



O'Hara Elementary School

**Student & Parent Handbook
2023-2024**

PLEASE RETURN TO YOUR HOMEROOM TEACHER BY
Friday, September 1, 2023



2023-2024 Student & Parent Handbook

Dear O'Hara Elementary Students & Families:

You are a valued member of the O'Hara Community of Learners! Each member of our community brings positive attributes to contribute to our team and help us continue on the path to success for all learners. As a community of learners, it is important that we all have a common understanding of the expectations for ourselves and others. Our Student and Parent Handbook helps us to develop a common understanding of these expectations, which focus on the importance of our district-wide core values of respect, responsibility, and integrity.

Please carefully read the [handbook online](#) (or request a hard copy if you are unable to access it electronically) and sign and return this sheet to your teacher by 9/1/2023.

Sincerely,

Dr. Kristy L. Batis, Principal
Mrs. Katelyn Toth, Program Principal

~~~~~  
Please check the applicable box below.



We have read and understand the rules, procedures and contents of this handbook online and are looking forward to working together to further the success of the O'Hara Elementary Community of Learners.

|                                                |      |
|------------------------------------------------|------|
| Student Name (Please print below.)             |      |
| Student Signature (Please sign below.)         | Date |
| Homeroom Teacher's Name (Please print below.)  |      |
| Parent/Guardian Signature (Please sign below.) | Date |



We are unable to access the handbook online and are requesting a hard copy.  
*Teachers, please forward requests for hard copies to Mrs. Shank.*

# 2023-2024 Fox Chapel Area School District Calendar

## 2023-2024 Fox Chapel Area School District Calendar

| August 2023 |    |     |    |    |
|-------------|----|-----|----|----|
|             | 1  | 2   | 3  | 4  |
| 7           | 8  | 9   | 10 | 11 |
| 14          | 15 | I   | I  | I  |
| P           | FC | P/C | P  | P  |
| FC          | 21 | 22  | 23 | 24 |
| 28          | 29 | 30  | 31 |    |

| September 2023 |    |    |    |      |
|----------------|----|----|----|------|
|                |    |    |    | (4)  |
| X              |    |    |    | 1    |
| 4              | 5  | 6  | 7  | (8)  |
| 11             | 12 | 13 | 14 | (13) |
| 18             | 19 | 20 | 21 | (18) |
| X              |    |    |    | (22) |
| 25             | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29   |

| October 2023 |    |     |    |      |
|--------------|----|-----|----|------|
|              |    |     |    | (27) |
| 2            | 3  | 4   | 5  | 6    |
| 9            | 10 | E/+ |    | (32) |
| 16           | 17 | 18  | 19 | (37) |
| 23           | 24 | 25  | 26 | (42) |
| 30           | 31 |     |    |      |

| November 2023 |        |        |    |       |
|---------------|--------|--------|----|-------|
|               |        |        | 1  | R(47) |
| E/CONF        | CONF/+ |        | 2  | (51)  |
| 6             | 7      | 8      | 9  | 10    |
| 13            | 14     | 15     | 16 | 17    |
| 20            | 21     | E/(59) | X  | X     |
| X             |        | 22     | 23 | 24    |
| 27            | 28     | 29     | 30 |       |

| December 2023 |    |    |    |      |
|---------------|----|----|----|------|
|               |    |    |    | (63) |
|               |    |    |    | 1    |
| 4             | 5  | 6  | 7  | (68) |
| 11            | 12 | 13 | 14 | (73) |
| 18            | 19 | 20 | 21 | (78) |
| X             | X  | X  | X  | X    |
| 25            | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29   |

| January 2024 |    |    |    |       |
|--------------|----|----|----|-------|
| X            |    |    |    | (82)  |
| 1            | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5     |
| 8            | 9  | 10 | 11 | (87)  |
| P            |    |    |    | (90)  |
| 15           | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19    |
| 22           | 23 | 24 | 25 | R(95) |
| 29           | 30 | 31 |    |       |

| February 2024 |    |    |    |       |
|---------------|----|----|----|-------|
|               |    |    | 1  | (100) |
|               |    |    | 2  | (105) |
| 5             | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9     |
| 12            | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16    |
| P             |    |    |    | (114) |
| 19            | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23    |
| 26            | 27 | 28 | 29 |       |

| March 2024 |    |    |    |          |
|------------|----|----|----|----------|
|            |    |    |    | (119)    |
|            |    |    |    | 1        |
| 4          | 5  | 6  | 7  | (124)    |
| 11         | 12 | 13 | 14 | (129)    |
| 18         | 19 | 20 | 21 | E/C(134) |
| X          | X  | X  | X  | X        |
| 25         | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29       |

| April 2024 |    |    |    |        |
|------------|----|----|----|--------|
|            |    |    |    | R(139) |
| 1          | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5      |
| 8          | 9  | 10 | 11 | (144)  |
| 15         | 16 | 17 | 18 | (149)  |
| 22         | 23 | 24 | 25 | (154)  |
| 29         | 30 |    |    | 26     |

| May 2024 |    |     |    |       |
|----------|----|-----|----|-------|
|          |    | 1   | 2  | (159) |
|          |    |     |    | (164) |
| 6        | 7  | 8   | 9  | 10    |
| 13       | 14 | 15  | 16 | 17    |
| 20       | 21 | 22  | 23 | (174) |
| X        |    |     |    |       |
| 27       | 28 | K/E | 29 | 30    |
|          |    |     | 31 |       |

| June 2024 |     |    |    |          |
|-----------|-----|----|----|----------|
|           |     |    |    | E/C(182) |
| 3         | 4   | 5  | 6  | 7        |
| P         | P/C |    |    | R        |
| 10        | 11  | 12 | 13 | 14       |
| 17        | 18  | 19 | 20 | 21       |
| 24        | 25  | 26 | 27 | 28       |

1<sup>st</sup> Grading Period – October 27 – 42 days  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Grading Period – January 18 – 48 days  
 3<sup>rd</sup> Grading Period – March 22 – 44 days  
 4<sup>th</sup> Grading Period – June 6 – 48 days

November 6 – Elem/Sec Early Dismissal & Parent Teacher Conference Day  
 November 7 – Parent Teacher Conference Day (No School for Students)  
 June 6 – Last Day for Students = 182 Days (unless makeup days are required)  
 June 11 – Last Day for Professional Staff = 195 Days (unless makeup days are required)

| First Semester |                                                          |
|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| 8/16-18        | New Teacher Induction Days                               |
| 8/21, 24, 25   | Professional Development Days                            |
| 8/22 & 28      | Full Clerical Days                                       |
| 8/23           | Professional Development/Clerical Day                    |
| 8/29           | First Day for Students                                   |
| 9/4            | Labor Day                                                |
| 9/25           | Fall Break                                               |
| 10/11          | Elem/Sec Early Dismissal                                 |
| 10/27          | Elem/Sec Early Dismissal & Clerical Day                  |
| 11/6           | Elem/Sec Early Dismissal & Parent Teacher Conference Day |
| 11/7           | Parent Teacher Conference Day                            |
| 11/22          | Elem/Sec Early Dismissal                                 |
| 11/23-27       | Thanksgiving Break                                       |
| 12/25-1/1      | Winter Break                                             |
| 1/15           | Martin Luther King Jr. Day & PD Day                      |

| Second Semester |                                             |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------|
| 1/19            | Full Clerical Day                           |
| 2/19            | Presidents' Day & PD Day                    |
| 3/22            | Elem/Sec Early Dismissal & Clerical Day     |
| 3/25-29         | Spring Break                                |
| 5/27            | Memorial Day                                |
| 5/29            | Kennywood Day (Tentative) & Early Dismissal |
| 6/6             | Last Day for Students                       |
|                 | Elem/Sec Early Dismissal & Clerical Day     |
| 6/7             | Full Clerical Day                           |
| 6/9             | Commencement                                |
| 6/10            | Professional Development Day                |
| 6/11            | Professional Development/Clerical Day       |

|      |                                                            |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| I    | New Teacher Induction Day                                  |
| C    | Clerical Day                                               |
| FC   | Full Clerical Day (No School for Students)                 |
| P    | Professional Development (PD) Day (No School for Students) |
| E    | Elem/Sec Early Dismissal                                   |
| X    | Holiday/Break/No School                                    |
| +    | Act 80 Day                                                 |
| CONF | Parent Teacher Conference Day                              |
| K    | Kennywood Day (Tentative)                                  |
| R    | Report Cards Available                                     |

April 22-May 3 shaded areas indicate PSSA testing windows. January 3-17 and May 13-24 shaded areas indicate Keystone Exams testing windows. Refer to the FCASD website ([www.fcasd.edu](http://www.fcasd.edu)) for specific grades tested in each time frame.

