



Avella Elementary School
Parent/Student
Handbook

2025-2026

Dear Avella Families,

Welcome to Avella Elementary Center where our students are our top priority and focus. Our staff is filled with excitement to be a part of your child's educational journey. We look forward to building the foundation for your child through rigorous courses of study. These include all core subjects such as English Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science, as well as the fine and applied arts that encompasses music, art, physical education, library, Makerspace, and computer innovation and design. Students engage in computer programming/coding through programs like Tynker, Scratch, Code and Lego Robotics.

Avella Elementary utilizes Class DOJO to allow for ongoing communication between the home and school. We believe that all of us - the school and community- must work together to ensure the success of all of our students. We believe we all have a responsibility to grow and empower our students to reach their fullest potential.

Avella Elementary focuses on educating the whole child. We provide opportunities for students to be recognized for their acts of kindness and facilitate this process through implementing Success for All "Getting Along Together" social and emotional curriculum. We focus on a restorative approach with our students allowing them to understand everyday is a new day.

We welcome and value your presence during school events and encourage you to participate with our vibrant AEC parent group. This group provides an enormous amount of support and dedication to our students and staff.

Best regards,

Carrie A. Graff

Avella Elementary School Principal

graffc@avellasd.org

724-356-2294 ext 5500

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE AVELLA AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Avella Area School District is a rural public school district serving less than 510 students in grades K-12. Approximately 30 miles southwest of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the school district's two schools are located on a beautiful rural campus that also facilitates a state certified day care and preschool. The district covers the Borough of West Middletown, Cross Creek Township, Hopewell Township and Independence Township in Washington County, Pennsylvania. The district is headquartered in the unincorporated Village of Avella. The district encompasses approximately 73 square miles. The Avella Area School District provides outstanding educational services to 493 pupils through the employment of 52 teachers, 25 full-time and part-time support personnel, and 4 administrators.

The Avella Area School District provides a quality education in a small class setting. The student-to teacher ratio is very small, which allows for hands-on activities and extra attention. Teachers are close with the families and many times work outside the regular school day to accommodate activities and functions in the community and school. Families in the Avella Area School District come from varied backgrounds, educationally and socioeconomically. The free and reduced lunch rate for our students is approximately 50%. A majority of our families live on farms and in very rural areas. The spectrum ranges from small prefabricated homes to custom-built, million-dollar homes. Avella School District's community resources include the American Legion, Avella and West Middletown fire departments, Meadowcroft Village, (which is part of the Senator John Heinz History Center), the A. D. White Historical Society, the Avella Athletics Association, the Avella Community Association, the Cedar Grove Park, the Cross Creek County Park, the Avella Community Center, the McKeever Study, and the Avella Public Library. Local industries include oil and gas, construction, agriculture, trucking, tourism, restaurants, and manufacturing.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Avella Area School District, in collaboration with students, parents and the community, is committed to developing 21st century learning and thinking skills through a rigorous, relevant, and comprehensive curriculum, while preparing students to be innovative, productive citizens in an interconnected world.

VISION STATEMENT

The vision of the Avella Area School District is to provide each student with a well-rounded educational program leading to college, career, vocational school and/or armed forces which will foster economic independence and social responsibility in the 21st century.

SHARED BELIEFS

- We believe that students have diverse needs.
- We believe that high expectations yield educational excellence.
- We believe that relevant, rigorous and diversified instruction is paramount to successful students.
- We believe that a skilled, committed, and caring staff is vital for success.
- We believe that students are the focus of educational planning.
- We believe that a rapidly changing world requires adaptability.

The Avella Area School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin, marital status, pregnancy, or handicap/disability. For more information or to report allegations of discrimination, please contact the Compliance Officer, Mr. Cyril Walther, Superintendent, 1000 Avella Road, Avella, PA 15312. The Superintendent can be contacted by telephone at 724-356-2218, or by email at waltherc@avellasd.org. If the complaint is about the Compliance Officer, then please contact the School Board Secretary, Dana Davis, at the same address or phone number as above, or email at david@d@avellasd.org.

HEALTH

ADMINISTERING MEDICATION

The School Nurse's Office is located in the Avella Elementary School. Before reporting to the school nurse, a student must be excused by the classroom teacher. The nurse will be notified that a student is reporting to their office by a classroom teacher. At the discretion of the nurse, the parents/guardians will be notified to take the student home. All students who are ill or experiencing a medical condition must see the school nurse before a parent is contacted for dismissal. The only exception will be in the case of a medical emergency in which administration, faculty and staff will follow the District's emergency procedures.

Students who take medication during the school day are to secure a copy of the form, **"Authorization for Prescription and Non-prescription Medication during School Hours"** from the office or the nurse. This form must be signed by the student's physician and returned to the school before the student is permitted to bring medication to school. All medication is kept in the nurse's office and obtained by the student when needed. No medication is to be kept in student bookbags, or carried around the building.

A student is permitted to possess asthma inhalers and to self-administer the prescribed medication used to treat asthma when such is parent-authorized.

*(For more information, see the district policy on **Medications #210** available for review on the District Webpage.)*

PENNSYLVANIA STATE MANDATED SCREENINGS

The Pennsylvania Department of Health requires the following grade level examinations:

Grade K or 1: Physical exam and Dental Exam

Grade 3: Dental Exam

Grade 6: Physical Exam and Scoliosis Screening

Grade 7: Dental Exam and Scoliosis Screening Physical Exam

Grade 11: Dental Exam and Scoliosis Screening Physical Exam

You will be notified when the school physician/dentist will be performing exams at your child's school. Only those students with written parental permission will be examined at the school.

The Department of Health encourages your family physician/dentist to conduct the exams since they are more familiar with your child's health history. Physical and dental exams done up to 4 months before grade entry will be accepted.

The required private physical/dental exam forms can be obtained from the school nurse or printed from the [Health Services](#) page on the Elementary Website.

The following screenings are required:

Height and Weight: Checked annually in Kindergarten through Grade 12

Vision: Checked annually in Kindergarten through Grade 12

Hearing: Check in Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 7th, and 11th

What does a referral mean?

If you receive a referral after any school screening or exam, it means that a possible problem was detected and further evaluation by your healthcare provider is recommended. The referral form is to be completed and returned to the school nurse.

STUDENT ILLNESS

Families are encouraged to keep their children at home if their child has a fever. Students must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school.

Parents are encouraged to contact the school if their child is staying home due to sickness. If it is determined the child will be out of school for an extended period, the district will place the student on the Google Classroom (when appropriate) so the student can continue their education and truancy is avoided.

ATTENDANCE

In Pennsylvania, students are required by state and federal law to attend school from the time the child enters school, which can be no later than six years old, until the child is 17 years old or graduates from high school.

The following are reasons that constitute an excused absence:

- Student illness
- Death in the family
- Vacation encompassing 5 days or fewer (Trip must be educational; Prior approval needed)
- Quarantine
- Required court appearance
- Emergencies
- Professional health care or therapy services, including doctor or dentist appointments
- Participation in a project sponsored by a statewide or countywide 4-H, FFA or combined 4-H and FFA group (Prior approval through written request)
- Religious instruction/Religious holidays

Following an absence, students must bring in a note signed by a parent/guardian or doctor indicating the date of absence and reason. The exception will be absences that require prior approval. Notes must be submitted to the elementary school office within **3 days** of returning to school. Notes submitted after **3 days** will not be accepted. Failure to submit an excuse will result in the absence being recorded as unexcused. Students with unexcused absences will **receive zeros** for any work missed during the absence.

