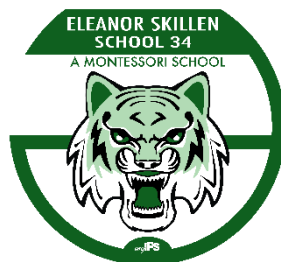


Eleanor Skillen 34
A Montessori School

FAMILY HANDBOOK 2026-2027



1410 Wade Street
Indianapolis, IN 46203
317.226.4234
April Shin, Principal
Cara Chandler, Assistant Principal

Dear Families,

Welcome to the 2026–2027 school year! We are so excited to welcome both returning and new families to Eleanor Skillen School 34, A Montessori School.

Our mission is to transform lives by empowering all students to think critically and productively while embracing kindness. Montessori is the way we understand children. This school year, our shared work and vision centers around three key focus areas: Grace and Courtesy, Intrinsic Motivation, and Community. These pillars reflect our commitment to authentic Montessori learning and flow directly into our school tagline:



ONE PRIDE: GROWING WITH GRACE, GUIDED FROM WITHIN

Growing with Grace (Grace and Courtesy): In our Montessori classrooms, learning how we treat one another is just as important as academic learning. We focus on teaching students respect, active listening, conflict resolution, and everyday kindness so our school remains a safe, welcoming, and nurturing environment.

Guided from Within (Intrinsic Motivation): We want our students to discover the joy of learning for its own sake. By fostering curiosity, self-discipline, and independent decision-making, we empower students to take ownership of their choices and take deep pride in their personal growth.

One Pride (Community): We cannot achieve our mission in isolation. "One Pride" represents the united partnership between our students, dedicated staff, and supportive families. Together, we build an inclusive culture where every student belongs and every accomplishment is celebrated. A pride also symbolizes our mascot, the wildcat!

You may also hear about two very special members of our community: our therapy dogs*, Cleo and Claudius! They are continuing their therapy dog training with us and spend time supporting students and staff throughout the school. Many children enjoy reading to Cleo and Claudius, greeting them in the hallways, or simply seeing them around the building. They are soon to become beloved parts of our community.



Most importantly, we want you to know that your voice matters. We believe the strongest schools are built through authentic partnerships between families and educators. We encourage you to ask questions, attend school events, volunteer when you can, read with your child every day, and stay connected with your child's teacher. Together, we can create an extraordinary learning experience.

Thank you for your partnership and dedication to making Eleanor Skillen the best place to learn and grow. We look forward to a wonderful year together!

Sincerely,

April Shin, Principal

**We recognize that every family has different comfort levels and needs regarding animals. If you prefer that your child have no contact with Cleo and Claudius, we completely respect that choice. A form is included at the end of this handbook that allows you to indicate this preference, and we will ensure that your wishes are honored.*



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2026-2027 Calendar

SY2026-27 Student & Staff School Calendar



JULY							AUGUST							SEPTEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3							1			1	2	3	4	5
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28	29	27	28	29	30			
							30	31												

OCTOBER							NOVEMBER							DECEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7			1	2	3	4	5
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30						27	28	29	30	31		

JANUARY							FEBRUARY							MARCH						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2		1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28							28	29	30	31			
31																				

APRIL							MAY							JUNE						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2							1			1	2	3	4	5
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
25	26	27	28	29	30		23	24	25	26	27	28	29	27	28	29	30			
							30	31												

Summary of Days			
Students		Staff	
Semester 1		Semester	
1 Asynchronous Days	84	1 Asynchronous Days	94
Semester 2		Semester	
2 Asynchronous Days	96	2 Asynchronous Days	98
Total	180	Total	192

Districtwide PL Days	School-Based PL Days
- Tuesday, July 28 - Monday, August 3 - Tuesday, August 4 - Tuesday, November 3 - Tuesday, February 16	- Monday, July 27 - Thursday, August 6 - Friday, August 7 - Tuesday, September 8

July 3	Observance of Independence Day
July 4	Independence Day
July 21 - 23	New IPS Teacher Induction
July 24	Teacher Work Day
July 27	Staff Professional Development
July 28	Staff Professional Development
Aug 3 - 4	Staff Professional Development
Aug 5	Teacher Work Day
Aug 6 - 7	Staff Professional Development
Aug 10 - Oct 17	Quarter 1
Aug 10	First Day for Students
Sept 7	Labor Day - No School
Sept 8	Staff Professional Development - No School
Oct 12 - 16	Fall Break
Oct 20 - Dec 18	Quarter 2
Oct 23	Student Progress Conferences - Student Asynchronous Learning
Nov 3	Staff Professional Development - No School
Nov 25 - 27	Thanksgiving Break
Dec 17	Last Student Day of 1st Semester
Dec 18	Records Day/Semester Close - No School
Dec 21 - Jan 1	Winter Break
Jan 4 - Mar 12	Quarter 3
Jan 4	First Student Day of Second Semester
Jan 18	Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday - No School
Feb 15	President's Day - No School
Feb 16	Staff Professional Development - Student Asynchronous Learning
Mar 15 - 19	Spring Break
Mar 22 - May 27	Quarter 4
Mar 26	Student Progress Conferences - Student Asynchronous Learning
May 27	Last Day for Students
May 28	Records Day/Yearly Close - Staff Only
May 31	Memorial Day
June 18	Observance of Juneteenth
June 19	Juneteenth



MONTESSORI VISION

We are a community of public schools where Montessori-credentialed educators follow the child by using specifically designed and time-tested Montessori materials, curricula, pedagogy, and philosophy in multi-age learning environments in which academic achievement, connection and relationship, diversity and equity, and empathy and kindness are valued.

MONTESSORI MISSION

We create safe, loving, and fun educational environments where students can become passionate, confident, and independent critical thinkers, problem solvers, and lifelong learners who value peace, grace, and courtesy.

WILDCAT CORE VALUES

We are peaceful

We are purposeful.

We are respectful



IPS MISSION

IPS empowers and educates all students to think critically, creatively, and responsibly, to embrace diversity, and to pursue their dreams with purpose.