Makeup days, if necessary, will be added on to the end of the school year, beginning June 7, 2024.

Please consult building and website calendars for building-level early dismissal dates, school activities, and other special events.

APPROVED 3.13.2023

## **2023-2024 State and Local Testing Windows**

(Please refrain from scheduling family trips during these testing windows)

**English Language Arts PSSA Testing Window** (Grades 3, 4, and 5) - April 22-26, 2024

**Mathematics PSSA Testing Window** (Grades 3, 4, and 5) - April 29-May 3, 2024

**Science PSSA Testing Window** (Grade 4) - May 6-10, 2024

**PSSA Make-up Window** (Grades 3, 4, and 5) - April 29- May 10, 2024

**CoGats** (Grade 1 and 4)

Grade 1 May 13-17, 2024

Grade 4 October 9-13, 2024

## **2023-2024 End of Quarter & Report Card Timeline**

**End of Quarter 1:** Friday, October 27, 2023

**Quarter 1 Report Cards Available:** Friday, November 3, 2023 after 4pm

**End of Quarter 2:** Thursday, January 18, 2024

**Quarter 2 Report Cards Available:** Friday, January 26, 2024 after 4pm

**End of Quarter 3:** Friday, March 22, 2024

**Quarter 3 Report Cards Available:** Friday, April 5, 2024 after 4pm

**End of Quarter 4:** Thursday, June 6, 2024

**Quarter 4 Report Cards Available:** Friday, June 14, 2024 after 4pm

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# A Day at O'Hara Elementary

## **8:40 - 8:55 Student Arrival and Optional Breakfast**

- Car riders and walkers are to arrive at school between 8:40-8:55, when O'Hara staff members will be available to supervise them.
- Students needing to arrive at the building prior to 8:40 will need to enroll in the YMCA Before-School Supervised Program.
- Breakfast (*optional, \$1.45*)
- Students will report to their homerooms to check in and then transition to the cafeteria.
- Car riders and walkers are urged to arrive promptly at 8:40 to ensure they have adequate time to enjoy a calm breakfast experience.

## **8:55-9:00 Transition to Homeroom Classrooms**

## **9:00 - 9:05 Homeroom (attendance, lunch count, announcements, etc.)**

## **9:00 - 3:35 Instructional Day and a 30 minute lunch (if purchasing \$2.65) and 30 minute recess**

## **3:35 - 3:40 Pack Up for Dismissal and Announcements**

## **3:40-3:45 Transition to Dismissal Locations**

## **3:45-4:00 Dismissal**

## **Academic and Behavior Expectations / Supports**

School-wide Positive Behavioral Support emphasizes an instructional approach where behavioral expectations are directly taught, practiced, and acknowledged –just like academics.

### Respect

- Valuing self and others and displaying through actions and words
- Caring for one's self, others, and environment
- Showing pride through positive actions and interactions

### Responsibility

- Taking ownership for the things you do and the choices you make
- Being a reliable member of our community of learners

### Integrity

- Doing the right thing consistently, even when no one is watching
- Being honest with self and others
- Being trustworthy in thoughts, words, and actions

## Positive Behavioral Support

O'Hara Elementary has received behavioral support services via a behavior specialist for many years. Positive behavior support is an effective and proactive process for improving social competence and academic achievement for all students.

The Behavior Specialist provides direct service to students with challenging behaviors, consultative services, assessment and supported instructional programs for students in special education. The Behavior Specialist also provides training and works collaboratively with teachers, aides, and support staff to demonstrate best practices, strategies and techniques to enhance instruction for students with social communications, behavioral and learning challenges, and assistance to parents in accessing services outside of the school.

| <b><u>Hallway Expectations</u></b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b><u>Cafeteria Expectations</u></b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Show Respect</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Use a voice level 0</li><li>● Keep your body to yourself</li><li>● Follow directions the first time</li></ul> <p><b>Show Responsibility</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Walk facing forward in a single line on the right side of the hallway</li></ul> <p><b>Show Integrity.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Walk directly to your destination</li></ul> | <p><b>Show Respect</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Use a voice level 2</li><li>● Keep your body to yourself</li><li>● Follow directions the first time</li></ul> <p><b>Show Responsibility</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Eat first. Talk later.</li><li>● Stay in your assigned seat and raise your hand for help</li></ul> <p><b>Show Integrity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Leave your area better than you found it</li><li>● Keep conversations kind and school appropriate</li><li>● Only eat food that is yours</li></ul> |

## Time Out Room:

Students who exhibit multiple unexpected behaviors throughout a school day and have not adjusted their behavior with prior redirection may be referred to the Time Out Room. The primary goal of the Time Out Room is to reteach expected behaviors so that students can return to the classroom. The Time Out Room is staffed by building teachers throughout the school day. When a student is referred to the Time Out Room, they will be retaught expected behaviors and make a plan for how they can return to the classroom to exhibit expected behaviors. While in the Time Out Room, students will work with a teacher to complete an action plan for improved behavior. Parents will be notified and receive a copy of the action plan that the student completed.



## Attendance - Policy 204\*\*

Regular attendance in school is extremely important and should be established early. Children achieve more, and feel better about themselves, when instruction is continuous and when a sense of belonging is established within the classroom. Those who learn the importance of regular attendance tend to stay more actively involved, and do better in school. However, we understand that children may become ill.

### Written or Emailed Excuses

- Our School Messenger system alerts parents of your child's absences. An automated call will be placed to you with a reminder to send in a written excuse upon your child's return to school. There is no need to call the school when your child is absent.
- Pennsylvania Public School Attendance Law requires that parents/guardians **must submit a written excuse within three calendar days of an absence** and will be informed if they fail to provide a written excuse within three days of an absence.
- Children under a doctor's care for a contagious disease or those with chronic absences, may be required to submit an excuse from a physician.
- Pennsylvania school law identifies excused/lawful absences as those related to:
  - illness of the pupil
  - death of an immediate family member
  - medical/dental appointments
  - bona fide religious holiday
  - quarantine
  - pre-approved educational travel
  - weather so inclement as to endanger student's health or safety (impassable roads)
  - court hearings related to student involvement with county children and youth or juvenile probation office agencies
  - authorized school activities (field trips)
  - family emergency
- Please be advised that when there is a scheduled **half-day of school** on the calendar and a student is absent, he/she will be charged a **full day's absence**.
- When students return to school after any absence or late arrival, or leave for an early dismissal they **must bring a written excuse signed by their parent or guardian stating the date(s) of absence(s) and reason(s) for the absence(s)**. Absences without excuses (or excuses for reasons other than those approved by Pennsylvania School Law) are recorded as unexcused/unlawful. **Parents are encouraged to send Sandy Shank (Sandra\_Shank@fcasd.edu) and the student's homeroom teacher the excuse.**

### Tardiness

- **Please note that students need to be in their seats by 9:00 a.m. for attendance.** If students are not in their homeroom seats by 9:00 a.m. they are considered tardy, regardless of the reason.
