



ELEMENTARY STUDENT HANDBOOK

**NORTHGATE SCHOOL DISTRICT
2026-27 ACADEMIC YEAR**

ADMINISTRATION/OFFICE PERSONNEL

A FULL STAFF DIRECTORY CAN BE FOUND AT NORTHGATESD.NET

Avalon Elementary School

721 California Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15202
412-732-3300 – Ext. 1000
Fax: 412-734-8054

Office Hours
7:30 am - 3:30 pm

School Hours
8:05 am - 2:55 pm

Dr. Joe Peacock
Principal
412-732-3300 Ext. 3000
jpeacock@northgatesd.net

Austen Tarabay
Counselor
412-732-3300 Ext. 3112
austen.tarabay@northgatesd.net

Danielle DiDomenico
Administrative Assistant
412-732-3300 Ext. 3000
DDidomenico@northgatesd.net

Malla Mizikowski
School Nurse
412-732-3300 Ext. 3107
malla.mizikowski@northgatesd.net

Bellevue Elementary School

435 Lincoln Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15202
412-732-3300 – Ext. 4000
Fax: 412-734-8047

Office Hours
7:30 am - 3:30 pm

School Hours
8:05 am - 2:55 pm

Dr. Qualisha Zyhier
Principal
412-732-3300 Ext. 4000
qualisha.zyhier@northgatesd.net

Brian Talbert
Counselor
412-732-3300 Ext. 4006
brian.talbert@northgatesd.net

Fara Pienkosky
Administrative Assistant
412-732-3300 Ext. 4000
fpienkosky@northgatesd.net

Malla Mizikowski
School Nurse
412-732-3300 Ext. 4107
malla.mizikowski@northgatesd.net

INTRODUCTION

The Elementary Schools have an excellent educational program Kindergarten through 6th-grade taught by a talented and dedicated faculty. Our faculty and staff take great pride in the curriculum and instruction offered to our district's youngest learners. We are committed to providing each student with an education in which essential information and skills are learned, knowledge is explored, and ideas are critically analyzed and evaluated.

The effort to meet each child's needs for growth socially, emotionally and academically—is ongoing. We use student assessment data and curriculum review and revision to develop appropriate classroom and differentiated instruction. Our Multi-Tiered System of Support allows us to create individualized plans for each child in order to meet their academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs.

Our parents play an important role in our students' lives and success at school. We are fortunate to have an active, strong parent-teacher organization to support and enhance our programs and activities.

The Elementary School Handbook has been designed to give an overview of both the elementary curriculum and the policies and procedures followed in each elementary school.

Your child's elementary school years are a special time in his or her life. Our priority is to engage and excite your child about their entire school experience. Building strong academic and social skills during the pivotal K-6 years provides a pathway for long-term success. We invite you to participate in our school community and to enjoy the excitement of learning.

NORTHGATE SHARED VISION, MISSION, & VALUES

Vision: Students First and Foremost

Mission: The Northgate School District provides a challenging academic program that prepares students to value learning, think critically and creatively and embrace diverse viewpoints. With a focus on developing the whole child, the district provides experiences that encourage the development of empathy, integrity and resilience to prepare all students to meet with success.

Core Values:

- **Challenging Academics:** We believe academic success for all students begins by developing foundational skills in reading and mathematics. Through a systematic approach, we meet each student's individual learning needs, and build environments that raise the bar for all students to think critically and take ownership of their learning.
- **Northgate Way:** We take pride in our schools and our community. We are proud to provide a high quality education in a nurturing environment, and we value the support of our community. We reflect the Northgate school culture by positively communicating and engaging in relationships that reflect our core mission and values.

- **Empower Students and Staff:** We value the diverse perspectives of our students and encourage them to confidently use their voice. We value the expertise of our staff and seek their input into our educational programming.
- **Value Diversity:** We view our diversity as an asset. We recognize that everyone brings unique, individual strengths to the school community. We develop opportunities for all stakeholders to see connections between themselves, the curriculum, and the district.
- **Whole-Child Focus:** We support the development of the physical, mental and unique talents of our student population through extra curricular opportunities (PBIS, the Chill Project, arts, athletics, clubs). We prioritize the full scope of a child's developmental needs and advance educational equity. Our whole child approach understands that students' education and life outcomes are dependent upon their access to deeper learning opportunities in and out of school, as well as their school environment and relationships.
- **Emphasis on Relationships:** We build healthy, strong relationships and care for each other. We strive to know each other's story and perspective. We treat others with courtesy, respect, and dignity. We view every interaction as an investment in improving relationships. We celebrate each other's successes.
- **Welcoming Environment:** We strive to make everyone feel welcomed and valued in our schools. This starts with the first greeting on the phone or in the office. We listen and ask questions to seek clarity when a colleague, parent, or student expresses a need. We take ownership and accept responsibility for making sure needs are met.
- **Community Allies:** We value community partnerships and recognize that it takes a village to enact the mission of the District and collectively "We" (parents/ guardians, faculty, staff and the broader community) can help students realize their potential and become good citizens.

