse to the office when entering the school after 8:10 a.m. Approved reasons for being tardy are listed below:

- Illness
- Physical injury
- Bereavement
- Observance of a bona fide religious holiday in accordance with the student's religious beliefs
- Healthcare from a licensed practitioner
- Approved school activity

Unexcused Tardy

Examples of an unexcused tardy:

- Oversleeping
- Automobile failure

If a student does not present an excuse or a valid excuse to the office upon entrance to the school, the tardy shall be marked as unexcused.

EARLY DISMISSALS

Should it be necessary for a student to leave prior to 2:55 p.m., the student must present a written request to do so upon arrival to school. The note must include the date, time, name of child(ren), reason for early dismissal, and the parent's/guardian's signature.

Children will be called to the office for early dismissals. **Parents are not to pick up children at the classrooms.** No child will be dismissed from school nor released to any other person without the express written consent of the parent/guardian. **Children are not permitted to leave the building without permission.**

VALUABLE ITEMS

Students should not bring valuable items or large sums of money to school. Collectable items and other electronic devices are not permitted in the school. The school is not responsible for items lost/stolen by students in any manner.

CELL PHONES

Cell phones must be turned off. Students are not permitted to use their cell phone at any time during the school day. If a student uses his/her cell phone during the day, he/she will be given one (1) warning to put the cell phone away. If the student uses the cell phone again, the teacher or principal will take it. The cell phone will be held in the office until a parent/guardian picks it up.

We understand parents' concerns about their child(ren) having a cell phone for emergency purposes. However, it can become disruptive during the school day. If a student needs to make an emergency call during school hours, he/she may make a call from the main office.

LOCKERS

Each student will be assigned a locker. Each student is responsible for keeping his/her locker neat and clean. No food should be left in the locker overnight.

If you damage your locker, either by kicking it, writing on it or prying it open, you will have to pay to have it repaired. If your locker becomes jammed, **report it to your teacher immediately.**

Lockers are the property of the school district. **Locks are not permitted.** Students may not open lockers belonging to other students. **The principal has the right to inspect a locker at any time.** Parents will be notified concerning any problem that may occur. The district assumes no responsibility for the security of items stored in lockers.

EDUCATIONAL TRIPS

Parents/guardians who plan to take a child out of school for an educational trip **must obtain a form from the school office and return this completed form to the principal at least two weeks prior to the trip.** The principal will decide upon the legality concerning the use of these days

WITHDRAWALS

Parents/guardians must complete a withdrawal form prior to the student's last day. Academic and health records will be forwarded to the student's new school.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS AND DELAYS

Parents, staff and community members are encouraged to monitor the District's website, Facebook and Twitter pages, as well as local television stations for the latest closing/delay information.

SCHOOL ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

All students are required to provide the schools with an immunization record, copy of the birth certificate, as well as two (2) proofs of residency when registering for school. Children entering kindergarten must be 5 years old before September 1. Children entering first grade must be 6 years old before September 1.

SCHOOL SAFETY

VISITORS

All visitors to the school, including parents/guardians, are required to register in the school office upon entering the building and must wear a visitor pass. Any deliveries (lunches, notes, etc.) should be left at the office.

No one is to go directly to a classroom or disturb a class when in session.

SECURITY

All elementary school doors are secured during the day. Both schools are equipped with video cameras and entry through the front door of each school is monitored. All doors will open from the inside.

DRILLS

Fire drills are conducted on a monthly basis, in accordance with the procedures established by the school district and the local fire department, to provide practice in the event of an emergency. At times, to comply with state regulations, students also participate in other drills such as the Severe Weather Emergency Drill.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

With the exception of certain special education children, all students walk to and from the elementary school. It is the parent's responsibility to determine a safe walking route for their child(ren). All students are expected to arrive at school between 8:00 a.m. and 8:05 a.m. Breakfast is served between 7:45 a.m. and 8:00 a.m.

When the temperature is below 32 degrees Fahrenheit or in case of inclement weather, the students will enter the building at 8:00 a.m. and go to the auditorium.

