KARNS CITY AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HANDBOOK 2026-2027



BE SAFE

BE RESPECTFUL

BE RESPONSIBLE

BE PRODUCTIVE

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Welcome to the Karns City Area Elementary School

This handbook has been developed to help familiarize parents and students with the policies and procedures of our school district. We invite you to visit our schools so that you may develop a working, cooperative relationship with your child's teachers.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Karns City Area School District is to provide a quality education while fostering an environment of inclusivity, compassion, accountability, and mentorship throughout the community.

Hours of Operation

Student Hours
8:50-3:25

Staff Hours
8:00-3:40

To ensure the safety of our students, visitors to our schools are required to first stop in the school office to sign in. Your cooperation is appreciated.

I. Staff and Administration KCASD

Superintendent……..……Dr. Eric Ritzert
Director of Business Affairs……...Mr. Evan McGarvey
Director of Special Education……...Mrs. Jennifer Jamison
Director of Transportation……..Mr. Jeff Wagner

Karns City Area Elementary School

Administrative Assistants…….Mrs. Chelsy Stimac & Mrs. Sara Ellenberger
Counselors…….……...Mrs. Melissa Hogan & Ms. Marci Creel
Assistant Principal……Mr. Jeff Wagner
Principal……Mr. Shane Spack

Karns City Area Elementary Faculty

Mrs. Michelle Craig	Kindergarten	Ms. April McMillen	Grade 3
Ms. Emma Dupe	Kindergarten	Mrs. Carrie Wilson	Grade 3
Mrs. Brooke Salerno	Kindergarten	Mrs. Christine Rice	Grade 3
Mrs. Bethany Stewart	Kindergarten	Mrs. Jennifer Hammonds	Grade 4
Mrs. Alissa Atwood	Grade 1	Mrs. Dacey Mealey	Grade 4
Mrs. Angela Fritch	Grade 1	Mrs. Julie Maurer	Grade 4
Mrs. Carol Hutchison	Grade 1	Mr. Nick Stockert	Grade 4
Mrs. Kim Wimer	Grade 1	Mrs. Isabella Kemmer	Grade 5
Mrs. Alison Perry	Grade 2	Ms. Emily Schnell	Grade 5
Mrs. Heather Ferguson	Grade 2	Mrs. Laisa Seidler	Grade 5
Mrs. Kylee Smith	Grade 2	Mrs. Mary Twentier	Grade 5
Mrs. Katie Wagner	Grade 2	Mrs. Danette Hebenthal	Grade 6
Ms. Nicole McCall	Grade 3	Mrs. Michele King	Grade 6

Mr. Mark Jones	Grade 6	Mr. Robert Carson	Phys. Ed.
Mr. Travis Twentier	Grade 6	Mrs. Whitney Grabowski	Librarian
Mrs. Christine Spencer	Title I Reading	Ms. Chelsea Grubbs	Art
Mrs. Jennifer Baron	Learning Support		
Mrs. Kylene Baum	Learning Support		
Mrs. Stacy DeBacco	Learning Support		
Mrs. Kelly Sadowski	Emotional Support		
Ms. Carolyn Kelly	Autistic Support		
Mrs. Grace Burkhardt	Speech & Language		
Mrs. Traci Joseph	Speech & Language		
Mrs. Carley Serafine	Life Skills		
Mrs. Dominique Masilela	Technology		
Ms. Kayla Karenbauer	Music/Band		

Itinerant Elementary Faculty

Mrs. Jennifer Aglio, RN, BSN, CSN…….School Nurse

Mr. Terry McKrell……..Gifted

II. Attendance and Dismissal

A. Attendance

Regular and punctual attendance at school is essential for students to make a success of his/her school career. The goal of the Karns City Area School District curriculum is to develop well-adjusted citizens who can take their proper place in society. Students who develop poor attendance habits may be causing themselves problems that will affect their lives for many years.

The school day for elementary students in the Karns City Area School District will begin at 8:50 AM and end at 3:25 PM. Students must be in their homerooms and seated at 8:50 AM. Students who eat breakfast at school should report directly to the cafeteria when arriving at school.

The laws governing school attendance are explicit and are to be strictly followed. Students are either legally absent (excused) or illegally absent (unexcused):

B. Types of Absences

1. Excused Absence (legal):
    A. Death in the immediate family (parent/guardian, sibling, grandparent, or other with prior prior approval)
    B. Emergency medical or dental attention
    C. Impassable roads as determined by the director of transportation
    D. Illness/injury verified by a medical doctor's excuse or a parental note **Note: After 10 parental/guardian notes, the district may require the parent/guardian to verify each future illness/injury with a specific written excuse from a doctor. If a doctor's excuse is not presented upon return to school after this notification, the days will be considered illegal.**
    E. Inclement weather
    F. Religious event
    G. Educational tour (2 week maximum; must be pre-approved by the building principal)
    H. Family emergency (1 permitted)
2. Unexcused Absence (illegal):
    A. All absences not covered under "Excused Absence" (listed above), will be unexcused.
    When a student is absent, a written excuse is required when the child returns to school. The parent or guardian should complete the excuse by naming the child, stating the reason for the absence, the date of the absence, sign it, and return it immediately to the homeroom teacher via the child. **All unexcused absences are considered illegal absences**. If an excuse is **not** received within three (3) school days after the student returns to school, the absence will be marked illegal.

C. Enforcement and Legal Procedures for Unexcused Absences

1. Per Pennsylvania State Law, students 15 years of age or younger are considered **TRUANT** if they have accumulated 3 or more unexcused absences.
    A. When a third illegal absence is recorded for a student, the parent/guardian will be required to schedule a truancy elimination hearing with the principal.

B. Additionally, a letter will address the fact that all subsequent absences may result in a citation being filed against the parent/guardian in a magisterial district court if the student is deemed habitually truant.

2. Per Pennsylvania State Law, students 15 years of age or younger are considered **HABITUALLY TRUANT** once they have accumulated 6 or more days of unexcused absences.

A. A student who is habitually truant will be referred to a school or community based attendance improvement program, a county children and youth agency, and/or the magistrate.

3. If the office receives prior notification from a parent/guardian that a student will be out of school with an unexcused/illegal absence, it is possible that the student may not be considered truant; in which case, the penalties for truancy described above, may be waived (Note: attendance record and grades of requesting student will be the determining factors in any such decision).

4. Students with 19 days or more absences may face retention in their current grade.

D. Classification of Absences

1. Full-Day Attendance – 8:50 AM to 3:25 PM
2. Tardy – Late arrival between 8:51 AM and 10:00 AM
3. Half-Day Absence (Morning) – Late arrival between 10:01 AM and 12:00 (noon)
4. Half-Day Absence (Afternoon) – Dismissal between 12:01 and 2:30 PM
5. Early Dismissal – 2:31 PM to 3:24 PM (See Below*)

E. Late Entry and Early Dismissal

It may be necessary for students to arrive late or leave school early from time to time. When a parent expects to pick up their child, the district requires that a note be sent to school with the child, identifying who will pick up the child. The note must be given to the child's teacher at the beginning of the day, so that a list of students and adults responsible for pick-up can be maintained in the office.

At the time of pick-up, the adult will sign for the student in the office as currently practiced. Photo identification is required for a student to be released to an adult. In the event a note is not sent in advance, a telephone call may be made to the office so that office security is aware.

F. Parent Pick-Up/Drop-Off Procedures

Parent pick-up will be scheduled as follows:

1. Karns City Area Elementary school at the main entrance at 3:35 PM

Administration and Security ask that you access parent pick up through the main office entrance loop. Parents can remain in your vehicle and pull up to the main entrance of the school to pick up their child.. The purpose of this procedure is to help minimize disruptions at the conclusion of the school day. *All school buses will be dismissed first and then parent pick up will commence after the busing departure.*

If parents arrive too early for pickup, you will be staged in the parking lot off of Pine/Spring Street. (Early entry is permitted if a parent/guardian needs to pick up their child early for an appointment).