ACADEMIC SCHEDULE

Students receive instruction in the core academic subjects Mathematics, English Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies. All students Pre-K to 6th grade receive specials instruction in Music, Art, Computer, Library, and PE on a weekly rotating basis, while students in grades 5 and 6 may participate in band. There is a Focus Period each day which allows for academic support or enrichment based on students' individual needs.

ACADEMIC GOALS

LANGUAGE ARTS

Northgate's Reading/Language Arts program is based upon State and National standards that integrate reading, writing, listening and speaking. Essential phonics skills are taught through the Science of Reading at the primary grades. Core knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) program in Kindergarten and grades 2-6 CKLA is a rigorous Language Arts program that focuses on building foundational knowledge and vocabulary through high-interest units. The units are often based in science and social studies themes that build important background knowledge in these areas. Process writing and literature circles develop vocabulary and comprehension skills and allow students to practice and apply strategies necessary to build independence. Library instruction supports fiction and non-fiction selections from the regular classroom representing various authors and genres. Research skills are systematically taught utilizing appropriate sources and electronic media. In addition, *Accelerated Reader*, an individualized program that promotes independent reading, reinforces reading comprehension by assigning points to computer quizzes after students have read *Accelerated Reader* books.

MATHEMATICS

Based on the Common Core Standards and the Standards of Practice of Mathematics, *Eureka Squared* is a rigorous curriculum proven to build students' mathematical knowledge from the basics to higher order thinking and critical problem solving in grades K through 5. Real-life problems and situations are applied to math concepts so that students experience information to develop mathematical insights and reasoning. In sixth grade students will use *Illustrative Mathematics*, a problem-based core mathematics curriculum that develops students' mathematical thinking skills through questioning, discussion, and real world contexts and connections. The Spring Math program is used to reinforce essential math facts.

SCIENCE

The Smithsonian Institute science program provides students with an engaged hands-on, inquiry based learning experiences, with an in-depth study of scientific concepts that require higher order thinking skills. Additionally, teachers have created engaging, hands-on, standards-aligned science lessons. Note that the CKLA English Language Arts program also builds important foundational science knowledge.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Social Studies concepts are incorporated with reading and literature in grades K-6. The intermediate program stimulates an understanding and respect for our American heritage, fosters the development of responsible citizenship in our democratic society, and emphasizes respect for varying cultures. It is a developmental program which focuses on literal comprehension, critical thinking skills, and vocabulary development, map and globe skills, writing and speaking skills, and the study of chronology. The program prepares the students for responsible

citizenship in our American society. Note that the CKLA English Language Arts program also builds important foundational social studies knowledge.

ART AND MUSIC

Students are offered rich learning experiences that integrate the arts with the general curriculum. All students in grades pre- K-6 receive formal instruction from certified art and music teachers each week. Our certified art specialists encourage aesthetic awareness through observation and visual re-creation of the world around us. The Teaching Artistic Behavior (TAB) curriculum used in Northgate elementary schools exposes students to a number of different media, including drawing, painting, sculpture, fiber arts, and printmaking. Students receive lessons from the teacher in each area throughout the year, and then they explore this type of art by designing and creating their own projects. Rather than following a prescriptive formula, students are challenged to develop their own projects. This engaging, student-centered approach was actually developed as an alternative to traditional teacher-centered art classes. In fact, important Guiding Principles of this curriculum include: "The Child is the Artist" and "The Classroom is the Studio." The process is just as important as the final product in this standards-aligned approach. Children are encouraged to take risks and make mistakes. They learn a technique and then they make it their own. Hard work is encouraged - so is creativity. Students have opportunities to design and implement unique projects based on their lived experiences rather than always following an established "right way" of doing art. For this reason, TAB is culturally responsive.

Our certified music specialists provide formal instruction that encourages participation through singing, rhythmic movement, and aesthetic awareness. Music instruction is often integrated with the general curriculum, which both enriches the learning experience and helps children form connections between the arts and other subjects, such as math and science.