General school dismissal is at 2:55 p.m. unless students are staying for an after-school activity or detention. It is the student's responsibility to notify parents if they are staying after school. **Students are not allowed on either elementary playground directly before or after school, unless accompanied by a parent.**

MISCELLANEOUS

ACCESS TO RECORDS

Parents/guardians of students have a right to inspect, review, copy and request corrections of their child's records. Such requests are to be made to the building principal. **No more than one (1) request per semester may be made by any parent/guardian or student for each enrolled child.**

Where guardianship is an issue, or if parents are separated or divorced, **notice and verification of any court order issued to deny a parent access to records must be provided to the school district.**

ASSEMBLIES

Assemblies are scheduled throughout the school year. Topics include school-wide themes, curriculum-related presentations, special speakers and programs. **It is expected that students will listen respectfully and display appropriate behaviors at each assembly.** Parents are welcome to attend assemblies, permitting they sit in the rear or the balcony.

CARE OF SCHOOL DISTRICT MATERIALS

It is expected that students will take proper care of those textbooks and materials issued to them by the school district. All textbooks must be covered. **Students who lose or damage materials or books will be expected to pay for replacement or repair costs. Report cards will be withheld at the end of each grading period if materials or fines are owed.**

CLASSROOM VISITATION

Those parents who wish to visit their child's classroom during school hours **must make prior arrangements with the building principal.** On the day of the visitation, the parent must sign in at the office and wear a visitor pass while in the school.

HOMEROOM ASSIGNMENTS

Homeroom assignments for the next school year are sent home with the final report card.

INTERNET POLICY

Specific guidelines and restrictions concerning Internet and computer use are found in the Northgate School Board Policy Manual, Section 4070. Parents are encouraged to review these pages. The Policy Manuals are available in each school.

Unless the school receives written notification that a child may not have Internet access, children will be allowed, with proper supervision, to use the Internet.

FIELD TRIPS

All Northgate elementary students have the opportunity to participate in at least one field trip each year. These trips are carefully selected based on the curriculum and developmental level of each grade. The field trips are implemented with the cooperation of the elementary Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) and the Northgate School District.

FOOD SERVICE PRICING AND CHARGE PROCEDURES

The Northgate School District participates in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Program which provides a nutritious FREE breakfast and lunch to all children enrolled in the district regardless of family income.

All meals meet federal and state guidelines. This program does not apply to extra entrees and ala carte items. Students must take 3 of the 4 items offered at breakfast, and 1 of those items must be a ½ cup fruit. At lunch, students must take 3 of the 5 items offered and 1 of those items must be a ½ cup fruit or vegetable.

Students who wish to purchase an extra entree, one of our snack options, or just a milk must pay for them. Charging the sale of these items will not be permitted.

Payment Options

The Community Eligibility Provision Program does not cover the cost of extra servings, or ala carte items such as snacks and beverages, you will need to use one of these payment options to fund your child's account.

Pay Online: View your child's purchase history and make payments at www.payschoolscentral.com. Payments can be set up automatically or add money as needed. A convenience fee will be charged at the time of payment.

Payments will update to your account within 24-48 hours but as quickly as 30 minutes. You can set up an alert to notify you when your student's meal account has fallen below the amount you have specified. We recommend you set up the low balance reminder at \$10 to provide families with enough time to add additional funds.

Many parents/guardians want to monitor their student's eating habits, but continue to send a check or cash in with the student. It is FREE to create an online account with www.payschoolscentral.com, monitor your student's eating habits and create low balance alerts. The only time you are charged a fee is if you choose to pay online. We recommend all families create an account to monitor spending.

Pay Cash: When sending in cash for elementary students, please place the cash in an envelope with your child's name and have them give it to their teacher. Secondary students may hand cash to the cashier during breakfast or lunch service.

Pay By Check: Make checks payable to the Northgate Cafeteria Fund and please record your student's name and student ID number on the check. When sending a check for elementary students, please place the check in an envelope with your child's name and have them give it to their teacher. Secondary students may hand the check to the cashier during breakfast or lunch service.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to pay for any previously accrued meal charges. For more information, please review the Northgate Food Services Policy.

NORTHGATE SCHOOL DISTRICT FOOD SERVICE AND MEAL ACCOUNT BALANCE PROCEDURES

Purpose

- To establish fair and consistent rules regarding meal account charges and expectations of payment for service rendered.
- To establish fair and consistent rules that allow the food service department to collect all monies due to the school district for meal service provided.
- To build positive and clear communication between the district food service, school district staff, and the community regarding these guidelines.