If your child arrives at school after 8:50 AM, you will need to send an excuse indicating the reason for the tardiness. To avoid being marked absent, ALL students are to be in their Homeroom classrooms by

8:50 AM. School time missed due to chronic tardiness to school without written legal excuses may be accumulated and converted to an equivalent number of days of unexcused absence.

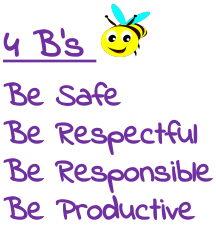
III. School-Wide Positive Behavior Support Program (SWPBIS)

A. Program - School Wide Positive Behavior Interventions & Support Program

School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (SWPBIS) is a proactive approach based on a three-tiered model of prevention and intervention aimed at creating safe and effective schools. Emphasis is placed on teaching and reinforcing important social skills and data-based problem-solving to address existing behavioral concerns. SWPBIS is being implemented in thousands of schools across the country and has been demonstrated to reduce discipline problems and increase time for instruction. In the past, school-wide discipline has focused mainly on reacting to specific student misbehavior by implementing punishment-based strategies including reprimands, loss of privileges, office referrals, suspensions, and expulsions. Research has shown that the implementation of punishment, especially when it is used inconsistently and in the absence of other positive strategies, is ineffective and can lead to increases in problem behaviors. School-wide positive behavior support provides an alternative approach to punishment that focuses on the prevention of problem behavior by teaching and reinforcing students' social skills.

Our elementary school has focused on four behavioral expectations that are positively stated and easy to remember. In other words, rather than telling students what not to do, we will focus on the preferred behaviors. They are listed as follows:



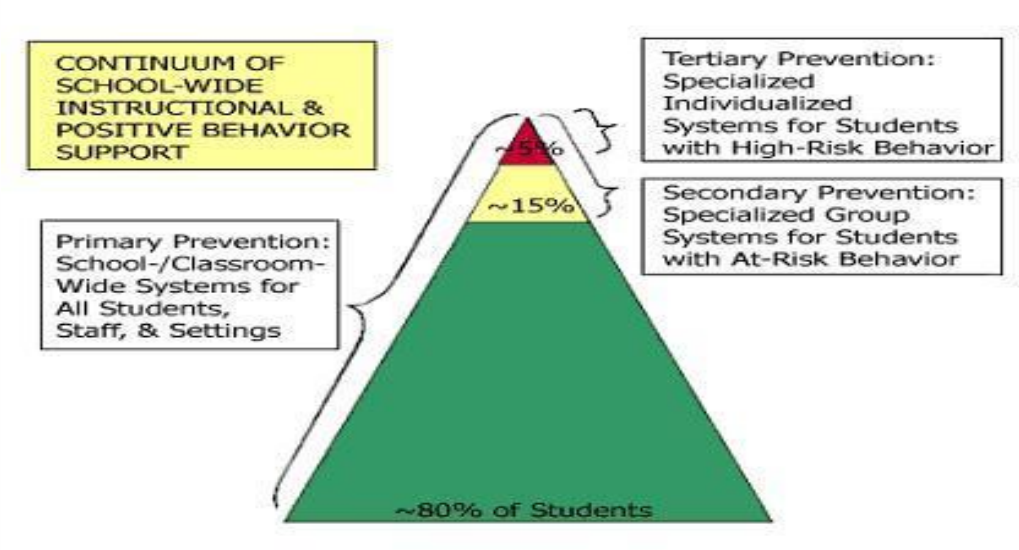


B. Additional features of school-wide positive behavior support (SWPBIS) include:

- Implementation efforts addressing both social and academic behavior
- Matrix of expected behaviors in all settings
- An emphasis on the prevention of problem behaviors through proactive reinforcement of expected appropriate positive behaviors
- Lesson plans that teach expected behaviors
- A three-tiered continuum of behavior support practices that increase in intensity based on student needs
- Team-based problem-solving across the school building
- Use of data for decision-making.

In schools, primary prevention strategies are implemented across school settings and for all students within the building. The goal is to create a positive social culture in which prosocial behaviors are

explicitly taught and reinforced, and all adults respond to the occurrence of problem behavior in a consistent manner. Secondary prevention is intended to support students at risk of engaging in more serious problem behavior. Strategies for secondary prevention address a child's needs before more intensive individualized supports are necessary. A smaller number of students require more individualized and intensive plans than primary and secondary prevention practices provide. At the tertiary prevention level, individualized and comprehensive plans address the unique needs of children who engage in serious problem behaviors.



Planning teams, an essential part of the success of SWPBIS efforts, consist of representatives from all areas of the school and community (e.g., general education, special education, administration, special services, family members, mental health, etc.). The role of the planning team is to bring information to the entire faculty that, over time, will become part of an action plan for implementing SWPBIS. The action plan is developed based upon a self-assessment of the school's strengths and needs. Data gathered during a self-assessment often include faculty, student, and community feedback, office referral data, suspension and expulsion data, direct observation data of students, along with measures of SWPBS implementation, academic outcomes, school safety, and climate measures. These data help schools make effective decisions and build on existing school strengths. SWPBS is a multi-year commitment that becomes a natural part of the school improvement process.

IV. Karns City Area Elementary Schools Code of Conduct/Discipline

A. Student Discipline and Conduct Code

Maintaining discipline is the prime responsibility of the district's professional staff, both individually and collectively. Effective teaching and learning have the best chance to succeed when a safe and orderly atmosphere is established. Developing a sense of pride and respect for the entire school setting are important goals in establishing an orderly environment in which learning can be the first priority. The intent of the discipline policy is to create a safe and orderly environment, and to encourage responsibility, which involves students, staff, and parents. Our goal is to foster an atmosphere of mutual respect, responsible actions, and courteous behavior in order to enable students to reach their highest potentials.

Discipline is most effective when it deals directly with the problem at the time and place it occurs and in a way that is viewed as fair and impartial by the student. Therefore, before seeking outside assistance,

teachers will first use all their resources to create a change of behavior in the classroom. When the teacher has made every effort to bring about positive behavioral change and has been unsuccessful the student will be referred to the principal, who will decide what further action will be taken. The student may also be referred to the Student Assistance Program (SAP) process to address behavioral, social, or academic issues.

Depending upon the nature of the situation, it is the school's desire that student discipline be progressive. A student's first violation may merit a lighter penalty than subsequent violations.

The Conduct Code is designed to ensure consistent, effective discipline. Discipline is training that results in self-control, orderly conduct, and acceptance of authority. Discipline is essential to an excellent educational program, and it is a responsibility to be shared by students, parents/guardians, and school personnel. The goal is to create and maintain a school environment conducive to learning. Most of the provisions of the Conduct Code apply to action taken when a student has been sent to the office by a teacher. The Code does not address preliminary teacher disciplinary actions before sending the student to the office. Authority: The PA School Code (Section 1317) recognizes that teachers are authorized to reprimand or correct students in the classroom, halls, and on any other school property.

Any item not addressed in the conduct code or in any other section of the student handbook will be at the discretion of the administration.

B. Bullying

Bullying means an intentional electronic (including cyberbullying), written, verbal or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in a school setting, that is severe, persistent or pervasive and has the effect of doing any of the following:

1. Substantial interference with a student's education.
2. Creation of a threatening environment.
3. Substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school.

The Board prohibits all forms of bullying by district students and encourages students who have been bullied to promptly report such incidents to the building principal or designee.

