

APPLEGARTH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



PRINCIPAL'S NEWSLETTER



Dear Applegarth Community,

We are well under way in the 2023-2024 school year! As we approach the holiday season, we, at Applegarth, would like to wish all families health, happiness, and good cheer, whatever your celebration is.

When we return to school in January, we will be settling into the heart of our curriculum. At the fourth and fifth grade level, it is critical that your children are reading every day and that they begin to learn study skills and self-regulation strategies to carry them through the remaining years of their education. Independent reading books should be at your child's reading level or slightly above. Your child's teacher can assist you with information about reading level.

Regarding study skills, now is the time to begin an organized regiment at home. Many children have after-school activities that are time consuming but essential to development of the whole child. Creating a daily schedule with your child that includes *daily* time for reading, homework, and studying will likely prove to be very beneficial and habit forming.

Many studies have debunked a long-standing idea that students should learn according to their specific learning style. Empirical evidence simply does not support this idea, except as it relates to initial engagement in a lesson. The method of delivery of a lesson, in the end, does not produce different results in learners. Brain science supports the concept of *interleaving* – spaced out studying of different concepts, leaving time in between for key concepts to transfer to long term memory. Study strategies, such as “reading over” information or highlighting key ideas, do not help the recall process. Students need to engage with the material and through practicing skills with written reflection or repeated quizzing, children have a better chance of remembering the material. Cramming material just prior to an assessment is one of the *least* effective study strategies. Cramming puts all the information into short term memory; without repetition of the concepts, it might stay there long enough for the assessment (if one is lucky) but not for enduring understanding. Most of the crammed information will not transfer to long term memory and will be lost. Since the aim of education is for children to move forward with retention of important concepts that scaffold more difficult learning, this advantage is gone. In other words, the learning is more important than the grade!

Studying should be a part of all subjects and daily time can be woven into the home routines. For example, a student might arrive home at 4 p.m. The child could play outside for 30 minutes and then come in to do 20 minutes of reading. By then, this time of year, it will be getting dark. After a 15-minute break, math homework can be completed. After dinner and sports, 15 minutes could be dedicated to reviewing the math section covered the day before (writing important vocabulary from memory and completing one practice problem). Another 15 minutes could be devoted to the content from science or social studies from the day before. A good strategy is to turn section headings into questions and try to orally answer the questions to see what has been retained from memory. If not much has been retained, the child should go back and look again at the section.

Do not wait for the teacher to announce a test to review. Review can begin as soon as new information is learned. The ongoing repetition, looking back at past skills, and using retrieval practices will solidify understanding more completely and more long term than cramming a night or two before!

A great book on this topic is *Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning* by Brown, Roediger and McDaniel if anyone would like more information!

Once again, enjoy a wonderful holiday season.

P.S. – A good book can make a great stocking stuffer!!

Sincerely,

Dawn Graziano

Dawn Graziano, Principal
Dawn.Graziano@monroe.k12.nj.us

TEACHER OF THE YEAR & EDUCATIONAL SERVICE PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to Olivia Volpe! Mrs. Volpe is a grade 5 teacher at Applegarth School and is this year's Teacher of the Year! Mrs. Nidia Oliviera, Applegarth School's ELL teacher is our Educational Service Professional of the Year. Mrs. Roslyn Push, Mrs. Graziano's secretary, has been selected as Applegarth School's Educational Support Professional of the Year. Congratulations Mrs. Volpe, Mrs. Oliviera & Mrs. Push!

A MESSAGE FROM MRS. ESSIG, OUR SCHOOL NURSE:



What is Give Kids A Smile?

Through the ADA Foundation's Give Kids A Smile program, launched nationally by the American Dental Association in 2003, more than 5 million undeserved children have received free oral health services. These free services are provided by approximately 10,000 dentists annually, along with 30,000 other dental team members.

Each year, here in NJ, more than 100 dental practices and clinics participate in this one-day event. **In 2023, we expanded the Give Kids A Smile program and celebrated all February long.**

Give Kids A Smile began in 2002 in St. Louis, Missouri. Each year Give Kids A Smile day is celebrated nationally on the first Friday in February. GKAS events are intended to be touch points for children who do not receive dental care, for whatever reason. The ultimate goal for a GKAS program should be to establish a dental home for these children - in other words, provide continuity of care.

For more information and to find participating dentists visit the web site. Participating locations and dates are already posted on the web site:

<https://www.njda.org/for-the-public/gkas>

CUSTODY ARRANGEMENTS

There are many types of families in our community and our first and most important interest is the safety and welfare of your child. If you are a family in which you, the parents, are either separated or divorced, it would be very helpful for us to have the proper legal court documentation in our files to adhere to the proper legal requirements of any agreements set forth by the court system. Please feel confident that all information will be kept in the strictest confidence and will only be available to those staff members making a decision about the release of your child to someone other than yourself. Please be sure that all the court agreements regarding custody are kept current in the school. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

ATTENDANCE & PLANNED EXTENDED ABSENCE POLICY

Regular attendance is a requisite for success in school. New Jersey law requires that students attend school regularly and it is the parent's responsibility to ensure that their child attends school. Please stress the importance of daily school attendance to your child.