IPS VISION

IPS is a family of excellent public schools in which every student has the opportunity to succeed and the power to create their own future.

IPS STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Increase access to rigorous curriculum and instruction.

Promote racial equity.

Foster authentic engagement.

Operate and fund strategically.



WHO WAS ELEANOR SKILLEN?

Our school is proudly named in honor of Eleanor S. Skillen, a dedicated educator and principal who served the children and families of Indianapolis in the late 1800s. For over 120 years, Eleanor Skillen School 34 has served as a cornerstone of the Bean Creek community.

Today, our school carries forward Miss Skillen's foundational commitment to education by providing a student-focused Montessori environment. We work to guide, educate, and empower our students to become thoughtful, literate problem-solvers, ensuring that every decision made within our walls is in the very best interest of our children's learning and growth.

MONTESORI EDUCATIONAL GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We believe that we have the responsibility to develop the whole child according to the principles of the Montessori Philosophy: physically, socially, emotionally, and intellectually, within a safe and positive learning environment.

We believe that expectations should be high for all students and staff, and that a variety of strategies, experiences, technologies, and assessments are needed to encourage children to develop skills necessary for life-long learning.

We believe that it is important to have the involvement and cooperation of parents and community members to help develop attitudes leading to caring and productive citizens in an ever-changing society.

MONTESORI EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Montessori education is guided by the work and writings of Dr. Maria Montessori (1870–1952), who believed that true education fosters a lifelong love of learning. Rather than filling children with facts from a pre-set curriculum, Montessori education cultivates a child's natural curiosity and inner drive to discover the world.

At its heart, the philosophy rests on a simple principle: follow the child. We recognize every child as a unique individual who is naturally motivated to grow, learn, and develop. The Montessori approach nurtures the whole child—intellectual, emotional, social, moral, and physical. As Dr. Montessori noted, "A child's work is to create the person they will become."

A Montessori classroom is a carefully "prepared environment" designed to offer freedom within boundaries. Everything in the classroom has a specific purpose, is fully accessible to the children, and is designed to build self-discipline, order, and joy.

Integrated Learning: Hands-on materials span practical life, sensorial exploration, mathematics, language, and cultural subjects. Rather than teaching these in isolation, topics are integrated so children see how concepts connect across disciplines.

Guided Discovery: Teachers and assistants observe each child closely to understand their unique developmental needs. Through targeted demonstrations, educators guide children toward activities that inspire self-discovery, build confidence, and foster true independence without interrupting their natural workflow.



Our mixed-age classrooms create a rich, supportive community where children learn skills in cooperation, negotiation, and goal setting:

- **Peer Mentorship:** Younger students learn by observing older classmates, while older students reinforce their own understanding by serving as leaders and role models.
- **Deeper Connections:** Multi-age cycles allow students to remain with the same teaching team over multiple years, building strong, trusting relationships and a deep sense of belonging.
- **Social Development:** As children explore their social identity, the curriculum provides the tools and structure they need to work collaboratively, manage their time, and practice self-directed goal setting.

Montessori environments foster intrinsic motivation and community cooperation rather than external competition. Academic progress is treated as an individual journey rather than a comparison against peers.

To maintain a cooperative atmosphere, our school follows these practices:

- **Elimination of External Rewards:** We do not use reward charts, "best work" bulletin boards, or traditional letter grades (PreK–6).
- **Focus on Individual Growth:** We do not host individual Honor's Day, Kindergarten Graduation, or 5th Grade Graduation programs, keeping the focus on community growth and personal milestones.
- **Voluntary Academic Events:** Schoolwide activities focus on non-competitive collaboration. For optional events like Science Fairs or Spelling Bees, participation is entirely student-chosen, and advancement to higher levels is handled privately.
- **Personal-Best Athletics:** In partnership with Indianapolis Public Schools, we offer sports including soccer, volleyball, tennis, track, and basketball. These programs emphasize teamwork, sportsmanship, and personal growth rather than individual rivalries.

VISITORS, VOLUNTEERS, AND CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

We warmly welcome families and community members into Eleanor Skillen School 34! In alignment with Montessori principles, we deeply respect the peaceful atmosphere of our classrooms and the children's uninterrupted concentration during their daily work cycle.

Because it takes time at the beginning of the school year to establish a settled environment where children are deeply absorbed in their work, formal classroom observations begin after the first Student Progress conference in October.

Formal Classroom Observations (Adults Only): Scheduled observation appointments are designed for adults only to keep disruptions to a minimum. Because classes regularly move throughout the building for specials (art, music, physical education, library), observation visits must be scheduled in advance with the school secretary or classroom teacher to ensure the class will be in the room.

Quick "Pop-In" Visits: If you would like to quickly check on your scholar without entering the room, you are welcome to "pop in." Upon signing in at the front office,



a staff member will escort you to the classroom, where you can observe briefly through the door window without disturbing the environment.

To help give you the most accurate picture of a working Montessori classroom, we ask all observers to practice the following guidelines:

- **Take a Seat:** A designated visitor's chair is provided in each classroom. Please enter quietly and remain seated during your visit.
- **Protect the Work Cycle:** Please do not initiate conversations with the guide, assistant, or children while work is underway.
- **If a Child Approaches You:** If a curious student speaks to you, give a brief, friendly answer and kindly suggest: "You may go on with your work now so I can continue my work of observing."
- **Post-Observation Questions:** Classroom guides and assistants are actively facilitating learning and cannot stop to answer questions during your visit. Staff will gladly answer your questions or address concerns during a separate, pre-arranged conference after your observation time.
- **Digital Courtesy & Environment:** Silence all electronic devices and keep them out of student view. Photography and video recording are strictly prohibited to protect student privacy. Food, drinks, chewing gum, and non-enrolled siblings are not permitted in the classroom during observations.