C. Strategy Statement - Code of Conduct/Discipline

We recognize violence as any word, look, sign, or act that hurts a person's body, feelings, or things. We also recognize bullying as a type of violence that occurs when someone uses his or her power unfairly and repeatedly to hurt someone else. To make our school violence-free and safe from bullying, we pledge:

- *Not to tolerate bullying.*
- *To intervene in incidents of bullying and strictly enforce rules against bullying.*
- *To empower students to report bullying behavior and to treat one another with respect.*

D. Consequence Plan

1. **STAFF RESPONSES TO BULLYING**:
   a. **First incident:** Intervene. Identify the behavior as bullying. State your expectation that the student will not engage in bullying behavior. Get a verbal promise that the student agrees to refrain from bullying. Document the incident.

b. **Second incident:** Intervene. Identify the behavior as bullying. State your expectation that the student will not engage in bullying behavior. Restrict the student's activities in the location in which the incident occurred for a reasonable period of time. (For example, for one week, the student cannot use the restroom when other students are in it and must sit out during recess for two days.) Document the incident.
c. **Third incident:** Intervene. Identify the behavior as bullying. State your expectation that the student will not engage in bullying behavior. Contact the student's family. Assign the student the "4B's Think About It Worksheet." Document the incident.
d. **Fourth incident:** Intervene. Identify the behavior as bullying. State your expectation that the student will not engage in bullying behavior. Document the incident and send the student to the administrative office for administrative response.

2. **ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSES TO BULLYING:**
   a. **Response to First Administrative Referral:** Arrange a phone conference with the student's family. Clarify expectations for student behavior. Assign to a support group through the school counselor's office and/or possible withdrawal of privileges.
   b. **Response to Second Administrative Referral:** Arrange a phone conference with the student's family. Withdrawal of privileges or assign in-school suspension.
   c. **Response to Third Administrative Referral:** Arrange a face to face conference with the student's family. Assign one to three day out of school suspension.
   d. **Response to Fourth Administrative Referral:** Assign possible three to ten day out of school suspension pending an informal hearing.

As a part of the *PBIS 4B's & Positive Action Programs*, your child will be involved in a series of lessons designed to help him or her

- Define bullying and understand what behaviors are considered bullying.
- Understand the effect of bullying behaviors and develop empathy for targeted students.
- Learn ways to respond to bullying behavior.
- Learn when and how to report bullying.
- Learn the consequences the school has established for engaging in bullying behavior.

The overall goal of the *PBIS 4B's and Positive Action Program* is to empower students to report bullying behaviors and to give school staff the tools to recognize, intervene, and issue consequences for bullying behaviors that they witness or hear about from students. Students who bully will not be punished for their behavior; rather, they will receive appropriate consequences to help them realize that bullying behavior isn't appropriate and won't be tolerated at school.

E. Consequences for Misconduct

1. **Conference with Principal/Verbal Reprimand**
   a. A conference is a formal meeting held between the student and Principal. A conference occurs when a student has exhibited inappropriate behavior.
   b. During a conference, the student must agree to correct his or her behavior.
   c. This meeting is documented.
2. **Parental Notification/Involvement**
   a. Parent/Guardian is notified by a phone call and/or letter to inform the parent/guardian of the student's behavior.

3. **Conference with Parent/Guardian**
   a. A parental/guardian conference is a formal meeting held between the parent/guardian and Principal.
   b. This conference may or may not include the student.
4. **Withdrawal of Privileges**
   a. The withdrawal of privileges is the loss of non-curricular school privileges for a period of time (usually one to ten days).
   b. Examples of privileges: recess, class parties, the cafeteria, special events, etc.
5. **In-School Suspension (ISS)**
   a. ISS is suspending a student from classes under supervision within the school.
   b. Prior to ISS the student will be informed of the reason(s) and given an opportunity to respond.
   c. The student's parent/guardian will be notified of the date(s).
   d. Students assigned ISS may not participate in or attend extracurricular activities during the period of suspension, which may include weekend events.
   e. During ISS, teachers will furnish assignments, which must be completed, and ready on the day suspended students return to classes. For tests, quizzes, and all graded work that cannot be completed during ISS, students will need to make up work no later than the first day back in class.
6. **Out-of-School Suspension (OSS)**
   a. OSS is suspending a student from classes and excluding the student from school property. The student is under the supervision of the parent/guardian and must remain at home during regular school hours.
   b. Prior to OSS the student will be informed of the reason(s) and given an opportunity to respond.
   c. The parent/guardian will be notified by phone and in writing of the suspension.
   d. In some instances the parent/guardian may need to accompany the student to school for an informal hearing with the Principal before the student will be readmitted.
   e. Students assigned OSS may not participate in or attend any extracurricular activities during the period of suspension, which may include weekend events.
   f. During OSS, teachers will furnish assignments if possible. For tests, quizzes, and all graded work, OSS students will have one make-up day granted for each day of suspension, up to a maximum of ten days.
7. **Expulsion**
   a. Expulsion is excluding a student from school for more than ten consecutive days.
   b. Expulsion may be recommended by the Principal, but requires School Board approval.
   c. Expulsion requires a formal hearing before members of the School Board. Appropriate notices and information to which students and parents are entitled will be furnished. Students have the right to legal counsel for a formal hearing.
   d. Expulsion may be permanent exclusion from school.

F. Level I - Misconduct

Normal progression for Level I offenses: Warning, Parental Conference, Withdrawal of Privileges (lunch detention, after school detention or timeout from recess), and possible suspension. Administrative discretion may apply.

Offense	First Offense Penalty	Second Offense Penalty	Third Offense Penalty
Use of electronic devices without permission during school hours.	Warning	Parental Conference	Withdrawal of Privileges (confiscation)
Behaving in a disruptive manner on school property (loud, disruptive, talkative)	Warning	Parental Conference	Withdrawal of Privileges
Eating/Drinking outside of the cafeteria without permission.	Warning	Parental Conference	Withdrawal of Privileges
Failing to return school-loaned equipment, books or other material (plus fine)	Warning	Parental Conference	Withdrawal of Privileges
Failing to return required forms	Warning	Parental Conference	Withdrawal of Privileges
Littering on school property	Warning (pick up)	Parental Conference (pick up)	Withdrawal of Privileges (pick up)
Loitering on school property	Warning	Parental Conference	Withdrawal of Privileges
Running in the hallways	Warning	Parental Conference	Withdrawal of Privileges
Using school-owned property without authorization	Warning	Parental Conference	Withdrawal of Privileges
Being in an unassigned area without authorization	Warning	Parental Conference	Withdrawal of Privileges
Being late to class	Warning	Parental Conference	Withdrawal of Privileges
Harassing others verbally	Warning	ISS	ISS or OSS
Displaying affection inappropriately (kissing, holding hands, etc.)	Warning	Parental Conference	ISS
Behaving in a disorderly manner on a school bus	Warning	Parental Conference	Bus Suspension
Spitting within the school building	Warning	Parental Conference	ISS
Violating the dress code, which includes violations while on field trips and other school functions (students will not be permitted to attend class or school function	Warning; student changes; if a student refuses to change, they must	Parental Conference	ISS

until proper attire is brought to the school)	await a change of clothes and will remain in the office		
Bringing non-essential items (i.e., toys, balls, stuffed animals, etc) that interfere with class or the school day	Warning	Parental Conference	Withdrawal of Privileges
Failure to sign out of class	Warning	Parental Conference	Withdrawal of Privileges

Level I Misconduct -- Attendance

Offense	Penalty
3 illegal absences (truant)	The student and their parents will be required to schedule a truancy elimination hearing with the principal.
6 illegal absences (habitually truant)	After 6 illegal absences, a student is considered habitually truant and will be referred to a school or community-based attendance improvement program, a county children and youth agency, and/or the district magistrate; the student forfeits the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities, prom, homecoming, assemblies, and other school-related events.

G. Level II – Misconduct

Normal progression for Level II offenses: Withdrawal of Privileges (1 week) , In-School Suspension(s), Out-of-School Suspension, And/or no admittance to after-school activities, Citations. Administrative discretion may apply.