Absences of five (5) or more consecutive school days or 10 or more cumulative school days require a doctor's excuse within 5 school days of returning to school. If a doctor's note is not provided the student will be marked as unexcused.

Students participating in classroom parties, field trips, and extracurricular activities are required to be in school for 2 of the day of the scheduled event. Students must arrive at school no later than **11:00 am**.

Excessive absences may result in removal from extra-curricular activities, or loss of privileges.
*(For more information, see the district policy on **Attendance #204** available for review on the District Webpage.)*

TARDINESS/LATE ARRIVAL

The elementary school doors open at **8:40 am** for all students. Students are considered tardy to school if they are not present in their homeroom by **8:55 am**. Students not present in the homeroom by **8:55 am** will be required to sign-in at the elementary school office.

The following constitutes an acceptable excuse for tardiness:

- Illness/Doctor's excuse
- Death in the family
- Quarantine
- Required court appearance
- Professional health care or therapy services, including doctor or dentist appointments
Participation in a project sponsored by a statewide or countywide 4-H, FFA or combined 4-H and FFA group (Prior approval through written request)
- Religious instruction/Religious holidays
- Emergencies (as determined by school administration)
- Impassable Roads (as determined by school administration)

Students that report late must sign-in at the elementary school office. At this time, an excuse must be presented to the elementary attendance secretary Mrs. Lori Ragan or classroom teacher. This can also be emailed at eloffice@avellasd.org. If a student's tardiness is not excused, the student's teacher will be notified and they will receive a zero for any work missed. For a student that accumulates three (3) or more unexcused tardies during the school semester discipline will be issued accordingly (i.e. suspension from extracurricular activities, detention, loss of privileges to field trips, etc.)

EARLY DISMISSAL

A student who wishes to be dismissed early from school must bring a note to the office prior to or during homeroom. All excuses must be written by a parent/guardian, indicate the reason for the dismissal and include the time requested for the dismissal. A student who is dismissed for a doctor's appointment must bring a form from the doctor's office upon his/her return to school. If a doctor's note is not provided the student will be considered absent for the time missed. Early dismissals are considered absences from school and will only be excused for the reasons stipulated in the **attendance section** of this document.

All students who are ill or experiencing a medical condition must see the school nurse before a parent is contacted for dismissal. All dismissals due to illness must be excused through the nurse's office.

A student that is dismissed early from school due to illness is not permitted to participate in any extracurricular activities during the day of the dismissal. Students that receive an early dismissal before 11:00 am will be recorded for a full day's absence.

Students are not permitted to leave school property for any reason during school hours without the permission of the principal.

SPECIAL ABSENCE/VACATION REQUEST

Students may be released from school upon the written request of a parent or guardian provided certain conditions of the school district policy are met.

Avella Elementary School requirements for approval of special absences/vacations:

- The trip, tour or vacation must be educational. The student is required to secure prior approval of the building principal by providing a written statement indicating the duration of the anticipated absence and the purpose of the trip.
- The excused period of special absence/vacation shall not exceed (5) days per school year.
- Students are required to keep a daily journal of their daily activities. This journal must be submitted within (5) days of returning to school. If a journal is not returned to the Elementary School Principal all days absent will be marked as unexcused and the student will receive a zero for any work missed.
- Parents are responsible to notify teachers 2-3 days prior to the scheduled absence to receive any work missed. Failure to make up assignments missed will result in a lower grade.
- Special Absence/Vacation Forms can be found on the district website or in the elementary school office.

BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

CONDUCT/SCHOOL RULES

Avella Area School District believes that it is essential for our schools to provide a safe and supportive atmosphere that is conducive to learning. Students must be able to work together and to accept and share responsibilities. While discipline begins in the home, the school provides reinforcement and continued opportunity for students to learn self-discipline and behaviors appropriate for becoming responsible citizens and living productively in our society.

Avella Area School District's approach to student discipline is restorative and intended to modify the inappropriate behavior. Maintaining appropriate standards of discipline in the Avella Area School District is essential to the establishment of a safe and orderly educational environment where students can learn. The Student Code of Conduct will be interpreted by the administration and their designees in a manner, which they deem just, given the circumstances of the individual case. Additionally, students must understand that administrators shall have the authority to enforce other reasonable disciplinary actions which they find warranted by situations not covered specifically (including limiting student participation/attendance in extracurricular school-based events/special assemblies/programs aimed at rewarding positive student effort and performance).

Discipline issues arise for a variety of reasons and in varying degrees of frequency and severity. The general sequence presented here is not intended to be rigidly followed. The actual sequence of disciplinary action may vary depending on the individual case and the process will be initiated at the step deemed appropriate.

In general, these steps are followed:

1. Teacher and student address the issue.
2. Teacher and parent/guardian address the issue.
3. Teacher, counselor, parent/guardian and/or student meet to address the issue.
4. Principal, parent/guardian, student and other personnel are involved to address the issue.
5. School officials, parent/guardian, student and social service agencies are involved to address the issue.
6. An administrative review occurs with the principal.
7. A superintendent's review occurs with the administrative staff, the superintendent or designee.
8. School Board hearing.

Misbehaviors and their interventions are categorized across four levels according to degree of seriousness and frequency of occurrence. Each school may have additional guidelines for student behavioral expectations as part of a positive behavior intervention or incentive system.

LEVEL I DISCIPLINE VIOLATIONS/CONSEQUENCES

Level I offenses include minor misbehaviors on the part of the student which are disruptive and impede classroom procedures and learning or that interfere with the orderly and safe operation of the school. These misbehaviors are expected to be addressed by the individual teacher or staff member who observes the incident, but may require the intervention of an administrator. An accurate record of the offense, corrective and intervention supports, and disciplinary action must be maintained by the teacher or staff member. Repeated instances of Level I behavior, despite redirection or intervention, may constitute a violation at a higher level with referral to an administrator.

Examples of Level I violation including but not LIMITED to:

- Disrespectful actions or language towards peers, adults, and/or property
- Classroom disruptions and violations of classroom procedures established by the teacher, which may include tardiness to class, disruptive behavior, failure/refusal to follow directives
- Disruptive behavior in common areas (e.g. hallways, cafeteria, playground)
- Minor dress code violations
- Lack of cooperation with staff (verbal/non-verbal)
- Failure or refusal to comply with adult directives
- Inappropriate and/or profane language or gesture not directed at others
- Untruthful or deceptive behavior to school personnel
- Misuse or unauthorized use of electronic devices
- Refusal to engage in academic learning activities
- Inhibiting other students' learning process

Examples of Level I consequences including but not LIMITED to:

- Timely parent notification from teacher
- Verbal redirection
- Special assignment
- Behavior contract
- Confiscation of electronic device Mediation
- Detention/Lunch Detention
- Parent/Student /Teacher conference Loss of classroom privilege Classroom meeting
- Referral to school Counselor
- Change of classroom seating Teacher assigned detention Student conference

LEVEL II DISCIPLINE VIOLATIONS/CONSEQUENCES

Level II offenses are misbehaviors whose frequency or seriousness disrupts the learning climate of the school and/or classroom. These infractions can result from the continuation of Level I misbehaviors and/or include new offenses. The educational consequences are serious enough to require disciplinary action taken by administrative personnel. Repeated or more serious instances of misbehavior at this level raise the offense to a higher level.

