

NORTH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

“Where Every Child Is A Star”



**Student Handbook
2023-2024**

NORTH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK

SCHOOL HOURS:

8:05 Students may go to classrooms (Breakfast in classroom K-4)
8:30 Attendance taken
2:55 Kindergarten dismissal
3:00 Walker/Car Rider and SACC dismissal
3:10 Bus dismissal

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATIONS: The school nurse must have on file a written request from the family physician and parent for prescription and over-the-counter medications. The note must state the dosage and frequency of the prescribed medication. It must be in the original labeled container with the child's name on it and be delivered to the school by the parent or parent's adult designee. **A verbal or telephone request from the parent or physician is not acceptable.** The nurse's direct telephone number is **315-779-5411**.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: Each student's presence, absence, tardiness and early departure shall be recorded **(in writing or electronically)** in a register of attendance during each school day. Any absence shall be recorded as verified or unverified. **Parents must notify the school at 315-779-5460 by 9:00 a.m. each day the child will not be in attendance or late.** Voice mail is available for your convenience. A school designee will call the home of any student whose absence has not been reported.

ATTENDANCE - TARDINESS: We encourage students to arrive on time each day. Students entering the classroom late start the day having to "catch up". Any student not in his/her assigned classroom at 8:30 a.m. is considered tardy. The student **must** report to the office upon arrival at school. School lunches need to be ordered each day. If a student is going to be tardy and needs a school lunch, please call the office and let us know. Please allow for extra travel time as the weather conditions worsen.

BABYSITTERS: If your child goes to a babysitter or after school program at the end of the day, please notify your child's teacher so he/she has a record of this. This note only has to be written once for the school year and updated in the event that the after school situation changes. A special form must be completed if you will need to ask permission for your child to be bussed to a babysitter.

BICYCLES: Students are welcome to ride bicycles to and from school. For your convenience, bicycle racks are found in the front of the school. For security, students should place their bicycles in the rack and be sure to lock them. The school cannot be responsible if your child's bike is lost or stolen. Students are to walk their bicycles on the sidewalk while on school grounds. All scooters are to be folded and carried into the building for proper security. All students must wear helmets to ensure their safety and abide by N.Y.S. Law.

BREAKFAST/LUNCH: All students who are enrolled at Watertown City School District are eligible to receive free breakfast and lunch at **NO CHARGE** to your household each day.

If your student chooses to purchase extra items (a la carte items) such as a second entrée or milk, this will be an additional charge to the student. Pricing will be available on our website: www.watertowncsd.org under the Food Service link. Students must have a positive meal account balance in order to purchase these items. Parents can deposit money into student accounts via www.myschoolbucks.com. Payment will also be accepted in the form of cash or check. These funds will be deposited into your student's account in order to make purchases.

* Please note that we do not have the capacity to heat items sent from home or prepare other food in the event that your child does not like the menu entrée being offered. Menus are located on the school district web page www.watertowncsd.org under calendars.

BUS BEHAVIOR: Riding the bus is a privilege, not a right. Students are expected to obey the rules posted on the bus and treat the driver and other riders with respect. If a student breaks the rules, he/she will be issued a bus infraction by the driver. This notice is brought to the principal and acted upon accordingly. Please be aware that it is the responsibility of the parent to transport the child to and from school if the child is suspended from riding the bus. Keeping a child home will be counted as an illegal absence.

Bus Rules

- **Always follow the driver's directions**
- **Stay seated**
- **Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself**
- **Always use appropriate language**

Bus Infractions

- 1. The first infraction is a warning with a copy of bus referral to parents.**
- 2. The second infraction is a two day suspension with a copy of bus referral to parents.**
- 3. The third infraction is a three day suspension with a copy of the bus referral to parents.**
- 4. A fourth infraction is a five day suspension with a copy of the bus referral to parents.**
- 5. A fifth infraction is a ten day suspension with a parent conference before a student may resume riding the bus again.**

BUS EMERGENCY DRILLS: Three bus drills are held throughout the school year. They include practice and instruction in the location of emergency doors, fire extinguishers, first aid equipment, and procedures for evacuating the bus in case of an emergency. Bus riding behavior, as well as safety tips during inclement weather, is taught.

BUS TRANSPORTATION: If your child is transported to school by bus, he/she will go home by bus unless you send a **WRITTEN** note to the contrary. Permission for

a child to ride a different bus home or get off the bus at a different stop **CANNOT** be given.

PLEASE NOTE: PASSING A STOPPED SCHOOL BUS WITH ITS LIGHTS FLASHING IS AGAINST NEW YORK STATE LAW. THIS INCLUDES BUSES IN SCHOOL DRIVEWAYS AS WELL AS ROADWAYS.

CELL PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES: The use of student cell phones is limited to before and after school for parent communication. The school is not responsible for loss, misplacement or theft of cell phones and/or electronic devices. These devices should not be heard or seen during school hours (8:05 – 3:05); they should be kept in student's backpack.