Offense	First Offense Penalty	Second Offense Penalty	Third Offense Penalty
Extreme or repeated level I offense	Withdrawal of Privileges	ISS	OSS
Lying, copying work, or cheating	Zero for grade	Zero for grade; ISS	Zero for grade; OSS
Cutting class or leaving school without permission	Withdrawal of Privileges	ISS	OSS
Defacing or damaging school property	Withdrawal of Privileges; restitution	ISS; restitution	OSS; restitution
Fighting	Up to a 10-day Suspension and Referral to the District Magistrate and possibly PA State Police Contact		
Using forged or falsifying notes/excuses	Withdrawal of Privileges	ISS	OSS
Being insubordinate, disrespectful in speech or	Withdrawal of	ISS	OSS

actions, or openly defiant of authority	Privileges		
Smoking or possessing tobacco and/or e-cigarettes, vape pens, etc.	Smokeless Saturday Referral	Withdrawal of Privileges, Smokeless Saturday Referral, Referral to Magistrate	OSS, Smokeless Saturday Referral, Referral to Magistrate
Using profanities or obscenities	Withdrawal of Privileges	ISS	OSS
Threatening, intimidating, harassing, or harming fellow students (potential suspension)	Withdrawal of Privileges or potential suspension (death threats, suicidal provocation, sexual harassment)	ISS or potential suspension (death threats, suicidal provocation, sexual harassment)	OSS (death threats, suicidal provocation, sexual harassment)
Stealing/Gambling	Withdrawal of Privileges and Restitution	ISS and Restitution	OSS and Restitution
Possessing or lighting matches, lighters, or in any way setting anything on fire (potential referral to district magistrate)	Withdrawal of Privileges, potential ISS, or potential OSS	Withdrawal of Privileges, potential ISS, or potential OSS	Withdrawal of Privileges, potential ISS, or potential OSS
Physically injuring a fellow student (other than in a fight)	Withdrawal of Privileges	ISS	OSS
Spitting on another individual	Withdrawal of Privileges	ISS	OSS
Snowballing or throwing other objects	Withdrawal of Privileges	ISS	OSS
Computer network hacking or downloading inappropriate material (potential suspension)	Withdrawal of Privileges or Potential Suspension; Potential Loss of Technology Privileges; Potential Law Enforcement Contact	ISS or Potential Suspension; Potential Loss of Technology Privileges; Potential Law Enforcement Contact	OSS; Potential Loss of Technology Privileges; Potential Law Enforcement Contact

H. Level III – Misconduct

Normal progression for Level III offenses: up to 10 Days Out-of-School Suspension, Expulsion. And/or no admittance to after-school activities, citations. Administrative discretion may apply.

1. Extreme or repeated Level I or Level II misconduct
2. Arson
3. Assault and battery
4. Disorderly conduct
5. Extortion or attempted extortion
6. Indecent exposure or lewdness
7. Leading or participating in a riot at school
8. Possession or use of firearms, lasers, explosive devices, or other weapons
9. Possession, use, sale, or transfer of drugs or alcoholic beverages
10. Threatening phone calls or bomb scares
11. Threatening or intimidating teachers or any other school personnel
12. Unauthorized use of school fire alarm system
13. Vandalism

I. Weapons and Dangerous Instruments

Any student found in possession of or transporting a weapon during school hours or activities on school property, regardless of intent, will immediately be reported to the local police, scheduled for an informal hearing, cited for (10) day out-of-school suspension, and be presented to the School Board for formal expulsion hearing proceedings in accordance with the PA School Code. (The PA School Code requires that the school district shall expel, for a period of not less than a year, any student who brings a weapon onto any school property, any school sponsored activity, or in any vehicle providing transportation to a school or school sponsored activity.)

The term weapon refers to any loaded or unloaded firearm (including pellet guns, BB guns, and look-alike firearms); explosive devices of any kind; any knife; flammable, noxious, irritating, or poisonous substances; any other tool or instrument which is capable of inflicting injury and is not reasonable to education; or any toy-like weapon or instrument. (Please note: All sharp instruments required for any classroom activity will be provided by the teacher and will be collected and kept by the teacher after each use.)

A student is in possession of an illegal and/or banned item(s) under this section when such item(s) is found on the person of the student, in his/her locker/desk, or automobile while it is on school property, or under his/her control while he/she is at any school function or activity, or any school event held away from the school or while the student is on his/her way to or from school.

Any professional staff member or school employee who knows of or has reasonable suspicion of a weapon in a student's possession shall immediately inform the principal who will conduct the complete investigation.

Upon just cause for suspicion of possession of a weapon, the building administrator will request the student to volunteer to be searched by a school official (in the presence of a witness). If the student resists being searched, the administrator will immediately summon the police and request assistance in this

matter. Parent/guardian will be notified as soon as possible. Upon confiscation of the weapon, the building administrator must notify and/or summon:

1. The local police
2. The Superintendent
3. The parent(s)/guardian(s) of any and all students involved in the incident
4. School notification to parents and staff

Depending on the seriousness of the offense, the building administrator will collaborate with the Superintendent to develop a public statement as well as to determine the most effective method for informing school personnel. The Superintendent will inform Board Members as soon as measures have been taken to eliminate any immediate danger associated with the incident.

The principal will coordinate the informal hearing procedure (e.g., investigation, securing written statement, witness statements and anecdotal records substantiating the charges of possession, transmitting and/or transporting a weapon, the informative and notification requirements for a formal hearing for expulsion proceedings in accordance with PA School Code, with the assistance of the Superintendent and Coordinator of Pupil Services).

J. Harassment and Fighting

Harassment of any kind, including sexual harassment and/or threats, is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, engaging in any action or written or spoken language which is intimidating, hostile, offensive, or threatening as well as any requests for sexual favors, physical conduct of a sexual nature or inappropriate references to physical or sexual characteristics.

The principal will enforce disciplinary action against any student who harasses another student. Depending on the severity and/or duration of the offense the matter may be referred to the Superintendent and the School Board for expulsion proceedings.

Fighting - Fighting in school, on school property or on the school bus is prohibited. Any student who is involved in a fight will be suspended from school and charges may be filed with the state police. Depending on the frequency or seriousness of the offense, a Board hearing for expulsion may occur.

K. Smoking, Drugs and Alcohol

Smoking - The use or possession of all types of tobacco products by students, staff, or visitors is prohibited in all school buildings. Students are also prohibited from the use or possession of tobacco products on school grounds and on school buses. In compliance with state law, the school district will file charges with the magistrate if any student is found using or in possession of any tobacco product.

Drugs and Alcohol - The use or possession of all drugs and alcohol and/or look-a-like products is prohibited in all school buildings and on school grounds. Disciplinary measures and legal action will be taken for any violation of this policy.

L. Student Dress

In October of 1975, the Secretary of Education's Office saw fit to issue a treatise entitled, Students Rights and Responsibilities. The matter of student dress cannot be flippantly discarded as something that neither needs nor is worthy of our attention. While the Department of Education states a student may dress to suit himself in regards to style, fashion, taste or appearance, it also states in another section of the bulletin that students have a responsibility to dress and conduct themselves in a manner not to interfere with the orderly operation of the school. Elementary students are expected to adhere to the district dress code.

1. **Student Dress Code**

   The faculty, administration, school board, and community recognize the need for students to be guided by three basic principles in regard to clothing, accessories, makeup and hairstyles.

   a. Is it hazardous to health or safety?
   b. Does it disrupt the educational process?
   c. Is it offensive to community standards?

   Explanations and examples of hazards, disruptions, and offenses against community standards appear here. These explanations and examples are not meant to be all-inclusive, but instead to be representative of a typical problem.

