

2026-2027

**Connellsville Area School
District**
Elementary School Handbook





WELCOME

Dear Connellsville Elementary Students, Parents, and Guardians,

On behalf of the faculty and staff at the Connellsville Area Elementary Schools, we welcome you and your family to our schools and learning community. Our faculty and staff are dedicated to providing a safe, caring, and engaging educational environment. It is important to remember that learning is the primary goal of the school. We are looking forward to a successful school year that will involve many new and exciting experiences and challenges.

The information documented in this student handbook is an attempt to familiarize students and parents/guardians with our school policies, procedures, and expectations. We encourage you to take the time to review this information carefully, discuss the information with your child, and then refer to the handbook as needed throughout the school year. By becoming familiar with the handbook, we can work together to provide a positive school environment that promotes the social, physical, and educational growth and development of our students. We expect each student to meet our high expectations and work to make this school a better place.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation with the faculty and staff. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the school, please feel free to contact your student's teacher, school counselor, or principal. Welcome to the 2026-2027 school year.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Jamie Bielecki-Quinn
Bullskin Township Elementary
(724) 628-6540

Dr. Stephanie Romanishan
Springfield Clifford N. Pritts Elementary
(724) 455-3191

Mrs. Jennifer Laskey
Dunbar Township Elementary
(724) 628-6330

Mrs. Dana Stepanic
West Crawford Elementary
(724) 628-4497

Ms. Lora Snyder
Assistant Elementary Principal



Soar with the Falcons!

CONNELLSVILLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT

The Connellsville Area School District strives to educate students in a safe and inclusive environment empowering students to become respectful, responsible, and resilient lifelong learners ready to thrive in a global society.

CONNELLSVILLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT VISION STATEMENT

Students of the Connellsville Area School District thrive through personal and academic excellence, equipping themselves for future challenges and opportunities.

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CONNELLVILLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT ELEMENTARY HANDBOOK

Standardized Assessment Calendar 2026-2027

Type of Test	Test Date / Window	Grade(s)
PSSA English Language Arts PSSA Math, Science, & Make-up	April 26 - 30, 2027 May 3- May 7, 2027	3-8 3-8
Keystone Exams - Winter Algebra I, Biology, Literature	Wave 1: December 7 - 18, 2026 Wave 2: January 4 - 15, 2027	9-12 as needed
Keystone Exams - Spring Algebra I, Biology, Literature	May 17 - 28, 2027	8-10 end-of-course, & 11
PASA Math, Reading, Science	March 8 - May 7, 2027	3-8, 11
ACCESS for ELLs	January - February	K-12
Test of Cognitive Skills (In-View Test)	As necessary	2
PSAT/NMSQT	TBD (registration required)	10, 11
ACT Assessment Test www.actstudent.org	TBD (registration required)	11, 12
SAT Assessment Test www.collegeboard.com	TBD (registration required)	11, 12
DIBELS/CDT Testing/Star Math (Elementary)	Benchmark #1: Sept. 8-Sept. 30, 2026 Benchmark #2: Jan. 20-Feb. 5, 2027 Benchmark #3: May10-May 26, 2027	K-5 (subject specific)
Secondary MAZE	Sept 11, 2026, Jan 22, 2027 & April 23, 2027	
CDT Testing (Secondary)	Benchmark #1: Sept. 8-Sept. 30, 2026 Benchmark #2: Jan. 20-Feb. 5, 2027 Benchmark #3: April 12-April 23, 2027	6-12 (subject specific)

ASSESSMENTS AND EVALUATIONS

All students participate in benchmark assessments throughout the year which evaluate their progress and drive instruction. Students in grades 3-5 participate in the PSSA (Pennsylvania System of School Assessments) in English Language Arts and Mathematics. Additionally, fourth graders take the Science PSSA. Students in grades K-5 will also be given the DIBELS assessment to measure acquisition of early literacy skills, students in grades 3-5 will take the CDT for math, and CDT science in 5th grade.

Parental opt-out– The regulation gives parents/guardians the right to review any state assessment to determine whether the assessment conflicts with their religious beliefs. In asserting a religious objection to the assessment, a parent/guardian must explain the objection in their written request for excusal.

ATTENDANCE

Connellsville Area School District adopted an attendance policy for the 2026-2027 school year. Attendance is a crucial part of your child's education and we encourage you to send your child to school every day! If you have any questions or concerns regarding your child's attendance, please call your child's school. The principal, school counselor, truant officer, and teachers are here to support your family in helping your child come to and stay in school. We look forward to working with you this year to help ensure that your child has great attendance!

Arrival/Dismissal

- Elementary school start time is 9:20 a.m. and end time is 3:25 p.m.
- Your child is considered tardy: 9:21 a.m. - 12:23 p.m.
- Your child is considered absent if they arrive after 12:24 p.m.
- Your child is considered absent if they leave before 12:23 p.m.
- Any change to your student's normal daily transportation at the end of the school day should be provided to the office in writing. Phone calls will not be accepted.

Absence

Regular school attendance is essential to the successful completion of the educational objectives of the school. The school laws of Pennsylvania require all school age children to be in attendance on all days that the school is open. The school attendance laws also require the school to hold students and their parents accountable for valid documentation of reasons for absence. Any student who is absent from school must submit an excuse for the absence(s) within three days of the date of the absence(s). Excuses should include the date, the student's full name, and the date of absence, and the reason for the absence. Excuses are to be submitted to the homeroom teacher or directly to the office.

