



Duxberry Park Elementary School

Heather Krekeler, Principal

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Mission: Each student is highly educated, prepared for leadership and service, and empowered for success as a citizen in a global community.

Dear Duxberry Park Elementary School Families,

Welcome to the **2026–2027 school year!** It is with tremendous excitement and gratitude that I welcome you back to Duxberry Park Elementary School and introduce myself as your new principal. I am truly honored to join the Duxberry community and look forward to partnering with our students, families, staff, and community throughout the year ahead.

For more than a decade, I have had the privilege of serving Columbus City Schools in a variety of roles, including classroom teacher, instructional coach, Regional English Language Arts Transformation Coach, and most recently, Leadership Intern at Oakmont Elementary School. Each of these experiences has strengthened my belief in the power of excellent teaching, strong relationships, meaningful collaboration, and high expectations for every student.

I am committed to creating a school environment that is academically rigorous, joyful, safe, and welcoming. I believe high expectations and strong support must go hand in hand. Strong partnerships with our families and community will be essential to our success, and I look forward to getting to know you, listening to your ideas, celebrating our students' successes, and working together when challenges arise.

Create. Inspire. Move Forward Together.

This year, our school theme is **"Create, Inspire, Move Forward Together,"** with our tagline:

"Everything We Need to Learn, Lead, and Create!"

At Duxberry Park Elementary, we believe our students already possess incredible talents, ideas, creativity, and potential. As we move forward together, we will build the knowledge, perseverance, collaboration, creativity, and kindness needed to learn, lead, and grow.

As an arts-infused school community, we will continue celebrating the creativity that makes Duxberry special while maintaining a strong focus on academic achievement.

Together, we will dream, create, perform, learn, and achieve!

Preparing for the First Day

Families can help students begin the school year successfully by preparing now:

Establish sleep routines. Begin transitioning your child back to a consistent bedtime and morning routine. Start setting alarms now so that waking up and arriving at school on time becomes part of the daily routine.

Download the CCS App. Stay connected to important district and school information throughout the year.

Activate and update your Parent Portal. Please make sure your address, phone number, emergency contacts, and other contact information are current before the first day of school. If you have not yet activated your Parent Portal, please do so before school begins.

Please note that **we can no longer make these changes at the school level.** The phone number listed as your primary phone contact should be the number where you would like to receive school phone calls and text messages.

Set up daycare transportation. If your child will be transported to or from a daycare provider, please make these arrangements with the daycare **before the first day of school.**

School Hours & Arrival

School Hours: 9:00 a.m.–3:15 p.m.

Students should maintain regular school hours and arrive ready to begin their day. Our school day will begin promptly with morning announcements.

Students are considered tardy beginning at 9:01 a.m.

It is imperative that students arrive at school on time. When students are consistently late, they miss important morning instruction, classroom routines, announcements, and opportunities to prepare for learning.

- Tardies are tracked and reported to the District.
- If your child arrives after 9:00 a.m., **an adult must bring the student into the school building and sign them in.**
- Consistent, on-time attendance helps students establish routines and sets them up for academic success.

Dismissal Changes

To ensure a **safe, organized, and efficient dismissal**, all changes to a student's normal dismissal plan must be communicated to the school office **no later than 3:00 p.m. each day.**

As our office and staff prepare for dismissal, it is important that we have adequate time to communicate changes to the appropriate staff members and ensure students are sent to the correct location.

Please notify the school office of all dismissal changes by 3:00 p.m. We appreciate your partnership in helping us keep dismissal safe and organized for all Duxberry students.

Attendance: EVERY DAY COUNTS!

Attendance will be taken daily, and we need your partnership in making regular attendance a priority.

The District will enforce attendance requirements under **HB 410**. Our school social worker may contact families when a student demonstrates excessive absences and/or tardies.

Every school day provides opportunities for learning, relationships, creativity, and growth. When students are at school consistently and on time, they are better positioned to succeed.

Every day matters. Every minute matters. Every student matters.

Staying Connected

Open, consistent communication will be an important part of our partnership this year. I want families to know what is happening at Duxberry and have multiple ways to stay connected with us.

School updates and important information will be shared through:

- **Blackboard phone dialer system**
- **TalkingPoints**
- **Email**
- **Duxberry Park Elementary School website**
- **Monthly electronic family newsletter**

Please keep your contact information current so that you do not miss important school announcements, reminders, celebrations, or emergency information.

Important Dates

Tuesday, August 18, 2026

Back-to-School Scavenger Hunt

4:00 p.m.–5:30 p.m.

Join us to meet your child's teacher, explore Duxberry, connect with staff, gather important resources, and kick off an exciting new school year!

Thursday, August 20, 2026

First Day of School — Grades 1–5

Tuesday, August 25, 2026

First Day of School — Kindergarten

Prior to the first day of school, **kindergarten teachers will contact families to schedule individual appointments**. Please be on the lookout for communication from your child's teacher regarding your scheduled appointment and additional information to help prepare for the start of kindergarten.

Monday, September 7, 2026

Labor Day — All Schools Closed

Tuesday, September 8, 2026

First Day of Pre-K

All Pre-K families will receive a phone call from their child's teacher with information regarding orientation.

Wednesday, September 30, 2026

Duxberry Park Open House

Additional information will be shared as we get closer to the event.

Moving Forward Together

As your principal, I want you to know that I will be visible, approachable, and willing to listen. I value open and honest communication and believe strong school communities are built through trust, consistency, mutual respect, and meaningful family partnerships.

I am incredibly excited about the journey ahead and all that we will accomplish together. Duxberry is a special community, and I look forward to learning more about our traditions, celebrating our strengths, and working alongside you to provide exceptional learning experiences for every child.

I hope you and your family enjoy the remainder of your summer and return refreshed and excited for a wonderful school year.

Please know that I am always here for you and your child.

If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at **614-365-6023**

I cannot wait to welcome our students back to Duxberry Park Elementary!

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Warm Regards,

Principal Krekeler