2. **Hazards/Safety**
   a. Loose clothing or shoe laces touching or dragging on the floor
   b. Clothing, accessories, hairstyles, earrings that could create conditions hazardous to other students or to the wearer (excessively long, wide, or low-riding pants, accessories with sharp edges or points, wallet/belt chains, unclean clothing or hair, etc.)
   c. Backpacks are permitted to be carried to and from school only. Backpacks are not to be carried during the school day.
3. **Disruptions**
   a. Clothing so revealing that it calls undue attention to the wearer and disrupts the educational process:
      1) Tight fitting or transparent garments (spandex, lycra)
      2) Garments exposing the midriff, chest, or undergarments (halter tops, tank tops, miniskirts, etc.)
      3) Makeup, face paint, hair coloring, tattoos, stick-ons, earrings, body piercing other than earrings, etc. as to call undue attention to the wearer and thus disrupt the educational process as determined by the administration.
4. **Offensive**
   a. Clothing or accessories with writing or pictures that are vulgar, profane, or obscene
   b. Clothing or accessories that makes reference to or advertises drugs, alcohol, sex, tobacco, or cults
5. **Special Cases**
   a. Hats may not be worn inside the school building. This applies to both boys and girls. Headscarves, bandanas, headbands, hoods, or any other apparel that covers the head are not to be worn in the building during regular school hours. Hair fasteners may be worn unless they are hazardous, disruptive or offensive. Religious exemptions may apply.
   b. Proper length of shorts or skirts should be minimum mid-thigh in a standing position. Shorts may not have frayed bottoms, be slit, or in any other manner be so fashioned as to be revealing or offensive.

c. Shirts must have sleeves. (Shirts with wide shoulders and are tight fitting around the arm holes are acceptable. Tank tops and spaghetti straps are not permitted.)
d. Students wearing questionable clothing will be reminded by their teacher the first time. The second time, they are to be sent to the office.

M. School Bus Safety Behavior

Students in the Karns City Area School District are expected to conduct themselves appropriately at all times. This includes riding to and from school on the bus. Inappropriate behavior on the bus creates a dangerous situation for students and the driver. Parents should pay close attention to the dress code to make sure straps, loose fitting clothing and inappropriate shoes do not pose a hazard on the bus. Accidents such as straps hitting other children or students tripping getting on and off the bus can be easily avoided. Students who repeatedly misbehave on the bus, risk losing their riding privileges.

Students should be reminded there is to be no eating or drinking while on the bus.

N. Bus Notes Procedure

School Bus Transportation Procedures:

The Karns City Area School District recognizes constraints placed on working families, and for that reason will consider written requests for an individual child care stop. The alternative request should be accompanied by a one month calendar and must be submitted and have prior approval from the Transportation Director. Once the schedule is submitted and approved, it should only be changed when there is an emergency. In order for our dismissal process to be efficient, we need parents to support the school by clearly communicating and consistently submitting your calendars.

O. Student Property at School & Student Visitors

Student Property

The district shall not be liable for the loss, damage or misuse of any electronic device or property brought to school by a student.

Student Visitors

Each year we receive requests from students as well as parents to have visitors attend class in our school (such as a friend or cousin). Students are not permitted to bring guests along with them to school.

V. Curriculum and Grading

All elementary schools in the district use the same curriculum and textbooks. Your children will be afforded many educational opportunities. The elementary curriculum guide can be accessed through the ***Karns City web site @ www.kcasdk12.org*** If you have any specific questions concerning the curriculum, please contact the building principal.

A. Technology

The Karns City Area School District is committed to providing the most up-to-date technology program to all students. A certified technology teacher serves each elementary building. Students in grades kindergarten through sixth grade receive formal instruction. All students have been assigned a Chromebook for their use throughout the school year.

Every student is required to sign an Internet policy when they register. This policy is in effect throughout the child's elementary school years. It is important that students remember and follow the guidelines outlined in the policy. Misuse of the Internet, or their Chromebook in general, could result in losing the privilege to use these tools.

B. Report Cards

Parents can access grades through the Infinite Campus Parent Portal. Grades on the Infinite Campus Portal will be updated regularly with a minimum of two graded assignments posted per week, Math & ELA K-2 and all subjects 3-6. Please encourage your child to do his/her best. If you have any areas of concern, please feel free to discuss with your child's teacher.

C. Grading Guidelines

The following is a brief summation of the present grading system utilized at the elementary level:

In Kindergarten, a performance checklist describing various aspects of the child's social and emotional, as well as cognitive development is used. On the checklist or report card, the respective teachers are to indicate the progress the child has made with the skills listed. The categories are as follows; B - Beginner, D - Developing, and S - Secure.

In grades first through sixth, percentage (%) grades are issued to each student to indicate progress in a particular subject area. The following grades are used with a corresponding letter grade for reporting purposes. Comments may also be added by the teacher to indicate strengths or areas that need to be improved upon.

A *Excellent*	*90-100%*	Outstanding work in the classroom
B *Above Average*	*80-89%*	Satisfactory-exceeds basic requirements
C *Average*	*70-79%*	Satisfactory - Maintains basic requirement
D *Below Average*	*60-69%*	Performs below basic requirements
F *Failure*	*0- 59%*	Does not meet basic requirements
Other Grades:	*I - Incomplete*	*X – Excused for Medical Reasons*

These grades are determined on the basis of the child's performance on quizzes, tests, homework assignments, class participation, projects and in-school class work.

D. Honor Roll

Honor

Students in grades three through six receiving all A's and B's on their report card are considered honor students and receive an award/ribbon at the end of each nine-week period.

High Honor

Students in grades three through six receiving all A's on their report card are considered high honor students and these students receive an award/ribbon at the end of each nine-week period.

E. Promotion/Retention Procedure

a. Each teacher evaluates student progress on a daily basis throughout the school year. If the teacher determines that a student is encountering difficulty in academic progress, physical, social, or

emotional development, parents are notified and every effort is made to obtain parental cooperation to provide additional appropriate and available help for the child. However, if the difficulty persists, the principal is to notify the parents/guardians of possible retention in or by the month of April.

b. At this time, the Multi Tiered System of Supports, which includes the child's parents/guardians, should meet to outline their expectations of the student by the end of the school term. If, at the end of the year, the child has not fulfilled these outlined goals, then the team may recommend retention. The goals or expectations for the student will be measured by continued progress reports in reading, math, language arts, social studies, and science.

c. The Multi Tiered System of Supports team shall meet to make the final recommendation for the child's placement for the following year.

F. Homework

Most homework assignments are designed so the majority of the work can be done during the time the child spends at school. For primary grades, fifteen to thirty minutes of homework is an adequate amount of time to be spent on work outside of school. For upper elementary grades, forty-five to sixty minutes should be sufficient. The intent of any assignment is to provide practice, reinforcement, and to strengthen areas of weakness. When class work or homework is assigned, it is an important part of the educational process and is the responsibility of the student to have it completed on time. Parents should help teach this responsibility to the child by reinforcing the importance of having assignments done properly and on time.

Students and parents can access assignments via their Google Classroom. To access Google Classroom please contact the school at 724-756-2030. Additionally, folders are provided to all students in grades K-3 to organize their take-home assignments and papers. One side is designated "To Home" the other "To School." Google Classroom and folders should be checked daily

VI. School Based Programs

A. Accelerated Reader Program

Reading is a skill and, as with every skill, it requires not just instruction but also practice. Reading practice serves a number of purposes. It enables students to apply the skills and strategies that are taught. It gives you opportunities to check student learning and identify weaknesses. And it draws students into the world of "real" reading—a world in which people learn from and enjoy books.

Practice does not automatically lead to growth, however. To be effective, practice must have certain attributes: it must be at the right level of difficulty, cover a sufficient amount of time, be guided by the instructor, and be enjoyable enough to sustain.

The purpose of Accelerated Reader is to enable powerful practice. It does this by:

- Providing data that helps you monitor and personalize reading practice.
- Encouraging substantial amounts of practice, according to guidelines based on research findings.
- Making practice fun for students by facilitating successful encounters with text.

Accelerated Reader and Our Curriculum

Accelerated Reader is designed to be part of a comprehensive reading program. It does not replace a reading series or other instructional materials; rather, it supports and enhances them. As the Common Core

State Standards emphasize, effective reading programs develop students' ability to draw knowledge from text. Moreover, all students must be able to tackle complex texts independently. One of the primary benefits of Accelerated Reader is that it is a vehicle for this essential learning transfer.

