

Palos 118 District Handbook



THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS HANDBOOK IS SUBJECT TO Change. FOR UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION VISIT palos118.org. This version updated 6/29/26

WELCOME FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



Thank you for your continued efforts to support our mission of excellence in education. Please take the time to read the contents of this parent/student handbook and visit the content links online for more detailed information. It contains information you will need as the parent of a Palos 118 student. The calendar and parent/student handbook are designed as a guide to the Palos 118 website and supersedes all previous calendar/handbooks. Informational items and parent notifications are summarized in the calendar/handbook with reference to the district website where more detailed information can be found at www.palos118.org. Please note that school procedures and board policies may be amended during the year without notice.

As a learning community, it is important that we partner with parents to maintain the superior school system we enjoy here at Palos School District 118. To this end, please take some time to go over the information contained within these pages with your child. As you do so, please remind your student that we are here for him or her and wish all our students an abundance of personal success and happiness. We hope you have a wonderful school year.

Sincerely,

Dr. Anthony M. Scarsella
Superintendent of Schools



GREETINGS FROM THE BOARD OF EDUCATION PRESIDENT

The Palos 118 Board of Education is committed to continuing the school district's tradition of offering exceptional educational and extra-curricular opportunities for every student while making it a great place for our talented staff to work and grow professionally. We are comprised of seven elected representatives, each serving a four-year term. The board's role is to serve as the policy making body for the district and work with our Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Scarsella, who implements those policies and oversees day to day operations. Regular meetings are typically held the third Tuesday of each month and are open to the public.

The Palos 118 School Board conforms to all standards set forth by the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB).

We hope to see you at our meetings and in our classrooms, sharing whatever time and talents you have. If you have any comments or questions, please feel free to contact me or any Board of Education member. Have a great school year.

Pam Paris
Palos 118 School Board President

Important Information

Absences

Students who regularly miss school are at heightened risk of falling behind academically. Parents/guardians should make every effort to ensure students are in school daily. If you are having trouble getting your child to school daily, please contact your child's school principal for support.

Excused Absences

Per Board of Education Policy 7:70, an absence from school will be excused for the following:

- Illness (including mental or behavioral health)
- Observance of a religious holiday
- Death in the immediate family
- Attendance at a civic event
- Family emergency
- Reasonable concern to the parent/guardian for the student's mental, emotional, or physical safety

Unexcused Absences

- Vacations/Family Trips
- All other absences not listed above

Attendance Notification Forms

Parents/guardians are required to notify their child's school of a planned vacation or family trip during the school year. The required notification form is available by clicking on the links below.

- Vacation/Family Trip Notification Form

Automated Attendance Reminders

Research shows that parents/guardians often underestimate the number of days their child is absent during the school year. To assist parents and guardians in tracking the number of days their child has been absent PRIOR to the school district being legally required to report them as **CHRONICALLY ABSENT (17 days total – excused and unexcused)** to the Illinois State Board of Education, parents/guardians will receive automated attendance notifications after their child misses the following total number of school days (**both excused and unexcused absences**).

Palos East and Palos West Elementary School Students

If a child misses **6 or more days** during the first trimester, parents will receive the following message at the end of the 1st Trimester:

Your child has missed 6 or more days during the first trimester of the school year. Continued absences at a rate of 6 or more days per trimester may result in your child being reported as chronically absent to the Illinois State Board of Education at the end of the school year.

If a child misses **12 or more days** during the first and second trimester, parents will receive the following message at the end of the 2nd Trimester:

Your child has missed 12 or more days through the second trimester of the school year and is in danger of being reported as chronically absent to the Illinois State Board of Education.

If a child misses **17 or more days** during the school year, parents will receive the following message at the end of the 3rd Trimester:

Your child has missed 17 or more days this school year and has been reported as chronically absent to the Illinois State Board of Education.

Palos South Middle School Students

If a child misses **5 or more days** during the first quarter, parents will receive the following message at the end of the 1st Quarter:

Your child has missed 5 or more days during the first quarter of the school year. Continued absences at a rate of 5 or more days per quarter may result in your child being reported as chronically absent to the Illinois State Board of Education at the end of the school year.