BAND

Students in grades 5-6 are encouraged to join the band. Flute, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, trombone and percussion instruments are taught on a weekly basis during the school day, for lessons of 30 minutes. Additionally, a weekly 30-minute band rehearsal is conducted to prepare for concerts in December and May. A continuous rent-to-buy program through local music stores is available. The school provides books and sheet music. Elementary instrumental lessons prepare students for membership in the instrumental ensembles at the high school and foster a life-long appreciation of music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Students in grades K-6 receive formal instruction from a certified physical education teacher each week. Students are expected to wear a t-shirt, shorts or sweatpants, and athletic shoes and socks on the days they have class. At the primary level, the program focuses on the development of basic gross and fine motor skills and participating cooperatively in small and large group activities. These skills are further developed at the intermediate level, when students receive instruction in the rules of various sports. In grades K-6, the arts are integrated in the form of music and dance, while overall physical fitness and wellness remain the focus of the program.

RECESS

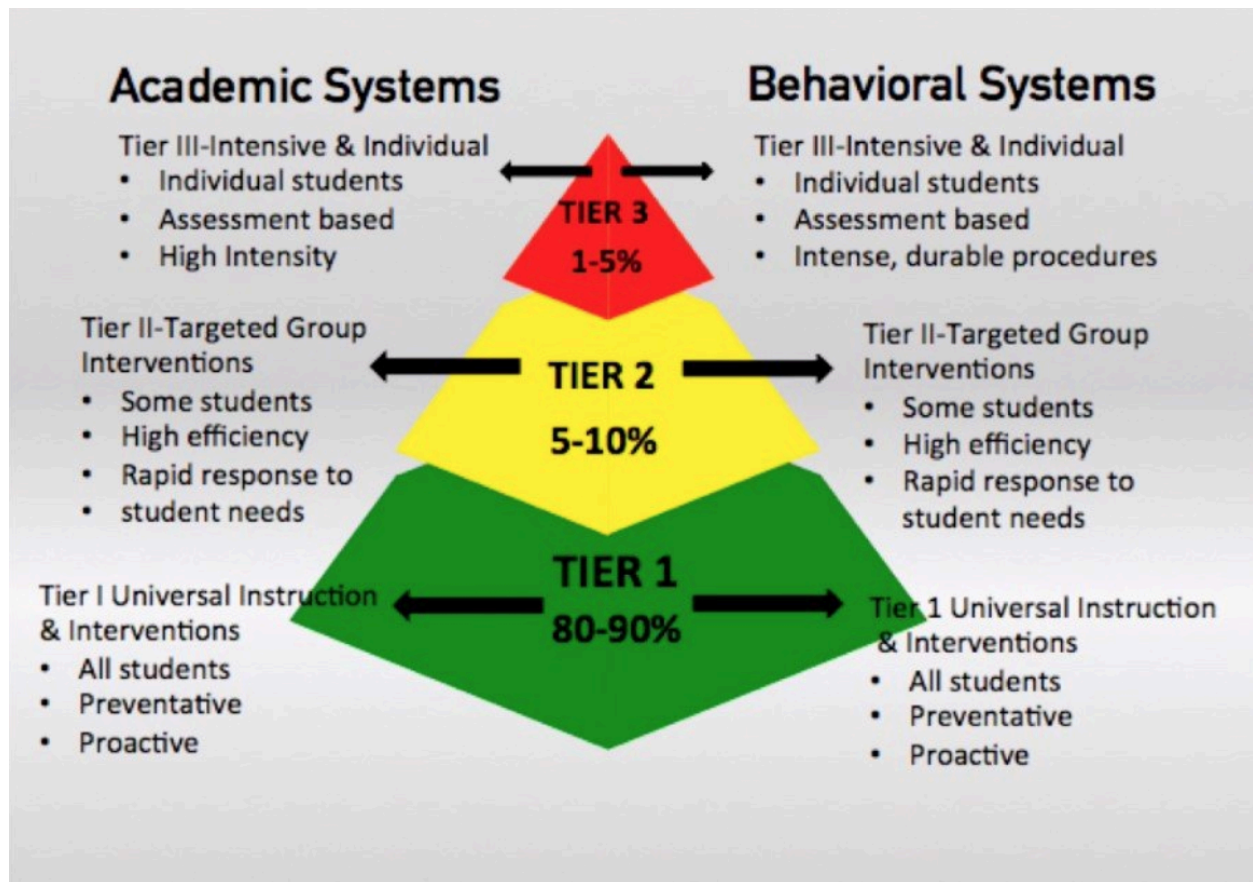
Recess is important to the physical, behavioral and social-emotional health of our students. It should therefore be part of each student's day, treated as a necessary part of the schedule just like math or reading. No research supports eliminating recess as an effective class management tool. In fact, this practice generally exacerbates

negative behaviors. It should therefore be used sparingly by teachers and administrators, and only if a behavior infraction relates to student safety or to repeated playground issues. As an alternative, teachers are encouraged to consider delaying recess by 5-10 minutes in order to teach or re-teach a behavior lesson if necessary. This allows for correction and reteaching and avoids the negative academic and behavioral impact that taking away recess brings. Teachers are encouraged to collaborate with team members and administration to come up with alternatives that are research-based and restorative, when possible.