Disciplinary Action for Attendance Infractions

Violation Number	Absences	Truancy Level	Disciplinary Action (Under 15 years old)	Disciplinary Action (15 years of age and older)
1	3	Truant	➤ Parent Notification letter ➤ Detention	➤ Parent Notification letter ➤ Detention
2	6	Habitually Truant	➤ Parent Conference Letter ➤ Student referred to Attendance Improvement Conference ➤ Excuse from doctor needed for any additional absences	➤ Parent Conference Letter ➤ Student referred to Attendance Improvement Conference ➤ Excuse from doctor needed for any additional absences ➤ 10 Day Driving Suspension

3	More than 6	Habitually Truant	➤ Referral to CYS and/or citation filed with the office of the appropriate Magisterial District Judge against the student and/or the person in parental relation who resides in the same household as the student.	➤ 30+ Day Driving Suspension ➤ Citation filed with the office of the appropriate Magisterial District Judge against the student and/or the person in parental relation who resides in the same household as the student.
Additional citations for ongoing violations of school attendance will be filed against a student or person in parental relation who resides in the same household as the student in accordance with the specific provisions of the law.				

ATTENDANCE

Cyber School Attendance

Cyber students will log in to the Student Management System (FOLA) for 5 out of the 7 days (Monday - Sunday of the week). If a student does not log in 5 out of 7 days a note must be submitted to the school stating the name, date, and reason for the absence. Students are expected to meet individual course attendance requirements. Please see the attendance above to see the steps that are taken as a student progresses through the attendance policy.

Educational Trips

Educational trips involving three (3) or more days must be pre-approved by the office through the Educational Opportunity Request to Participate form in order for the absence to be marked excused. Students are permitted five (5) education trip days total for each school year. It is the responsibility of the students or parents to inform the classroom teacher(s) and to get any work or makeup work for the days absent. Students have three (3) school days to make up assignments and ten (10) days to make up tests/quizzes. If you need more time, please work with the classroom teacher to make arrangements.

Tardiness Regulations

A student is considered tardy if they arrive late to school. Students who are tardy must report to the office and secure a tardy permit. Students are expected to provide a tardy excuse slip from their parent / guardian to explain their tardiness. Tardy notes should be turned in upon arrival to school, but must be submitted within three days of the tardy. Any student who leaves early due to appointments will need to turn in a slip the following day from that appointment.

Discipline Actions for Tardiness – Elementary School

Start time is 9:20 a.m. and end time is 3:25 p.m. (6 hours 5 minutes, 365 minutes)

Tardy: 9:21 a.m. - 12:23 p.m.

Absent if arrive after 12:24 p.m.

Absent if leave before 12:23 p.m.

Violation Number	Tardies	Disciplinary Action (Under 15 years old)	Disciplinary Action (15 years of age and older)
1	3	Parent / Guardian Phone Call	Parent / Guardian Phone Call
2	6	Student referred to SAP	Student referred to SAP

BREAKFAST/LUNCH PROGRAM

Students in the Connellsville Area School District will receive one free breakfast and one free lunch each school day through the Community Eligibility Program. If a student wishes to eat extra, he/she may purchase items ala cart. Any opened drinks and snacks must be consumed in the cafeteria. If your child has a food allergy or special dietary need, please notify the school nurse and principal immediately to schedule a meeting regarding this allergy. If your child cannot have milk or dairy products with their meal, please provide us with a note from your doctor specifying a substitute beverage or item. This note must be renewed each year.

CAFETERIA

The cafeteria, besides being a lunch room, is also a place where positive social relations can be developed. Here, each student is expected to practice the general rules of good manners. Some simple rules of courteous behavior which would make the lunch period pleasant and relaxed are:

1. Have your school ID number ready so you do not hold up the line.
2. Choose your food promptly.
3. Be courteous to all who serve you.
4. Handle cafeteria items carefully as they cost money—your money.
5. Observe good dining room standards at the table.
6. Leave the table and the surrounding area clean and in good order.
7. Put trash in the proper containers.
8. Use appropriate table manners and inside voices.

CAFETERIA INFRACTIONS

Additional infractions may result in cafeteria privileges being revoked. All food must be eaten in the cafeteria. Students are not to take food or drink into the hallways or classrooms. The cafeteria is run by the school at cost. Appreciate it and keep it clean and attractive.

CHAIN OF CONTACT

It is the Connellsville School Area School District policy that any classroom issues should be first addressed with your child's teacher. Although most situations can be dealt with effectively by the parent, teacher and child, sometimes other people may need to be included such as our school counselor, principal, school psychologist, nurse, or instructional specialist. If needed, you may then contact the office and speak with the school secretary, who may direct you to the school counselor or principal who will help you resolve your concern.

CHROMEBOOKS

Overview

The mission of the 1:1 Chromebook program is to create a collaborative environment that enhances student engagement and promotes the development of self-directed learning. Students will transition from consumers of information to co-creators of knowledge.

The Chromebook provides students access to educational materials, web-based tools, and Google Workspace for Education. The supplied device is an educational tool not intended for gaming, social networking or high-end computing.

This section of the handbook outlines the procedures and policies for student use and guidelines for students and families to protect the device issued by the Connellsville Area School District.