If a child misses **9 or more days** through the second quarter of the school year, parents will receive the following message at the end of the 2nd Quarter:

Your child has missed 9 or more days through the second quarter of the school year and is in danger of being reported as chronically absent to the Illinois State Board of Education.

If a child misses **13 or more days** through the third quarter of the school year, parents will receive the following message at the end of the 3rd Quarter:

Your child has missed 13 or more days through the third quarter of the school year and is in danger of being reported as chronically absent to the Illinois State Board of Education.

If a child misses **17 or more days** during the school year, parents will receive the following message at the end of the 4th Quarter:

Your child has missed 17 or more days this school year and has been reported as chronically absent to the Illinois State Board of Education.

Absence Make-up Work

Parents of students who are absent from school due to illness may request make-up work prior to 10 a.m. by calling the school office. If a child is ill for 2 days or longer, it is strongly recommended that parents call the office and request make-up work. Homework may be picked up in the vestibule outside the school office between dismissal until 4 p.m. (Palos East & Palos West) and 3:45 p.m. (Palos South). A student who is excused from school attendance will be given the same number of days to complete make-up work equivalent to the number of days the student was absent from school.

Vacation Make-up Work

Academic success is dependent upon regular school attendance. Parents are encouraged to plan family vacations when school is not in session. It is impossible to replicate the classroom experience by virtue of make-up classwork. Should it be impossible to schedule vacation without impacting school attendance, the teacher will provide make-up work upon the student's return to class. Students will be given the same number of days to complete make-up work equivalent to the number of days the student was absent from school.

Tardiness

In the event that a child arrives late to school, a parent/guardian must accompany the child to the office.

Telephone Use

Except in cases of special emergencies, parents are asked not to telephone their children at school. If any emergency arises at school, children are given permission to use the school telephone.

Gifts

Collection of money for the purpose of purchasing gifts for school personnel is discouraged.

Recess (Elementary Schools)

Students will go outside for recess unless the temperature (with the wind chill factor) is below 15 degrees, or other circumstances such as playground conditions or precipitation require students to remain indoors. Please dress your child appropriately.

School Visitors and Parents

School security procedures require that all visitors and parents must request admittance to the school through the office. Parents who desire to observe their child in class should make arrangements with the school principal. Classroom visitation procedures are also clarified in board policy 6:122. School offices have locked entrances and a buzzer intercom and camera system.

- All parents/visitors are required to have a picture ID such as a driver's license or state-issued ID.
- All parents/visitors must identify the purpose of their visit. An appointment must be made in advance by contacting the building administrator to observe a classroom, attend a conference, or meet with a teacher.
- All parents/visitors will be required to wear a visitor badge and lanyard while in the school. The staff have been instructed to direct any unidentified visitor to the office.
- All parents/visitors are limited to the pre-approved purpose for their visit and should not visit classrooms, engage students in conversation, or tour the building.
- At the conclusion, visitors/parents must return to the office, sign out, and return their visitor badge.

CHAIN OF COMMAND

When questions, concerns, or interests regarding your child's progress or school program arise, please address them properly by contacting the classroom teacher first. If questions or concerns remain, it is appropriate to contact the building principal. If there are still unresolved concerns, contact the superintendent of schools.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS

District 118 will utilize an automated calling system to call home, cell, and/or workphone numbers in the event of a school closing. School closings are also listed on the district website and the Emergency Closing Center website www.emergencyclosings.com.

LATE START OF SCHOOL/ WEATHER DELAY

Palos 118 may also declare a one-hour late start option to provide an additional solution for poor weather situations and parents will be notified with an automated phone message. A late start scheduled delays all school and bus operations by one hour. Students report to their bus stops one hour later and schools begin one hour later.

LATE START WEDNESDAYS

With the exception of the first and last week of school all students will start 30 minutes later on Wednesdays. For detailed times, go to www.palos118.org/latestartwed.

SKYWARD PARENT PORTAL

Palos South parents and students have access to grades and attendance through a secured parent portal. Parents and students will receive individual usernames and passwords. The usernames and passwords are given to all parents and students entering sixth grade, or those new to the district. Please contact the district office (448-4800) if you do not receive a username and password by the end of your child's first month of

school.