There have been changes in the Board Policy 5200 for student attendance. A copy of the policy is attached to this newsletter.

A student can still be disenrolled for a prolonged time away from school if you choose. If the student is disenrolled, they will not be responsible for missed work. Should you decide to have the student remain on the school roster, they will be responsible for all missed work, at their teacher's discretion, during their absence.

All absences should be communicated with the main office and the classroom teacher.

Should you decide to disenroll your child, Cherie McCoy at Central Registration (732-521-2882) should also be contacted with this decision.

PROCEDURE REMINDERS:

RESPONSIBILITY REMINDERS

We need your help please...we have been experiencing a great number of students coming to the office to call home because they have forgotten something they should have brought to school with them, e.g., homework, projects, assignments, instruments, etc. Would you please work with us to instill in your child that it is their responsibility to be sure they are prepared with everything they need for school? Having them be prepared will make them more responsible and save you a trip to school to bring what they may have forgotten. It can be difficult to decline bringing a forgotten item, but it could encourage your child to be more mindful in the future. Also, at the end of the day, students should not be returning to school to retrieve anything they may have forgotten to complete their homework. They should review their assignments and be sure to pack everything they need in their backpack before dismissal. Thank you in advance for your help!

HOMEWORK REQUESTS

With the flu season comes student absences. We are happy to comply with requests for homework when your child is absent from school because of illness; however, it does take time to collect materials and assignments during the day. Therefore, if you wish to request homework to be sent home, please call the school office prior to 10 AM. Requests later in the day may not be honored. In cases of shorter absences, our concern is for the health of your child, not homework to be completed.

STUDENTS' ATTIRE DURING THE COLD WINTER MONTHS

Now that the cold months of winter have arrived, it's important that students are dressed for the weather. Please be sure your child is dressed appropriately. If providing winter clothing for your child is an issue with your family, please contact the school nurse at 609-655-0604 Ext. 3604. Your situation will be handled discreetly. When the

weather permits, students will continue to go outside for a short period of time after lunch. Please insure that children are dressed properly for the cold.

BUS ASSIGNMENT CHANGES

Please be aware that requests for temporary bus assignment changes will only be authorized in cases of extreme emergency. Students wishing to go to a friend's house to play or to attend a party do not constitute an emergency. The teachers have reviewed bus safety rules with the children. Please help us by reinforcing them with your child. Your cooperation in this matter is greatly appreciated.

INCLEMENT CLOSING INFORMATION



Once the winter is in full swing, I'd like to remind you of some important information regarding delayed openings and closings. **Information for parents regarding notification of school closings and delayed openings due to inclement weather will be posted on the Monroe Township School District website at www.monroe.k12.nj.us and a Blackboard Connect message will be sent to you.**

Please note: It is the parent's responsibility to check the website and monitor phone calls if school is closed or delayed. Sometimes a delayed opening will be announced first and then, if the weather continues to deteriorate, a closing will be declared. Please continue to monitor the status of the delay / closing throughout the morning.

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER

On a day when a 4-hour session is announced due to worsening weather/road conditions, all students will be dismissed at 1:05 PM and no lunch will be served.

Here is some information regarding Emergency Closings

When a 2-Hour Delayed Opening is declared, Applegarth School's schedule will be as follows:

- Student Hours : 11:05 AM – 3:34 PM

Lunch will be served

- **Falcon Care will be in operation**

In the event of an EARLY DISMISSAL:

Occasionally, conditions exist which necessitate an early dismissal from school. Deterioration of the weather or facility problems such as loss of water or power may require such action. Parents are asked to review with their child the procedures to be followed in the event the child arrives home and the parent is not there. In addition to this contingency plan, the school will make an effort to contact the numbers provided to the school to inform you of the emergency early dismissal. Our Blackboard Connect System will be used to contact you or your emergency contacts and attempts will be made until someone is reached. If your home, work telephone, or any emergency contact numbers change, please notify the school immediately so the change can be made in our system. **Please note that if there is an emergency early closing, all after school programs will be cancelled including Falcon Care.** If your child is enrolled in the Falcon Care program and you have any questions related to their policies for a delayed opening, an early dismissal, or hours of operation should school activities be cancelled, please contact them directly at 732-251-0266.

SCRIPPS SPELLING BEE

Applegarth School will once again take part in the Scripps Spelling Bee. In January, the students compete by class to determine finalists from each homeroom. The school-wide spelling bee competition will be scheduled once the classroom competitions are complete, and the date will be shared with you. The final competition will declare an Applegarth winner who will move on to the Regional Spelldown.

PICTURE DAY RETAKES

Picture retake day is scheduled for Friday, January 5th. Please check your email for “Alerts” regarding retake day and ordering with the codes.