- If tardy, parents must park their vehicle and escort their student into the office. Parents must provide a written excuse indicating the reason for tardiness.



- **IMPORTANT: Three unexcused tardies to school will be converted to one unexcused absence.**

Parents of chronically tardy students may receive a call, letter, or visit from O’Hara personnel and/or the district office. Continued concern may result in required excuses from a physician, parental appearance before a magistrate and /or referral to Children Youth and Family Services.

### Educational Tour and Trip - Policy 204.1\*\*

If a student is going on a family trip, parents/guardians must complete an *Educational Tour and Trip Request Form* so that the absence is recorded as legal and excused.

- The form may be obtained at the school office or downloaded under the category “Handbook & Forms” on [O’Hara’s web page](#).
- Educational Tour and Trip Request forms are to be submitted to Ms. Noffsinger at least ***two weeks prior*** to the trip in order to process the form and to provide teachers with ample time to compile assignments.
- Students are required to make up school work missed during educational trips. Parents/guardians are urged to restrict travel on school days since the lack of continuity disrupts instruction for the absent child as well as the class.
- **In addition, trip requests are strongly discouraged during CoGAT and PSSA testing weeks. If an Educational Tour and Trip Request is submitted and extends into a testing window with time not available for make-up, the request may be denied.** Refer to the district calendar and testing schedule.

### Bullying - Policy 249

O’Hara Elementary uses the OLWEUS Bullying program. The *Olweus Bullying Prevention Program* is designed to improve peer relations and make schools safer, more positive places for students to learn and develop. O’Hara is committed to providing a safe, positive learning environment for all students. Fox Chapel Area district policy 249 (full version available on the district website) states: *Bullying means an intentional electronic, written, verbal, or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in a school setting and/or outside a school setting that is severe, persistent, or pervasive and has the effect of doing any of the following:*

- Substantial interference with a student’s education
- Creation of a threatening environment
- Substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying, as defined in this policy, includes cyberbullying.

“School setting” means in the school, on the school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop, or at any activity sponsored, supervised, or sanctioned by the school. O’Hara recognizes that bullying creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation and distracts from the safe environment necessary for student learning.

***The district bullying reporting form is available through the building principal.***

## **Bus Issues/Route Status Updates**

- Parents should follow these procedures when reporting issues or inquiring about the status of bus arrival/departure:
  1. Call the bus company, **ABC Transit, at (412)-828-9000.**
  2. If the issue is not resolved, please contact the building principal.
- ***Please remember that per Pennsylvania State Law, parents are not allowed to board a school bus for any reason.***

## **Bus Rules are as Follows:**

- Arrive at the bus stop ten minutes before pick up time.
- Board the bus in an orderly fashion.
- Follow the directions of the driver and safety patrols.
- If assigned seats are provided, sit in the assigned seat.
- Remain seated, wearing your seatbelt until it is time to get off the bus.
- Keep hands, feet, objects inside the bus.
- Use appropriate language to talk to friends around you in a normal conversational volume (inside voice).
- Food, beverages, tobacco products, gum, and littering are not permitted on the bus.
- Students are not permitted to ride buses other than their district assigned bus.
- Students are responsible for any damage caused to the bus or another student's belongings.



## **Consequences for Bus Rule(s) Violation**

Safety is such an important part of the school day. It is necessary that all students follow appropriate bus behavior at the bus stop and on the bus.

- Any such violation of bus safety will be promptly and strictly enforced.
- There will be appropriate consequences including suspension of riding privileges based on the student's actions.

## **Bus Safety ABC Transit (412)-828-9000**

The safety of all students is our top priority.

Parents are asked to:

- Review bus information and safety rules with your child.
- Be sure your child knows his/her bus stop and AM/PM bus number(s).
- Print name/address/phone number in your child's backpack.
- Discuss the importance of safety and appropriate behavior while riding the bus and at the bus stop with your student.
- Parents/guardians are responsible for transportation for before-and-after school activities.

We are confident that O'Hara students will respect that privilege and to demonstrate safe school bus behavior. Every school bus is equipped with multiple cameras which may be viewed by school administration at any time. **Bus transportation is provided by ABC Transit. (412)-828-9000**

## **Classroom Events/Lessons/Celebrations**

Classroom teachers and parent/guardian volunteers coordinate classroom events and celebrations for various activities throughout the year. In order to volunteer, parents and guardians must go through the [district volunteer application process](#). Activities for these celebrations and lessons are specifically designed to address the age, interests, and developmental level of the grade involved. Younger siblings attending these events distract from those activities and lessons, *therefore, we are unable to permit siblings to attend classroom functions during the school day.*

Students are excited to share birthday parties and other special activities outside of school with their peers. If your child is inviting all students in the homeroom for these events, then the student may bring and pass out an invitation to every child in the classroom. If your family is hosting a more intimate event, then we respectfully request that you distribute the invitations outside of the school setting to help us to avoid the unintentional hurt feelings that may result.

## **Communication**

### **Parent / Teacher Communication**

Communication and cooperation between home and school is vital. Discussing a concern and asking questions of your child's teacher is strongly encouraged. **Teachers cannot accept parent phone calls during instructional time or when supervising students.** You may email or leave a voice message for your child's teacher at any time. A directory of teacher's email addresses and voice mail numbers can be found on the O'Hara web site. Emergency phone calls should be made directly to the school office.

Parent/Guardian-Teacher conferences are scheduled during November. However, student focus meetings may be scheduled at any time during the school year. When parents have academic or classroom concerns, they should contact the child's teacher and request a student focus meeting. **At any time, parents and/or teachers may refer concerns to Ms. Amy Myer, 412-963-0333 ext. 4303 our Response-to-Intervention Facilitator.**

### **Email Blast**

All school-wide emails will be sent through PowerSchool. If you would like to be included in this "Email Blast," please make sure you update your PowerSchool settings with the appropriate email.

## **Confidentiality**

Respecting confidentiality is crucial to O'Hara Elementary School, as it acts to protect the rights of every student. On occasion, families will request that a staff member share contact information for peers and their families. Please note, that due to confidentiality, staff members are not permitted to share this information. Additionally, volunteers at school may notice a student involved in a disciplinary matter, or may observe student academic performance in the classroom. These circumstances should be treated confidentially and are not for discussion in, or outside the school. It is extremely important that volunteers respect the privacy

rights of all members of the O'Hara Community. Volunteers who violate this policy may be asked to no longer volunteer at the building.

## **Counseling Services at O'Hara**

A comprehensive guidance program is proactive in nature and addresses the developmental needs of all students, as well as offering additional support to individual students when appropriate. The school counselors aid in the development of students' social, emotional, and academic success by providing the following services: individual counseling, skill-building groups, classroom lessons, and conflict mediation. The counselors work collaboratively with parents and staff to address a variety of educational, social, emotional, and behavior concerns and facilitate communication/consultation with outside agencies. Test interpretation and the coordination of assessments is another responsibility of the school counselors. Parents are encouraged to contact the school counselor with any questions and concerns. They can do so by calling 412-967-2507 for grades K-2 and 412-967-2505 for grades 3-5.

## **Curricular Materials**

Students will be provided with numerous curricular materials from the district. These items include workbooks, hardback books, technology items, musical instruments, etc. If a student loses or intentionally damages these materials they will be responsible for the replacement cost of the item.