REQUIRED PHYSICAL EXAMS AND IMMUNIZATIONS

Physical Exam and Immunizations: Illinois State Law requires each public school student to present proof of physical examination and immunization upon entering school at kindergarten or at the first-grade level, when transferring to a new school, and at the sixth-grade level. School District 118 will exclude children on the first day of school only until such time as proof of physical examinations and immunizations are presented. The Department of Public Health requires evidence of immunity against Poliomyelitis, Diphtheria, Tetanus, Whooping Cough, Measles (Rube-ola) Rubella (German or 3-day measles), Mumps, Chicken Pox, Hemophilus Influenza, Pneumococcal Disease, Meningococcal Conjugate, and Hepatitis. If there are objections on religious grounds, the Illinois Certificate of Religious Exemption to Required Immunizations must be completed.

and signed by parent and child's health care provider responsible for performing the child's health exam. If the physical condition of a child precludes immunizations on medical grounds, the examining physician must indicate the reasons.

Dental Exam: Illinois State Law requires each public school student to present proof of dental exam by May 15 of current school year at the kindergarten, second, and sixth grade levels. District 118 will withhold student report cards until such time as proof of dental exam is presented.

Vision Exam: Illinois State Law requires eye exams within one year prior to entering kindergarten starting in the fall, and for students entering a school in Illinois for the first time. Proof of the required vision examination by an optometrist or ophthalmologist must be submitted by October 15 of current school year. School District 118 will withhold student report cards until such time as proof of vision exam is presented.

Physical Exams, Interscholastic Athletics: The Illinois State Board of Education requires all students who participate in interscholastic athletics to have an annual physical examination. The proper form must be completed and returned prior to the first day of tryouts. Forms are available at South and on the website.

Vision and Hearing Screening: School health personnel perform vision and hearing screening of students. The parents of a child may request a screening at any time. Vision screening will be done, as mandated, for the following children: Preschool, kindergarten, second grade, eighth grade, special education, teacher referrals, and new students during the current school year. Hearing screening will be done as mandated, for the following children: Preschool, kindergarten, first, second, third, special education, teacher referrals, and new students during the f current school year school year. Vision and hearing screenings are not substitutes for a complete eye and ear examination by an appropriate doctor. Your child will not be required to undergo this VISION screening if an optometrist or ophthalmologist has completed and signed a report form indicating that an examination has been administered within the previous 12 months and that an evaluation is on file at the school. Your child will not be required to undergo this HEARING screening if an audiologist has completed and signed a report form indicating that an examination has been administered within the previous 12 months and that evaluation is on file at the school. This notice is not a permission to test and is not required to be returned. Vision and hearing screening is not an option. If a vision or hearing examination report is not on file at the school for your child, your child in the mandated age/grade/group will be screened.

MEDICATIONS IN SCHOOL

Medication for students remains the responsibility of parents and should, if possible, be given at home. For required medication during the regular school day, these steps must be followed:

1. Written orders from a physician detailing the name of the drug, dosage, and time interval must be provided on the district's form. Orders must be renewed annually.
2. The parent/guardian must complete the school district's form requesting that the school comply with the physician's orders.
3. Medication must be brought to school in a container appropriately labeled by the pharmacy or the physician.
4. Palos 118 retains the authority to reject complex requests for administration of medication.
5. Direct communication with the health office is essential for full comprehension of the student's medical needs.
6. Cough drops and throat lozenges can only be brought from home and used by students if written parental permission is provided to school nurse.

SPECIAL EDUCATION AND STUDENT SERVICE

School District 118, in accordance with state and federal mandates, supports the rights of all children with disabilities to a free, appropriate public education.

Students may qualify for special education services if they are determined to have a disability that is adversely impacting their educational performance and are in need of a specially designed instructional program to succeed in school. A continuum of instructional programs and services are available to eligible students who have a disability that impacts their ability to benefit from standard educational programming as determined by an Eligibility Conference and an Individual Education Plan (IEP) Conference. Special Education programs and services are offered directly through the school district or in conjunction with Southwest Cook County Cooperative for Special Education. A copy of the rules and regulations that govern the Administration and Operation of Special Education can be attained from the Student Services Department or by written request to: Illinois Office of Education, 100 North First Street, Springfield, IL 60277.