When observing a Montessori environment, focus on the rhythm of the room rather than direct teacher-led instruction:

- **The Prepared Environment:** Notice the orderly layout, child-level accessibility of materials, and how attractive, inviting displays encourage independent exploration.
- **Interactions & Respect:** Observe the supportive interactions between children, between scholars and teachers, and among staff members. Look for mutual respect, kindness, and cooperation.
- **Atmosphere & Social Climate:** Watch how children balance freedom with structure. Notice their work habits, levels of concentration, and how independently they select, complete, and return their work.
- **Child Focus & Presentations:** Follow one child for a period of time to see how they organize their time and transition between activities. Observe how the guide presents materials to individuals or small groups to spark self-discovery.

SCHOOL SAFETY & DAILY ACCESS

- **Drop-Off Independence:** To foster self-reliance and maintain campus security, parents drop their children off at the main entrance each morning so students can navigate their arrival routine independently.
- **Building Security:** All exterior doors are locked after student arrival. Visitors must request entrance at the front door bell, present a valid photo ID, and sign in at the main office before proceeding anywhere in the building. Visitors must also sign out in the main office prior to leaving.



VOLUNTEER CLEARANCE PROCESS

All classroom volunteers and field trip chaperones must be listed on the district's "Approved Volunteer List" before assisting:

- Annual Background Check: Every volunteer must complete a background check each school year (approvals do not carry over from previous years).
- How to Apply: Complete the online application at myips.org or through our school website. Processing typically takes 1 to 2 weeks.
- Confirmation: Contact the main office or check with our Administrative Assistant to verify your approval status prior to your scheduled volunteer date.

BUS TRANSPORTATION PROCEDURES & SAFETY GUIDELINES

Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) provides transportation to all eligible students who live within school boundaries and beyond the designated walking zone. Transportation routes, stops, and schedules are managed directly by the IPS Transportation Department, not school staff.

Before the school year begins, IPS Transportation mails a letter to families detailing the student's assigned bus number, bus stop location, and scheduled pick-up and drop-off times.

Daily Bus Arrival & Dismissal

- Bus Stop Arrival: Students must be at their designated bus stop 10 minutes prior to the scheduled pick-up time. Buses stop only at authorized locations.
- School Arrival (9:00am): Buses line up in the front parking lot, and students are welcomed into the building through the front entrance.
- School Dismissal (beginning at 3:45pm): Bus riders are dismissed to load and depart from the front parking lot through Door 4.
- Supervision: Dedicated staff members, including our Bus Coordinator, supervise bus loading and unloading daily to ensure a safe transition.

Same-Day Transportation Changes (2:00pm Cutoff)

For the safety of all students, any change to your child's regular dismissal routine requires advance notice:

- Submit a Written Note: Send a note with your child to give to their teacher in the morning.
- Contact the Main Office: Call the office at 317-226-4234 (or 317-226-4251) before 2:00pm.
- Strict Cutoff: Transportation changes cannot be accepted after 2:00pm, as staff cannot guarantee messages will reach teachers and students before dismissal routines begin.
- Default Routine: Without prior written or verbal confirmation from a parent/guardian before 2:00pm, students will automatically be sent home via their standard daily transportation method.



Bus Stop Safety Expectations

Safety begins before the bus arrives. Please review these essential guidelines with your child:

1. Wait Safely: Stand back from the curb, stay out of the street, and avoid horseplay or games of tag near traffic.
2. Never Run After a Bus: Caution your child never to run toward or alongside a bus once it begins moving, and never cross in front of a moving bus. Attempting to catch a bus after it has departed creates an extremely hazardous situation.

Bus Conduct & Discipline Policy

Riding the bus is a privilege conditioned on appropriate behavior. Per Indiana State Law, the bus driver is in full charge of the vehicle, and students are required to follow the driver's instructions at all times.

- Seating: Drivers may assign specific seats to students to maintain order and safety.
- Misbehavior Reporting: If a student breaks a safety rule, the driver will issue a written Bus Conduct Report to inform parents.
- Progressive Consequences: Continued or severe infractions will involve school administration and may result in a parent conference, formal discipline, or temporary/permanent suspension of bus privileges.
- Parent Responsibility During Suspension: If a student's bus privileges are suspended, parents/guardians are legally responsible for providing transportation to and from school during the suspension period.

Handling Bus Delays & Key Contacts

School staff do not have direct contact with individual buses on their routes and rely on the same dispatch systems as parents. For real-time updates regarding late buses, contacting IPS Transportation directly provides the fastest response.

- IPS Transportation Dispatch: 317-226-4500 (Call for route questions, late buses, or stop concerns)
- School Main Office: 317-226-4234 (Available during regular office hours)
- After 4:30pm: The school office closes at 4:30 PM. For late bus inquiries after hours, please contact IPS Transportation at 317-226-4500 or IPS School Police at 317-226-4633.

WALKERS & CAR RIDERS - TRANSPORTATION PROCEDURES & SAFETY GUIDELINES

Morning Arrival

Our staff looks forward to welcoming students each morning! School doors open at 9:00 AM, when supervisory team members take their posts. For your child's safety and well-being, please ensure they arrive at or after 9:00 AM so they are properly supervised.

Car Rider Drop-Off (9:00 AM – 9:20 AM): Vehicles may drop off students at Door 9 at the rear of the building, where staff are ready with a warm greeting.

Tardy Arrivals (After 9:20 AM): For student safety, outdoor staff transition inside at 9:20 AM to begin the morning routine. If arriving after 9:20 AM, please park and escort your child into the main office to sign them in and receive a class admission pass.