Examples of Level II violation including but not LIMITED to:

- Repeated Level I violations or Level I with aggravating circumstances
- Failure to complete assigned Level I discipline
- Major dress code violations or repeated violations
- Minor disruption in school such as horse playing, play fighting, verbal altercation, etc.
- Failure to properly identify oneself to teachers and/or staff
- Falsification of documents, statements, and/or misrepresentation of parent/guardian
- Loitering in an unauthorized area
- Failure to attend class, leaving class without authorization, presence in unauthorized areas
- Leaving school without authorization
- Verbal/non-verbal flagrant disrespect toward teachers and staff
- Agitating/instigating comments/fights between students
- Use of obscene language/gestures toward others
- Possession of matches, lighters

Examples of Level II consequences Including but not LIMITED to:

- Parent notification and possible conference
- Detention/Extended Day Detention
- In/Out of school suspension
- Temporary removal of driving privileges
- Verbal and written reprimand
- Behavior contract
- Referral to SAP
- Withdrawal of privileges and/or participation in school activities
- Loss of driving privileges

LEVEL III DISCIPLINE VIOLATIONS/CONSEQUENCES

Level III offenses are acts whose frequency or seriousness disrupt the learning climate of the school and are directed against persons or properties. These misbehaviors could endanger the health and safety of those in the school.

Examples of Level III violation including but not LIMITED to:

- Repeated Level II violations or Level II with aggravating circumstances
- Failure to complete assigned Level II discipline
- Vandalism (Less than \$100) or Petty Theft (Less than \$100)
- Trespassing on school property
- Disorderly conduct
- Major disruption of school
- Fighting, harassment, threatening comments, simple assault, hazing
- Act or acts of discrimination and/or intimidating behaviors intended to demean another person
- Bullying/Cyber Bullying
- Refusal to leave school property when directed to do so
- Sexual misconduct, indecent exposure
- Sexual harassment
- Student demonstrations that result in disruption to the school
- Violation of the Acceptable Use Policy
- Truancy
- Possession of pornography or other illegal material, sexting
- Use/possession of drugs and or alcohol, look-alikes, and/or paraphernalia
- Use/possession of tobacco and/or related products, look alike products
- Use/possession of vapes, vaping materials and/or related products, look alike products

Examples of Level III consequences Including but not LIMITED to:

- Up to 10 day suspension
- Law enforcement/charges
- Due Process
- Restitution
- Truancy citation
- Referral to SAP
- Parent Conference
- Activity Restriction (examples include, but not limited to: school sponsored trips, dances, commencement exercises, sporting events, etc.)

LEVEL IV DISCIPLINE VIOLATIONS/CONSEQUENCES

Level IV offenses disrupt the learning climate of the school by posing a threat to the health, safety and welfare of others in the school. These criminal acts always require administrative actions and may require the removal of the student from school, the intervention of law enforcement and authorities and possible action by the Avella Area School District School Board.

Examples of Level IV violation including but not LIMITED to:

- Repeated Level III violations or Level III with aggravating circumstances
- Failure to complete assigned Level III discipline
- Possession of a weapon or look-alike weapon of any kind on school property including school sponsored events and transportation to or from school.
- Bomb threat or causing a false alarm
- Arson or attempted arson
- Tampering with security/safety equipment and/or technology systems
- Terroristic threats or acts
- Commission of a criminal felony on school property or at a school sponsored event
- Aggravated assault
- Sexual assault (a student convicted/adjudicated will not be educated within the same school as the victim of the duration of their educational career)
- Distribution of pornography (including by not limited to child pornography)
- Use of, distribution and/or intent to sell drugs, alcohol, paraphernalia, or look-alike substances
- Vandalism and/or theft over \$100
- Burglary of school property
- Possession/use of explosive devices
- Misconduct off campus: If any of the above acts occur off campus, a student is subject to expulsion if the victim is a student or school employee and there is a reasonable basis to believe that the continued presence of the student demonstrates a clear threat to the safety of the victims or others in the school environment.

Examples of Level IV consequences including but not LIMITED to:

- Out of school suspension
- Alternative Education Placement
- Restitution
- Expulsion
- Superintendent' hearing
- School Board of Directors' hearing Involvement of law enforcement with potential for criminal charges
- Activity Restriction (examples include, but not limited to: school sponsored trips, dances, commencement exercises, sporting events, etc.)

DRESS CODE

The Avella Area School District may impose limitations on dress where the attire causes the disruption of the educational process or constitutes a health or safety hazard. Administration's prerogative will be used in any questionable situation that may arise and is not covered in the board policy.

The following are considered inappropriate school wear and NOT permitted:

- Hats, sunglasses or hoods are not to be worn in the building.
- Coats and outside jackets are not permitted. If a heating problem arises, teacher's discretion will be used.
- Tank tops, see-through clothing, low necklines or backlines, halter-tops, spaghetti straps, muscle shirts, and shirts which display bare midriffs will not be permitted. Sleeveless shirts must be 2 inches wide and cover undergarments.
- Shorts, skirts, and dresses are to be fingertip length or longer, this standard applies to slits in skirts or dresses.
- No see-through shorts, spandex, swim shorts, or frayed shorts are to be worn.
- No jewelry, clothing, or face coverings may be worn with suggestive, obscene, sexual innuendos, vulgar wording, or graphics that advertise/suggest/promote tobacco, drug, or alcohol products.
- Jeans with rips or tears must be fingertip length or below to be worn unless fixed with stitching or a patch.
- No pajama pants, slippers or pajama outfits may be worn unless deemed an appropriate day by the school administration.
- No pants may be worn below the waistline.
- No undergarments may be visible at any time.

Violations of the dress code will result in the following disciplinary actions:

- **1st Offense:** Students will receive a warning. Students will be asked to change into appropriate attire. If a student refuses, he/she will be sent home and this absence will be counted as an unexcused absence.
- **2nd Offense:** Students will receive After School Detention. Students will be asked to change into appropriate attire. If a student refuses, he/she will be sent home and this absence will be counted as an unexcused absence.
- **3rd Offense:** Students will receive Extended Day Detention. Students will be asked to change into appropriate attire. If a student refuses, he/she will be sent home and this absence will be counted as an unexcused absence.
- **4th Offense:** Students will receive In/Out School Suspension. Students will be asked to change into appropriate attire. If a student refuses, he/she will be sent home and this absence will be counted as an unexcused absence.

(For a comprehensive list pertaining to the THE SCHOOL DRESS CODE, see the school district policy on Dress and Grooming #221 available for review on the District Webpage.)

ELECTRONIC DEVICES/CELL PHONES

Use of electronic devices, including music players, beepers, laser instruments, cellular phones, Wi-Fi hotspots, smart watches or any communicative device or other type of sound system or sound recording device is prohibited in school during school hours unless approved in advance by the principal for educational purposes. Electronic devices should be powered off and left in the student's backpack during school hours.

Violations of the electronic policy will result in the following disciplinary actions:

- **1st Offense:** Students will receive a warning from the building administrator and be asked to leave the device in the office until the remainder of the school day. Refusal to adhere to the request will result in an Out-of-School Suspension.
- **2nd Offense:** Students will receive three days of lunch detention and be asked to place the device in the office for the remainder of the school day. Refusal to adhere to the request will result in an Out-of-School Suspension.
- **3rd Offense:** Student will receive one day of In-school Suspension and the device will need to be picked up in the office from the parent/guardian. Refusal to adhere to the request will result in an Out-of-school Suspension.
- **4th Offense:** Students will receive one day of Out-of-school Suspension and the phone will need to be picked up in the office from a parent/guardian. A parental meeting with the building administration will need to occur. Refusal to adhere to the request will result in three days Out-of-school suspension and loss of device privileges.

*(For more information, see the school district policy on **Electronic Devices #237** available for review on the District Webpage.)*

BUS CONDUCT/TRANSPORTATION

Avella Area School District Administration recognizes that safety is paramount in transportation. The administration is committed to working with the Board of Education, parents, students, principals, drivers, and staff to maintain a safe and orderly environment. The following guidelines are in place to ensure positive and safe passage to and from school and school sponsored events.