B. Aimsweb

Aimsweb is a K-6 benchmark and progress monitoring system used to assess students' foundational skills in reading and math. It helps teachers identify students' strengths and areas of need, set goals, and track progress throughout the year to ensure academic growth. Assessments are brief, age-appropriate, and given several times a year to support targeted instruction.

C. IXL

IXL is a third through sixth grade online learning program that offers personalized practice in math and language arts. It adapts to each student's skill level, providing targeted questions and immediate feedback to support mastery of key concepts. Students can use IXL both in school and at home to reinforce classroom learning and build confidence.

D. Mathseeds

Mathseeds is a K-3 interactive online program designed to teach early math skills to students in a fun and engaging way. It combines structured lessons, games, and rewards to build number sense, problem-solving, and foundational math skills. Mathseeds is ideal for young learners and supports independent learning both at school and at home.

E. Reading Eggs

Reading Eggs is an online reading program that helps children develop essential literacy skills through fun, interactive lessons and activities. It covers phonics, sight words, vocabulary, comprehension, and more, making it ideal for early readers. Reading Eggs supports individualized learning and can be used both in the classroom and at home.

F. Lunch and Breakfast Program

All schools in the Karns City Area School District participate in a free school lunch and breakfast program. The elementary schools use a computerized sales system. Each student has an account and they type their student ID number into the computer as they get their free meal. Parents can choose an "open" account that will allow students to buy extras. You can pay for their extras by check, money order, or cash. Checks can be sent any time after the start of school. It is recommended to open the account with at least ten dollars.

G. Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

Each elementary school in the district has an MTSS team that provides intervention strategies and support for students, teachers, and parents. A student may be referred to the team if he or she is experiencing academic, attendance, or behavioral problems. The team is made up of the child's parent(s)/guardian(s), teachers, principal, counselor, school psychologist, or any other staff members that are appropriate to include. Classroom teachers, parents, or other school personnel may make referrals to MTSS.

Additionally, each elementary school organizes targeted instructional groups at each grade level. Students are assessed multiple times through the school year using Aimsweb and benchmark testing (PSSA predictor). Students are placed in targeted instructional groups based on needs identified during these

assessments. The flexible, dynamic groups allow for students to transition from group to group based on acquired skills.

H. Student Assistance Program (SAP)

The Commonwealth's Student Assistance Program is meant to assist school personnel in identifying issues, including alcohol, drugs and others, which pose a barrier to a student's learning and school success. Student assistance is not a treatment program; rather, it is a systematic process using effective and accountable professional techniques to mobilize school resources to remove the barriers to learning, and, where the problem is beyond the scope of the school, to assist the parent and the student with information so they may access services within the community. The student assistance team members do not diagnose, treat or refer for treatment; but they may refer for an assessment for treatment. It is the parent's right to be involved in the process and to have full access to all school records under applicable state and federal laws and regulations. Involvement of parents in all phases of the student assistance program underscores the parent's role and responsibility in the decision-making process affecting their children's education and is the key to the successful resolution of problems.

I. Title I Reading

The Karns City Area School District participates in the federally funded Title I program in order to provide remedial language arts services to eligible students. If you have any questions concerning the Title I program or eligibility requirements, please contact the school office.

VII. Health Services

A. Medications

Policy 210 Medications

1. Purpose

The Board shall not be responsible for the diagnosis and treatment of student illness.

The administration of prescribed medication to a student during school hours in accordance with the direction of a parent/guardian and licensed prescriber will be permitted only when failure to take such medicine would jeopardize the health of the student or the student would not be able to attend school if the medicine were not available during school hours.

2. Definitions

For purposes of this policy, **medication** shall include all medicines prescribed by a licensed prescriber and any over-the-counter medicines. For purposes of this policy, **licensed prescribers** shall include licensed physicians (M.D. and D.O.), podiatrists, dentists, optometrists, certified registered nurse practitioners and physicians assistants.

3. Authority the Board directs all district employees to comply with the Pennsylvania Department of Health's Guidelines for Pennsylvania Schools for the Administration of Medications and Emergency Care. SC 510 Title 22 Sec. 12.41

Before any medication may be administered to or by any student during school hours, the Board shall require the written request of the parent/guardian, giving permission for such administration.

4. Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent or designee, in conjunction with the Certified School Nurse (CSN), shall develop administrative regulations for the administration and self-administration of students' medications. All medications shall be administered by the Certified School Nurse, or in the absence of the Certified School Nurse by other licensed school health staff (RN, LPN), except as otherwise noted in this policy. 42 Pa. C.S.A. Sec. 8337.1 In the event of an emergency, a district employee may administer medication when s/he believes, in good faith, that a student needs emergency care. The Certified School Nurse shall

collaborate with parents/guardians, district administration, faculty and staff to develop an individualized healthcare plan to best meet the needs of individual students. The policy and administrative regulations for administration of medications shall be reviewed, at least every two (2) years, by a committee consisting of the Certified School Nurse, school physician, school dentist and designated administrators and revised as necessary.

5. Guidelines

The district shall inform all parents/guardians, students and staff about the policy and administrative regulations governing the administration of medications. All standing medication orders and parental consents shall be renewed at the beginning of each school year. SC 1409 Pol. 216 Student health records shall be confidential and maintained in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations and the Department of Health Guidelines. SC 1414.1 Pol. 210.1 Students may possess and use asthma inhalers and epinephrine auto-injectors when permitted in accordance with state law and Board policy.

6. Delivery and Storage of Medications

All medication shall be brought to the nurse's office, or the main office if the nurse is in another building, by the parent/guardian or by another adult designated by the parent/guardian. All medication shall be stored in the original pharmacy-labeled container and kept in a locked cabinet designated for storage of medication. Medications that require refrigeration shall be stored and locked in a refrigerator designated only for medications. The district shall not store more than a thirty-day supply of an individual student's medication. Medication should be recorded and logged in with the date, name of student, name of medication, amount of medication, and signatures of the parent/guardian or designated adult delivering the medication and the school health personnel receiving the medication. Nonprescription medication must be delivered in its original packaging and labeled with the student's name.

Prescription medication shall be delivered in its original packaging and labeled with:

1. Name, address, telephone and federal DEA (Drug Enforcement Agency) number of the pharmacy.
2. Student's name.
3. Directions for use (dosage, frequency and time of administration, route, special instructions).
4. Name and registration number of the licensed prescriber.
5. Prescription serial number.
6. Date originally filled.
7. Name of medication and amount dispensed.
8. Controlled substance statement, if applicable.

All medication shall be accompanied by a completed Medication Administration Consent and Licensed Prescriber's Medication Order Form, or other written communication from the licensed prescriber.

7. Disposal of Medications

Procedures shall be developed for the disposal of medications consistent with the Department of Health Guidelines, which shall include:

1. Guidelines for disposal of contaminated needles or other contaminated sharp materials immediately in an appropriately labeled, puncture resistant container.
2. Processes for immediately returning to parents/guardians all discontinued and outdated medications, as well as all unused medications at the end of the school year.
3. Methods for safe and environmentally friendly disposal of medications.
4. Proper documentation of all medications returned to parents/guardians and for all medications disposed of by the Certified School Nurse or other licensed school health staff. Documentation shall include, but not be limited to, date, time, amount of medication and appropriate signatures.

8. Student Self-Administration of Emergency Medications

Prior to allowing a student to self-administer emergency medication, the district shall require the following:

1. An order from the licensed prescriber for the medication, including a statement that it is necessary for the student to carry the medication and that the student is capable of self-administration.
2. Written parent/guardian consent.
3. An Individual Health Plan including an Emergency Care Plan.
4. The nurse shall conduct a baseline assessment of the student's health status.
5. The student shall demonstrate administration skills to the nurse and responsible behavior.