Afternoon Dismissal

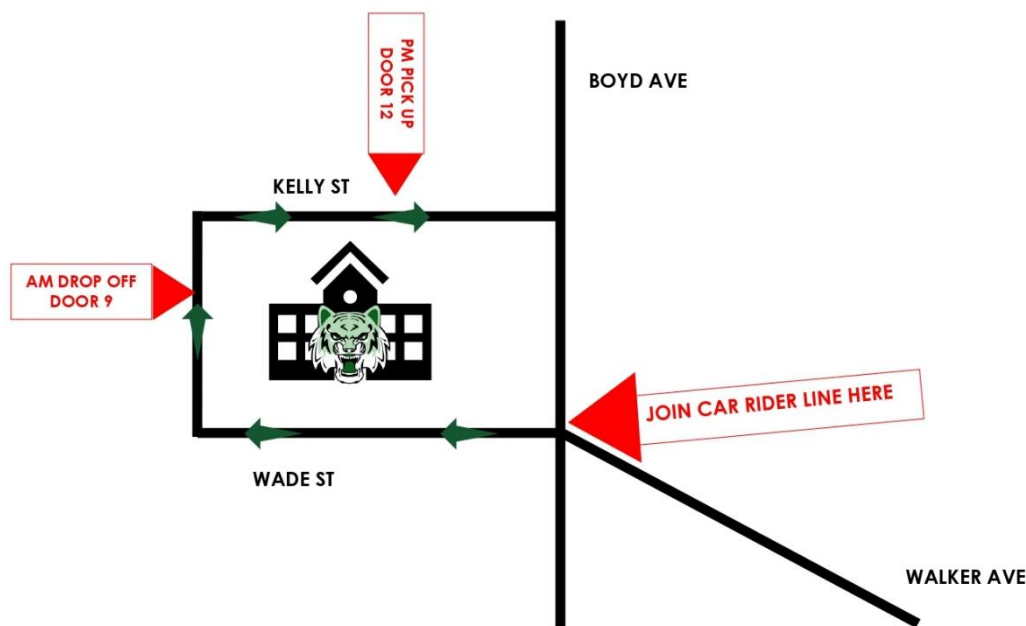
Our afternoon routine begins with announcements at 3:45 PM. To maintain a calm and organized environment, students are dismissed in gradual waves based on their transportation method.

Walkers

We define "walkers" as students who walk all the way between school and their home door. For the safety and supervision of every child, we ask that all vehicle drop-offs and pick-ups take place through our official car rider line rather than nearby streets. Our car line is designed to move quickly, and using it ensures every scholar remains under the direct care of our team until safely in your vehicle. Thank you for partnering with us to keep our school zone secure!

Car Riders

- **Pick-Up Location & Time:** Car riders are dismissed from the gym doors starting at approximately 3:50 PM.
- **Lineup Procedure:** Drivers may begin lining up at 3:45 PM along Wade Street (south and west sides of the building). To help us be great community neighbors, please avoid lining up on Walker or Boyd Streets and take care not to block neighborhood driveways. For everyone's safety, please remain inside your vehicle as you move through the line.
- **Car Rider Window Numbers:** To ensure a swift and secure dismissal, all vehicles in the car line must display an official car rider number sign in the front window. Window numbers are distributed at Back to School Night and during the first week of school. Drivers without a window number will simply be asked to park and show a valid photo ID in the main office to complete pick-up.
- **Late Pick-Up:** Students who are not picked up by 4:05 PM will wait safely in the main office. If you encounter unexpected delays, please call the office so we can reassure your child. We ask that all late pick-ups arrive by 4:15 PM.



GENERAL SCHOOL OPERATIONS & PROCEDURES

Daily School Schedule

- 8:30 am Office Opens
- 9:00 am Doors Open for Students
- 9:20 am Tardy Bell
- 3:45 pm Dismissal Begins
- 4:30 pm Office Closes

Attendance

Every day in a Montessori classroom offers essential opportunities for discovery, sequential learning, and community building. Because our curriculum relies heavily on hands-on materials, small-group presentations, and peer collaboration, regular attendance is vital to your child's academic development.

Chronic Absenteeism

Defined as missing 10% or more of enrolled school days—whether excused or unexcused—at any point during the school year. Chronic absenteeism creates structural gaps in a child's learning journey and significantly jeopardizes academic success.

Reporting Absences

If your student must miss school, please notify us as early as possible on the morning of the absence:

- Morning Notification: Contact the main office before 9:00 AM by calling (317) 226-4234 or emailing the main office.
- Written Verification: Upon returning to school, your child must submit a written parental note or official medical verification detailing the specific reason for the absence directly to the main office. Absences without timely notification or valid institutional verification are classified as unexcused.
- Prearranged Travel: Prearranged family travel or leisure trips taken during scheduled instructional periods are recorded as unexcused absences.

Excused Absences

- In accordance with Indiana state law and Indianapolis Public Schools policy, absences are classified as excused for the following reasons
 - Illness: Accompanied by a parent call/note or an official doctor's note
 - Bereavement: Death in the immediate family with a parent note.
 - Religious Observances: Recognition of religious holidays and observances.
 - Pre-Approved Absences: Specific educational or emergency circumstances pre-approved by the principal.

Mandatory Attendance Interventions & Legal Requirements

To ensure every student stays on track, Eleanor Skillen School 34 adheres to Indiana State Law and IPS district attendance frameworks:



1. 5 Absences in a 10-Week Period (Indiana SEA 482): In strict compliance with Indiana attendance law, any student who accumulates five (5) absences within any rolling 10-week period—whether excused or unexcused—triggers a mandatory attendance intervention. The school will hold a supportive attendance conference within 10 instructional days to establish or revise an Attendance Success Plan.
2. 6 Unexcused Absences (per Semester): The principal or administrative designee will invite the family to a collaborative conference to address attendance obstacles and revise support strategies.
3. 10 Unexcused Absences (Legal Referral): Accumulating ten (10) unexcused absences represents a critical loss of instructional time. Per state mandate and district policy, the school is required to initiate a formal legal referral to the Marion County Prosecutor's Office for educational neglect/truancy and may submit a report to Child Protective Services (CPS).

Early Dismissal Guidelines

- End-of-day routines—including closing meetings, community clean-up, and daily reflection circles—are an integral part of the Montessori work period. Early departures before our scheduled 3:45 PM dismissal disrupt these important community routines.
- Identification Required: An authorized adult must present a valid government-issued photo ID in the main office vestibule and sign the secure exit log before a student can be released.
- Classroom Departure: To protect instructional time, students remain in their classrooms and will be called down to the front desk only after adult identity is verified in person.
- Appointments: Families are strongly encouraged to schedule routine medical, dental, and personal appointments during school breaks or outside of instructional hours whenever possible.