TECHNOLOGY

Northgate School District is 1:1 with each student having access to their own personal device. Students in grades K and 1 receive iPads while students in grades 2-6 receive a Chromebook. The devices remain in the classroom and must be used as permitted by the teacher for academic purposes and within the guidelines of the district Acceptable Use Policy. Devices remain in the classroom unless students have permission to take them home for academic purposes.

MULTI-TIERED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT (MTSS)



At Bellevue and Avalon Elementary Schools, we utilize the MTSS Process to support students both academically and behaviorally. The process is broken into three Tiers:

- Tier 1: serves all students, and roughly 80% of those students respond to the Tier 1 supports and interventions that are put into place.
- Tier 2: serves roughly 15% of students who need more academic or behavioral support.
- Tier 3: serves roughly 5% of students who need intensive academic or behavioral support.

Academic supports may include additional support through teachers, extra support through the Reading Specialists, lessons during focus period, and tutoring.

SPARK SCHOOL WIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION & SUPPORT (SWPBIS) MISSION STATEMENT

All students, given a positive, supportive, predictable environment created by faculty and staff, can experience behavioral and academic success at Bellevue Elementary School.

WHAT IS SWPBIS

Just as we teach academic content, it is incumbent upon us to teach and reinforce behavioral expectations. School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions & Support (SWPBIS) is an evidence-based framework for communicating and reinforcing these behavioral expectations. The delivery of consistent lessons and the acknowledgment of appropriate behaviors create a supportive, structured, and predictable environment where all students understand the expectations. Research shows SWPBIS leads to an improved school climate with decreased negative behaviors.

Rather than focusing on what NOT to do, in an effective SWPBIS system, schools identify 3-5 simple, easy-to-remember expectations and proactively teach them in every classroom. In addition to teaching these behavioral expectations, educators acknowledge them through individual, classroom, and school-wide recognitions. We teach students to be Safe, Present, Accountable, Respectful, and Kind (SPARK) in all facets of school life. Then we acknowledge them through SPARK tickets that lead to classroom and whole-school rewards. We then use data to analyze the school culture and set goals for continuous improvement.

WHY SWPBIS

When implemented consistently, with fidelity, research has shown statistically significant outcomes that include:

- Increased prosocial behavior (Metzler, Biglan, Rusby, & Sprague, 2001; Nelson et al., 2002)
- Improved emotional regulation (Bradshaw et al., 2012)
- Improved academic achievement (Horner et al., 2009; Lassen, Steele, & Sailor, 2006; Nelson et al., 2002)
- Improved perceptions of school safety (Horner et al., 2009)
- Improved health of the organization (Bradshaw et al., 2008)
- Reduced problem behaviors (Bradshaw, Mitchell, & Leaf, 2010; Flannery et al., 2014; Horner et al., 2005; Lee & Gage, 2020; Metzler et al., 2001; Nelson, 1996; Nelson et al., 2002)

When implemented in tandem with a Social Emotional Learning program, the positive outcomes are even more impressive in each of these areas. For us, this means that the Chill Project will complement a solid SWPBIS program to produce even greater results!

A TIERED APPROACH

In keeping with the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) model, we recognize that we have to differentiate our delivery to meet the needs of all students. Tier 1 of PBIS is made up of the classroom and building practices that all students receive. Essential components include clear lessons, the use of data, an incentive system at every level, and a supportive, problem-solving approach. All faculty and staff emphasize expectations by teaching and acknowledging appropriate behaviors through classroom lessons and delivery of SPARK tickets and acknowledgments. It is important to note that employing a punitive approach to behaviors is actually associated with increases in tardiness, truancy, aggression, and misbehavior. It is therefore even more important that all teachers buy into this approach to produce the best results.