The nurse shall provide periodic and ongoing assessments of the student's self-management skills. The student shall notify the school nurse immediately following each occurrence of self-administration of medication. Students shall demonstrate a cooperative attitude in all aspects of self-administration of medication. Privileges for self-administration of medication will be revoked if school policies regarding self-administration are violated.

9. Administration of Medication During Field Trips and Other School-Sponsored Activities Pol. 121

The Board directs planning for field trips and other school-sponsored activities to start early in the school year and to include collaboration between administrators, teachers, nurses, appropriate parents/guardians and other designated health officials. Considerations when planning for administration of medication during field trips and other school-sponsored programs and activities shall be based on the student's individual needs and may include the following:

1. Assigning school health staff to be available.
2. Utilizing a licensed person from the school district's substitute list.
3. Contracting with a credible agency which provides temporary nursing services.
4. Utilizing licensed volunteers via formal agreement that delineates responsibilities of both the school and the individual.
5. Addressing with parent/guardian the possibility of obtaining from the licensed prescriber a temporary order to change the time of the dose.
6. Asking parent/guardian to accompany the child on the field trip, with proper clearances.
7. Arranging for medications to be provided in an original labeled container with only the amount of medication needed. Security procedures shall be established for the handling of medication during field trips and other school-sponsored activities.

References:
School Code – 24 P.S. Sec. 510, 1401, 1402, 1409, 1414.1
State Board of Education Regulations – 22 PA Code Sec. 12.41
Civil Immunity of School Officers or Employees Relating to Emergency Care, First Aid or Rescue – 42 Pa. C.S.A. Sec. 8337.1
Pennsylvania Department of Health "Guidelines for Pennsylvania Schools for the Administration of Medications and Emergency Care" March 2010
Board Policy – 103.1, 113, 121, 210.1, 216

B. Health Screenings

Screenings as required by Pennsylvania law:

- A physical examination upon original entry to school and in grades 6 and 11.
- A dental examination upon original entry to school and in grades 3 and 7.
- Height and weight measurement and determination of Body Mass Index-for-Age percentile annually.
- A vision test annually.
- A hearing test in grades K, 1, 2, 3, 7, and 11.
- Scoliosis screening in grades 6 and 7.
- Screening for pediculosis (head lice) where indicated.

***** *Students who do not turn in a completed, private physical or dental exam form will be scheduled for an exam with the school doctor or dentist.* Exams dated up to one year before the start of the school year in which the exam is required will be accepted.

The purpose of the screening program is to identify possible health problems that may require further evaluation and/or treatment. School screenings are not intended to replace periodic examinations by your family health practitioners. It is recommended that physical and dental examinations be conducted by your family physician or dentist, with payment being the responsibility of the parent. You can request a screening at any time if you suspect that your child may have a problem.

Parents may assist in maintaining students' good health by:

Providing proper meals at regular times. Insist that your child eat breakfast every day.Have a regular bedtime. School aged children need 9 – 12 hours of uninterrupted sleep every night. Dress young children according to weather conditions. Keep a sick child home from school.

Please follow these guidelines for keeping your child home from school:

- A fever of 100 or greater. A child must stay home until free of fever for 24 hours without the use of medication.
- Red eyes with drainage or that are "stuck together" upon awakening. Consult a healthcare provider.
- Vomiting the night before. Must tolerate a light diet before returning to school.
- Excessive coughing or nasal drainage.

VIII. Special Education/Gifted Services

The Karns City Area School District follows the federal law called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which ensures that all children with disabilities, regardless of the severity of their disability, and who are in need of special education and related services, are identified, located, and evaluated and provided a free appropriate public education. Your child may be eligible to receive special education if your child: 1) Has a physical, sensory, mental, or emotional disability (these include an intellectual disability, emotional disturbance, an orthopedic impairment, a hearing impairment, deafness, other health impairment, a speech or language impairment, a visual impairment including blindness, a specific learning disability, deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities) and 2) Needs special education as determined by an evaluation team. Your child must meet both qualifications in order to be eligible for special education. A parent may request, in writing, that the district initiate a screening or evaluation of their student's specific needs at any time. In Pennsylvania, all children eligible for special education have the right to a free appropriate public education.

The District also conducts child find activities for children who may be eligible for gifted services via Chapter 16. Students suspected of being exceptional can be identified through screening activities, MTSS teams, faculty, staff, and/or parents. When screening indicates that a student may be exceptional, the school district will seek parental consent to conduct an evaluation to determine a need for special education services. A parent may request, in writing, that the district initiate a screening or evaluation of their student's specific needs at any time. For further information on the screening processes, special education procedures, and/or gifted services, contact Mrs. Jennifer Jamison, Director of Special Education, at (724) 756-2030.

CHAPTER 15 PROTECTED HANDICAPPED STUDENTS

The Karns City Area School District shall provide each protected handicapped student enrolled in the district, without cost to the student or family, those related aids, services, or accommodations which are needed to afford the student equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits from the school programs and extracurricular activities without discrimination, and to the maximum extent appropriate

to the student's abilities. To meet criteria of a protected handicapped student, a child must be of school age and have a physical or mental disability that substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the student's school program. To meet criteria for services under Chapter 15, a student needs to be identified, through the evaluation process, as a protected handicapped student. These services and protection for "protected handicapped students" are distinct from those applicable to all eligible or exceptional students enrolled (or seeking enrollment) in special education programs.
For further information on the evaluation procedures and provisions of services to protected handicapped students, contact Mrs. April Christy, School Psychologist, at (724) 756-2030 x1044.

Karns City Area School District's goal is to provide all students with the highest quality of education, regardless of the needs of the student. If you believe that your child may be in need of an individualized program, an evaluation process to assess your child's needs is available to you at no cost through the school district. For questions or more information, please contact the special education office at: 724-756-2030 x1022

Director of Special Education: Mrs. Jennifer Jamison
District School Psychologist: Mrs. April Christy
Special Education Office Secretary: Mrs. Heather Landgraf

IX. McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

Homeless children and youth means individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, and includes:
Children and youths who are:

a. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
b. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
c. Living in emergency, transitional or domestic violence shelters; or
d. Abandoned in hospitals.

If you believe any of the aforementioned circumstances applies to your child/student, please contact the district homeless liaison, Mr. Shane Spack at 724-756-2030 (phone), 724-445-2776 (fax), or sspack@kcasdk12.org (email).

X. The Rights of Students Experiencing Homelessness

Children and youth who experience homelessness — including those living in shelters, doubled-up due to economic circumstances, in temporary housing, or "couch-surfing" — have important rights under a federal law called the "McKinney-Vento Act."

Under the McKinney-Vento Act, students experiencing homelessness have the right to stay in their current school even if they no longer live in the same neighborhood or immediately enroll in a new school. The law also provides additional services to support students to be successful. This section explains those rights and protections and what to do if a student needs help in identification, enrollment, retention, transportation, supports, family engagement, and community partnerships.

Who Qualifies As "Homeless" Under The Law?
All students attending public schools from preschool until age 21 or high school graduation —including those in charter schools or school programs operated by Intermediate Units (IUs) —qualify for additional rights under the McKinney-Vento Act if they are experiencing homelessness. The protections apply for as long as the student experiences homelessness, and certain protections like school stability and transportation apply for the remainder of the year that the child secures permanent and adequate housing. Courts have recognized that there is no duration to experiencing homelessness, even if it lasts several years or recurs. Students are considered to be "homeless" under the Act if they lack a consistent, adequate, fixed nighttime residence. This includes but is not limited to: "living doubled-up" with friends or family due to economic hardship or loss of housing; "couch-surfing;" living in temporary or emergency shelter; living in a car, hotel, campground, or trailer park; living in a place that is not ordinarily used for sleeping; living unsheltered; or living in housing that is legally recognized as substandard.