Issuance and Collection of Chromebooks

- Every student will be issued a Chromebook upon entering Kindergarten, Fourth Grade, and Eighth Grade; or upon enrollment in the District. This device is the property of the Connellsville Area School District, but individual students will be responsible for the care of their issued Chromebook until a new device is issued or until withdrawal from the District.
- Students leaving the District must return the District-owned Chromebook to the Media Center of their respective school. Any Chromebook not returned upon the withdrawal of the will be considered stolen property and law enforcement agencies will be notified.
- Chromebooks will be examined for damage and fees may be issued if damage is found to be beyond normal wear and tear.

Use of the Chromebook

- The District's Acceptable Use Policy applies to all student use of Chromebook devices. The student, in whose name a system account and/or Chromebook hardware is issued, will be responsible at all times for its appropriate use. Noncompliance with the policies of this document will result in disciplinary action.
- Chromebooks are subject to content filtering both in school and at home. Any attempt to bypass the content filtering, including, but not limited to accessing the following will result in disciplinary action: alcohol, drugs, gang related symbols, guns, inappropriate language, pornographic materials, weapons, or anything else deemed inappropriate by Connellsville Area School District staff
- In addition to teacher expectations for daily classroom use, Chromebooks will be used to access school announcements, calendars, grades, and schedules. At-home use of the Chromebook is encouraged.
- Students are expected to bring their completely charged Chromebook to school for use in class each day. A fully charged Chromebook's battery should last an entire school day. Failure to bring a completely charged device may affect daily achievement grades or lead to other consequences. Repeat violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action.
- If a student leaves their Chromebook at home, they will be permitted to call their parent/guardian to bring the device to school. This should occur before the school day starts or during lunch time to reduce distractions during the school day. Students unable to contact a parent/guardian may use a "Classroom Loaner", if available. If no loaner devices are available, the student must comply with teacher-specific classroom procedures for completion of assignments.
- Students will only be able to login using their assigned @casdedu.org Google account. To ensure account security, students should not share their password and should log out of their Chromebook when not in use. Account login information can be supplied to a student by the Media Center staff.
- Sound should remain muted unless permission is granted from the teacher. Students are encouraged to purchase a pair of headphones/earbuds for personal use. The District will not supply headphones.
- The District encourages the digital exchange of information by sharing and/or emailing communication and assignments. Printing from the Chromebooks will not be available.

Chromebook Care Guidelines

- Chromebooks must have a Connellsville Area School District barcode label on them at all times; this tag must not be removed or altered in any way. Chromebooks must remain free of any writing, drawing, or stickers.
- Clean the Chromebook with a soft, dry microfiber cloth or antistatic cloth. If a more thorough screen cleaning is required, lightly dampen a clean microfiber cloth with water. Do not use any type of cleaning solvent on your Chromebook.
- Screens are particularly sensitive to damage from excessive pressure on the screen. Do not lean on or place heavy objects on the top of the device when it is closed. Do not poke the screen with anything that will mark or scratch its surface or place anything on the keyboard before closing the lid (e.g. pens or pencils).
- Food or drink should never be placed near the Chromebook.
- Cords, cables, and removable storage devices must be inserted and removed carefully.
- Transport Chromebooks with care. Lids should remain closed and tightly secured when moving. Never move a Chromebook by lifting from the screen. Always support a Chromebook from its bottom with the lid closed. Never transport the Chromebook with the power cord plugged in.
- Cases will not be provided by the District but may be purchased from many retailers. It is suggested that students get a case to transport their Chromebooks back and forth to the school.
- To prevent overheating, Chromebooks should never be left in a car. Vents must not be blocked in any way.
- Under no circumstances should Chromebooks be left in an unsupervised area including cafeterias, locker rooms, media centers, unlocked classrooms, on top of lockers, restrooms, hallways, or outside. If an unsupervised Chromebook is found, notify a staff member immediately. Disciplinary action may be taken for leaving a Chromebook in an unsupervised location.

Chromebooks Needing Repair

- Chromebooks that are broken, or fail to work properly, must be taken to the Media Center of their respective school as soon as possible. Depending on the severity of the issue, a "Daily Loaner" may be issued right away.
- All repairs must be handled by District IT Staff. Students and families should never attempt to fix a broken Chromebook. Do not take District owned Chromebooks to an outside computer service for any type of repairs or maintenance. The District will not issue reimbursements for outside repair services.
- Students and/or families will be responsible for any damages caused to their District-issued Chromebook. If a device is lost or stolen the student and/or family will be responsible to replace the Chromebook. Optional insurance is available through the District for \$25.00 per year.

Examples of charges for Chromebook Repair:
Replacement of damaged/lost Chromebook: \$200.00

Replacement of screen: \$75.00
Replacement of keyboard/touchpad: \$50.00
Replacement power cord: \$20.00

Google Privacy Notice

Google Workspace for Education accounts (including Gmail) will be given to all students in the Connellsville Area School District. The only identifiable information provided to Google will be the student's name and the District provided email address. Google uses student personal information to provide, maintain, and protect the services. Google does not serve ads in the Core Services or use personal information collected in the Core Services for advertising purposes. Additional Services require parental consent for students under the age of 13. In order to comply with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), we must also provide a process for opting out of these services. If you feel it would be best for your child not to utilize these tools, please contact your child's school to request information on opting out.

CHROMEBOOKS

Using Your Chromebook at School

- Chromebooks are intended for use at school each day.
- In addition to teacher expectations for Chromebook use, school messages, announcements, calendars and schedules may be accessed using the Chromebook.
- Students must be responsible to bring their Chromebook to all classes, unless specifically advised not to do so by their class teacher.