Questions can be directed to Director of Student Services Office, at the Central Administrative Office at 708-761-5806.

PRESCHOOL SCREENINGS

School District 118 conducts free preschool screenings for children who are 3, 4, and 5 years of age. The purpose of the preschool screening is to assess a child's general development and detect any delays in vision, hearing, motor, cognitive, social-emotional, and/or speech and language development areas. Children identified through the screening process as being at-risk for learning and/or behavioral difficulties may be referred for a special education evaluation. Members of the Student Services Team conduct the screenings and will provide feedback to the parents as to their child's performance. The screening takes about 45 minutes. Preschool screenings will be held multiple times during the school year. For further information, please contact the Student Services Department at 708-761-5807.

Children from birth to three years of age whose parents and/or physicians suspect significant physical or developmental delays may be eligible for an evaluation and/or intervention services through the Illinois Child and Family Services Program. For further information on birth to three screenings, please contact Student Services at 708-761-5807.

ENGLISH LEARNER SERVICES

School District 118 offers opportunities for English Learners to develop high levels of English proficiency and academic achievement by providing supports to attain grade level content and meet state standards that all students are expected to meet. English Learner Services include Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) in Arabic, Polish and Spanish and Transitional Program of Instruction in English for all other languages.

Palos 118 is mandated to assess progress of language proficiency of all English Learners annually. English Learners are administered ACCESS which assesses students' English in the domains of Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. Parents/Guardian of English Learners are notified of their child's placement in EL services and English proficiency progress. Parents/Guardians have the opportunity to provide input and feedback on EL services by joining the Bilingual Parent Advisory Committee (BPAC).

For questions about English Learner Services, contact the Director of English Learner Services, at the Central Administrative Office at 708-761-5811.

COMPUTER AND INTERNET USE

All District 118 schools offer technology tools and online resources to support student learning. Students in grades four through eight are provided with personal network passwords and space to save individual work on our file servers. Use of our network services, including access to the Internet, is supervised and subject to the provisions of our District 118 Acceptable Use Policy. This can be viewed online. Please refer to the District 118 Board of Education policy explained in its entirety in Policy 6:235, Access to Electronic Net- works.

TRANSPORTATION

Students in grades K-8 who live 1-1/2 miles or more from their attendance center receive free bus service. This service is also available to students who attend kindergarten and who live in Illinois Dept. of Transportation approved hazardous walking areas. Parents who qualify for bus service will receive information in the mail prior to the school year. Call the transportation department at (708) 448-4405.

PARENT NOTIFICATION LIST

Palos 118 must give parents annual information regarding a number of topics. A brief listing of these follows. Detailed information regarding these and other important topics can be found on the parent notification link www.palos118.org/pnl. Parents who do not have computer or internet access, or who have questions are encouraged to contact your school office. This listing is not exhaustive and may be updated without notice.

- Absences
- Access to Electronic Networks
- Administering Medication to Students Including Asthma and Allergies to Students
- Alternative Learning Opportunities
- Anti-Bias Curriculum
- Asbestos Management Plan
- Behavior Intervention
- Birth Certificate Requirement
- Bullying Prevention, Intimidation, Harassment
- Community Notification Act
- (Sex Offender Information) www.lsp.state.il.us/Sor
- CPR and AED Video
- Deaf or Visually Impaired Notice
- Dental Exam
- Diabetes Care Procedures
- Directory Information
- Distribution of Non-Curriculum/Non School Sponsored Literature by Students
- English Language Learners
- Equal Education Opportunity
- Erin's Law/Notice of Teen Dating Violence Policy
- Free Public Education
- Harassment of Students Prohibited
- Homeless Students
- Mandated Child Find
- Notice of Non-Discrimination
- Notice of Delegation of Rights for Special Education
- Notice of Parents' Legal Protections When a Public Agency Seeks to Access Public Benefits or Insurance
- Notice to Parents of Students who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Blind or Visually Impaired Regarding Special State Schools
- Notice of Parental Right to Object to Invasive Exams
- Notice of Survey Policies
- Notice of Violence and Drug Prevention Efforts
- Parent's Right to Know
- Pesticide Exposure
- Prevention/Management of Allergic Reactions
- Radon Testing
- Review of Instructional Materials
- Safety Drills
- School Meals
- School Visitation Rights
- Search and Seizure
- Section 504/Americans with Disabilities Act
- Sex Equity
- Sexual Harassment
- Soccer Goal Safety