DISCIPLINE: We will be stressing **RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY**. We have developed rules for general student behavior because we believe that:

1. No student can be allowed to interfere with a teacher's right to teach.
2. No student can be allowed to interfere with another student's right to learn.
3. No student can be allowed to cause harm to themselves or others.

Positivity Project is utilized by the Watertown City School District to consistently teach our students about the character strengths that everyone possesses. Teachers are provided with resources, training and strategies to teach positive psychology's 24 character strengths and to empower our students to build positive relationships.

If your child frequently misbehaves at school, you will be notified. A special behavior management plan will usually be drawn up. Your support as a parent is vital for improvement to occur.

EARLY DISMISSAL: There may be times when it will be necessary for you to pick up your child before the end of the school day. If you know this information before your child leaves for school, please send a written note to the teacher that contains: the child's name, time you will pick your child up, and the reason for the early dismissal. All parents must report to the main office to sign out their child(ren). **STUDENTS WILL NOT BE RELEASED FROM THE CLASSROOM TO GO WITH THEIR PARENTS.** The teacher will be called from the main office to send the child to the office. Only parents and guardians will be allowed to sign a child out of school. Anyone else picking up the child, will need a note from the parent with signed authorization. They may be asked to present identification at the time of pick up. **STUDENTS WILL NOT BE RELEASED WITHOUT WRITTEN APPROVAL FROM PARENTS/GUARDIANS.**

EMERGENCY INFORMATION CARD: There is an emergency information card on file for each child in school. It is important that emergency phone numbers be kept current. If parents cannot be reached, the person(s) named as responsible parties will be called to transport a child should they need to be sent home for a minor illness or emergency. Listing someone on the emergency information card only gives permission for the person to pick up a child who is being sent home by the school nurse. It does not give that person the right to pick up the child at any other time without specific, written permission from a parent or guardian.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING: During our long winter months, we often have various weather changes. In the event of a school closing, delayed opening, or early dismissal, information will be given over the following radio and television stations and Website:

WTNY – 790AM WTOJ- 103.7 FM WWNY TV7
WOTT – 100.7 FM WCIZ- 93.5 FM WWTI TV50
WATN – 1240 AM WBDR-106.7 FM www.newzjunky.com
WFRY- 97.5 FM

Please pay close attention to determine whether it is the **WATERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS** that are delaying, closing or dismissing early. They will not mention North Elementary School by name in these announcements.

Parent Square will be utilized to convey messages from the district. As school messenger was used in the past, this service will allow parents to receive notifications of school closures, early dismissals or other important information. Parents are automatically signed up for this and will need to “opt out” if they do not want to receive information from school.

EXCUSES: New York State law requires that a written excuse be on file with the school for any absence. If no excuse is written, then it is documented on the child’s attendance card as an unexcused absence. Please send the excuse back with your child the day he/she returns to school. Even though you may have called your child in absent from school, a written excuse signed by a parent or legal guardian is needed for your child’s record.

PROLONGED ABSENCES: The school nurse’s telephone number is 315-779-5411. The school nurse should be notified if a child will be absent for a long period of time. If in doubt, check with your physician. The school likes to be aware of communicable diseases to protect other students. Should you suspect one of these diseases, contact your physician. School nurses do not diagnose conditions and sending an ill child to school exposes other children.

FIRE DRILLS: Students are instructed and trained to leave the building in a calm and orderly manner should there be an emergency. Twelve drills must be held during the school year. Fire prevention instructions are also given to all pupils.

HOME SCHOOL COORDINATOR’S ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM: This program is designed to monitor student attendance and to offer assistance to those students and their families who have a high rate of absenteeism. The coordinator talks to the students and makes home visits to parents. If you have any questions or need help in dealing with a child’s specific attendance problem, please contact Mr. Craig Randall at school at 315-779-5436.

IMMUNIZATIONS: Children entering school must be properly immunized, as mandated by New York State Law. Each entering student must show proof of having had at least 3 Polio, 3 DTP, 3 Hepatitis B, 2MMR, and 1 Varicella (Chicken Pox) vaccination.

LOCK DOWN DRILLS: We perform Lock Down drills periodically throughout the school year. Teachers and students have pre-established plans in place in the event that an intruder or unsafe situation should arise in our school. We **can not** open doors or answer phone calls at this time.

PARENT TRANSPORTATION – In order to avoid accidents, parents who transport their children to and from school are asked to follow these instructions:

1. **THERE WILL BE NO PARKING** in the circular loop from 7:50 to 8:30. This area is designated for loading and unloading buses only. **You may not leave your car running or leave the driver's portion of your car when dropping your child off in the morning.** If you need to enter the building, please park in the designated parking areas.
2. Visitors may park in the circular loop at other times during the day.
3. In the afternoon, kindergarten parent pick up and walker students will be released at 2:55 p.m. Students in grade 1st through 4th will be released at 3:00 p.m. Vehicles may only park in the parking lot or on either side of the loop. Do not park in the center of the loop. Cross walks must be kept clear.