Updating your Chromebook

- When a Chromebook starts up, it updates itself automatically, so it has the most recent version of the Chrome operating system without you having to do a thing.

Virus Protections & Additional Software

- The Chromebook is built with layers of protection against malware and security attacks.
- Files are stored in the cloud, so there's no need to worry about lost homework

COUNSELING PROGRAM

In compliance with state standards, students will participate in a comprehensive school counseling program, encompassing academic and personal/social development as well as career-readiness. Students will work collaboratively with their school counselor, parents, and community stakeholders, to help set short- and long-term goals, ensuring success upon graduating from CASD. Through classroom activities and individual conferences, students will complete a series of career-oriented projects, through an online career portfolio. At the high school level, in addition to counselor scheduled appointments, students can request to see their counselor through email or an appointment form that can be picked up in the counseling office. If an emergency situation arises, a school counselor will be available without appointment. Our goal is to create an environment that encourages each student to achieve their highest potential.

DRESS CODE - POINTS OF EMPHASIS

The administration recognizes that each student's mode of dress and grooming is a manifestation of personal style and individual preference. However, personal appearance should not disrupt the educational process, call undue attention to the individual, violate federal, state, or local health or

obscenity laws, or affect the welfare of the student or his/her classmates. Building principals will determine if the students dress is appropriate. In all cases, the decision of the principal as to the appropriateness of the attire is final. Specific dress rules include the following:

1. Students should wear clothing that is decent and reasonably modest ensuring adequate coverage and appropriateness.
2. Clothing and accessories shall not have writing, pictures, or insignias of any type which promote drugs, alcohol, sexual activity, or tobacco. Clothing and accessories shall not have writing, pictures, or insignias with double meanings, or that are offensive to others (such as Confederate flags).
3. No headwear except that which is required medically or religiously. Sunglasses cannot be worn in the building.
4. Garments designed for protection against the weather such as hats/gloves may not be worn in the building during the school day.
5. Appropriate footwear should be worn daily due to safety concerns while using stairs and on the playground. Tennis shoes must be worn for Physical Education class.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Cell phones, headphones, earbuds, smart watches, cameras, AI/smart glasses, portable game consoles, and other smart devices, electronic entertainment or communication devices are not appropriate for use during the instructional school day unless specifically authorized by school personnel for educational purposes.

All electronic devices must be powered off and kept out of sight during the school day. Electronic devices should not be seen or heard during the school day.

Students who violate this expectation will be subject to the following progressive disciplinary consequences:

Disciplinary Actions for Electronics Violations (under 17 years old)	
1 st Offense	➤ Device will be confiscated and may be picked up by the student at the end of the school day.
2 nd Offense	➤ Device will be confiscated and must be picked up by a parent or guardian.
3 rd Offense	➤ Device will be confiscated, must be picked up by a parent or guardian, and the student will receive a Level II disciplinary infraction (i.e., detention).
4 th Offense	➤ Device will be confiscated, must be picked up by a parent or guardian, and the student will receive a Level II disciplinary infraction (i.e., PSR).
5 th Offense	➤ Device will be confiscated, must be picked up by a parent or guardian, and the student will receive a Level III disciplinary infraction (i.e., OSS).

The school district reserves the right to prohibit additional electronic devices that interfere with the educational environment, compromise safety, or violate student or staff privacy.

EMERGENCY CARDS

Emergency cards should be completed and returned before the end of the first week of school. Any change of address or telephone number after the opening of the school year must be made known to the school office as soon as possible. The information on the emergency cards is vital when a situation arises where the parent must be contacted.

EMERGENCY DRILLS/SCHOOL SAFETY DRILLS

Emergency drills are required at regular intervals by law and are an important safety precaution. It is essential that when the first signal is given, everyone leave the building by the prescribed route as quickly as possible. The teacher in each classroom will accompany and give instruction to the students. Students will also be required to participate in school safety drills throughout the school year related to emergency weather situations as well as intruder in the building protocol.

EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

The Connellsville Area School District uses the School Messenger emergency notification system to make parents/guardians aware of early dismissals, health threats, changes to the school calendar, snow delays and closings, and to announce special school events. School Messenger is an automatic notification system that delivers voicemail messages to telephones and/or mobile phones.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

In accordance with the Board's philosophy to provide quality educational programs to all district students and to increase the English language proficiency of students who are English Learners, the district shall provide an effective Language Instruction Educational Program that meets the needs of English Learners. This program works in partnership with Intermediate Unit 1 to provide appropriate instruction and educational programs in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations. If parents/guardians prefer school communications in a language other than English, please notify the office and we will provide communications in their preferred language.

FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act)

A school must annually notify parents of students in attendance of their rights under FERPA. The annual notification must include information regarding a parent's right to inspect and review his or her child's education records, the right to seek to amend the records, the right to consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information from the records (except in certain circumstances), and the right to file a complaint with the Office regarding an alleged failure by a school to comply with FERPA. The school must also inform parents of its definitions of the terms "school official" and "legitimate educational interest."

FERPA does not require a school to notify parents individually of their rights under FERPA. Rather, the school may provide the annual notification by any means likely to inform parents of their rights. Thus, the annual notification may be published by various means, including any of the following: in a student handbook; in a notice to parents; in a calendar of events; on the school's website (though this should not be the exclusive means of notification); in the local newspaper; or posted in a central location at the school or various locations throughout the school. Additionally, some schools include their directory information notice as part of the annual notice of rights under FERPA. To read your rights protected by FERPA.