Transportation to and from school is a privilege. Abuse of this privilege may result in loss of transportation to and from school. When you lose your transportation privileges, you cannot ride a bus owned by the GG & C Bus Company and contracted by the Avella Area School District during the time of suspension.

Video camera systems with audio capability are installed on the GG & C Transportation School Buses. The information from these tapes can be used to determine disciplinary action. The cameras on buses and vans are to help ensure the safety of all students and staff.

All students will be subject to the same disciplinary procedures including suspensions from riding the bus. If a child has an IEP, the IEP will be reviewed to be sure that there are not any special circumstances that would warrant alternative forms of discipline, especially when a bus suspension is under consideration.

It is to be understood that in the event of a bus suspension, the student is required to attend school and any absence during the suspension without a valid written excuse will result in school officials following the standard school truancy policy.

The following are expectations all drivers are to follow in operating a bus in the Avella Area School District:

1. Drivers will greet all students as they enter and exit the bus in a pleasant and welcoming manner.
2. Drivers set expectations for students to sit in assigned areas or seats on the bus and set expectations for students to remain seated in assigned areas or seats.
3. Drivers will maintain focus on student safety and not engage in distracting behavior including but not limited to cell phone usage.
4. Drivers will maintain open lines of communication with teachers, administrators, and the GG & C Bus Company regarding the safety, security and behavior of all students.
5. Drivers will act in a professional manner at all times when interacting with students, parents, staff members and administrators.

The following are expectations all administrators are expected to follow in supporting the safe operations of district transportation:

1. Administrators and GG & C administration will reinforce seating arrangements on all buses.
2. Administrators and GG & C administration will enforce all school and school bus safety rules when made aware of a violation.
3. Administrators will maintain open lines of communication with bus drivers, GG & C administration and District Office Administration in regards to transportation issues.
4. Administrators will request and review video from any bus violation.

The following are expectations all students are expected to adhere to during transportation to and from school.

1. Students will sit in their assigned area or seat and face forward at all times. No standing is permitted while the bus is in motion.
2. Students will keep hands, feet and personal belongings to themselves and out of the bus aisle.
3. Students will wait their turn to enter and exit the bus at the stop for which they are assigned.
4. Students will use appropriate language, tone and volume when speaking on the bus.
5. Students will be respectful of all other students and the driver while on the bus and at the bus stop.
6. Students will not play loud or distracting music on the bus.

Parents can contribute to the efficient and safe transportation of their children in the following ways:

1. Ensure that students are at their designated bus stop at least five minutes prior to bus arrival time. Drivers are not required to wait for children as all children further down the route would then be forced to wait that much longer.
2. Ensure students stay off the roadway at all times while waiting for the bus.
3. Ensure students cross in front of the bus when crossing the road or highway.
4. Ensure students wait until the bus has come to a complete stop and red lights are flashing before attempting to enter or leave the bus.
5. Ensure special items and projects are transported by parents to school rather than on the bus due to space and safety consideration.
6. Ensure students do not chase after a bus.

7. Ensure students are orderly while awaiting the bus.
8. Ensure that the bus stop is safe and maintained.
9. Ensure that if driving students to the bus stop you do not interfere with the traffic patterns of the bus.

NOTE: In case of the need for an emergency bus change, a note from a parent must be submitted to the office for approval. This does not guarantee that approval will be granted. If approval is given, the student will receive a bus pass to give to the bus driver. Students must submit the note to the office first thing in the morning in order to arrange for this change. If a student will be getting off the bus at another student's stop a note from both parents is required.

Misbehaviors and interventions are categorized across four levels based on the seriousness/frequency of occurrence.

LEVEL I DISCIPLINE VIOLATIONS/CONSEQUENCES

Level I offenses include minor misbehaviors on the part of the student, which are disruptive and impede or interfere with the orderly and safe operation of the school bus. These misbehaviors are expected to be addressed by the bus driver who observes the incident, but may require the intervention of an administrator. An accurate record of the offense, corrective and intervention supports, and disciplinary action must be maintained by the bus driver. Repeated instances of Level I behavior, despite redirection or intervention, may constitute a violation at a higher level with referral to the appropriate building administrator.

Examples of Level I Violations including but not LIMITED to:

- Disrespectful actions of language towards peers, adults, and/or property Inappropriate and/or profane language or gesture not directed at others
- Not following bus driver directions
- Inappropriate tone or volume when speaking on the bus (yelling and screaming)
- Standing up or moving seat-to-seat
- Unauthorized use of electronic devices
- Distracting loud music or noises
- Leaving trash on the bus
- Students seated out of assigned seat or area

Examples of Level I consequences Including but not LIMITED to:

- Verbal redirection
- Special assigned seat
- Referral to building administration
- Timely parent notification (by phone & documented in writing)
- Behavior contract

LEVEL II DISCIPLINE VIOLATIONS/CONSEQUENCES

Level II offenses are misbehaviors whose frequency or seriousness disrupt the safe operation of the school bus. These infractions can result from the continuation of Level I misbehaviors and/or include new offenses. The consequences are serious enough to require disciplinary action taken by administrative personnel.

Examples of Level II Violations including but not LIMITED to:

- Repeated Level I violations or Level I with aggravating circumstances
- Verbal/non-verbal flagrant disrespect toward bus drivers or other students
- Agitating/instigating comments between students
- Horseplay
- Use of obscene language/gestures toward others
- Pushing, shoving, or tripping other students in line
- Intentionally distracting the bus driver
- Inappropriate misuse of technology (videotaping other students)
- Intentionally boarding an unassigned bus
- Exiting the bus at an unassigned stop

Examples of Level II consequences Including but not LIMITED to:

- Verbal redirection
- Special assigned seat
- Referral to building administration
- Detention
- In-School suspension
- Out-of-School suspension
- 1 to 3 day bus suspension
- Parent notification and conference
- Referral to SAP
- Withdrawal of privileges and/or participation in school activities
- Written reprimand
- Behavior contract

LEVEL III DISCIPLINE VIOLATIONS/CONSEQUENCES

Level III offenses are acts whose frequency or seriousness impact the safety of students and staff and are directed against persons or properties. These misbehaviors could endanger the health and safety of an individual or other individuals.

Examples of Level III violations including but not LIMITED to:

- Repeated Level II violations or Level II with aggravating circumstances
- Vandalism (less than \$100) or Petty theft (less than \$100)
- Disorderly conduct
- Major disruption on the bus
- Fighting, harassment, threatening comments simple assault, hazing
- Act or acts of discrimination and/or intimidating behaviors intended to demean another person
- Bullying/Cyber-bullying
- Sexual harassment
- Possession of pornography or other illegal material, sexting
- Use/possession of drugs and/or alcohol, look-alike, and/or paraphernalia
- Use/possession of tobacco and/or related products, look-alike products (2nd offense)
- Throwing items out of the bus window
- Throwing items at other people on the bus
- Hanging out the bus window

Examples of Level III consequences including but not LIMITED to:

- Up to a 10-day bus suspension
- Up to a 10-day Out-of-School suspension
- Law enforcement/charges
- Restitution
- Referral to SAP
- Parent Conference
- Activity Restriction (examples include: school sponsored trips, field trips, dances, classroom parties, commencement, exercises, etc)

LEVEL IV DISCIPLINE VIOLATIONS/CONSEQUENCES

Level IV offenses pose a threat to the health, safety and welfare of others. These criminal acts always require administrative actions and may require the removal of the student from district transportation and/or school, the intervention of law enforcement authorities and possible action by the Avella Area School Board.