## **Dress Code**

Students at O'Hara Elementary are expected to dress in a manner that is conducive to a safe, friendly learning environment for students and teachers. Therefore, students have a responsibility of wearing clothing that projects a positive attitude of pride in self, school, and community. Students are required to wear appropriate, comfortable, and safe clothing.

In addition, students are strongly recommended to wear gym-appropriate shoes to climb on the playground equipment. Backless shoes, wheeled shoes, flip-flops, and sandals, prohibit safe footing on the climbing apparatus and have been the cause of slipping and sliding accidents.

Please properly mark your child's jacket, sweater, lunch box, etc., with your child's full name so that these items are easily identifiable. Lost and found areas are provided in the school for lost articles.

## **Electronic Devices/Toys (Board Policy #237)**

The Board prohibits use of personal electronic devices (PEDs), by students on school property, on buses and other vehicles provided by the district, and at school-sponsored activities. PEDs include but are not limited to the following: cell phones, smart phones, smart watches, electronic tablets, laptops, music players, gaming devices, laser pointers and attachments and telephone paging devices/beepers, among others. Use by students of any PEDs that provides for a wireless, unfiltered connection to the Internet is prohibited.

PEDs may be used by students during the school day for academic purposes as specified by the classroom teacher, principal, or building guidelines using the district-provided, filtered connection to the Internet.

The district is not responsible for loss, damage, or misuse of any electronic device brought to school by a student.

The Board prohibits the capturing, sharing, distributing, or publishing of audio, video, text or photographic content without the permission of the district, the person(s) part of the electronic media, or copyright holder. All content must comply with the district's Acceptable Use Policy. The district shall not be liable for the loss, damage or misuse of any PEDs brought to school by a student, including loss of personal data or data breach. Violations of the guidelines by a student will result in disciplinary action and may result in confiscation of the electronic device and require parent/guardian pick up of the device.

Toys, trading cards (i.e. Pokemon, hockey cards, etc.), personal athletic equipment, etc. should be left at home unless a teacher requests that a specific item be brought in for an educational or special purpose. **The school is not responsible for lost or broken toys or electronics.**

## **Exclusion from School**

The Pennsylvania and Allegheny County health departments require exclusion of all students who are suspected of or have been diagnosed as having the following communicable diseases:

| <b><u>Illness</u></b>          | <b><u>A student may return to school</u></b>                                                                              |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Strep Throat and Scarlet Fever | 24 hours after beginning appropriate treatment                                                                            |
| Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)      | When judged not infective by a physician or school nurse.                                                                 |
| Chicken Pox                    | When all vesicles (sores) are crusted; approximately five days from eruption of the last crop of vesicles.                |
| Scabies                        | After completion of appropriate treatment and judged not infective by a physician or school nurse.                        |
| Ringworm                       | After the first treatment, if body lesions are covered. Neither scalp nor body lesions that are dried need to be covered. |
| Impetigo                       | 24 hours after beginning appropriate treatment.                                                                           |
| COVID-19                       | 5 days from symptom onset and/or per ACHD/CDC guidelines                                                                  |

The school nurse should be consulted if there are any questions or concerns regarding readmission to school at 412-967-2508.

## **Field Trips**

Field trips are an integral part of the curriculum. Parents will be notified well in advance of all field trips and parent/guardian written permission will be required for participation.

To ensure the safety of all of our students, field trip chaperones must obtain their [volunteer clearances](#), which include a Criminal Record Check, a Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance, and an FBI Criminal History check. Copies of clearances will be confidentially filed at the Central Office. Please allow plenty of time to obtain your clearances. Parents who are not chaperones and siblings are not permitted to attend any field trips.

## Food Allergies - Peanut/tree nut allergy alert

There are children in our school who have serious allergies, particularly tree nut/peanut allergies. Tree nuts include but are not limited to almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, chestnuts, filbert/hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, pecans, pine nuts (pignolia nuts), pistachios, and walnuts. A child with a serious tree nut/peanut allergy can suffer a reaction merely by touching a food containing a tree nut or peanut.

Therefore, the following guidelines are in effect:

- Classrooms will refrain from projects that involve peanut butter or peanut or tree nut shells.
- Parents are asked not to send in student projects that contain peanuts, tree nuts and/or their shells.
- Do not include candy or other food treats as part of holiday cards.
- Snacks that are brought in by a student to eat in the classroom at snack time must not contain tree/nuts or peanuts. While peanut/tree nut containing foods are permitted in the cafeteria, we must keep the classrooms peanut/tree nut safe.
- Students who eat peanut butter or tree nut or peanut products are to wash hands with soap and water after eating lunch. Similarly, we would appreciate you making sure that your child washes his/her hands with soap and water before leaving for school each morning.

Understanding the complexity of food-allergies in young children is a learning and growing process for all of us; we trust that you understand how deeply important it is for all of us to respect and adhere to these guidelines. Please contact the school nurse, school counselor, classroom teacher or principal should you have questions or concerns about food-allergies in children or food-allergy related issues.

## Food Services

### Breakfast/Lunch Program

- Breakfast and lunch are served daily. During the 2023-2024 school year, elementary breakfast will be \$1.45, and elementary lunch will be \$2.65. Individual milk purchases will be 75 cents.
- All students are given a Personal Identification Number (PIN), which they enter into a computerized register when purchasing breakfast or lunch.
- Students who qualify may also receive meals free or at a reduced price (\$0.40 for lunch and \$0.30 for breakfast).
- To receive free or reduced lunch for your child, you must thoroughly complete a Meal Benefit Application and return it to school. **This application must be completed every school year.** One Meal Benefit Application may be used for all eligible school children in the family. If you receive notification that you are on the direct certification list, you do not need to fill out an application. You can download a free/reduced application online by going to <https://www.fcasd.edu/Page/105>.
- To pay ahead for lunches or breakfasts, add funds to [www.schoolcafe.com](http://www.schoolcafe.com) or send a check in with your child. Checks should be in envelopes labeled with the student's name, classroom teacher, and





any special instructions. The check should be made out to FCASD Cafeteria Fund. Students may also pay daily in the lunch line at the standard rate.

- Students that incur a negative balance at the elementary level are expected to bring their accounts up to date by the following school day. All balances are carried over from the previous year.
- Nutrition facts of our school lunches are located on the FCASD website under the [Food Services Tab](#). Questions about the school breakfast and lunch program can be directed to Mrs. Julie Geary, Food Service Specialist, at 412-967-2502.

### Snacks/Extras

- Snacks are offered in all four elementary cafeterias during lunch periods, and our district food service strives to select healthy choices. Baked chips, low-fat ice cream, and fruit snacks are some of the choices.
- Most snacks are priced between \$.70 and \$1.00. Students are able to purchase an unlimited number of snacks, per the district nutrition center, thus it is helpful for parents to monitor snack consumption via the student's lunch account.
- Students in grades K-2 are permitted to purchase snacks on Fridays; students in grades 3-5 are permitted to purchase snacks Monday - Friday.
- A "No Snack" day may be determined at the discretion of the café manager and/or administrator.
- *Parents are able to restrict their child's lunch account in order to prevent them from purchasing snacks and/or ice cream by emailing Julie Geary at [julie\\_geary@fcasd.edu](mailto:julie_geary@fcasd.edu).*
- Students have a daily classroom snack time and families are able to send in a snack with their child so long as it aligns with the tree nut/peanut free policy.
- If a student has a negative balance on their lunch account, no extras will be allowed to be purchased until the account is current.
- Please review the Wellness section of the handbook regarding food allergies.
- Additional details regarding the breakfast and lunch programs can be found on the District's Food Services web page: <https://www.fcasd.edu/domain/55>.

### Hazing - Policy 247\*\*

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a safe, positive environment for students and staff that is free from hazing. Hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational goals of the district and are prohibited at all times.