Academic Continuity & Makeup Work Policy

We want every student to maintain academic continuity, even when circumstances cause them to miss school:

- Full Academic Credit: Students in grades K–6 earn full academic credit for all completed makeup work resulting from an absence.
- In-School & Out-of-School Suspensions: Students serving in-school or out-of-school suspensions are provided with all classroom assignments, are required to complete them, and will receive full credit upon completion.

CLASSROOM CELEBRATIONS & BIRTHDAY POLICY

At Eleanor Skillen School 34, we celebrate each child's life and milestones using intentional Montessori traditions that honor the individual without disrupting the educational environment. Individual student birthday parties with outside treats or gifts do not occur during instructional time.

How We Celebrate Birthdays

The "Celebration of Life" (Walk Around the Sun): In a Montessori setting, birthdays are recognized through a beautiful cultural presentation. The child holds a globe



and walks around a symbolic sun once for each year of their life, sharing family photographs and historic timeline milestones. This connects concepts of history and science directly to their personal identity and growth.

School & Classroom Recognition

Birthday students are also celebrated with a special schoolwide morning announcement, a birthday pencil, and simple traditions planned by their classroom teacher.

Our Five Core Commitments

Our uniform celebration guidelines are firmly rooted in five core commitments to our scholars and families:

1. **Protection of Uninterrupted Work Cycles:** Authentic Montessori education relies on deep, sustained cognitive concentration. Spontaneous, food-based parties fragment student attention and interrupt the critical work blocks necessary for deep concept mastery.
2. **Commitment to Equity and Inclusion:** Bringing outside treats or commercial-themed items can create unintended socio-economic comparisons. A standardized, school-guided tradition ensures every child is celebrated with equal dignity and joy.
3. **Health, Safety, and Allergy Management:** To guarantee the physical safety of all scholars—especially those managing severe or life-threatening food allergies—we maintain strict control over food entering our learning spaces.
4. **Preservation of Instructional Minutes:** Every minute of our school day is dedicated to student growth and literacy goals. Minimizing non-educational interruptions preserves our instructional focus.
5. **Respect for the Prepared Environment:** Celebrating through cultural presentations honors the child's holistic development while maintaining the order and harmony of the classroom.

Food, Balloon, and Gift Guidelines

- **No Outside Birthday Items:** Students are not permitted to bring treats, cupcakes, candy, balloons, toys, or goodie bags to school for birthdays.
- **Pre-Packaged Food for Special Events:** On rare occasions when a teacher requests food donations for an official, planned classroom event, all items must be store-bought and pre-packaged. Food prepared in private homes will not be served at school under any circumstances.

Religious Accommodations & Exemptions

We deeply respect the diverse cultural and religious beliefs of our school community. If your family's religious practices preclude your child from participating in specific school activities—such as classroom celebrations, health instruction, or the Pledge of Allegiance—please notify your child's teacher in writing. We encourage scheduling a brief conference prior to or at the start of the school year so we can establish thoughtful classroom accommodations that honor your family's beliefs.



SCHOOL CULTURE, ANTI-BULLYING, & BEHAVIORAL SUPPORT FRAMEWORK



Eleanor Skillen School 34, A Montessori School
One Pride: Growing with Grace, Guided from Within



SCHOOL PEACE AGREEMENT

We are peaceful, purposeful, and respectful.

We keep our bodies and objects to ourselves, follow directions, and take care of our environment.

Hallway Transitions	Cafeteria	Playground	Restrooms	Learning Environments
• Use walking feet. • Allow others to focus on their work. • Be mindful of your surroundings. • Use the appropriate voice level.	• Raise your hand for permission to get up. • Use your inside voice. • Eat only your food. • Get all items before sitting down.	• Use equipment safely. • Take turns. • Agree to the rules of the activity.	• Give others privacy. • Use your inside voice.	• Use materials correctly. • Follow the learning environment's peace agreement. • Allow others to focus on their work.

Grace, Courtesy, & Restorative Practices

Beginning Early Childhood, all students are explicitly taught community skills through our specialized Grace and Courtesy curriculum. Students practice essential social skills daily, such as waiting patiently for materials, using peaceful voices, respecting physical boundaries, and moving carefully through common spaces to keep everyone safe.

When behavioral challenges arise, our school utilizes Restorative Practices rather than purely punitive measures. Students participate in guided reflection to understand the impact of their choices, repair relational harm, and restore community balance. Our schoolwide discipline structure utilizes a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework, beginning with positive teacher redirects, moving to reflective individual conferences, and involving specialized administration or social work teams as an advanced tier of support.

Comprehensive Anti-Bullying Policy

Eleanor Skillen School 34 is a certified No-Bullying Zone. The administration and staff are committed to providing all students a learning environment free from bullying and harassment based on race, color, religion, national origin, disability/handicap, sexual orientation, ancestry, gender expression or identity, and appearance. We expect all students and staff to treat each other with civility and respect.

- Legal Definition of Bullying: In accordance with Indiana Code 20-33-8-0.2, bullying is defined as overt, unwanted, and repeated acts or gestures—including verbal, written, or digital communications, physical acts,



aggression, or other behaviors—committed by a student or group of students against another student with the intent to harass, ridicule, humiliate, intimidate, or harm the targeted student, creating an objectively hostile environment.

- **Jurisdiction:** Bullying is strictly prohibited on school grounds, while traveling to or from school, on district transportation, at school-sponsored functions, and through school-provided electronic devices or communication platforms.
- **Reporting Process:** Parents or students who suspect bullying is occurring should report the matter immediately to the principal or administration. Official IPS Bullying Report Forms are readily accessible in the main office.
- **Investigation & Accountability:** All submitted reports undergo a mandatory, rigorous five-day administrative investigation. Consequences will be assessed as appropriate, consistent with the Board's Student Discipline policy, up to and including suspension or expulsion. Results of the investigation are paired with timely family notification and targeted restorative interventions.