Examples of Level IV consequences including but not LIMITED to:

- Repeated Level III violations or Level III with aggravating circumstances
- Possession of a weapon or look-alike weapon of any kind on school property including school sponsored event and transportation to or from school
- Arson or attempted arson
- Tampering with security/safety equipment and/or driving instruments
- Commission of criminal felony on the school bus
- Aggravated assault or sexual assault
- Distribution of pornography (including but not limited to child pornography)
- Distribution and/or intent to sell drugs, alcohol, paraphernalia, or look-alike substances
- Vandalism and/or theft over \$100
- Possession/use of explosive devices

Examples of Level IV consequences including but not LIMITED to:

- Removal from district transportation
- Out-of-School suspension
- Alternative Education Placement
- Restitution
- Expulsion
- Superintendent's hearing
- School Board of Director's hearing
- Involvement of law enforcement with potential for criminal charges
- Applicable Level III consequences
- Activity restriction (examples include: school sponsored trips, school field trips, classroom parties, dances, commencement exercises, etc.)

INTERNET USAGE POLICY

The Student Use of the Internet/School District Network and District-Provided Computer Equipment Policy can be found on the district webpage. Parents/guardians and students are to review the policy and sign the permission form attached. Once signed, the permission form is to be returned to the elementary school office.

ACADEMICS

STANDARDS BASED REPORT CARDS

Students in grades Kindergarten through Second grade will receive a Standards Based Report Card. Learning objectives for each grade level in reading and math can be located on the district website, along with additional information explaining our district's Standards Based Grading System.

GRADING POLICY

Grades for students in grades Third through Sixth will be posted weekly on Goedustar. Students that have missing assignments will be provided two weeks from the date of the missing assignment to complete the work for full credit. If a student is out due to extenuating circumstances, then specific arrangements will be made between the building administrator and teacher to support that student.

Students in third grade will be graded in Core Subject areas. They will receive Outstanding, Satisfactory, and Unsatisfactory for science and social studies.

All students will receive Outstanding, Satisfactory, and Unsatisfactory grades for special classes; Art, Media, Music, and Physical Education.

GRADING SCALE

Standards Based Report Cards:

Mastery-90% to 100%

Proficient-80% to 89%

Emerging: 70% to 79%

Unsatisfactory- 69% and below

Report Cards:

A-90% to 100% (Mastery)

B-80% to 89% (Proficient)

C-70% to 79% (Emerging or at level)

D-60% to 69% (Unsatisfactory or below level)

F-0 to 59% (Failing)

HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION

If a child has suffered an illness that has lasted longer than five days, he/she may require Homebound Instruction (instruction in the home by a certified tutor.) Please contact the building principal to obtain a Homebound Instruction Application. This is to be completed by your family physician verifying the need for this process if the circumstances arise for your child.

REPORT CARDS AND PROGRESS REPORTS

Report cards are issued at the end of each quarter, or nine-week session. Progress reports are issued during the 4th week of a nine-week session. Report cards and progress reports are available via your student's go.edustar account. If you would like a paper copy of your child's report card, a written request must be sent to the elementary school office at the beginning of each year.

Students in grades Kindergarten through Second grade will receive a Standards Based Progress Report and Report Card.

PROMOTIONS AND RETENTIONS

Promotions and retention are based on an evaluation of academic, social, and emotional growth. The primary reasons for considering retention are indifference or lack of effort on the part of a capable student and frequent long absences. Parents can assume their child will be promoted unless the alternative for retention has been discussed during the school year. Parents will be involved in any retention decisions. The building administrator does hold the final decision in retaining or promoting a student. However, all retention decisions are made as a team that results in the best solution for both the families and students. Documentation of recommended retention is kept on file along with the final decision made from the team.

(For more information please see policy #215 promotions and retentions located on the district website.)

GO.EDUSTAR: STUDENT ONLINE GRADEBOOK

Avella Elementary School utilizes the online grading system **go.edustar**. To access this portal parents and students are to visit the school website @ www.avellasd.org, select "Parent Links" in the top menu and next select the "go.edustar" tab. This process will take the user to the Parent Login Page. Parents will be prompted to enter their username and password. A **Go.Edustar Parent Online User Guide** is available on the school district website. If there are any issues accessing your account please refer to the above guide or contact the elementary school office @ 724-356-2294.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY/CHEATING/PLAGIARISM

Avella Elementary School adheres to a strict policy of academic integrity. To assist in this, teachers and administration use available technology and aids to identify any violations.

Cheating is defined in the following ways:

- Plagiarism
- Permitting a student to copy your work and submit as his/her own.
- Copying another student's work and submitting it as your own.

- Providing a student with answers to a test or examination.
- Obtaining help from another student during a test or examination.
- Use of technology, notes, etc. during an assignment or examination without the teacher's permission.

Violations of this policy will result in the following disciplinary actions:

- **1st Offense:** Students will receive a ZERO on the assignment/examination.
- **2nd Offense:** Student will receive a ZERO and In School Suspension
- **3rd Offense:** Students will receive a ZERO, a parental conference will be requested with building administration to discuss further disciplinary action.

Disciplinary action is subject to change due to the severity of the incident.

SCHEDULING

Reading is a ninety minute block for all students Kindergarten through Sixth grade. Students in Kindergarten through third grade focus on Heggerty, Foundations, Kid Writing, and Reading during the ninety minutes. This stage of reading development is focused upon phonemic awareness, phonological development, accuracy and fluency development, and comprehension. Students in grades fourth through sixth are continuing to grow the foundational reading skills and transitioning from learning to read to reading to learn.

Math is a sixty minute block for all students Kindergarten through Sixth grade. Avella Elementary uses the Illustrative of Mathematics Curriculum for math instruction.

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RTI)

Students in Kindergarten through Sixth grade participate in an RTI model days per week. Forty minutes are set aside for students to be split into small groups according to reading and math assessments to work on targeted skill groups. During this time students have the opportunity to receive remediation or enrichment based upon how they perform on STAR reading and math assessments, classroom formal and informal assessments, and teacher observations.

Students that receive Title One services and Special Education services have designated TIER 3 instruction daily for 40 minutes in the Title One Reading classroom and Special Education Resource Classroom.

TITLE I

Avella Elementary is a School Wide Title I Elementary School. The Avella Area School District, in accordance with its mission statement, is committed to providing quality education to every child. Academic success has been proven to increase when schools and parents/guardians form strong partnerships and both are involved with the decisions that affect education. Avella Elementary Center will hold a minimum of two parent engagement meetings/activities per school year. We also encourage parents to attend our monthly AEC meetings to be a part of parent engagement planning and updates. The Avella Elementary Title One School Parent Compact can be located at the end of this handbook.

(For more information please review the school districts Title One policy #918 Title I Parent and Family Engagement located on the Avella School District website.)

RIGHT TO REQUEST TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

As a parent of a student in the Avella Area School District, you have the right to know the professional qualifications of the classroom teachers who instruct your child. Part of the No Child Left Behind law allows you to ask for certain information in a timely manner. Specifically, you have the right to ask for the following information about each of your child's classroom teachers:

- Whether the Pennsylvania Department of Education has licensed or qualified the teacher for the grades and subjects he/she teaches;
- Whether the Pennsylvania Department of Education has decided that the teacher can teach in a classroom without being licensed or qualified under state regulations because of special circumstances;
- The teacher's college major; whether the teacher has any advanced degree, and if so, the subject of the degree; and whether any teacher's aides or similar paraprofessionals provide services and, if they do, their qualifications.