FIELD TRIPS

Your child's teacher will inform you of any upcoming trips outside of school. Classroom field trips must be board approved and if you would like for your child to participate, please complete and return a permission slip to your child's teacher.

GOOGLE'S GSUITE FOR EDUCATION

The Connellsville Area School District wants students to be interested and excited in learning and for parents to be involved with their student's education. To discuss how Google's G Suite apps will be used at your child's school, please talk to your child's teacher(s) or school administrator. Additionally, parent meetings will be held at your child's school to answer questions and help you to understand your options.

GOOGLE PRIVACY NOTICE

G Suite for Education accounts (including Gmail) will be given to all students in the Connellsville Area School District. The only identifiable information provided to Google will be student's name and the District provided email address. Google uses student personal information to provide, maintain, and protect the services. Google does not serve ads in the Core Services or use personal information collected in the Core Services for advertising purposes. Additional Services require parental consent for students under the age of 13. In order to comply with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), we must also provide a process for opting out of these services. If you feel it would be best for your child not to utilize these tools, please contact your child's school to request information on opting out.

GRADING SCALE/REPORT CARDS

Your child's school will send information regarding our student information management system (PowerSchool) home with your child toward the beginning of the school year. This information will instruct you how to log in to see your child's grades. Please call the school secretary with any questions regarding PowerSchool. Report cards are distributed electronically 4 times a year. A conference may be scheduled upon parent request. Annual parent teacher conferences are held in November (please see the district calendar for the specific date and time). Retention occurs when a student does not meet the standards set forth by the school district. In all cases of retention, the parents/guardians shall be fully involved and informed throughout the process. Parents/Guardians and students shall be informed of the possibility of retention of a student well in advance. The following is the grading scale utilized at CASD:

A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	59% or Lower

HEALTH SERVICES

If a student becomes ill in school, he/she should report to the nurse who will decide what should be done. Students who are ill must not leave the building without authorization from the nurse. The nurse's office is not to be used as an excuse for being late to class or being absent. The nurse does not dispense medication. Students who are taking prescribed medications must register the drug with the nurse.

HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION

The Board shall provide, pursuant to law and regulations, homebound instruction to students confined to home or hospital for physical disability, illness, injury, urgent reasons, or when such confinement is recommended for psychological or psychiatric reasons. The period of homebound instruction for an individual shall not exceed three (3) months.

HOMELESS STUDENTS

Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH):

This resource is intended for parents/guardians/staff/community members to utilize if experiencing homelessness or in crisis. This resource also provides guidance and training and is updated annually. If you or someone you know is in need of assistance — please reach out to **724-626-0236**

Homeless Liaison(s): **Dr. Lori Rosensteel**

Liaison Responsibilities:

The district's liaison shall coordinate with:

1. Local service agencies that provide services to homeless children, youth, and families.
2. Other school districts on issues of records transfer and transportation.
3. District staff responsible for the provision of services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and Individuals with Disabilities Act.
4. State and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies.

The district's liaison shall provide public notice of the educational rights of homeless students in schools, family shelters, soup kitchens, public libraries, and locations frequented by parents/guardians of homeless children.

The district liaison shall provide reliable, valid, and comprehensive data to the coordinator of Pennsylvania's Education for Children/Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH) Program in accordance with federal and state law regulations.

Definition of Homelessness:

Homeless students are defined as individuals lacking a fixed, regular, adequate nighttime residence, which include the following conditions:

1. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship.
2. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
2. Living in emergency, transitional, or domestic violence shelters.
3. Abandoned in hospitals.
4. Whose primary nighttime residence is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings.
6. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations or similar settings.
8. Living as migratory children in conditions described in previous examples.
9. Living as run-away children.
10. Abandoned or forced out of homes by parents/guardians or caretakers.
11. Living as school-aged parents in houses for parents if they have no other living accommodations.

School of origin is defined as the school the student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled, including pre-school. When the student completes the final grade level served by the school of origin, the school of origin shall include the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools.

Unaccompanied youth is defined as a homeless child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

Enrollment/Placement:

To the extent feasible and, in accordance with the student's best interest, a homeless student shall continue to be enrolled in his or her school of origin while he or she remains homeless or until the end of the academic year in which he or she obtains permanent housing.

Parents/Guardians of a homeless student may request enrollment in the school in the attendance area where the student is actually living or other schools. If a student is unaccompanied by a parent/guardian, the district liaison will assist the student with placement and enrollment decisions and give priority to the views of the student in determining where he or she will be enrolled.

If after such consideration, the district determines that it is not in the student's best interest to

attend the school of origin or the school requested by the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth, the district shall provide the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of the reasons for its determination. The explanation shall be in a manner and form understandable to the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth and shall include information regarding the right to appeal.

The selected school shall immediately enroll the student and begin instruction, even if the student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment pursuant to district policies. However, the district may require a parent/guardian to submit contact information. The district liaison may contact the previous school for oral confirmation of immunizations, and the school shall request records from the previous district, pursuant to Board policy. Homeless families are not required to prove residency regarding school enrollment.