### Health Services

The certified school nurse is an integral part of the educational team, providing guidelines for school personnel so that specific health needs of students are met. The school nurse assesses the seriousness of illnesses or injuries that occur during the school day. The school nurse also provides, performs, administers, and/or supervises all necessary treatment procedures required by the student population. The school nurse will administer minor first aid to students with injuries or illnesses that occur at school. However, serious injury or illness may necessitate parental/guardian notification and possible outside medical attention. These decisions are at the discretion of the nurse, with consideration for the needs of the student. Any changes in a student's medical status should be discussed with the school nurse so that proper care can be provided in the event of an emergency.



Each fall, parents are asked to update their PowerSchool account to include updated emergency contact information. If, at any time during the school year, the emergency information changes, please update your PowerSchool account and notify the school nurse immediately. This information is of vital importance as it gives school personnel access to information needed in the event of a student's illness/injury or an emergency event.

### COVID-19 Information

Please visit the district website [here](#) for the most up to date information regarding policies and procedures associated with COVID-19.

### Screenings

The Pennsylvania School Health Law requires:

- **Physical examinations** for students entering school (kindergarten or first grade) and again in sixth and eleventh grades.
- **Dental examinations** are required on entering school (kindergarten or first grade) and in third and seventh grades.
- **Height, Weight and Vision screenings** are given annually by the school nurse.
- **Audio screening tests** are given in kindergarten, first, second, third, seventh, and eleventh grades.

### Immunizations

All children attending school in Pennsylvania must be in compliance with the state's current immunization laws and regulations which includes:

- 4 doses of DTaP (last dose after 4th birthday)
- 4 doses of Polio (last dose after 4th birthday)
- 3 doses of HepB
- 2 doses of MMR
- 2 doses of Varicella

The law provides that students NOT IN COMPLIANCE with these requirements MUST BE EXCLUDED from the start of the school year until the student provides verification of the immunizations received, has a scheduled plan signed by the physician, or obtains an exemption signed according to the provisions of the law.

For more detailed information, please see the School Health Services [website](#)

### Home Learning

Home assignments are designed to reinforce / extend the in-school learning experience. Parents and guardians are encouraged to allow their student(s) the opportunity to work independently. Homework should not require more than an hour of time each night (this time may vary based on grade level). If a student is significantly struggling with an assignment, parents and guardians should contact their student's teacher to inform them.

## **Homeless Students**

Under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, all school districts are responsible for identifying students experiencing homelessness and connecting them with the resources needed to ensure academic success.

**Who is considered homeless?** Children or youths living in a shelter, transitional housing, hotel/motel, vehicle, campground, on the street, or doubled up with friends or family due to a lack of alternate resources are considered homeless. An unaccompanied homeless youth is a child or youth that is not in the care of their parent or legal guardian and meets the definition of homeless under McKinney-Vento.

**Where can students experiencing homelessness attend school?** The law indicates that homeless students have the right to remain in their school of origin (the school they attended at the time of the homeless episode or last school attended) through the end of the school year in which they find permanent housing, provided it is in the child's/youth's best interest.

If through consultation between the school and the family and/or unaccompanied youth it is determined that remaining in the school of origin is not in the student's best interest, then the student has the right to immediately enroll in the school that non-homeless students living in the attendance area in which the child/youth is actually living are eligible to attend, even if they do not have all of the required documentation. Additionally, unaccompanied homeless youths have the right to immediately enroll in school, even if they do not have a legal guardian present.

**What supports can school districts provide to homeless students?** Homeless students are eligible for supports and services to remove barriers to educational success. These may include transportation to the school of origin, free meals, referrals to physical/mental health providers, clothing to meet school requirements, access to school supplies and resources, assistance with credit recovery, tutoring supports, expedited evaluations, and assistance to participate in school activities, including parent engagement opportunities, sports, clubs, etc.

**Homeless Dispute Process:** If at any time there is a disagreement about homeless status or best interest for school placement, the district will notify the family in writing of their determination that the family/unaccompanied youth is ineligible for McKinney-Vento services. At this time, the district will provide the family/unaccompanied youth with the ability to dispute their determination. Throughout the dispute process, the child/youth, including unaccompanied youth, will continue to be educated in the school of origin or immediately enrolled in the school in which they are seeking enrollment until the dispute process is finalized. Transportation will continue throughout the dispute process. All disputes will be sent to the ECYEH regional coordinator, who will issue a determination. If any party is unhappy with the determination, they can elevate the dispute to the state coordinator.

**What if I think that I am eligible for services under McKinney-Vento?** Please contact Donna Beley, homeless liaison and foster care point of contact, Fox Chapel Area School District, at (412) 967-2431 or [donna\\_beley@fcsd.edu](mailto:donna_beley@fcsd.edu).

For more information, please see [A General Guide to Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness \(ECYEH\) Program](#).

## **Medications - Policy 210\*\***

Medications should be given at home. Should the need arise for a student to be given medications during school hours, these procedures must be followed:

- Written instructions signed by a physician with the diagnosis, medication, dosage, length of time to be given, possible side effects, and parent/guardian signature are required for all types of medication. Forms are available from the certified school nurse or on the website
- It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to maintain an adequate supply of medication throughout the school year.
- Medication must be brought to the school nurse by the parent/guardian in the prescription-labeled container, which must remain at school.
- If the school nurse is not available, the building principal or designees will accept and sign for the medication.
- Over-the-counter medications, including cough drops will not be administered, unless prescribed by a physician.
- The certified school nurse will review all new medication requests.
- The first dose of medication: When a child has been prescribed a new medication that must be taken in school, it is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to give the first dose when the child is at home to ascertain the child's reaction to the medication.
- Medication will be discarded one week following the expiration date, or at the conclusion of the school year, unless the parent/guardian requests the return of the medication. Medication will be returned to the parent/guardian or an adult designee only.

### **Nondiscrimination in School and Classroom Practices Policies 103 & 104\*\***

The district strives to maintain a safe, positive learning environment for all students that is free from discrimination. Discrimination is inconsistent with the educational and programmatic goals of the district and is prohibited on school grounds, at school-sponsored activities and on any conveyance providing transportation to or from a school entity or school-sponsored activity.

### **Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)**

The O'Hara Elementary Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) works closely with the teachers and the school administration to fund materials and activities that enrich the academic, physical and social well-being of O'Hara students. PTO membership is open to any person who is a parent or a guardian of a child attending O'Hara Elementary School or any member of the O'Hara Elementary faculty, staff, or administration. There is no fee to join. We encourage you to become an active member in our PTO. To learn more, visit our website at [www.oharapto.org](http://www.oharapto.org).



### **Parent Volunteers**

There are many opportunities to volunteer at O'Hara Elementary, and we welcome your willingness to help at O'Hara. To ensure the safety of all students, clearances are required for all unpaid adult volunteers who are responsible for the welfare of a child or have the possibility of caring for, supervising, guiding or controlling children or routine interaction with children, regardless of the number of hours or frequency of the contact.

The clearances required for Volunteers are:

1. [PA State Criminal Record Check](#).
2. [PA Child Abuse History Clearance](#).
3. [Federal Criminal History Record Check \(Fingerprint\)](#)



No person who is required to submit clearances will be permitted to volunteer if the criminal history or child abuse reports/clearances show evidence of an offense which would preclude such individual from providing services under the Child Protective Services Law

Should a volunteer cease involvement with the district's volunteer program for a period of one (1) school year, they will be required to obtain new clearances.

When first submitted, the clearances cannot be more than twelve (12) months old.

## **PowerSchool - Returning Student Form & Report Cards**

Homeroom teacher assignments, class information and schedules, attendance, and other class activities can be accessed in PowerSchool. More information on using PowerSchool can be found on the PowerSchool website at

<https://sites.google.com/a/cl.fcasd.edu/powerschool-parent-introduction/>.