If you would like to receive any of this information, please contact the Principal of your child's school.

HOMEWORK

Nightly homework practice will be provided to all students in grades K-6. The homework will be a short practice of reading skills and or read and responding for grades K-2 and basic math facts. Grades 3-6 will have a twenty-minute reading requirement and response, along with a basic math fact review. Homework should be completed as a review of skills that have already been instructed in the classroom. We are working to enhance basic reading and mathematical skills. Students will not be graded for their homework assignments. They will receive a positive DOJO point for completing the homework. They will NOT receive a negative point if the homework isn't completed. However it is proven that reviewing these basic skills nightly helps strengthen students academically and builds positive traits such as organization and responsibility. Homework will only be given Monday through Thursday. No homework will be provided over the weekend or in addition to the basic assignment, unless the student is failing to utilize their provided time in school. The parent or guardian will be notified if such behaviors are occurring in the classroom.

PARENT RIGHT-TO-KNOW LETTER

Parent Right to Know Information as Required by The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESSA) [Section 11129e0910(A)] and the Every Student Succeeds Act [Section 1112 (e)(1)(A)]

August 1, 2024

Dear Parent(s)/Legal Guardian(s):

Your child attends Avella Elementary School, which receives Federal Title I funds to assist students in meeting state achievement standards. Throughout the school year, we will be providing you with important information about this law and your child's education. This letter lets you know about your right to request information about the qualifications of the classroom staff working with your child.

At the Avella Elementary School, we are very proud of our teachers and feel they are prepared to give your child a high-quality education. As a Title I school, we must meet federal regulations related to teacher qualifications as defined by the ESEA. These regulations allow you to learn more about your child's teachers' training and credentials. We are happy to provide this information to you. At any time, you may ask:

- Whether the teacher met state qualifications and certification requirements for the grade level and subject he/she is teaching.
- Whether the teacher received an emergency or conditional certificate through which state qualifications were waived, and
- What undergraduate or graduate degrees the teacher holds, including graduate certificates and additional degrees, and major(s) or areas(s) of concentration.

You may also ask whether your child receives help from a paraprofessional. If your child receives this assistance, we can provide you with information about the paraprofessional's qualifications.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) which was signed into law in December 2015 and reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1956 (ESEA) includes additional right to know requests. At any time, parents and family members can request:

- Information on policies regarding student participation in assessments and procedures for opting out, and
- Information on required assessments that include
 - Subject matter tested
 - Purpose of the test
 - Source of the requirement
 - Amount of time it takes students to complete the test
 - Time and format of disseminating results

Our staff is committed to helping your child develop the academic knowledge and critical thinking he/she needs to succeed in school and beyond. That commitment includes making sure that all of our teachers and paraprofessionals meet applicable Pennsylvania state requirements. If you have any questions about your child's assignment to a teacher or paraprofessional, please contact Mrs. Carrie Graff at the Avella Elementary School at 724-356-2294 or email graffc@avellasd.org.

Sincerely,

Carrie A. Graff
Elementary Principal Federal Programs Coordinator

GUIDANCE AND SCHOOL SUPPORTS

SCHOOL COUNSELOR

The school counselor assists all students to promote academic, career and social/emotional development. Students are to contact the school counselor for academic and career goal needs, as well as, concerns or problems they may experience throughout the school year.

Avella Elementary Counselor: Mrs. Marissa Bourg

Phone: 724-356-2294 ext: 5211

[Email: bourgm@avellasd.org](mailto:bourgm@avellasd.org)

Except in cases of crisis or emergency students are to complete a **“Request to see the School Counselor Form”** in the office and return to class. Students will be called down to the school counselor’s office when it will be least disruptive to their daily schedule.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SAP)

For over 25 years, the Student Assistance Program has worked in Pennsylvania to help troubled students. We are in some situations a first line of support for students dealing with any family issues, drug alcohol issues, suicidal issues, sadness issues, peer drama or bullying issues. We work to not only support students in school but also connect students and families to the much-needed resources to help them succeed in negotiating some of life’s most tumultuous storms.

The core of the program is a professionally trained team, including school staff and liaisons from community drug & alcohol and mental health agencies. When the problem lies beyond the scope of the school, the SAP Team will assist the parent and student so they may access services within the community. The SAP members do not diagnose, treat or refer for treatment; but they may refer for a screening or an assessment for treatment.

SAP TEAM MEMBERS

Carrie Graff, Principal	Marissa Bourg, School Counselor/SAP Coordinator
JT Mylan	Amy Hott
Cheryl Rush	Lauren O’Brien
Emily Jezowicz	Amanda Kolson
Dana Gatewood	

How do you make a referral?

Anyone can refer a student when he/she is concerned about a student’s behavior, attitude, or academic performance. The student can go directly to the SAP team member to ask for help. A member of the SAP team may then contact a parent for permission to proceed with the SAP

process. If you would like more information, please contact the school counselor, Mrs. Marissa Bourg @724-356-2294 ext. 5211 or bourgm@avellasd.org

*(For more information, see the district policy on the **Student Assistance Program Policy #236**, available for review on the District Webpage.)*

BULLY PREVENTION

The Avella Area School District recognizes that a student's ability to learn, and the District's ability to safely educate its students, is adversely affected by bullying. The school district seeks to avoid these adverse effects and maintain the safety of the school environment.

Students who are experiencing the effects of bullying are to report incidents to the elementary office. Students and parents/guardians can also review the Bullying Policy on the District Webpage. Included with this policy are forms to report a bullying incident.

*(For more information, see the district policy on **Bullying/Cyberbullying #249** available for review on the District Webpage.)*

SAFE2SAY SOMETHING

Safe2Say Something is a youth violence prevention program run by the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General. The program teaches youth and adults how to recognize warning signs and signals, especially within social media, from individuals who may be a threat to themselves or others and to "say something" BEFORE it is too late. With Safe2Say Something, it is easy and confidential to report safety concerns to help prevent violence and tragedies.

Here is how it works:

- Submit an anonymous tip report through the Safe2Say system
- Crisis center reviews, assesses and processes all submissions
- Crisis center sends all submissions to school administration and/or law enforcement for intervention
- If needed, crisis center may contact tipster anonymously through the app

Students can report concerns using Safe2Say Something in three ways:

- Use the Mobile App
- Call 1-844-SAF2SAY (723-2729)
- Online @SAFE2SAYPA.ORG

HOMELESS STUDENTS

The Pennsylvania Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program exists to help students who experience homelessness by offering a wide variety of services to help during this time of change and stress. In accordance with McKinney Vento Act Avella Area School District provides support for those students who are determined homeless. If you believe you may be homeless or have any questions, please contact the Elementary School Counselor, Marissa Bourg @ 724-356-2294 ext. 5211 or bourgm@avellasd.org

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

The Education for Homeless Children and Youth (ECYEH) is federally protected by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Categories of “homeless” children include:

- Children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardships or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency shelters or transitional housing
- Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings
- Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings
- “Unaccompanied homeless youth” including any child who is “not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.” This includes youth who have run away from home, been thrown out of their home, been abandoned by parents or guardians, or separated from their parents for other reasons.