The core principles guiding Tier 1 PBIS include:

- Effectively teaching appropriate behavior to all children
- Intervening early before unwanted behaviors escalate
- Responding in a way that is supported by research in its effectiveness
- Monitoring student progress; using a positive, supportive approach to bring students back into the learning community as opposed to isolating and shaming them
- Using data to guide decision-making

In coordination with these guiding principles, **five practices** that should be present in all BES classrooms include:

1. Using a 5:1 ratio of positive to corrective language
2. Actively monitoring students, walking throughout the classroom or playground area to engage students, offering reminders, and providing acknowledgments before issues arise.
3. For students struggling with behaviors and with whom you are struggling to build positive relationships, spend time to get to know them for at least 2 minutes for 10 straight days (2x10 strategy)
4. Reaching out to the student, family, counselors, and previous teachers to better understand the function of the behavior based on the student's lived experience. Teachers then proactively address the root cause of unwanted behaviors rather than reacting to symptoms. Teachers differentiate tier 1 to meet the needs of all students
5. Consistently teaching SPARK expectations throughout the year in all important school locations. Lessons are never "one and done". Students learn best through constant reminders and positive reinforcement.

We recognize that even the best tier 1 implementation will not work for all students. However, the expectation is that we differentiate enough to meet the needs of 85-90 percent of our students at Tier 1. **Tier 2** practices and systems provide targeted support for students who are not experiencing success through Tier 1 supports alone. The specific Tier 2 interventions will be added to the menu of Tier 1 supports for these students. The defining characteristics of these supports are that they are easy to implement, align with the function or root cause of behavior, and are flexibly adjusted based on data. All staff will implement the support as needed with the support of the Advanced Tiers Team as needed. The Advanced Tiers team will meet monthly to monitor data and make recommendations, which include:

- Check In Check Out (CICO)
- Check & Connect
- Scheduled Chill Room visits; Chill counselor schedule
- Scheduled school counselor supports
- A behavioral contract
- Peer Mentoring
- Lunch bunches
- Home pass/home connection

**SPARK: WE ARE TAUGHT TO BE SAFE, PRESENT, ACCOUNTABLE, RESPECTFUL, AND KIND
IN ALL ASPECTS OF SCHOOL LIFE.**

Expectations	Rules					
	Hallway	Restroom	Cafeteria	Arrival/ Dismissal	Recess	Classroom
Safe	Walk Eyes forward	Walk Wash your hands	Walk	Walk	Walk to and from recess Follow teacher's cue	Walk (Keep food and drink away unless directed)
Present	Get to where you are going	Go, Flush, Wash, Leave	Take what you'll eat Eat what you'll take	Report on time Remain in assigned area	Practice sportsmanship	Be on time and focused Get to where you are going
Accountable	Voice volume 0 Stay with your class	Voice volume 1 Clean up after yourself	Voice volume 2 Know your lunch number Clean up after yourself Stay with your class	Voice volume 2 Cell phones off and away	Voice volume 3 Outside/Gym Voice volume 2 Indoor Be a role model	Use inside voices (voice volume 0-2) Have all your materials
Respectful	Keep hands and feet to yourself	Keep hands and feet to yourself Practice privacy	Keep hands and feet to yourself Lights off = Volume 0	Keep hands and feet to yourself	Keep hands and feet to yourself Appropriate use of equipment	Keep hands and feet to yourself Listen to others
Kind	Silent wave	Use appropriate language	Use appropriate language	Use appropriate language	Use appropriate language	Use appropriate language

	Use appropriate language		Use manners	Use manners	Include others	Use manners
	Use manners		Include others		Use manners	

It is the expectation that students are Safe, Present, Accountable, Respectful, and Kind in all facets of school life. While the SWPBIS SPARK program is designed to teach and acknowledge positive behaviors, consequences will be assigned to behaviors that interfere with teaching and learning and those that create a negative learning environment. Examples of infractions and potential consequences are outlined in the Referral Form Definitions section of the SPARK handbook.

Crucial to a successful SWPBIS program are consequences that are logical, commensurate to the severity of the infraction, agreed upon, and communicated. Examples include, but are not limited to, re-teaching, conference, call home, reflection sheet, or detention. When possible, consequences should be restorative, aligned directly to the infraction, and include an instructional component. Because no research supports the effectiveness of suspensions from school, this consequence is used sparingly at the elementary level, and generally only when the infraction involves the safety and well-being of others.

STUDENT SERVICES

TITLE I

Title I Reading is a federally funded program designed to assist qualifying students in the skills necessary to become better readers. The primary goal is for students to be successful in the regular school program, to attain grade level proficiency, and ultimately, to meet or exceed the State Standards in reading. In order to accomplish these outcomes, differentiated instruction is provided by certified specialists in coordination with each student's regular classroom teacher.