Sensory Regulation & Emergency Intervention Safeguards

To support emotional self-regulation and protect the instructional integrity of our learning environments, our school utilizes a stepped approach to student support:

- **Individual Classroom Peace Corners:** Equipped with calming sensory tools, Peace Corners offer students a safe, quiet space within the classroom to process emotions and regain focus independently.
- **The Reset Room:** This supervised, therapeutic space is used as a targeted intervention when classroom-level supports (such as a buddy room visit) are insufficient, or when a student is exhibiting direct physical or verbal aggression. It serves as a short-term bridge for scholars to complete a regulation period and restore their readiness to return to learning. This room is supervised by our Grace & Courtesy Coach.
- **Emergency Intervention Protocols:** In rare instances where a student experiences an acute behavioral crisis and poses an immediate threat of physical harm to themselves or others, trained Crisis Prevention Team personnel may implement a temporary physical hold strictly for safety stabilization. In accordance with district safety protocols, parents/guardians are notified immediately by telephone whenever an exceptional physical intervention occurs, and the event is formally documented.

HEALTH SERVICES, STUDENT ILLNESS, & MEDICATION POLICY

Shalom Health Care Clinic

Eleanor Skillen proudly hosts an on-site, school-based Shalom Health Care Clinic staffed by a full-time Nurse Practitioner. The clinic can diagnose, treat, and complete athletic physicals.

- **Enrollment & Cost:** Services are provided at no cost to families. Shalom bills Medicaid and third-party health insurance directly. **To utilize clinic services, students must have a completed consent form on file with parent/guardian permission.**

Student Illness & Injury Policy

If a student becomes ill or is injured during the school day, the nurse practitioner will evaluate the situation.



- **Exclusion Guidelines (When Students Are Sent Home):** Students will be sent home if they exhibit a temperature greater than 99.9°F, show signs of diarrhea, or present symptoms of a communicable disease. Students may not remain in the clinic for extended periods.
- **Parent Pickup:** If a student is unable to return to class due to illness or injury, staff will contact parents/guardians to arrange immediate transportation home.
- **Keeping Sick Students Home:** Please do not send your child to school if you suspect or know they are ill.
- **Injury Reporting:** Any accident resulting in injury to a student, staff member, or visitor must be reported promptly in writing, and the injured individual will be referred for appropriate medical attention.

Medication Administration Policy

All student medications must be stored and administered exclusively inside the school health clinic under the direct supervision of the school nurse or authorized healthcare personnel. Students are strictly prohibited from carrying any medication in their pockets, backpacks, cubbies, or classrooms.

- **Prescription Medications:** Requires a written prescription from a physician, a signed parent authorization form on file, and the medication in its original pharmacy container clearly labeled with the student's name and exact dosage. Staff will never administer a dosage other than what is authorized by the physician's prescription.
- **Over-the-Counter (OTC) Medications:** Non-prescription medications require a completed written parent permission form accompanied by precise dispensing instructions.

STUDENT DRESS CODE

At Eleanor Skillen School 34, our student attire policy protects safety, hygiene, and a focused learning environment while honoring individual scholar identity.

Daily Attire Requirements

- **Tops:** Shirts with sleeves that completely cover the midriff (e.g., t-shirts, blouses, sweaters, sweatshirts, or hoodies).
- **Bottoms:** Pants, shorts, skirts, or dresses that are free of structural holes or tears and extend to fingertip length.
- **Footwear:** Fully closed-toe shoes are required daily to ensure student safety during physical education and active outdoor play.

Headwear & Religious Observances

- **Religious Headwear:** Head coverings worn in observance of a student's culture or religion are fully permitted and respected.
- **Fashion Headwear:** Standard hats, bonnets, durags, wave caps, and similar non-religious head coverings must be removed and stored in cubbies or backpacks during the school day.



Restrictions & Safety Considerations

- **Prohibited Imagery:** Clothing, jewelry, or accessories featuring profane language, drug/alcohol promotion, weapons, hate speech, or inappropriate imagery are strictly prohibited.
- **Activity-Specific Attire:** Additional attire requirements may be enforced when necessary for student safety in specific settings (such as physical education, science activities, or special field trips). Reasonable variations are also permitted for activities such as gymnastics or swimming.

For complete details regarding districtwide expectations, please view the official IPS Student Dress Code policy at www.myips.org.

TECHNOLOGY & OTHER PERSONAL PROPERTY

In accordance with IPS district policy and state law, personal technology (smartphones, flip phones, tablets, personal laptops, smartwatches, gaming devices, cameras):

- **During School Hours (9:00 AM – 4:00 PM):** Must be turned off completely and stored out of sight in backpacks, cubbies, or lockers.
- **Prohibited Use:** Personal wireless devices may not be used between 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM without explicit staff authorization. Exceptions are made for documented IEP/504 accommodations.
- **Travel:** Responsible device use is permitted before 9:00 AM and after 4:00 PM while traveling to and from school. Bus use is at the bus driver's discretion.

Digital Privacy & Cyber-Safety

- **Unauthorized Recording:** Students are strictly prohibited from using devices to record, photograph, or transmit images/audio of students or staff without permission.
- **Academic Integrity:** Photographing or recording tests, quizzes, or answer keys is considered academic dishonesty.
- **Cyberbullying:** Using devices to record, share, or post content that demeans or harms others is a severe violation (Level 3 or Level 4 offense) and will result in disciplinary action.

Confiscation Protocol

Devices used without permission will be confiscated by staff and delivered to the main office.

1. The violation will be documented in PowerSchool.
2. **Parent Pick-Up Required:** Confiscated devices will only be returned directly to a parent or guardian.

Eleanor Skillen School 34 and IPS assume no financial or legal responsibility for lost, stolen, or damaged personal technology or personal items.

SCHOOL PROPERTY

Students are responsible for the proper care of all books, equipment, and furniture supplied by the school. Damage or unauthorized use of software on the computer system could result in students being asked to pay for the cost of correcting the



system. Students shall not mark school furniture, walls, ceilings, floors, or equipment with a pen, pencil, paint, or any other instrument. Students shall not tamper with fire alarms, fire extinguishers or any electrical systems. Any student who willfully destroys school property through vandalism, arson, larceny, or who creates a hazard to the safety of our students will be referred to school administration.