School/Health Records:

The receiving school district may contact the district of origin for oral confirmation that the student has been immunized but must not be a barrier to enrollment. Oral confirmation between professionals is a sufficient basis to verify immunization with written confirmation to follow within thirty (30) days. The instructional program should begin without delay after the enrollment process is initiated and should not be delayed until the procedure is completed. The enrolling district's liaison will assist the parent/guardian/student in obtaining necessary immunizations, or immunization or medical records.

The district will support families with accessibility to health-related resources — not limited to access to a physician, dentist, and other specialty doctors.

The district may assist with transportation for access to medical providers as well as assist with overcoming barriers related to insurance.

Placement/Disputes/Complaints:

If the district is unable to determine the student's grade level due to missing or incomplete records, the district shall administer tests or utilize appropriate means to determine the student's placement.

If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment, the student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. The parent/guardian/student will be provided with a written explanation of the school's decision on the dispute, including the right to appeal. The parent/guardian/student will be referred to the district liaison, who will carry out the state's grievance procedure as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute. In the case of an unaccompanied student, the district liaison shall ensure that the student is immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of the dispute.

If disputes or complaints of noncompliance arise regarding the education of homeless students, the following steps shall be taken:

1. The person filing the complaint shall first contact the school or district through the district liaison, the principal, or Superintendent to present their concerns to the people closest to the situation and, most likely, to be able to resolve it quickly.
2. If Step 1 is not successful or is not possible under the circumstances, contact should be made with the Homeless Project Education Liaison, or the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) will accept complaints directly through the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program.
3. Individual cases may be referred to the PDE's Office of Chief Counsel and the Office of the Deputy Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, as needed, by the State Homeless Coordinator.

PDE will deliver a response within fifteen (15) business days of the receipt of the complaint. The complaint may arrive in the form of a copy of the school district letter or on the Dispute Letter Form, if given directly to a Liaison of the Homeless Initiative.

Education Records:

Information about a homeless student's living situation shall be treated as a student education record subject to the protections of the Family Educational Right and Privacy Act (FERPA) and shall not be deemed to be directory information.

Homeless students shall be provided services comparable to those offered to other district students including, but not limited to: transportation services, school nutrition programs, vocational programs and technical education, preschool programs, programs for students with limited English proficiency, and educational services for which students meet eligibility criteria, such as programs for disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and gifted and talented students.

Transportation:

The district shall provide transportation for homeless students to their school of origin or the school they choose to attend within the school district.

If the school of origin is outside district boundaries or homeless students live in another district but will attend their school of origin in this district, the school districts shall agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs of the transportation.

Transportation Coordinator: Mr. Rich Evans

Fiscal Responsibilities:

The following guidelines will be followed in cases when the education of the student is provided by the district where the homeless student is temporarily living. The guidelines shall also apply in cases when the district of prior attendance, where that is not the district the student attended when permanently housed, will educate the student:

1. Homeless individuals not in facilities (shelters) or institutions, as well as homeless individuals living in hotels, motels, cars, tents, or doubled-up with a resident family, shall be reported and reimbursed as resident students.
2. For homeless individuals in temporary shelters, the educating school district will send a form for the determination of district residence for students in facilities or institutions to the presumed district of residence.
3. If the form is acknowledged by the resident district, the educating district will enter the student on its rolls as a nonresident student from the acknowledging resident school district. The educating district will bill the resident district for tuition and will report membership data according to state child accounting procedures.
4. If the form is disclaimed and a district of residence cannot be determined, the student will be considered a ward of the state. The educating district will enter the student on its rolls as a nonresident ward of the state and will report membership according to state child accounting procedures. The Department of Education will pay tuition to the educating district based on membership reported to child accounting.

In cases when the education of the student is provided by the district of origin, where that is the district, the student attended when permanently housed, the district will continue to educate a homeless student for the period of temporary displacement and should maintain the student on its rolls as a resident student.

In cases when the student becomes permanently housed during the academic year and continues in the school of origin, which is not the district of new residence, the educating district will continue to educate the formerly homeless student on its rolls as a nonresident student.

Training:

Offered by the Coordinator of Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program. The district's liaison shall arrange professional development programs for school staff, including office staff.

School personnel providing services to homeless students, including enrollment staff, shall receive professional development and support to:

1. Improve identification of homeless students.
2. Understand the rights of such children, including requirements for immediate enrollment and transportation, and
3. Heighten the awareness of, and capacity to respond to, the educational needs of such children.

Family Engagement:

Families are a valued member of our community and an essential part of a child's success. Opportunities for participation in school and building sponsored events are communicated in a variety of ways throughout the school year. If you need assistance to participate, please contact your building principal.

Community Partnerships:

The District partners with community agencies to support families through collaboration. Some community partnerships include but are not limited to:

- Fayette County Drug and Alcohol
- Chestnut Ridge Counseling Services
- Private Industry Council
- Connellsville Community Ministries

Academic Supports:

Students have access to numerous academic supports — based on the need of each individual student. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Title 1 services
- Multi-Tiered Intervention Supports
- After School Tutoring
- Credit Recovery

McKinney Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act:

<https://www.education.pa.gov/K12/Homeless%20Education/mckinneyvento/Pages/default.aspx>

HOMEWORK

Assigning homework is an acceptable practice. It becomes an essential part of the total education of the student when it provides the opportunity for the student to practice, apply, integrate, or extend school learning.

KEEPING YOUR SCHOOL CLEAN

We make every effort to keep the school neat and clean. Our students have pride in their school and want pleasant surroundings. Please cooperate by placing debris in the proper containers.