- Social Networking Passwords
- Special Education
- Student Athlete Concussions and Head Injuries
- Student Behavior Plan
- Student Discipline/Behavior Intervention Guidelines
- Student Fees/Waiver of Fees/Free and Reduced Meals
- Student Records
- Suicide Awareness & Prevention Policy
- Suspension, Expulsion, and Due Process Requirements
- Teacher Qualifications
- Title I Parent Notification Including Parent Involvement
- Transportation
- Uniform Grievance Policy/Procedures- Title IX
- Video Surveillance on Buses and in School
- Videotape/Audio Surveillance Policies
- Vision/Hearing Exams/Screenings
- Water Testing Results
- Wellness Policy

Board of Education Policy References

Palos118.org/board-of-education/policies

6:235 Access to Electronic Networks

7:70 Attendance and Truancy

7:140 Search and Seizure

7:180 Preventing Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment

7:200 Suspension Procedures

7:210 Expulsion Procedures

7:220 Bus Conduct

7:160 Student Appearance

7:240 Conduct Code for Participation in Extra-Curricular Activities

7:190 Student Discipline

7:310 Restrictions on Publications and Written Electronic Material

7:20 Harassment of Students Prohibited

7:230 Misconduct by Students with Disabilities

Parent Organizations

PARENT FACULTY ASSOCIATION (PFA)

www.palos118pfa.com

District 118 PFA is an association of parents and school faculty working together on behalf of your children. Each child in District 118 benefits from the various programs and events sponsored by the PFA. The PFA provides our schools supplementary financial support that funds various items needed by faculty to enhance the learning experience of every child in our amazing school district. Throughout the year, PFA volunteers organize fun events for Palos 118 students and families. For more information about joining the PFA or becoming a volunteer, please email at pfa@palos118.org. Current District 118 families can join through Skyward during registration. More information about the PFA can be found on their website, palos118pfa.com.

EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

Since 1998, the Palos Educational Foundation's vision has been F.U.N. (Funding Unfunded Needs) in Palos 118 schools through annual fundraising endeavors. Their mission is to work to support and enhance the superior educational opportunities for the students of Palos 118 District. The Foundation is an advocate of excellence in public education through long-term community partnerships and resources. The Foundation strives to expand the educational mission of the District by providing financing beyond the means of conventional public funding and by fostering long-term community partnerships. Recurring events include Laps for Literature and Trivia Night. More information about the Foundation can be found at palos118.org.

MUSIC PARENTS ASSOCIATION (MPA)

The Music Parents Association (MPA) at Palos School District 118 is a volunteer organization with a mission to support the advancement of education through the District's music programs. The MPA provides supplemental financial resources through various fundraising efforts, including the annual Harvest Fest. Funds raised are used for educational music activities, equipment, and supplies. In addition, the MPA also conducts ancillary activities such as hospitality during key musical events at the three Palos District 118 schools. All parents with students in band or choir are automatically members of the MPA. Members are encouraged to donate \$10 per year and give one or more hours of volunteer time to the organization to improve the experience of District music programs.