SCHOOL COUNSELING

The counselors in both elementary schools are committed to providing all students with a comprehensive program which systematically addresses the three areas of academic, career, and personal/social development. This model allows us to assist students in exploring, planning and realizing their individual interests, abilities, and goals. Our counselors work collaboratively with parents, educators and the community to provide support for student achievement while carefully considering the developmental needs for our students..

SUICIDE AWARENESS, PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

The Board of School Directors is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its students and school community. This policy supports federal, state and local efforts to provide education on youth suicide awareness and prevention; establish methods of prevention, intervention, and response to suicide or suicide attempt; and to promote access to suicide awareness and prevention resources.

In compliance with state law and regulations, and in support of the district's suicide prevention measures, information received in confidence from a student may be revealed to the student's parents/guardians, the building principal or other appropriate authority when the health, welfare or safety of the student or any other person is deemed to be at risk.

The district shall utilize a multifaceted approach to suicide prevention which integrates school and community-based supports. The district shall notify district employees, students and parents/guardians of this policy and shall post the policy on the district's website.

CHILL PROJECT

The Chill Project uses mindfulness-based exercises to equip students, teachers, and parents with a common language and universal skills to identify, discuss, and react positively to stress.

School has always been a source of stress, whether you're taking classes, teaching, or parenting a student. Negative reactions to stress create a significant barrier to learning and growth. The Chill Project features dedicated professionals, a calming space, and regular instruction to help every member of a school's community better handle pressure and anxiety. All students receive monthly Chill Lessons and have the Chill Educator and Behavior Therapist available as a tiered resource

STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

A team of trained professional staff provides assistance and referrals for parents and children who are experiencing difficulties that are barriers to their learning. Please contact the guidance counselor in your child's elementary school for more information.

STUDENT HEALTH

The Northgate elementary schools attempt to provide an environment in which each child will be safe from injury or illness. If a minor accident occurs, the school nurse or school personnel will administer first aid. The parent will be notified if further attention is needed. The school nurse is available to treat children who encounter accidents and illnesses during school hours only. Injuries or illnesses occurring at home are the responsibility of the parent and/or family physician.

EMERGENCY CARDS

Each year, parents/guardians are requested to complete an emergency card. Parents should be sure that the required emergency information has been supplied to the school on the yellow emergency card. **Please keep the card updated by notifying the school of any changes in address or phone numbers. It is very important that you provide notification of these changes in a timely manner.** Transportation for students who must be excused from school because of an illness or accident is the responsibility of the parent. If this should be impossible, other arrangements would be noted on the emergency card.

IMMUNIZATIONS

The following immunizations are required before a child can enter school:

- Four (4) DPT and a fourth dose must be administered on or after the 4th birthday
- Three (3) doses of Hepatitis B
- Four (4) doses of polio (4th dose on or after 4th birthday and at least 6 months after previous dose given)
- Two (2) doses of the MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) immunization

- Two (2) doses of varicella (chicken pox), or evidence of immunity.
- **The universal lead testing regulation went into effect on January 1, 2018. This means that starting in the fall of 2018, every child will need to present a record of being tested for lead before entering kindergarten.**

SCHOOL EXAMINATIONS

- PHYSICAL EXAMINATION – Kindergarten and sixth grades
- DENTAL EXAMINATION – Kindergarten and third grades
- HEIGHT AND WEIGHT – Annually by the school nurse
- VISION TEST – Annually by the school nurse
- HEARING TEST – By the school nurse in kindergarten, first, second and third grades
- SCOLIOSIS SCREENING – Students are screened for scoliosis (curvature of the spine) in sixth grade

You are encouraged to have the physical and dental examinations performed by your child's doctor and dentist. Instructions concerning the procedure to be followed are distributed during the school year.

MEDICATION POLICY

Every effort should be made to administer any required medication to children at home. If it becomes necessary for a student to receive prescription medication or over the counter medication during the school day, a special medication form must be filled out by the attending physician and signed by the parent. These forms are available from the school nursing office.

The school nurse is authorized only to dispense the following non-prescription medications: acetaminophen, ibuprofen, and antacids with parental permission.

- All medications must be supplied by the parent and kept locked in the health office.
- All prescription medication must be in the original labeled pharmacy container.
- All non-prescription medications must be contained in the original packaging and labeled with the student's name.