NON-DISCRIMINATION (TITLE IX)

The Board declares it to be the policy of this district to provide an equal opportunity for all students to achieve their maximum potential through the programs offered in the schools without discrimination on the basis of race, color, age, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin or handicap/disability.

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

The district shall provide to all students, without discrimination, course offerings, counseling, assistance, employment, athletics and extracurricular activities. The district shall make reasonable accommodations for identified physical and mental impairments that constitute disabilities, consistent with the requirements of federal and state laws and regulations.

PBIS (STUDENT CONDUCT)

All elementary schools in the Connellsville Area School District, implement a positive behavior system called PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports). This program promotes positive school wide behavior by ensuring that all students are taught the behavioral expectations within the school and on the school bus. Students that need more support in this area will receive major or minor behavior referrals and will work with the teacher, school counselor, and the principal to increase positive behaviors. Major and/or minor behavior referrals may constitute missed recess, lunch or school detention, in-school or out of school suspension. Parent notification and collaboration is part of the PBIS program.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEOTAPES

The instructional staff and TV production students photograph and videotape numerous school activities throughout the school year. Parents who do not wish to have their child photographed or videotaped should notify the principal, in writing, of this request at the beginning of each school year. No other videotaping is permitted, including with the use of cell phone, unless prior permission is given to the student by a teacher or administrator.

PROMOTION AND RETENTION

A student shall be promoted when s/he has successfully completed the curriculum requirements and has achieved the academic standards established for the present level, based on the professional judgement of the teachers and the results of assessments. A student shall earn the right to advance to the next grade by demonstrating mastery of the required skills and knowledge.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SAP)

SAP is a state mandated program set up for students who are experiencing difficulties. These difficulties can range from a personal problem, truancy issues, a drop in grades, to drug/alcohol involvement or depression. The purpose of the program is to refer students to sources of help, to move the problem from the school environment, to allow the student to better concentrate on educational issues, and, in some instances, to reduce the disruption of the educational process for other students. Students may be referred by self, other students, parents, or staff. Additional information can be obtained by calling your child's school.

STUDENT RECORDS

The educational interests of students require the collection, retention, and use of data and information about individuals and groups of students while ensuring the individual's right to privacy. The school district will maintain educational records for students for legitimate educational purposes.

The Board recognizes its responsibility for the collection, retention, disclosure and protection of student records. The Board also recognizes the legal requirement to maintain the confidentiality of student records and prohibits the unauthorized access, reproduction, and/or disclosure of student education records and personally identifiable information from such records.

STUDENT WELLNESS

Connellsville Area School District recognizes that student wellness and proper nutrition are related to students' physical well-being, growth, development, and readiness to learn. The Board is committed to providing a school environment that promotes student wellness, proper nutrition, nutrition education and promotion, and regular physical activity as part of the total learning experience. In a healthy school environment, students will learn about and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices that can improve student achievement.

TELEPHONES

Only emergency messages from the parent/guardian will be taken in the office and conveyed to the student as soon as possible. Students will be allowed to use the office phone to return emergency phone calls.

TITLE I

Title I programs are supplemental instructional services, in the areas of reading and mathematics, which are funded by the Federal Government. Connellsville Area School District is able to provide these programs based on the poverty rate, and the number of students in our district who receive a Free or Reduced Lunch. The purpose of Title I is to improve the academic achievement of the disadvantaged.

TRANSPORTATION AND VIDEOTAPING

The Board authorizes the use of video and audio recording on school buses and school vehicles for disciplinary and security purposes. The Board prohibits the use of audio recording on any school bus or school vehicle that is not being used for a school-related purpose.

BUS/VAN REGULATIONS

Riding a bus/van to school is a privilege that children should enjoy. Concerns about safety and behavior are addressed as needed to maintain a safe situation on the school buses and vans. Children are expected to conduct themselves on buses/vans in an orderly manner. Courtesy toward others and respect for the law and for others is expected. Warnings or suspensions from riding the bus/van will be given to the students by the principal. Bus/van drivers alert the principal if inappropriate behavior occurs. If the unwanted behavior continues, the student may lose the privilege of riding the school bus/van. **A loss of bus privileges does not legally excuse a child from school.** Bus routes will be published in the local paper. All students must report to the designated bus/van stop prior to the pick-up time. In order that we have a definite understanding as to the rules governing students who ride school buses/vans owned and contracted by the Connellsville Area School District, we present you with the following set of regulations.

1. The bus/van driver has the same authority on the bus/van as the teacher has in the classroom and it is the driver's duty personally, to report all misconduct to the principal in charge.