Payments

- It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to monitor and keep students' meal accounts funded at all times.
- An online account can be set up at www.payschoolscentral.com to monitor student balances.

Negative Meal Account Balances

It is expected that student meal accounts be funded for extra servings or ala carte items . We do understand that occasionally negative balances can occur; therefore, the following rules will apply regarding charges to students' meal accounts:

- No student who requests a meal will be denied a lunch option, unless the student's parent or guardian has provided a written request to the Food Service Department to withhold a school lunch or to not

allow a la carte options. When documentation from the parent or guardian has been provided, items can be removed from the student's tray at the register.

- A school meal option must include three of the five components; one must be a fruit or vegetable. The five lunch components are: Meat/Meat Alternative, Grain, Fruit, Vegetable, and Milk. Entrees consist of the Meat/Meat Alternative and Grain options(i.e., pizza slice, grill sandwich, salad bar or deli sandwich).
- When all components of a breakfast or lunch are not taken, the cashier must charge a la carte prices for the food items.
- Students will not be reminded at the register of their current balance. Students may request their balance from the cashier. All balance notifications will be sent to the parent/guardian.
- When purchases are made with cash, change should be issued to the students except when the student asks for the balance to be applied to his/her meal account.
- In the event that a student's meal account is over - \$50.00 and two attempts have been made to collect the debt without response, the district will use a third party collection agency to complete the collection process.

End of Year Meal Account Balances

- Students in Grade 12 – All monies owed to the district food service must be paid in full prior to graduation.
- Students in Grades K-11 – If a positive or negative balance is left in a student's account at the end of the school year, that balance will remain and carry over into the next school year.

LUNCH IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS

We employ a computerized meal service system. The purpose of the system is to allow parents to prepay for extra servings, or ala carte items. All students must have their student ID number daily to obtain a lunch.

LOST AND FOUND

Lost articles, when found, are taken to the school office where they can be claimed. **Please label your child's belongings.** Lost and found items not claimed at the end of each school year will be donated to a charitable organization.

SCHOOL PICTURES

Notification concerning school pictures will be sent home with your child. Pictures are taken early in the school year.

TELEPHONE

Incoming calls with messages for students should be kept to a minimum. Use of the school phones is restricted for emergency purposes only. Students will not be permitted to use office phones unless they have a note from their teacher stating that it is an emergency.

HOMEWORK

Students should budget their time to complete homework assignments properly and in a timely manner. They should ask questions to clarify and fully understand their assignments.

If a student is absent, he/she should arrange to make up all missed assignments as required by the teacher, upon return to school. Arrangements for picking up work on the day of the absence can be made by contacting the building office before 11 am on the day of the absence.

It is beneficial to the students if parents are familiar with classroom homework expectations and procedures. A work atmosphere conducive to successful completion of assignments and time to review the day's learning experiences and assignments with your child is helpful. Each student in grades 2 to 6 will receive an assignment notebook in which they are to copy the homework for that evening. You may also check your child's homework at our district website, www.northgatesd.net

HOMEWORK TIPS

1. Use your planner every day. Write in your assignments as they are given. Teachers say assignments out loud and also write them on a chalk or white board in each room.
2. Be sure to check your planner near the end of the day for books and materials you will need.
3. Ask your parents to help set up a study area. Have study tools, such as pencils, pens, a ruler, paper, calculator and dictionary there.
4. Make time to study and do homework each day. If you don't have a specific assignment, review math facts, spelling words, or reread the social studies lesson. Read a library book.
5. Get organized. Decide what to do first, second, third.
6. Do long assignments in small parts.
7. Have someone proofread your homework.

HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS CONFERENCES

Parents are welcome to initiate conferences, and may do so by contacting the child's teacher. Teachers may also contact parents to meet with them personally, to review a child's academic progress. By sharing information, teachers and parents can build a strong foundation for a positive and rewarding school experience. Conferences may also be arranged by or with the principal.

DISTRICT WEBSITE

It is important to us that our families have updated information and answers to any questions. Families should visit our website for the most up-to-date information at www.northgatesd.net. If you have any questions, please contact your building principal directly.