INTEGRATED FIELD LEARNING EXPERIENCES (FIELD TRIPS)

Field trips and off-campus learning experiences are an integral part of your child's educational growth. Designed to build background knowledge, deepen reading comprehension, and bring classroom learning to life through rich experiences across the Indianapolis area, these excursions are vital chapters in our academic curriculum.

Equity & Curricular Access

- Access for Every Student: Because field learning experiences are fully integrated into our academic curriculum, equal opportunity to participate is guaranteed to every student regardless of financial capacity.
- Inclusive Participation: Off-campus learning is a core instructional component; therefore, students are not excluded from participating as a punitive disciplinary measure.

Permission Slips & Safety Requirements

- Written Permission Slips: A separate, signed physical permission slip is required for every field trip. Permission slips are distributed at least 10 school days prior to the excursion. Please sign and return permission slips on time to ensure your child does not miss out on the experience.
- No Verbal or Phone Permissions: In strict compliance with safety regulations, verbal or phone permissions cannot be accepted under any circumstances. A physical signed document must be on file for a student to leave campus.

Chaperone Guidelines

Family involvement helps make our field trips successful! Parents and guardians who wish to serve as chaperones must have an active, approved criminal history background check on file with the front office prior to the excursion.

SPECIAL SERVICES

Eleanor Skillen Elementary offers a host of student support services:

- MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Support) – A school-based support team which determines interventions and supports for students who are considered at-risk for academics or behaviors
- Intervention Groups – Small group instruction (5-6 students) provided to all students. The reading groups are based on individual skills and are designed to meet students' exact needs so that children see maximum growth potential.
- Social Worker - Our school social worker will provide many resources to families and students. She offers community resources, crisis intervention, wrap-around service support, and family support for those in need.



- Adult & Child – Adult & Child is a behavioral health counseling service who can provide services to children and families in need. The counseling services can be for grief, divorce support, anxiety, depression, ADHD, or a host of other supports.
- High Ability Programming – The Indianapolis Public Schools offer a wide array of supports for High Ability Students. If you believe your child is eligible for High Ability Services, please speak to the main office for additional information.
- Special Education Services – Eleanor Skillen has numerous supports for students with disabilities. We have several special education teachers on staff, along with a speech & language pathologist, occupational therapist, and physical therapist. We host two special programs--Developmental PreK and Life Skills. If you would like additional information on special education services, please contact the main office.

ADDRESS AND PHONE CHANGES

If a parent moves after the start of the school year, a parent may request that the student remain in the school in the attendance boundary in which the parent previously had resided for the remainder of that school year. **Under this provision, transportation to and from school shall be the parent/guardian's responsibility.** We ask that you visit the school office to provide updated proof of address if you should move during the school year. You will also be asked to sign an Administrative Transfer form with agreements regarding attendance and student behavior.

If your contact information should change, please call the school office and provide the secretary with a current phone number at which you can be reached. All new numbers must be entered in our online system to provide a successful home-school connection. It is vital that the school has a way to contact a parent/guardian during the school day!

CHILD CUSTODY

"Parent" as defined in the Indianapolis Public School Bylaws and Policies (Section 0000 Number 0100) is the natural, adoptive, or surrogate parents or the party designated by the courts as the legal guardian or custodian of a student.

STUDENT RECORDS

Right of Access.

A parent of a student or an eligible student has the right to inspect and review such student's education records maintained by IPS. A parent, or either parent, shall be presumed to have authority to inspect and review the student's records unless IPS has been provided with written notice that there is a court order that restricts or terminates the parent's authority to access the student's records under applicable State statutes governing matters such as divorce, separation, and legal custody.

Manner of Exercising Such Rights.

Such rights shall be exercised by presenting a written request to the office of the Superintendent or the principal of the school which the student attends. The request shall specify the specific records which the parent or eligible student wishes to examine. In the event that the exact records as described in the request cannot



be identified the appropriate school official will immediately contact the parent or eligible student by letter or otherwise, to determine the desired scope of records to be inspected.

Such inspection shall be made during reasonable business hours determined by mutual agreement between the appropriate school official and the parent or eligible student, but in no event shall be more than forty-five (45) days after receipt of the written request. A school official shall be present during any such inspection to assist in the interpretation of the records where they reasonably require any professional interpretation. The parent(s) must submit sufficient proof of his/her identity to the school official before inspection of a student's records shall be permitted.

AFTER SCHOOL EVENTS/ATHLETICS

Students will NOT be permitted to attend any after school event, including athletic games on and off site, without the supervision of a parent/guardian.

LOST AND FOUND ITEMS

Please label personal articles with student's names. If an item is lost, check the school's Lost and Found located in the main office next to the clinic.

CAFETERIA INFORMATION

Students may bring their lunches, but may not bring snacks unless directed to do so by the teacher. Please send items that do not need to be kept cold or need heated. We emphasize good nutritional habits at School #34. Students are not allowed to bring gum, candy, large bags of chips, or carbonated beverages to school (soda or energy drinks).

If you are on the approved volunteer list, you are welcome to join your child for lunch during his/her regularly scheduled lunch period. No outside food (with the exception of student sack lunch brought from home) is permitted in the cafeteria during student lunch period. If permitted by the principal, parents/visitors/guests may bring in an outside student meal on a pre-approved special occasion. This meal must be eaten in the designated area. Other expectations may be defined by the administrator on a case-by-case basis.

SCHOOL SAFETY

In accordance with the state law, all schools conduct fire drills, severe weather and lock down drills. These drills prepare students and staff to act without panic and to protect them from danger in the event of a disaster. Fire and security drills are held monthly. Posted escape routes and emergency stations are found in each room. Children must move quickly and quietly and follow the directions of the teacher in charge.

During these drills, teachers lead students to designated areas and take a count of students to ensure that all are safe. Students should remain quiet, calm and orderly at all times in order to listen for emergency directions if necessary. Returning to regular classroom procedures is accomplished with the same orderliness.