Under federal protections, any student who falls into one or more of the above categories has equal access to the same free appropriate public education, including a public preschool program, as provided to other children and youth. New enrollments of “homeless” students will not result in a delay of education. To counteract any educational disruption caused by a “homeless” situation for existing students, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act provides students with the right to remain in the school district of origin if feasible. A Best Interest Determination (BID) meeting may take place to consider:

- The distance of commute and the impact it may have on the student’s education
- Personal safety issues
- A student’s need for special instruction (Individualized Education Plan or Gifted Individualized Education Plan)
- The length of anticipated stay in a temporary housing situation
- The time remaining in the school year

For more information families may contact:

Marissa Bourg, Elementary Guidance Counselor 724-356-2294 x5211

Kasey Scears, JrSr High Guidance Counselor 724-356-2218 x3305

Carrie Graff, Elementary Principal 724-356-2294 x5500

Heather Zalar, JrSr High Principal 724-356-2218 x3301

Marcy Jaworowski, Homeless Liaison Designee 724-356-2216 x3303

SAFETY

SCHOOL VISITORS

Visitors must be limited to parents and persons having legitimate business at the school. All visitors must report to the office immediately upon entering the school building. Visitors must sign in, provide a valid driver's license and receive a visitor's pass.

*(For more information see the school district policy on **School Visitors #907** available for review on the District Webpage.)*

SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

The Avella Area School District supports the involvement of parents and guardians as volunteers in our school. Pennsylvania State Law (Act 15) requires every volunteer who has direct contact with students to have the necessary clearances on file with the School District. The Volunteer Policy and all required forms are located on the district webpage.

- Volunteer Q/A Letter Volunteer Policy #916 Volunteer Application
- Act 34: PA Criminal History Clearance
- Act 151: PA Child Abuse History Clearance
- Disclosure Statement Application for Volunteers
- Act 114: FBI Fingerprint Clearances *(not required if applicant has been a resident of Pennsylvania during the previous 10 year period.)*
- **You will need this Service Code: 1KG8XN**

ZERO TOLERANCE

The Superintendent (or his or her designee), on an individualized case basis, may appeal to the board in writing, requesting that the action called for in the District's policy may be changed or adjusted based on extenuating and mitigating factors of the individual case directly related to the policy.

WEAPONS

Weapons offenses are serious issues in our schools. A weapon can mean any tool, instrument, or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury. Any student caught in possession of a weapon will be disciplined.

*(For more information see the school district policy on **Weapons #218.1**) available for review on the district webpage.*

CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

Avella Area School District prohibits the use, possession, distribution and being under the influence of any controlled substances, tobacco products and/or electronic cigarettes during school hours, at any time while on school property, at any school-sponsored activity, and during the time spent traveling to and from school on the bus.

A student found to be under the influence of any controlled substance will be subject to disciplinary action which may require participation in drug counseling, rehabilitation, testing or other programs as a condition of reinstatement into the school's educational, extracurricular or athletic programs.

*(For more information see the **School Policy on Controlled Substances/Paraphernalia #227; Electronic Cigarettes #256; # 222 Tobacco and Vaping Products** available for review on the District Webpage.)*

ALICE DRILLS

A.L.I.C.E. is an acronym for five (5) steps students, faculty and staff can utilize to increase the likelihood of survival if attacked by an Active Shooter or Violent Intruder. These safety drills will be conducted periodically. Parents and students will be notified prior to the district conducting these drills. The State of Pennsylvania requires this within the first ninety days of school.

FIRE DRILLS

The purpose of fire drills is to teach students to evacuate the building safely, quickly, orderly, and methodically with a high degree of self-control. Fire drills may be announced or unannounced. Students are not to assist in fire-fighting duties or the handling of fire extinguishers.

The exit route for each room location is displayed in that room and students are urged to make note of the exit route. When the fire alarm sounds students leave the room immediately and in an orderly fashion. All belongings should remain in the room. Students will report to their designated area with the guidance of the classroom teacher. Once in the designated area in which students should gather the classroom teacher will take the roll. Students will be signaled when to return to the classroom.

DISCRIMINATION/ TITLE IX SEXUAL HARASSMENT AFFECTING STUDENTS

Avella Area School District does not discriminate in any manner, including Title IX sexual harassment, in any district education program or activity, to be issued to all students, parents/guardians, employment applicants, employees and all unions or professional organizations holding collective bargaining or professional agreements with the district. All discrimination notices and information shall include the title, office address, telephone number and email address of the individual(s) designated as the Compliance Officer and **Title IX** Coordinator.

*(For more information see the school district policy on **Discrimination/Title IX Sexual Harassment Affecting Students Policy 103** available for review on the District Webpage.)*

SEARCHES

An administrator may seize any evidence indicating that a student is violating or has violated the law or a school rule, that the administrator may find as a result of a search of a student's property, clothed body or areas designated for a student's use if the search is proper and reasonable. A student who refuses the request for a search by an administrator that is proper and reasonable may be disciplined under the district's discipline policy. Action may include suspension or referral to the board for an expulsion hearing.

*(For more information see the school district policy on **Locker Searches #226, Student Searches #226.1 and Motor Vehicle Searches #226.2** available for review on the District Webpage.)*

GENERAL PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

NEW STUDENT REGISTRATION

The district shall enroll all school age regular education students who are eligible to attend district schools, and special education students through the end of their twenty-first (21st) year of age, provided that any regular or special education student has not already graduated from another school entity, in accordance with district policy and applicable laws and regulations. Eligibility shall be determined in accordance with law and district policy.

Parents/Guardians are to complete a registration packet and provide the following documentation required for enrollment:

- Proof of Student's Age
- Immunization Record
- Proof of Residency
- Discipline Statement
- Home Language Survey

The District shall, prior to the registration of any student, obtain from the student's parent/guardian an affidavit detailing any suspensions or expulsions from any school system in the U.S., which were the result of violence or the possession of a weapon.

*(For more information, see the school district policy on **Admission and Enrollment of Students #200** available for review on the District Webpage.)*

WITHDRAWAL OF STUDENTS

If you are moving and are withdrawing your child from school, please call or contact the school at least two weeks prior to the withdrawal date. This will enable us to have ample time to complete required paperwork. All library books, textbooks, and technology must be returned. All outstanding charges paid prior to your child leaving and enrolling in another school. Your child's records

will be forwarded upon request to the new school. No withdrawal will be made without official notice from the parents/guardians to the school. As always, your cooperation is appreciated.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

School begins at **9:00 am**. Students are permitted into the specific designated location in the building at **8:40 am**. **Adult supervision does not begin before 8:40 am**. Please do not bring your child to school before that time as they cannot be supervised and their safety is a major concern. They may proceed to their classrooms at **8:40 am**. Dismissal is at 3:15 for parent/family pick-ups and 3:20 for bus riders. Any parent or guardian wishing to pick up their child should follow the elementary school route behind the JR/SR high school and then begin lining up at the front of the elementary school. **Please do not arrive any earlier than 3:05 pm for parent/guardian pick-ups.**

Parents are welcome to bring their child to and from school daily. If this is going to be your selected measure of transportation, we ask that you register with the elementary office. We will provide you a number for your vehicle that safely identifies your car. If arrangements for bussing need to be made on an occasion you can contact the office for a bus pass. This system helps us dismiss students efficiently and safely.

ADDRESS/PHONE/EMAIL CHANGES

It is very important that the school maintains a correct address, phone number and email for each student. Any changes of information are to be promptly reported to Mrs. Lori Ragan @ 724-356-2294 ext. 5502.

EMERGENCY CARDS

The safety of your child is a concern of the school. The Emergency Cards issued to your child at the beginning of the year have important information needed so that the school can contact the parents in case of an emergency. To eliminate any delays in contacting parents in emergency situations, **this card must be returned on the second day of school each year.**

CONFIDENTIALITY

With regard to the release of student information, parents are reminded that with few exceptions, information relative to a student cannot be released without prior consent of the parent or eligible student to anyone outside of educational agencies. Student information, which does not require prior consent and may be disclosed on request, is called "Directory Information." This would include the following: student's name, address, telephone number, date of birth, place of birth, participation in activities and sports conducted by school, dates of attendance, honors, awards, diploma, certificates, parents' name and address. All parents and students are advised that those items listed as "Directory Information" may be withheld at the request of the parent, guardian, or eligible student. This request must be submitted in writing to the Elementary School Principal.