DISTRICT CONTACTS

DISTRICT OFFICE (CENTRAL)

708-448-4800

www.palos118.org

8800 W. 119th St., Palos Park, IL 60464

PALOS EAST ELEMENTARY

708-448-1084

Report Student Absences: 708-923-7051

7700 W. 127th St., Palos Heights, IL 60463

Allison Grasso, Principal

Andrea Ramoley, Assistant Principal

PALOS WEST ELEMENTARY

708-448-6888

Report Student Absences: 708-923-7052

12700 S. 104th Ave., Palos Park, IL 60464

Joel Dukett, Principal

Kristie Tieri, Assistant Principal

PALOS SOUTH MIDDLE SCHOOL

708-448-5971

Report Student Absences: 708-923-7053

13100 S. 82nd Ave., Palos Park, IL 60464

Stuart Wrzesinski, Principal/CSBO Designee (SY 27-28)

Sarah Leahy, Assistant Principal

SCHOOL HOURS

PALOS EAST & WEST 8:55 a.m. - 3:25 p.m.

Kindergarten full day 9:15 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

PALOS WEST PRESCHOOL.....8:55 a.m. - 3:25 p.m.

Morning session 9:15 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.

Afternoon session.....12:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

PALOS SOUTH 8:15 a.m. - 2:32 p.m.

Palos South Zero Hour 7:29 a.m. - 8:12 a.m.

*With the exception of the first and last week of school all students will start 30 minutes later on Wednesdays.
For detailed times, go to www.palos118.org/lateststartwed.*

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

Dr. Anthony Scarsella	Superintendent of Schools
Rob Szklanecki	Director of Teaching & Learning
Shea Schaaf	District Data Coordinator
Huwaida Hamed	EL Program Director
Brock Stein	Director of Communications & Public Engagement
Scott Fox	Dir. of IT Services
Luis Martinez	Network Administrator
Maria Correa	District Office Assistant

BUSINESS OFFICE

Dr. Anthony Scarsella	Interim Chief School Business Official (SY 26-27) (Dr. Stuart Wrzesinski CSBO Designee SY 27-28)
Joseph Kehoe	Bookkeeper
Kathy Pagoria	Admin. Assist. for Bus. & Oper.
Tricia Baker	Payroll

SPECIAL SERVICES

Erin Deval	Director of Student Services
Terri Dodds	Assistant Director of Student Services
Darlene Moleski	Admn. Asst for Student Services

TRANSPORTATION OFFICE

708-448-4405
7710 W. 127th St., Palos Heights, IL 60463

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Pam Paris, President, Mike Pizur, Vice President, Susan Szafranski, Secretary,
Board Members: Dr. Tim Baker, Dan Cox, Jennifer Jensen, Kevin Quinn.

REPORT STUDENT ABSENCES – 24 HOUR ANSWERING SERVICE

East: 708-923-7051 West: 708-923-7052 South: 708-923-7053

Southwest Interscholastic Conference Schools (SWIC)

Century Jr. High #135

10801 West 159th Street Orland Park, IL 60467 www.orland135.org
708-364-3500

Conrady Jr. High #117

7950 West 97th Street Hickory Hills, IL 60457 www.npd117.net
708-598-5721

Grissom Jr. High #140

17000 South 80th Avenue Tinley Park, IL 60477 www.ksd140.org
708-429-3030

Evergreen Central #124

9400 South Sawyer Avenue Evergreen Park, IL 60805 www.d124.org
708-424-0148

Jerling Jr. High #135

8851 West 151st Street Orland Park, IL 60462 www.orland135.org 708-364-3700

Liberty Jr. High #111

5900 West 81st Street Burbank, IL 60459 www.burbank.k12.il.us 708-596-4355

Middle School #123

5345 West 99th Street Oak Lawn, IL 60453 www.d123.org
708-499-6400

Orland Jr. High #135

14855 West Avenue Orland Park, IL 60462 www.orland135.org 708-364-4200

Prairie View Middle School #140

8500 West 175th Street

Tinley Park, IL 60477 www.ksd140.org 708-532-8540

Palos South Middle School #118

13100 S. 82nd Avenue

Palos Park, IL 60464 www.palos118.org 708-448-5971

Simmons Jr. High #122

6450 West 95th Street Oak Lawn, IL 60453 www.ridgeland122.com 708-599-8540

Central Middle School #146

18146 South Oak Park Ave. Tinley Park, IL 60477 www.district146.org
708-614-4510



PALOS DISTRICT 118
PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE



ACADEMICALLY PREPARED