SCHOOL CLOSED



Please note that schools will be closed on Monday, January 15, 2024, in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

Friday, January 12th is a 4-hour session for students. Also, on the following dates in February schools will either be closed or will have 4-hour sessions:

February 16th (4-hour session / Teacher In-Service)

February 19th (Closed for President's Day)

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent/Teacher conferences are scheduled for Wednesday & Thursday, February 21st and 22nd.

Thursday, February 22nd will be reserved for evening conferences.

Wednesday, February 21st through Friday, February 23rd will be 4-hour sessions for students.

HEART CHALLENGE

Students will, again this year, participate in the Heart Challenge. Students will take part in heart-healthy physical activities and raise money for the American Heart Association. The activity will be held in the gym on Thursday, February 15th. Our students and the families in our community have always been very generous with donations for this important cause, and we appreciate your support.

BULLYING VS. UNKIND BEHAVIOR

The school year is now in full swing, and as such, we are beginning to experience more issues with discipline. Often, students will come to the main office and allege that they are being “bullied.” Kindly take some time to review the definition of bullying with your child, and reinforce that poor behavior, while we might not always like it or think it is kind, is not necessarily bullying. Our district definition of HIB is posted to the school and district web pages, and a reproduced article is attached to this newsletter to assist you.

STUDENT THREATS

The Monroe Township School District's Code of Conduct regards threats by one person to another as a potential step prior to the commission of a violent or physically aggressive act of behavior that can cause pain and/or injury to someone. Consequently, a report of student threats at any school level will be regarded seriously and investigated thoroughly.

As indicated in the Code of Conduct, ***"A threat is a declaration of an intention or determination to inflict punishment, pain, or injury on another person, and may be made by means of suggestion, innuendo or stated expressly. A student need not act on a threat for the school district to consider it a serious matter."***

When a threat is reported to the school administration, the following steps will occur:

1. A thorough investigation by a school administrator to determine the validity and credibility of the alleged threat. During this investigation, the alleged perpetrator will be isolated from the intended victim. This can include an exclusion of the alleged perpetrator from school during the administrator's investigation.
2. The administrator will assess each situation based on the specific circumstances of the alleged threat. In cases where there is realistic danger of harm to anyone, the administrator will always have the discretion to notify the local police.
3. Should the administrator determine the threat to be valid, he/she may require one, all or any combination of the following measures toward the perpetrator: suspension from school, exclusion from a specific activity, and referral to an outside clinician for a case review. (**Note:** Any student suspended from school will be given the opportunity to complete assignments within a fair and appropriate time limitation).
4. The administrator will continue to work with all appropriate district resources to resolve the problem and to restore order to the school.

Please conscientiously discuss this matter with your child and also review the importance of choosing the correct usage of words and comments toward others.

SPRING RECESS

Schools will be closed for Spring Recess Friday, March 29th through Friday, April 5th. School reopens on Monday, April 8th.

NJSLA (NEW JERSEY STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT) TESTING

The tentative dates for NJSLA testing are as follows:

Grade 5 ELA & math: April 29th through May 2nd. Science: May 3rd and 6th.

Grade 4 ELA & math: May 7th through May 10th.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Please see the calendars of upcoming events on following pages...



APPLEGARTH SCHOOL



DECEMBER 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 PTA Evening Holiday Shop & Family Photo Night @ Oak Tree 5 PM	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13 Board of Education Meeting @ MTHS/6:30 PM	14 Winter Band & Chorus Rehearsal @ MTHS Winter Band & Chorus Concert @ 7 PM / MTHS	15	16
17	18	19	20 Principal's Book Club / Virtual @ 4 PM	21 Progress Reports available to parents	22 4-Hour Session Student Council Snack Sale	23
24	25 SCHOOL CLOSED	26 SCHOOL CLOSED	27 SCHOOL CLOSED	28 SCHOOL CLOSED	29 SCHOOL CLOSED	30



APPLEGARTH SCHOOL



JANUARY 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 SCHOOL CLOSED	2 SCHOOL REOPENS	3	4	5 School Picture Make Up Day	6
7	8	9	10	11	12 4-HOUR SESSION FOR STUDENTS	13
14	15 SCHOOL CLOSED	16 Jump Rope for Heart Assemblies	17 Board of Education Meeting @ 7 PM / MTHS	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31 End of Marking Period 2			



APPLEGARTH SCHOOL



FEBRUARY 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7 Report Cards Available	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15 Jump Rope for Heart Challenge Day	16 4-Hour session for Students Student Council Snack Sale PM InService for Staff	17
18	19 SCHOOL CLOSED	20	21 4-Hour Session for Students Student Council Snack Sale Parent-Teacher Conferences Afternoon	22 4-Hour Session for Students PTA Snack Sale Parent-Teacher Conferences Afternoon & Evening	23 4-Hour Session for Students	24
25	26	27	28	29		