ATTENDANCE

(BOARD POLICY NO. 204)

Elementary school hours are from 8:05 a.m. to 2:55 p.m. Elementary teachers are available for parent conferences during their preparation period and also from 2:55 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. daily by appointment. When a student is going to be absent from school, the parent/guardian should call before 8:05 a.m., if possible, and leave a voice message, including the reason for the absence.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

- Students are required by law to be in full attendance each school day unless absent for an approved reason.
- State Law requires that a student's parent or guardian send to school a written excuse for each absence within three (3) school days of the student's return. This excuse must be submitted on the approved Northgate School District Attendance Excuse form indicating the reason for the absence and be signed by the legal parent or guardian of record with the School District.
- If applicable, documentation from licensed medical practitioners or hospitals should be attached to the Attendance Excuse form.

- Excuses written by non-custodial parents or emergency contacts will not be accepted. If such an excuse is not submitted to the Main Office on or before the third day, the absence(s) shall be marked as unexcused and considered illegal.
- *(A printable copy of the Northgate School District Attendance Excuse form is available on the District's website and copies are also available in the main office.)*

Approved reasons for absence are listed below:

- Illness
- Physical injury
- Bereavement
- Observance of a bonafide religious holiday in accordance with the student's religious beliefs
- Healthcare from a licensed practitioner when it is not practical or possible to receive care outside of school hours
- Approved school activity or field trip
- Out-of-school suspension

CUMULATIVE EXCUSED ABSENCES

A maximum of ten (10) days of cumulative lawful absences verified by parental notification may be permitted during a school year. **All absences beyond ten (10) cumulative days require a doctor's excuse.**

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

If a proper excuse is not submitted to the office within three school days of the absence, the absence will be considered unexcused.

HABITUALLY TRUANT

The School Code defines habitually truant as absence for more than three (3) school days or their equivalent following the first notice of truancy given after a child's third unlawful absence.

Upon the third absence without a completed/submitted Attendance Excuse form, the following procedures will be followed by the Attendance Office:

1. The parent/guardian receives a notice of third unlawful absence by mail providing "official notice of the child's third illegal absence." Attached to this notice will be penalties for violation of compulsory attendance requirements as they pertain to both the student and the parent/guardian, including information that three days after giving such notice, the student or parent/guardian who again violates the compulsory attendance requirements shall be liable without further notice.
2. The School District shall coordinate a Student Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP) Conference as per Pennsylvania State Code to discuss the cause of the child's truancy and develop and mutually agreed upon Student Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP) to resolve truant compulsory attendance requirements as they pertain to both the student and the parent/guardian. Issues to be reviewed at the school/family conference include the appropriateness of the child's education environment, current academic difficulties, physical or behavioral health issues and family/environment concerns.
3. At the end of the conference all parties should sign a comprehensive SAIP that is agreed to by the school representative, the child, and the parents and/or family. The plan could include assessing academic and social/health support from the school and community organizations, an outline of family/parent and student responsibilities, and levels of performance monitoring that include rewards and consequences.

4. If unexcused absences occur after the SAIP meeting, a truancy citation may be filed with the local magistrate. After this step, the school is obligated to inform parents in writing of absences and all future incidents of truancy will be referred directly to the magisterial district judge.

Examples of unexcused absences are listed below:

- Oversleeping
- Automobile failure
- Failure to produce written excuse(s) within the outlined time period for day(s) absent

TARDY/LATE TO SCHOOL

- Any student arriving after 8:05 a.m. must report to the Attendance Office for an admit slip. No one is permitted to enter late and go directly to class. This regulation will be strictly enforced.
- Tardiness negatively impacts a student's academic performance and social well-being in school. It is therefore of utmost importance that parents make sure students arrive to school on time.
- It is the sole responsibility of the student to secure all missed class work/assignments. Failure to secure missed class work/assignments will result in a zero for all missed assignments.
- Students must present a valid, written excuse to the Main Office when entering the school late. Approved reasons for being tardy/late to school are listed below:
 - Observance of a bonafide religious holiday in accordance with the student's religious beliefs
 - Healthcare from licensed practitioner
 - Approved school activity

EARLY DISMISSALS

Should it be necessary for a student to leave prior to 2:55 p.m., the student must present a written request to do so upon arrival to school. The note must include the date, time, name of child(ren), reason for early dismissal, and the parent's/guardian's signature.

Children will be called to the office for early dismissals. **Parents are not to pick up children at the classrooms.** No child will be dismissed from school nor released to any other person without the express written consent of the parent/guardian. **Children are not permitted to leave the building without permission.**

STUDENT ASSESSMENT REPORT CARDS

Students in grades K-6 receive report cards every nine weeks. An explanation of the grading scales used at each level is included on the report cards.