2. Student transportation is a service provided by the Board of School Directors and the State of Pennsylvania. This service can be denied to any student according to policies established by the Connellsville Area School District.
3. Students are only permitted to ride their regularly assigned bus/van to and from school. Students are not permitted to switch buses or stops without approval of the principal, transportation office, and bus line.
4. Students may be denied the privilege of being transported to and from school for the following reasons:
 - a. Using foul language at any time.
 - b. Loud or boisterous noises that could distract the bus/van driver.
 - c. Throwing or shooting objects.
 - d. Smoking while traveling to and from school.
 - e. Marking or destroying any part of the school bus/van will result in suspension plus cost.
 - f. Striking or fighting any member of the traveling group.
 - g. Spitting or throwing any trash on the floor of the bus/van.
 - h. Refusing to sit in the seat assigned by the bus/van driver.
 - i. Pushing or disorderly rushing to the school bus/van while loading or unloading.
 - j. Placing arms or any part of the body outside the windows.
 - k. Throwing objects or materials from the bus/van.
 - l. Failure to remain in seat while the bus/van is in motion.
 - m. Boisterous or annoying yells to the passing public.
 - n. Illegal use of the emergency door.
 - o. Violating the property of others.
 - p. Misconduct at the bus/van stop.
5. Students denied transportation must be present for each school session to prevent them from being marked illegally absent from school and subjecting parents to arrest.
6. The above rules are established for safety and the concern of all children who ride the school buses.
7. The Elementary School Policy concerning bus/van misbehavior will be as follows:
 - a. First Offense - Detention
 - b. Second Offense - 1-day bus/van suspension or detentions.
 - c. Third Offense - 3 day bus/van suspension.
 - d. Fourth Offense - 5 day bus/van suspension.
 - e. Fifth Offense - 10 day bus/van suspension.
 - f. Sixth Offense - bus/van suspension for remainder of year.

*The above are standard discipline measures, but the school principal has the right to adapt these based on the frequency and severity of the action.

*Students may be given assigned seats on the bus/van at any time.

VISITORS

We encourage you to be involved with your child's school. Keep in mind that upon arrival, you will be required to go through security, including a metal detector and a driver's license scanning device (Raptor), sign in, and wear a visitor's pass. If you would like to chaperone field trips and/or work school events, you are required to have the following current clearances on file with the office. These are available online for a fee.

- Child Abuse History Clearance (CY113)
- Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Record Checks for Employment (SPA-164) or Volunteers (SPA-164A)
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Fingerprinting

WEATHER EMERGENCY DRILL

Each year, every building in the District will take part in a weather emergency drill that is run in conjunction with PA Emergency Management Services. During this drill, students will be instructed on where they should go and what they should do in the event of a weather-related emergency. The emphasis of this drill is to relocate students to areas in the building that are in the closest proximity to their current class that removes them from dangerous areas such as windows, doors, etc.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

How to Access Special Education Services

- Parents, guardians, teachers and counselors may refer students experiencing difficulties to the principal at the elementary level or to the Student Assistance Program (SAP) at the secondary level for instructional support team assistance.
- Classroom interventions will be initiated.
- Assessment data will be collected and reviewed with the parent and building level team.
- A multidisciplinary team (MDT), which includes the parent, will collect information about the student, write an evaluative report (ER) and determine if the child has a disability and is in need of special education.
- An Individualized Education Program (IEP) team develops an educational plan and determines the services needed to address the student's needs.

Special Education and Your Rights

- Under Pennsylvania and federal law, a child with a disability has a right to special education and related services that are provided:
 - At public expense
 - Under public supervision
 - Without charge
- To conform to the Individual Education Program (IEP) and must receive a free and appropriate public education and related services.
- Recommendations will be made for additional classroom interventions or referral for a formal evaluation.
- Written parental permission is required for a formal evaluation.
- A Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP) is signed by the parent to grant permission to implement the IEP.

Special Education- Continuation of Services

The Connellsville Area School District will provide or access a complete continuum of services for all

children with disabilities. A child with a disability is evaluated and identified according to Federal and State

Regulations as found in IDEA '2004 and Chapter 14:

- Autism means a developmental disability affecting communication and social interaction.
- Deaf-blindness means a hearing and visual impairment.
- Deafness means a hearing impairment.
- Emotional Disturbance means having emotional concerns (depression, unnatural fears, acting out) displayed over a long period of time.
- Hearing Impairment means permanent or fluctuating hearing difficulties.
- Intellectual Disabilities means sub-average intellectual functioning.
- Multiple Disabilities means two or more impairments found in this list.
- Orthopedic Impairment means a physical condition that affects a child's educational progress.
- Specific Learning Disability means one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding are impaired.
- Other Health Impairments include limited strength, vitality or alertness (or heightened alertness) that affects a child's performance.

- Speech or Language Impairment means a communication disorder and/or voice impairment.
- Traumatic Brain Injury is an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force.
- Visual Impairment including Blindness means an impairment in vision (even with correction) that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Due Process and Parental Rights

- If you do not believe that your child's education program is working, you can request an IEP meeting to discuss changing your child's services. Whenever a change in your child's program is proposed, you will be notified and informed of your rights in writing and you will be given the opportunity to agree or disagree with the proposed placement.
- You will receive a Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP) from the school district and you may approve or disapprove of the proposed placement. There are procedures to follow to ensure that your rights are protected. There is a process in place to help resolve differences of opinion concerning program or placement and related services.

VALUABLES

Students are not to bring large amounts of money or valuable merchandise, such as cameras, cell phones, electronic devices, leather jackets, toys, etc. to school. If a student wears glasses or jewelry, he/she is to keep track of them at all times. Students are responsible for personal property. **Please mark all of your child's belongings, jackets and book bags in particular, with a permanent marker.** No toys or items from home are permitted into the building unless for a project that has been cleared by the teacher.



Parent/Guardian/Student Handbook Sign Off

We have received a copy of the Connellsville Area School District Elementary Student Handbook for the 2026-2027 school year. We understand that we are responsible for the content, rules, and policies contained herein and must abide by them when involved in any activity or event related to the Connellsville Area School District.

Student name: _____ Teacher: _____

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date