Eleanor Skillen School 34, A Montessori School staff and students will practice our responses to various scenarios throughout the year, including:



Fire Drills- once a month
 Tornado Drills- once a year
 Lockdown Drills- once a year

We reserve the right to practice these drills more frequently as needed to ensure all students and staff know what to do in the case of an actual occurrence. It is important that students follow all the rules of the emergency responses to keep them safe. Please reinforce this with your child throughout the year.

INCLEMENT WEATHER PLAN

The School Board recognizes that its responsibility for the safety of students extends to possible natural and man-made disasters and that such emergencies are best met by preparedness and planning.

The Board authorizes a system of emergency preparedness which shall ensure that:
 the health and safety of students and staff are safeguarded;
 minimum disruption to the educational program occurs;
 students are helped to learn self-reliance and trained to respond sensibly to emergency situations.

All threats to the safety of Corporation facilities shall be identified by appropriate personnel and responded to in accordance with the plan for emergency preparedness.

In the event of inclement weather, the following practices will occur:

- Snow, Cold Weather, Icy Roads – School Messenger will be utilized to notify all stakeholders of delays or cancellations. In the event of a two-hour delay, students will be counted tardy after 11:20 a.m. The school building will open at 11:00a.m. on two-hour delay days.
- Cold Weather – Children will go outside for recess unless the temperature is below 10 degrees Fahrenheit. This includes actual temperature or wind chill. Please send your child in appropriate attire during cold weather months.

USE OF TOBACCO POLICY

Please be aware of the policy prohibiting the use of tobacco on property owned or leased by the IPS at all times. **This includes personal vehicles while they on IPS property.** The Board recognizes the health hazard presented to students and staff and is working to insure the safety of our students. Everyone on School #34 property is expected to comply with this policy at all times.

NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

Indianapolis Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, creed, national origin, sex, disability, age, or sexual orientation in its programs and activities. For inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policy, contact the Human Resources Division, 120 E. Walnut St., Indianapolis, IN 46204, (317) 226-4150.



TITLE IX POLICY

Title IX Policy Forbidding Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment of Students Policy against sex discrimination

In accordance with applicable law, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the Indiana Civil Rights Law, it is the policy of Indianapolis Public Schools that no student will be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in any education program or activity on the basis of sex. A student may not, on the basis of sex, be limited in the enjoyment of any right, privilege, advantage, or opportunity, including courses, extracurricular activities, benefits, and facilities.

Prohibition against sexual harassment

The policy against sex discrimination includes a prohibition against sexual harassment. Sexual harassment consists of sexual advances, sexual gestures, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that is unwelcome and that limits or denies, on the basis of sex, a student's ability to participate in or benefit from the education program.

This policy prohibits sexual harassment by an employee or agent of IPS, by another student, and by third parties who come in contact with students at school or at school-related activities. This policy also prohibits any employee from being in a locked room with a student.

Title IX Coordinator

IPS' Title IX Coordinator, who is responsible for IPS' compliance with Title IX and directs the investigation of complaints may be reached at: Title IX Coordinator 120 E. Walnut St., Room 602B. Indianapolis, IN 46204, (317) 226-3870,

Making a Complaint

Parents and students are encouraged promptly to submit a complaint or provide information about suspected sex discrimination or harassment so that IPS can take appropriate action to resolve the situation. A parent or student should make the complaint orally or in writing to the building administrator, school counselor, school social worker, or directly to the Title IX Coordinator. A complaint should be made as soon as possible after the complained-of incident, preferably within ten days after the parent has been notified by a student of sex discrimination or harassment. However, IPS accepts complaints after the ten-day filing period.

Investigation and Corrective Action

The Title IX Coordinator will promptly investigate, or direct the investigation of complaints and reports of sex discrimination or harassment. The investigation will be completed in a timely manner. Depending on the nature and complexity of the issues, it should generally take no more than 30 days. After the investigation, the Title IX Coordinator will report the result to the Superintendent, including, where appropriate, making a recommendation for reasonable, timely, age-appropriate, and effective corrective action. The Superintendent may impose discipline up to and including a recommendation for employee termination or student expulsion. The Title IX Coordinator will advise the



Complainant and the person accused of misconduct, in writing, whether or not the allegations were found to be substantiated. The decision of the Superintendent is final unless an employee or student has a statutory right to challenge the Superintendent's recommendation for expulsion or termination or an employee has a collectively bargained right to challenge the imposition of discipline.



Therapy Dog No-Contact Request Form

As part of our school community, our therapy dogs, **Cleo** and **Claudius**, assist in supporting student well-being and classroom visits. We recognize and respect that individual students may have allergies, fears, or personal/cultural reasons that require them to avoid interaction with dogs.

If you prefer that your child **does not** have direct contact with Cleo and Claudius during the school year, please complete this form and return it to the main office or your child's classroom teacher.

Student & Family Information

- **Student Full Name:** _____
- **Teacher / Room #:** _____
- **Parent/Guardian Name(s):** _____

Reason for Request (Optional - Check all that apply):

☐ **Medical/Allergies** (Please specify severity if applicable): _____

☐ **Fear/Anxiety around dogs**

☐ **Personal/Family Preference**

☐ **Other:** _____

Parent/Guardian Acknowledgment

By signing below, I request that my student, _____, be excused from direct interaction with Cleo and Claudius (e.g., petting, sitting next to, or reading directly to the therapy dogs).

I understand that while Cleo and Claudius may still be present in public school areas (such as hallways or schoolwide gatherings), school staff will ensure my child is given appropriate distance and will not be asked to interact with the dogs.

- **Parent/Guardian Signature:** _____
- **Date:** _____



Family Handbook Sign-Off 2026-2027

Please read and discuss this handbook with your child. Afterwards, please sign and return this form to your child's classroom teacher.

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

PHOTO RELEASE

_____ Please initial here if you **DO NOT** wish for your child to be photographed at school.

_____ Please initial here if you **DO NOT** allow your child's photograph to appear on any of our Eleanor Skillen social media pages. Please note, we never post student names with photos. These social media pages are run by school administrators or designees.