CANCELLATIONS/DELAYS/EARLY DISMISSALS

In the event of inclement weather or mechanical breakdown, school may be closed or the starting time may be delayed. The same conditions may also necessitate early dismissal. School closings, delayed starting times, or early dismissals will be announced over local radio and TV stations and through Send IT our school messenger program via an automated phone call and Class DOJO. Please do not call the elementary school office. Reports in the morning will be given by 6:30 a.m. (If no report is heard, then school is in session.) Because of the inclement weather and road conditions, the time the bus will arrive at each stop will vary. Please allow at least 20 minutes leeway for the arrival of the bus at your stop. Listen to the local radio and TV stations for updated information. In the event school is canceled the Avella Area School District may call a Remote Instructional Day. Students will be provided instruction through their Google Classroom. Information for the day will be provided on both Google Classroom and Class DOJO.

CHROMEBOOKS

Avella Elementary School Students are issued a Google Chromebook at the beginning of each new school year for use in school and at home. The Chromebooks are lent to the students for educational purposes only during the academic year. Permission for use of the same may be revoked by the District at any time for a limited time or permanently based on a student's violation of the Student Use Agreement. Students and/or parents/guardians are responsible for any damage done to a student's Chromebook. Students will be provided their assigned Chromebook, once the parent/student handbook sign off has been received.

Chromebook Insurance is available through Worth Ave. Group for the 2025-2026 school year. To purchase insurance, parents/guardians must fill out the insurance application form and return it to the elementary school office along with the payment for the policy. Applications can be found on the district website @ www.avellasd.org or in the elementary school office.

*(For more information, see the school policies on **Student Use of the Internet/School District Network and District-Provided Computer Equipment #815, Use of the Internet/School District Network/District-Provided Computer Equipment by Employees and Other Authorized Users #815.1, Chromebooks #815.3**, available for review on the District Webpage. The Student Use Agreement and Chromebook Procedures and information can also be found on the school website @ www.avellasd.org or in the high school office.)*

FIELD TRIPS

A student who has a suspension during their attendance at Avella Elementary School will jeopardize the right to go on field trips. If a student cannot conform to rules and regulations in school, teachers are not expected to take them on field trips. Building administration and staff reserve the right to establish their own rules regarding participation in field trips, specifically regarding what can exclude students from participating.

Students and parents/guardians must also realize that trip money is nonrefundable. Reservations for school trips are made in advance and prepaid.

FINES AND OBLIGATIONS

If fines and obligations are owed from a prior or current year, regardless of the amount, the following procedures are to be followed.

- Students will not be permitted to participate in extracurricular activities such as end of the year parties, classroom field trips, etc..
- If a student owes an obligation, it must be paid before the end of the school year or the student's report card will be held until the obligation is rendered.

All fines and obligations are payable by cash or money order only.

FOOD AND DRINKS

Food or pre-packaged liquids are to be consumed during the breakfast, snack, or lunch periods only and are not permitted outside of the cafeteria area except as part of the educational experience of a regularly scheduled class (classroom reward parties, class holiday parties, etc.). However, students are permitted to consume water throughout the school day. Acceptable containers are prepackaged water bottles and/or clear water containers. Energy drinks and/or highly caffeinated drinks are not permitted to consume.

COMMUNICATIONS

Communication is vital between the school and families. Avella Elementary Center utilizes a variety of communication tools to support family engagement. Class DOJO is used on a daily basis as both a messaging tool and Positive Behavior system for your child. Each staff member has Class DOJO and can be accessed once you have been invited to join the Avella Elementary School. Your homeroom teacher will provide further instructions for using Class DOJO. We also use the Avella School District Facebook page to communicate updates and announcements. Parent Square is a district wide messaging system that is also utilized for communication. General announcements will be made to families, on Class DOJO, Facebook, and an email/text/phone call message will be sent using Parent Square to families after 4:00 pm. **If an emergency or critical situation arises you will be notified via phone call during the school day.** If it is necessary to send a general message during school hours it will occur through text/email messages.

AVELLA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK SIGN-OFF SHEET

2025-2026

I am aware that the Avella Elementary School Handbook and School Board Policies are available on the District website, www.avellasd.org. I agree to read the handbook and abide by the standards, policies, and procedures defined or referenced in this document.

The information in this handbook is subject to change. I understand that changes in policies may supersede, modify, or render obsolete the information summarized in this handbook. As the District provides policy information, I accept responsibility for reading and abiding by the changes.

The preceding rules and regulations of this Parent/Student Handbook for the Avella Elementary School have been read and discussed by:

Student Name (Please Print)

Homeroom

Student Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date

AVELLA AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Cyril Walther, Superintendent
Mrs. Heather Zalar, JR/SR High School
Mrs. Carrie Graff Elementary Principal

ELEMENTARY OFFICE STAFF

Telephone: 724-356-2294 Fax: 724-356-7892

Mrs. Carrie Graff, Elementary Principal-Ext. 5500
Mrs. Lori Ragan, Secretary-Ext. 5502
Mrs. Marcy Jaworoski-Special Education Secretary-Ext. 3303
Ms. Marissa Bourg, Guidance Counselor-Ext. 5211
Mrs. Lauren O'Brien, School Nurse-Ext. 5504
Mrs. Heather Poirier, Food Service Director-Ext. 3312 Dr.
Matt Williams, Special Education Coordinator-Ext. 5501

ELEMENTARY STAFF MEMBERS

Kindergarten Teachers:

Mrs. Heather Maidment // Ms. Lynette Zimmerman

1st Grade Teachers: Mrs. Nicole Brown-Deer // Mrs. Lauren Baker

2nd Grade Teachers: Mrs. Melinda Coates // Mrs. Katrina Rado

3rd Grade Teachers: Mr. Daniel Davidson // Mrs. Heidi Farrell

4th Grade Teachers: Mrs. Rebecca Fox // Mrs. Jessica Crum

5th Grade Teachers: Mrs. Colleen Jastrzebski // Mrs. Marie Smitsky

6th Grade Teachers: Mrs. Kristina Piskuric // Mrs. Beth Rosenberg

Mrs. Amy Hott - Learning Support // Ms. Emily Jezowicz - Learning Support
Mrs. Cheryl Rush - Learning Support // Ms. Colleen Bernard - Life Skills
Mrs. Dana Gatewood - Emotional Support // Ms. Christy Byerly - Behavioral Therapist
Mrs. Leigh Stets - Speech Language Therapist // M. Gregory Curtin- Title I Reading Specialist
Ms. Jenna Craig - Art // Ms. Lynn Maidment-Clarchick - Media/Gifted
Mr. John Mylan - Physical Education // Ms. Amanda Kolson – Music
Mrs. Jody Morgan – SFA Curriculum Coordinator

ELEMENTARY PARAPROFESSIONALS

Mrs. Lisa Conn // Mrs. Linda Gagliani // Mrs. Barb Humensky // Mrs. Jennifer Markle // Mrs. Loretta Whyte

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

GG&C Bus Company Inc. 2924 Jefferson Avenue Washington, PA 15031
Telephone: 724-222-2320 Fax: 724-228-3030

Avella Elementary School

1000 Avella Road
Avella, PA 15312
(724) 356-2294
www.avellasd.org