OPEN HOUSE

The traditional Open House is a time for students and their families to visit the school and meet the teachers in a more informal setting.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Parents are encouraged and welcome to volunteer in the schools. Each school PTO distributes information about their various types of volunteer programs.

For the safety of the children, all volunteers must secure Act 34 (Request for Criminal Record Check), Act 151 (Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance), Act 114 or Act 153 Affidavit for PA 10-year resident (fingerprinting or notarized Act 153 Volunteer Affidavit if you have lived in Pennsylvania for 10 years and have not committed any reportable offenses), and the PDE-6004 (Arrest/Conviction Report and Certification Form).

PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION

The PTO in each elementary school is a viable organization that brings parents and teachers together to benefit the students. In addition to monthly business meetings, each PTO sponsors educational and recreational activities that support the schools. Membership information may be obtained from each school.

OTHER PARENT INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS

Throughout the year there are other opportunities for parents to become involved within the school and the school district. Committees consisting of administrators, teachers, staff, and parents are formed as needs arise. Information on these and other parent involvement programs is available through the office.

COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

The Northgate School District will not discriminate in its educational programs, activities, or employment practices, based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, religion, ancestry or any other legally protected classification. Announcement of this policy is in accordance with state and federal laws, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. For information regarding grievance procedures, services, activities, programs and facilities that are accessible to and usable by handicapped persons or, for inquiries regarding compliance with the above nondiscriminatory policies, please contact the Coordinator of Special Services, 591 Union Ave., Pgh., PA 15202. Phone – 412-732-3300, ext. 2000. Northgate S. D. will make reasonable accommodations to its programs & services to assure access to all persons. If, because of a disability, you require an accommodation, please contact the Coordinator of Special Services, Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator – 412-732-3300, ext. 2000.

HOMELESS STUDENTS

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is a federal law created to support the enrollment and education of homeless students. McKinney-Vento is intended to provide homeless students the same educational opportunities as housed students by removing as many barriers to learning for homeless students as possible.

Who is considered homeless?

Children or youth and their families living in a shelter, transitional housing, motel, vehicle, campground, on the street, or doubled-up with relatives or friends due to a lack of housing are considered to be homeless.

What choice of schools do homeless students have?

The law indicates that the local education agency shall, according to the child's best interest: (i) continue the child's or

youth's education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness (1) in any case in which a family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year; OR (ii) for the remainder of the academic year, if the child or youth becomes permanently housed during an academic year; or (II) enroll the child or youth in any public school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend.

Is there any reason to delay enrolling a homeless child?

No. The school selected shall immediately enroll the child/youth in school, even if the child or youth lacks records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, medical records, proof of residency, or other documentation. The terms "enroll" and "enrollment" are defined to include attending classes and participating fully in school activities. The enrolling school must immediately contact the last school the child or youth attended to obtain relevant academic and other records. Immunization records can be transferred over the phone from the school nurse of the sending school to the school nurse of the receiving school.

Where can you receive assistance?

The Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program exists to help homeless children with a wide variety of services. We can assist homeless children during this time of change and stress. If you are homeless with school-age children or you are a school, agency or shelter employee, please contact: Christina Garczewski, Director of Pupil Services at christina.garczewski@northgatesd.net or 412-732-3300 x2000.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

A child who has any of the following conditions should remain at home for at least the time indicated:

- CHICKEN POX – Seven (7) days from onset of illness or until all crusts are dry
- IMPETIGO – Readmitted when clear of infection
- PEDICULOSIS (HEAD LICE) – Until free from all lice and nits
- CONJUNCTIVITIS (PINK EYE) – Until seen by physician and treatment is initiated
- RINGWORM (SKIN) – Until area is non-infectious or with doctor's note

- SCABIES – Until skin is clear
- STREP THROAT/SCARLET FEVER – 24 hours from initiation of antibiotic/effective medical treatment.

It is important that children stay home until they are completely well. The child recovering from one of the above diseases may no longer be able to transmit it to others, but his/her resistance may be so low that he/she is easily susceptible to other infections:

- fever: temperature of 100 degrees or greater
- red, watery eyes or crusted lids
- swollen glands or sore throat

- vomiting or diarrhea
- skin sores or rashes
- acute cold and nausea