PERSONAL ITEMS: Because we cannot always place personal items in a safe location, it is suggested that personal items of value not be brought in or left at school. Such items include cell phones, IPODS, hand-held electronic games or other personal items are a student's responsibility. Money should not be left in either a student or teacher's desk. Please discourage your child from bringing in personal items (toys) unless they are directly related to a class lesson or project.

PHYSICAL EXAMS: At Kindergarten Registration, a physician's report form is given to each parent to be completed by the family physician at the time of enrollment. The school district physician will do a routine health appraisal for children in second and fourth grades and any new entrants not done within one year. Notification will be sent home prior to this.

PRESS/MEDIA COVERAGE PERMISSION: Should a field trip or activity in school or on school grounds receive press/media coverage, parents are asked to give/deny consent for their child to be taped or have his/her picture taken and possibly shown on public television programming, printed in the newspaper or displayed on the Watertown City School District web page. A permission form is sent home at the beginning of the year. Parent/guardians are asked to complete the form and return it to school.

PTO: The North PTO is an active group of parents and teachers that sponsors programs and performances in school and social events which make for wonderful memories of the school year. Participating in The North Elementary PTO can be a personally rewarding experience. PTO gives parents opportunities to make new friends and acquaintances in the community, it provides an opportunity to become more intimately acquainted with your child's school life, and it provides the additional involvement with your child's schooling, which research has demonstrated increases student achievement and school adjustment. You are all warmly welcomed to become a part of this organization. Meetings are held on a monthly basis. Please check the monthly calendar for date and time.

PTO ACTIVITIES: Profits from PTO activities are used to provide extras which make the school year special for your child. In the past, the PTO has been able to purchase playground equipment, books and resources for our teachers and library, field trips, and assembly programs for our children. Some of the programs that we sponsor to raise those extra funds are:

School Pictures – Lifetouch comes in the fall to take school pictures.

Book Fairs - there are three during the course of the school year. All profits from the fairs go back to the teachers to purchase books and resources for the classroom.

School Spirit Items - T-shirts, sweat shirts, water bottles, etc.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES: Two parent-teacher conferences will be held. One conference is at the end of the first quarter (November) to discuss individual progress. The second conference is held in the middle of March. If you wish to set up a conference with your child's teacher at other times you are encouraged to contact the teacher or the school office.

PUPIL INJURY: If a student is injured during the school day, the student will be brought to the clinic, and the appropriate first aid will be given. School nurses notify parents if their child:

1. Has a notable bruise or cut
2. Has a head injury which requires ice
3. Has a seizure in school

The above listed injuries are logged on the school accident form and parents at the primary level are notified by telephone, or a note if not reached by phone. All nurses make decisions based on the child's reaction as to whether or not a student remains in the clinic and whether or not a parent should be notified. In many cases the children use the clinics as a "safe place" for momentary relief from an uncomfortable situation in the school setting. Once the nurses come to know their students, they make decisions on these instances.

PUPIL ILLNESS: If a student feels ill during the day, he/she should report to the clinic. In the clinic the illness will be evaluated and a parent called if necessary. It is expected for a child to be picked up by an adult (parent or emergency contact) immediately after notification.

RECESS: Children will be going outside for fresh air and exercise with their classroom teacher in all but the most inclement weather. Please make sure that your child is always dressed appropriately. In winter this will include boots, snow pants, hat, coat, mittens and scarf.

SACC and 4H Cornell Cooperative Extension: The YMCA and Cornell Cooperative Extension work in conjunction to provide before after school care at North Elementary for any child enrolled in school. All inquiries in regards to the before school program must be directed to the SACC staff, 315-755-2005. If you are interested in participating in the afternoon program you will need to contact Cornell Cooperative Extension at <https://ccejefferson.org>.

SIX-DAY ROTATION: Students have “specials” – music, art, library, and gym on a 6-day cycle. Your child’s teacher will send home a class schedule at the beginning of the year. **Sneakers are required for gym and an old shirt or smock is recommended for art class.**

VISITORS: All entrances to the building will be locked at 8:30 a.m. Visitors should use the buzzer to the left of the door at the main entrance. For any visitor wishing to enter the building, (ex. parent/teacher conference, North Country Family Health Center, etc.) will need to have an ID. The photo ID will be scanned and each visitor will be provided with an ID badge to wear while in building. Visitors will also need to sign out with the secretary before exiting the building. The North Elementary staff have been instructed to ask anyone without a visitor’s badge to report to the office. Your cooperation is appreciated.

The Watertown City School District hereby advises students, parents, employees, and the general public that it offers employment and educational opportunities without regard to sex, race, color, national origin, creed or religion, marital status, age, gender preference, or disability. Inquiries regarding this non-discrimination policy may be directed to: Coordinator Title IX, Section 504 @ 1351 Washington St.; P.O. Box 586; Watertown, NY 13601-0586; 315-785-3714.