Parents and guardians are required to update each student's PowerSchool account annually to ensure emergency contact information is up to date.



Parents will be able to view student grades at any time throughout the school year. Assessment grades are updated in PowerSchool by the teacher within 7 days of the administration of the assessment. Report cards with standards based descriptors are available at the end of each marking period. If needed, parents may contact the school secretary to have a paper copy of the report card mailed home following each quarter.

Students in grades one through five will have report card information available following each quarter. For students in Kindergarten, report card information will be available following the second, third, and fourth quarters.

## **Principal/Program Principal Intervention**

Certain unexpected behaviors require the immediate intervention of the principal and/or program principal. Some of these behaviors include: Defiance / Disrespect, Abusive / Inappropriate Language, Major Physical Contact, Fighting, Bullying, Property Damage, Major Electronic Violation, etc. A child who is referred to the principal may have to develop a plan to change his or her behavior and may also be required to participate in a conference with his or her parents/guardians to encourage better choices. Furthermore, consequences for unexpected behaviors may be given by the principal or program principal.

## **Public Attendance at School Events – Policy 904\*\***

The Board welcomes the public at activities and events sponsored by the district, but the Board also acknowledges its duty to maintain order and preserve school facilities during such events (tobacco/nicotine, free admittance, service animals).

## **Recess**

- Research supports the importance of physical activity and active play for children, so we do our best to get students outside for fresh air whenever possible.

- If the “feels like” temperature is 23 degrees or higher, and the field/playground surfaces are usable, we will have outdoor recess.
- Three different apps/websites are reviewed when making our decision: CBS Weather, Weather Bug, Weather.com.
- The field tends to get very muddy and there will be days where we have to keep students on the track area and/or blacktop as a result of this.
- For indoor recess, students will have access to indoor recess bins filled with board games, indoor active games, craft and art supplies, etc. thanks to the support of PTO and families.
- Please remind students to wear heavy coats, gloves, scarves, and hats on cold weather days. Parents are encouraged to have students keep extra sets of clothing and shoes in their lockers.
- If students are not dressed appropriately to safely enjoy outdoor play, they may be asked to remain indoors for recess.

## **Response to Instruction and Intervention**

- Response-to-Intervention is a process that fosters systematic research-based instruction and interventions for all learners. Instruction and interventions are matched to student needs, and the monitoring of progress is continuous.
- Teachers collect and analyze student assessment data monthly to measure whole group and individual student progress related to grade level benchmarks and to plan and implement classroom and support interventions.
- If a student is being referred to the RTII process, parents may be invited to discuss their individual child’s growth during a student focus meeting. There are several days each month dedicated to student focus meetings.
- In addition, parents are able to request a student focus meeting to discuss any academic/behavioral, social, or emotional concerns for their child.
- This approach to monitoring student progress promotes student success. If you have any questions about our RtII process, or would like to request a meeting to discuss your child’s progress, please contact our RtII Facilitator, Amy Myer, at 412-963-0333 or [Amy\\_Myer@fcasd.edu](mailto:Amy_Myer@fcasd.edu).

## **Safety Drills**

A variety of safety drills are practiced periodically to ensure student knowledge and comfort with hearing the sounds and participating in the drills. When available, officers may be on site to assist with our drills and provide feedback to staff. Teachers, counselors, and administrators monitor and check-in with students and staff throughout and after safety drills. Anyone who is visibly upset or who has voiced concerns is referred to our counselor. If a student would benefit from counselor support, the parent is informed.

- **BUILDING EVACUATION DRILLS**
  - Held once a year
  - Students and staff evacuate to a designated off-site location with the support of local first responders.
- **BUS EVACUATION DRILLS**
  - Held twice a year
  - Bus driver and staff members assist students with exiting the rear of the bus
- **FIRE EVACUATION DRILLS**
  - When the alarm is pulled, the principal announces on the intercom that “this is only a drill.”
  - Held monthly to practice evacuating the building and moving to a safe distance in a timely and safe manner

- LOCKDOWN DRILLS
  - Helps make students and staff aware of where to go and what safety precautions to take in the event of a crisis situation or an intruder inside or outside of the building.
  - Held a minimum of twice a year
  
- SEVERE WEATHER DRILLS
  - Mandated by the state to be held in the spring each year.
  - Students and staff practice going to a safe location and getting into a safe physical position within the building

## **Sickness and Injuries**

\*Please visit the district website [here](#) for the most up to date information regarding policies and procedures associated with COVID-19.\*

If your child has any of the following symptoms it would be best for them to stay at home and rest until they are healthy enough to return to school. Please consult with your medical professional and our school nurse prior to return.

- a fever of 100 degrees or more (students should be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school)
- vomiting or diarrhea within the last 24 hours
- a suspicious rash
- a stomach ache or fatigue, accompanied by a fever and/or vomiting
- a headache lasting one-two days, or recurring
- red, irritated eyes with pus-like or excessive watery drainage
- persistent, uncontrollable coughing and sneezing

When children become ill at school, it is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to provide transportation from school to home. Emergency treatment information, completed by parents/guardians annually in PowerSchool, enables the school nurse to ensure that children receive the best possible aid in the event of an emergency or illness at school.

**\*\*\* After five consecutive days of absence, students will be required to have a doctor's excuse upon return to school.**

## **Site-Based Management Team**

The SBMT is composed of two parents, a community member, faculty members, a staff member, and the principal, who provide input and guidance to our school community. Standing committees research and recommend ideas and solutions to the SBMT. The SBMT focuses on the district and building strategic plans and works with the principal to make and implement well-thought ideas and decisions for students and staff.

## **Special Education Services**

The Fox Chapel Area School District provides a free, appropriate, public education to eligible students. To qualify as an eligible student, the child must be of school age, in need of specially-designed instruction, and meet eligibility criteria for one or more of the following physical or mental disabilities, as set forth in Pennsylvania State Regulations:

- Autism



- Deafness
- Visual Impairment including Blindness
- Emotional Disturbance
- Hearing Impairment
- Intellectual Disability
- Multiple Disabilities
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Other Health Impairment
- Specific Learning Disability
- Speech or Language Impairment
- Traumatic Brain Injury

The District engages in identification procedures to ensure that eligible students receive an appropriate educational program consisting of special education and related services, individualized to meet student needs. At no cost to the parents, these services are provided in compliance with state and federal laws and are reasonably calculated to yield meaningful educational benefit and student progress.

To identify students who may be eligible for special education, various screening activities are conducted on an on-going basis. These screening activities include: review of group-based data (cumulative records, enrollment records, health records, report cards, ability, and achievement test scores); hearing, vision, physical, and speech/language screening; and review by a Child Study Team, MTSS Team, or (Elementary) Student Assistant Program ((E)SAP) Team. When screening results suggest that the student may be eligible for special education services, the District seeks parental consent to conduct a multidisciplinary evaluation.

Parents who suspect that their child is eligible for special education services may request a multidisciplinary evaluation at any time through a written request to the Director of Special Education and Pupil Services.

Services designed to meet the needs of eligible students include the annual development of an Individualized Education Program (IEP), bi-annual or tri-annual multidisciplinary re-evaluation, and a full continuum of services, which include Itinerant, Supplemental, or Full-Time Levels of Support. The extent of special education services and the location for the delivery of such services are determined by the IEP team and are based on the student's identified needs and abilities, chronological age, and the level of intensity of the specified intervention. The District also provides related services required for the student to benefit from the special education program.

Parents may obtain additional information regarding special education services and programs and parental due process rights by contacting the Director of Special Education and Pupil Services, 412-967-2435, Fox Chapel Area School District, 611 Field Club Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15238.