Can Youth Who Are Living On Their Own Qualify As Homeless?
Yes. Students who are experiencing homelessness and living on their own qualify as homeless and are under the law are referred to as "unaccompanied homeless youth." Unaccompanied youth living on their own are allowed to enroll themselves in school and are entitled to additional protections under the McKinney-Vento Act. For example, schools must help these youth enroll in school, access extra curriculars, and apply to college. In addition, if an unaccompanied homeless youth is also a student with a disability, the school district will appoint an educational "surrogate parent" to act as that student's special education decision maker through the IEP process.

Are Schools Responsible for Identifying Students Who Are Experiencing Homelessness?
Yes. School personnel are solely responsible for making sure that all students who are experiencing homelessness are promptly and proactively identified. Students experiencing homelessness on their own and with their families do not need to know that they are McKinney-Vento eligible, use the words "McKinney-Vento" or "homeless," or assert their rights in order to be eligible. That is the school's job. As a best practice measure we screen all children and youth every year upon enrollment to make sure all students who are experiencing homelessness are identified and given McKinney-Vento rights and protections.

Do McKinney-Vento Eligible Students Have The Same Rights In School As Other Students?
Yes. Students who qualify as homeless under the Act have the same rights to access all educational programs and opportunities as students who are housed who can show proof of residency. Schools are prohibited from segregating students, discriminating against them, or stigmatizing these students because they are experiencing homelessness. Schools cannot adopt policies that deny students equal access to "attend school and fully participate" in school.

Where Can Eligible Students Attend School?
McKinney-Vento eligible students have a legal right to stay in their current school or a prior school they attended before becoming homeless. If remaining in such a school is not in the child's best interest, the child can immediately enroll in a new school where they are staying — even without providing any of the documents normally required for enrollment.

School Stability: McKinney-Vento eligible students have a right to "school stability," which means that they can continue to attend their current school or the school they attended prior to becoming homeless.

Students can continue to stay in the same school even if they move again, until they secure permanent and adequate housing. The current school or the school the student attended prior to experiencing homelessness is called the "school of origin" under the McKinney-Vento Act.

Immediate Enrollment: Alternatively, a student can enroll in a new school where they now are living or where they have "any substantial connection." This is particularly important for children and youth who stay in different locations over the course of weeks. Children must be enrolled immediately — on the same day they seek enrollment — even without any documents normally required for enrollment and even if the school does not have the student's education records, including a child's IEP.

Who Makes The Best Interest Determination?
The determination regarding where a child will attend school is based on the "best interest" of the child as determined by their parent, legal guardian, or youth who is enrolling on his/her own in conjunction with school district staff. It is "presumed" that it is in the best interest of the student to attend her school of origin unless the parent disagrees. Remaining in the same school is preferable because research shows that students lose 6-8 months of academic progress with every school move. This "best interest determination" is completed by a student's local school district, called a Local Education Agency (LEA) by the McKinney-Vento Act. Each determination is "student-centered" and must be focused on the individual needs of the student who is experiencing homelessness. The determination must take into consideration the preferences of unaccompanied students, or the parent's wishes if the student is experiencing homelessness with their parent or guardian. The school district must consider the "impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, and safety" of each student.

Can A Student Experiencing Homelessness Be Enrolled Without Immunization Record?
Yes. Under the law, all McKinney-Vento eligible students must be enrolled immediately, even without documentation ordinarily required for enrollment. However, the new school will immediately request the student's records and help an unaccompanied youth obtain these enrollment documents: proof of age, immunization records, and an Act 26 statement, also known as a parent registration form relating to school discipline. McKinney-Vento eligible students must provide an address where they are living if possible.. If a student needs help obtaining immunization records, the "McKinney-Vento Liaison" at the student's school will help the student obtain these records.

Who Is Responsible For Transporting McKinney-Vento Eligible Students To And From School?
Local educational agencies (LEAs) must provide free transportation to and from a student's "school of origin." Even if a student becomes permanently housed in the middle of the year, the school must continue to provide free transportation until the end of the school year. If a student needs to be transported across district lines, and it is in the student's best interest to continue attending their "school of origin," the LEAs from both jurisdictions must work together to transport the student. The schools must also consider the student's needs when arranging for transportation and must treat students who are McKinney-Vento eligible the same way they would treat students who are not experiencing homelessness. The McKinney-Vento Liaison will work with the transportation department at the student's school district to set up the transportation.

What Other Support Or Services Are Available To Help Students To Be Successful In School?
What Happens If A Students Needs School Supplies, Tutoring Help, Or Meals At School?
All McKinney-Vento eligible students are automatically entitled to free breakfast and free lunch. Under the McKinney-Vento Act, eligible students are also entitled to receive school supplies. In addition, "Title

IA" funds, when available, may be used to provide a variety of support services to help eligible students meet academic achievement standards. These supports include tutoring help, counseling, eyeglasses, SAT prep and testing fees, food, etc.

Are There Physical & Mental Health Supports Available?
As we work with a student, we will assist to remove barriers when possible to lessen the many burdens on these families/children by providing as stable a school environment and experience as possible. This area can be incorporated into the intervention plan so it's regularly monitored through the Student Assistance Program (SAP). The student's SAP case manager will work closely with the school counselor and school nurse when behavioral and medical needs are observed, as homelessness can negatively impact the emotional/mental and physical health of the child/ren. Review the child's need for counseling or other supportive services offered by school counselors or through referral. We will continue to include SAP, MTSS, SWPBIS and PBIS team members in communications and issues, as appropriate, related to any serious conditions of the student, to ensure teamwork and information sharing. We will utilize our district's homeless liaison as a resource in order to provide comprehensive services.

What Does Family Engagement and Community Relationships Look Like For Homeless Students?
All McKinney-Vento eligible students are automatically entitled to participate in all family engagement activities held at KCASD. Under the McKinney-Vento Act, eligible students are also entitled to attend and participate in any of the school-community sponsored events. Community partnerships include the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), the Communities That Care (CTC), and local faith based organizations.

What Can Unaccompanied Students Or Parents/Guardians Of Students Experiencing Homelessness Do If They Disagree With A School's Decision?
If a parent or unaccompanied youth disagrees with an LEA about where the student should attend school based on the student's best interest, or whether the student qualifies as McKinney-Vento eligible, the parent, guardian, or youth may use a dispute resolution procedure to resolve the disagreement. During the pendency of any dispute, the McKinney-Vento Act requires the school district to permit the student to remain in her current "school of origin" or to immediately enroll in a new school as the school of choice. The right to remain in this school placement and receive other McKinney-Veto protections and rights continues until the dispute resolution process is over.

XI. Birthday Treat Distribution

To support student wellness, safety, and instructional time, birthday celebrations at school will be kept simple. Parents wishing to recognize their child's birthday may send commercially prepared or store purchased, packaged treats or non-food items for distribution. Treats will be shared at a time designated by the teacher. To minimize disruptions and ensure an orderly distribution process, the classroom teacher will distribute all treats to students. Due to student allergies and dietary restrictions, families are encouraged to consider non-food alternatives, such as pencils, stickers, bookmarks etc.

XII. Cell Phone and Personal Electronic Devices

To support a focused and distraction-free learning environment, students are strongly encouraged to leave cell phones and personal electronic devices at home.

Because elementary students do not have lockers, any cell phone brought to school must remain powered off or silenced and stored in the student's backpack, which should be kept in the student's assigned cubby throughout the school day. Cell phones may not be carried on a student's person or used during the school day unless specifically authorized by school administration.

Students who are found using or possessing a cell phone outside of their backpack during the school day may be subject to disciplinary action. Repeated violations may result in the device being confiscated and a parent/guardian being required to retrieve it from the school.

Parents who need to communicate with their child during the school day should contact the elementary office. Likewise, students who need to contact a parent or guardian may do so through the office with staff assistance.

Our goal is to provide a safe, focused, and productive learning environment for all students while ensuring that necessary communication can occur when needed.