### **Student Network/Internet User Agreement / Parent Permission Form - Policy 815\*\***

To use networked resources, all students must sign and return a parent permission form, and those under age 18 must obtain parental permission. The form is distributed to parents upon initial entrance into O'Hara Elementary School.

#### **The activities listed below are not permitted:**

- Sending or displaying offensive messages or pictures
- Using obscene language



- Giving personal information, such as complete name, phone number, address or identifiable photo, without permission from teacher and parent or guardian
- Harassing, insulting or attacking others
- Damaging or modifying computers, computer systems or computer networks
- Violating copyright laws
- Using others' passwords
- Trespassing in others' electronic folders, work or files
- Employing the network for commercial purposes, financial gain, or fraud
- Installation of non-approved software
- Chat/Instant Message/Blog/Wiki Programs that are not part of classroom instruction
- Modifying Software Settings
- Loading or use of unauthorized games, programs, files, or other electronic media.

Violations may result in a loss of access as well as other disciplinary or legal action.

### **Student Observation by Parents/Outside Agencies**

While we understand that parents may have an interest in having their child observed by an outside agency, we must be cautious that the teaching/learning process is not interrupted. It is also important that the privacy of each student is protected. Parents/guardians may request a student observation with personnel by following set guidelines, beginning with the completion of the Outside Agency Student Observation Form. Forms can be obtained from the building principal. The building principal will make the final determination concerning this type of request.

### **Student Release of Information Form**

At times, parents may request that our staff members release academic or behavioral information about their children to outside agencies/parties. We are also asked to complete rating scales on children by medical professionals. We need parental permission in order to release this information or provide rating scales to outside agencies. If you are requesting this, please contact your child's counselor to request the form and return it to the counselor upon completion.

### **Suspension**

The principal or program principal may suspend a student from participating in regular classes and activities due to fighting, disruption of school, or other serious offenses. The suspension may be "in-school" or "out-of-school." In-school suspension assignments will depend on the severity of the behavior and availability of supervisory staff. Out-of-school suspensions may be assigned for one day up to ten days, depending on the severity of the offense. Suspension days are considered excused absences and students are permitted to make up missed work.

Students should never bring any item to school that could be considered hazardous to their health and well-being and/or the health and well-being of others. Examples include: cigarettes or tobacco products, any kind of knife regardless of the size, sticks, sharp objects, toy guns/swords/knives, etc., or any item that

can be interpreted as a weapon. Students who bring any type of weapon, sharp object, or look-alike weapon to school are subject to district discipline procedures.

### Act 26

#### **When can your child be expelled for bringing weapons to school?**

Act 26 is a Pennsylvania law which requires the expulsion for at least one year of any student who possesses a weapon on school property, at a school function, or going to and from school. Many students have faced expulsion as a result of this law.

#### **Who is affected by Act 26?**

Any student who possesses a weapon in school, or at a school activity, or going to and from school (including on public transit), must be expelled for at least one year under the law. The student does not have to use the weapon; it is enough to carry it, keep it in a locker or book bag, or hold it for a friend.

#### **What is a weapon?**

A weapon is defined by Pennsylvania school law as "any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nunchaku, firearm, shotgun, rifle, and [anything else] capable of inflicting serious bodily injury." This definition may include box cutters, kitchen knives, pen knives on keychains, and other common household items. A narrower definition is used for special education cases (see next page).

#### **Does a student have any rights in an expulsion case?**

Before a student can be expelled, the student is entitled to a formal hearing. The student is entitled to advance notice of the hearing, and can request that the names of the witnesses against the student and copies of any statements made by those witnesses be provided to the student before the hearing. At the hearing, the student has the right to bring an attorney, may question the witnesses against him/her, and may present evidence on the student's behalf. Although the hearing may be held before a hearing officer or a panel of the Board of School Directors, the entire school board must vote on the expulsion. If a student wishes to challenge an expulsion decision, an appeal must be filed in court within 30 days of the decision.

#### **Will the police be notified?**

Act 26 requires school officials to notify the police whenever they discover any weapon covered by the Act. A separate law makes the possession of any such weapon on school grounds or on a bus traveling to or from school a crime.

#### **Are there any exceptions to the rule that a student must be expelled for at least one year under Act 26?**

The superintendent may make modifications to the expulsion requirements for a student on a case-by-case basis. A school district may not adopt a "zero tolerance policy" that does not allow the superintendent to consider the individual circumstances of a student.

#### **Are students in special education affected by Act 26?**

Federal law requires that special procedures must be used before students in special education may be

disciplined, even after the passage of Act 26, and they cannot be disciplined for conduct related to their disability. However, a student in special education who brings a dangerous weapon to school may be transferred to an alternative program for 45 days without parental consent while those special procedures are used.

### **What happens to a student who has been expelled?**

When a student is expelled, if the student is under 17 and cannot find another school to attend within 30 days of the expulsion, the student's family must notify the school district in writing of the need for a program. It is then the school district's duty to provide the student with an educational program, although the law is not clear about what that program must look like.

A student in special education has the right to continue receiving special education services up until graduation or age 21, even if expelled. Those services would just have to be delivered outside the regular school setting.

### **Does a student's family have to tell a new school district about an expulsion or disciplinary problems at another school?**

Yes. Act 26 also requires that whenever a student registers in a new school district, the student's parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of a student" must give the new school a sworn statement saying whether the student has ever been suspended or expelled from any public or private school in any state for offenses involving weapons, drugs, alcohol, willful injury to another person, or violence on school grounds. This statement then becomes part of the student's record. Persons giving incorrect information on purpose can be charged with a third-degree misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of \$2500 or one year in jail.

Once the sworn statement is provided, the student must be admitted and provided with an education on the same terms as other students in that district. The only exception to this requirement is that a student expelled from one district for an Act 26 weapons offense may be excluded from the new district and placed in an alternative assignment for the duration of the expulsion by the old district.

## **Title IX: Section 504 and ADA**

The Fox Chapel Area School District is an equal rights and opportunity school district. The school district does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin, or handicap/disability. The district shall make reasonable accommodations for identified physical and mental impairments that constitute disabilities, consistent with the requirements of federal and state laws and regulations.

Additional information pertaining to civil rights, school district policies, and grievance procedures can be obtained by contacting the compliance officers listed below between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday-Friday.

This notice is available from the compliance officers in large print, on audiotape, and in Braille.

Title IX:

Dr. David P. McCommons

(412) 967-2456

Section 504 and ADA:

Dr. Timothy Mahoney

(412) 967-2435

Address:

Fox Chapel Area School District

611 Field Club Road

Pittsburgh, PA 15238

## **Tobacco/Nicotine - Policies 222 & 223**

The board recognizes that tobacco, nicotine, and nicotine delivery products present a health and safety hazard that can have serious consequences for both users and nonusers and the safety and environment of the schools.

## **Transportation**

### **Morning Arrival Procedures**

#### ***Bus Riders***

- Students will arrive at school between 8:40 and 8:55 AM.
- School buses drop students off on the side of the building by the gymnasium.
- Cars must avoid this area between 8:15 and 9:00 AM; during this time, the entrance/exit closest to Timberlane Drive will be closed to cars.

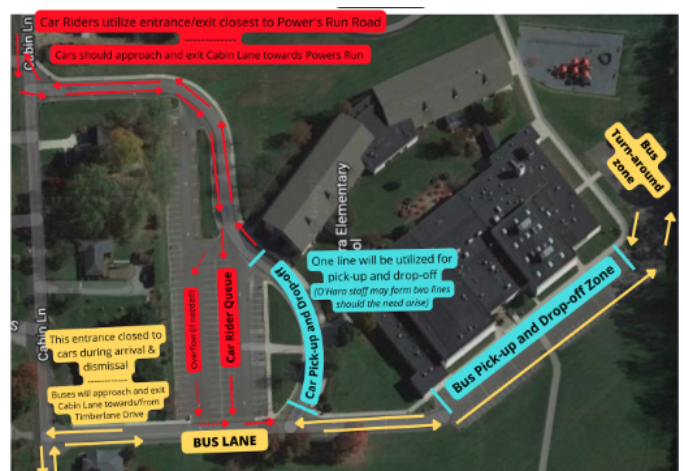
#### ***Car Riders***

- Students should arrive between 8:40 and 8:55 AM. *(Staff members are not available to supervise students prior to 8:40 a.m.)*
- For car riders who will be eating breakfast, please arrive between 8:40 and 8:45 a.m. to ensure your student has enough time to eat.
- Car riders should remain in a single file line to be dropped off in front of the school alongside the curb. All students should exit from the passenger side. Please use the entrance and exit closest to Powers Run Road.
- Please remain in your vehicle. If you need to assist your child getting out of the car, please park and walk them into the building.
- Once your children are safely on the other side of the yellow line, you will wait to exit the drop-off lane until the cars in front of you proceed.
- Students who are not in their seats by 9:00 AM are considered tardy. If arriving after 8:55am, parents/guardians are asked to park their vehicle and escort the student to the main office to sign in.

### **Afternoon Dismissal Procedures**

#### **Bus Riders**

- School buses pick students up on the side of the building nearest the gymnasium.



- Cars must avoid this area between 3:00 and 4:15 PM; during this time, the entrance/exit closest to Timberlane Drive will be closed to cars.

### **Car Riders**

- Car riders pick students up in the driveway directly in front of the school, alongside the curb.
- Cars will be directed to use the entrance/exit closest to Power Run Road.
- Please be sure to log into the School Dismissal Manager app to obtain your unique security pin that will serve as your signature for pick-up.

### *Dismissal Changes*

- If your child's dismissal routine is going to change, even for a day, please be sure to update the School Dismissal Manager before the 2:00 PM cut off.
- Changes should be submitted in writing by noon to the homeroom teacher and Sandy Shank at [Sandra\\_Shank@fcasd.edu](mailto:Sandra_Shank@fcasd.edu) to ensure that all parties are aware of the change (office staff, teacher, and student).

### **Video Taping/Pictures of Students**

At O'Hara Elementary, we have a lot to be proud of and we enjoy promoting our school and sharing our students' wonderful accomplishments with the community through the World Wide Web, newspapers, and local television stations. The district allows students to be recorded, photographed, and interviewed for legitimate public purposes.

**If you do not allow your child to be photographed, videotaped, or interviewed for the purpose of promoting our school and district, please address written objections to Bonnie Berzonski, Coordinator of Communications, Fox Chapel Area School District, 611 Field Club Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15238.**

If you take pictures or video of your child during events at O'Hara Elementary, please be aware that not all parents are comfortable with their child's pictures being shared through video sites such as YouTube and social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.

### **Visitors/Volunteers**

- In an effort to enhance the safety and security of our students and staff, the Fox Chapel Area School District uses the Raptor Visitor Management System in each of our schools. The system tracks all visitors, contractors, and volunteers who come into the schools, and provides alerts on anyone who may jeopardize the safety of our students and staff.
- All visitors must be buzzed in at each school and immediately report to the office. Visitors then present a valid state-issued driver's license or ID, which is entered into the Raptor system. A badge is issued identifying the name of the visitor, as well as the date and time of their visit. Visitors return the badge prior to exiting the building, and will then be signed out of the system.
- The safety of our students and staff is our highest priority, and the Raptor Visitor Management System is just one of the tools we use to make our schools safer.
- If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the district's School Safety and Security Coordinator, Joseph Kozarian, at 412/967-2448, or email him at [joseph\\_kozarian@fcasd.edu](mailto:joseph_kozarian@fcasd.edu). For

more information on the Raptor Visitor Management System, please visit the Raptor Technologies website at [www.raptortech.com](http://www.raptortech.com).

## **Weather Emergencies**

When weather conditions cause local roads to become hazardous, schools may be delayed or closed. Delays, closings, and early dismissals will be announced on the school website (<http://www.fcasd.edu/ohara-home.html>), on local news websites, over the local television and radio stations. Please listen to the following radio and/or television stations for information regarding delays, cancellations or early dismissals:

\* KDKA (1020 AM)

\* KQV (1410 AM)

\* WTAE (Channel 4)

\* KDKA –TV (Channel 2)    \* WPXI-TV (Channel 11)

- When school is delayed for two hours, the starting time will be 10:40 AM. Students should be at their bus stop two hours later than their regular scheduled time. No breakfast will be served on two-hour delay days.
- Emergencies affecting any or all of the Fox Chapel Area schools will be made known on the school website (<http://www.fcasd.edu/ohara-home.html>), over local radio and television stations.
- There will be an announcement on the district Web site at [www.fcasd.edu](http://www.fcasd.edu) whenever there are school delays, cancellations or early dismissals.
- In addition, the Fox Chapel Area School District has implemented the School Messenger notification system to provide timely communication to parents and staff members on matters such as attendance and district emergencies. The system automatically calls parent/guardian phone numbers, cell numbers or sends a text message to a cell number programmed by parents/guardians into the system to alert them to emergencies. This system can also send email alerts in case of an emergency. You can add phone numbers and emails to this system through your child's PowerSchool page.
- In the event of a severe storm forecast or other emergency, when children are already at school, an early dismissal may occur. Parents/guardians who work or are not at home should plan with their child (children) where to go should such a situation arise. Each school will request this information from parents in the early fall of the school year on the Student Pick-Up Authorization Form. This form also designates persons to pick up your child (children) for all instances when the student is released from the school. Please ensure that only those persons on the form attempt to pick up your child (children). Anyone picking up a student will be required to produce photo identification and sign a release form.
- In the event your child (children) has a personal means of transportation at school at the time of the emergency or evacuation, your consent is also required before the student will be permitted to leave with their own mode of transportation.

## **Wellness - Policy 246\*\***

FCASD District Wellness Policy Fox Chapel Area School District recognizes that student wellness and proper nutrition are related to students' physical well-being, growth, development, and readiness to learn. The Board is committed to providing a school environment that promotes student wellness, proper



nutrition, nutrition education and promotion, and regular physical activity as part of the total learning experience. In a healthy school environment, students will learn about and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices that can improve student achievement.

To access the entire wellness policy please go to:

<https://www.fcasd.edu/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=151&dataid=785&FileName=246%20School%20Wellness.pdf>.

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement and Complaint Procedure In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form , (AD-3027) found online at: [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html) , and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) E-mail: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov) This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

The Fox Chapel Area School District is committed to the optimal development of every student. The district believes that for students to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, developmental, and social success, we need to create positive, safe and health-promoting learning environments at every level throughout the school year. In its continuing efforts, the district has adopted recommendations from The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). These recommendations include: Nutrition Standards for School Nutrition Programs, nutrition standards for “other foods” sold or served during the school day. This requires that all “other foods” reflect the smart snack guidelines.

- Foods must also meet several nutritional requirements as outlined in the smart guidelines.
  - Smart snack guidelines are in effect from the time the first student arrives until 30 minutes after all students are dismissed.
  - All foods made available include vending (if applicable), ala carte, fundraisers, and school parties/celebrations are considered under the smart snack guidelines.
1. Parents/guardians/food providers should take every measure that student access to foods and beverages will meet federal, state/local laws, and guidelines.
  2. Nutrition information for products offered a la carte is available near the point of purchase (register).
  3. The School District will be providing information to families via the school food service website that will encourage parents/guardians to teach their children about health and nutrition.
  4. Students will be encouraged to start each day with a healthy breakfast.