PROGRESS REPORTS

if a student experiences difficulty in a subject area, or if grades begin to drop significantly, a progress report is sent home for parent review. These reports may be issued any time prior to the receipt of a report card. **If your child receives a Progress Report, please schedule a conference with their teacher(s).**

PROMOTION/RETENTION

Students who successfully complete a grade level are promoted to the next grade level at the end of the academic year. Should a student not achieve success, retention may be necessary. Students may be retained for the following reasons:

- Grade 1: Must pass (grade M, S, or N) both Reading and Math to be promoted to 2nd grade.
- Grades 2-4: Must pass (grade A, B, C, or D) both Reading and Math. In addition to Reading and Math, a student must also pass (grade A, B, C, D, M, S, or N) one of the following major subjects: Science or Social Studies.
- Grades 5-6: Must pass (grade A, B, C, or D) three of the major subject areas (one of which must be Reading or Math): Reading, Math, English, Science and Social Studies.
- If a student misses 30 or more days in a year, he/she may be retained.

Recommendations for retention may also be made for other reasons such as social/emotional development or level of readiness. Parents and teachers should discuss any possibility of retention early in the second semester.

STANDARDIZED TESTING

Kindergarten students are screened in August before starting school. Students in grade K- 2 will be administered Acadience Testing in the fall, winter, and spring. Students in grades 3-6 will participate in the PSSA (Pennsylvania System of School Assessment) test for Reading and Math. In addition, grade 4 participates in the PSSA Science test. All assessments, including local assessment data, are utilized to monitor individual student achievement and to guide decisions regarding curriculum and instruction.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Attendant upon the rights established for each student are certain responsibilities, which include regular attendance, conscientious effort in classroom work and homework, conformance to Board policies and school rules and regulations, respect for the rights of teachers, students, administrators and all others who are involved in the educational process, and expression of ideas and opinions in a respectful manner.

It shall be the responsibility of the student to follow all SPARK expectations. This includes but is not limited to the following:

- Be aware of all SPARK rules and regulations.
- Exercise safety for oneself and others, especially when using tools and equipment
- Treat others with respect and kindness.
- Volunteer information in matters relating to the health, safety and welfare of the school community and the protection of school property.
- Follow the dress code guidelines.
- Attend school daily and be on time to all classes and other school functions.
- Be Present and Accountable. This includes putting forth your best effort and making up work when absent from school.
- Report information to adults so we can help resolve conflicts when necessary

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, consistent with the Code of Student Conduct and Board policy.

GENERAL DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

All teachers follow the SPARK expectations outlined in the PBIS handbook. Teachers may have classroom rules and regulations that vary within the guiding principles of a Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) plan. These rules and regulations shall be distributed to parents during the first part of the school year. While we focus on creating a supportive environment with the teaching and re-teaching of clear rules and expectations, discipline may be issued depending on the severity or repetition of infraction(s). The following discipline procedures may apply:

- Teacher and student meet to clarify the rules and regulations. Reteach and complete a reflection sheet
- Teacher contacts the parent/guardian and documents such.
- Consequences may be issued by the teacher or principal depending on the severity of the infraction and based on the positive behavior and support guidelines.
- Minor infractions will be handled by teachers while major infractions are handled through an Office Discipline Referral (ODR). A discipline notice is sent to the parents with follow-up taken by the teacher or principal. Often it is necessary to conduct a meeting with the parents, child, teacher, counselor, and/or principal.

DRESS CODE

An important objective of the School District is to promote a school environment that is conducive to learning and one that fosters responsible attitudes and habits, reflecting community values while also respecting a student's right to express themselves in the way that they dress. Students are expected to respect the school community by dressing appropriately for the K-12 educational environment. Clothing may not state, imply, or depict hate speech/imagery targeting groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious affiliation, or any other protected classification. Clothing or jewelry displaying indecent writing, profanity, depictions or allusions to drugs, alcohol and sex, including slogans, are inappropriate and may not be worn. Apparel of or relating to designation of gang membership, affiliation or promotion is prohibited. The following dress code requirements will be enforced:

- Students must wear clothing including both a shirt with pants or skirt, or the equivalent (for example dresses, leggings, or shorts) and shoes.
- Clothing must cover areas from one armpit across to the other armpit, down to the thighs and tops must have shoulder straps.
- If a person's shirt does not cover the navel area, then a jacket, hoodie, or some type of coverup must be worn.
- Clothing must cover undergarments.
- Fulfillment of the dress code must accommodate clothing worn by students as an expression of religious beliefs (head scarves, for example) and worn by students with disabilities (protective helmets, for example).
- Clothing must be suitable for all scheduled classroom activities including physical education, science labs, wood shop, and other activities where unique hazards exist.
- Specialized courses may require specialized attire, such as sports uniforms or safety gear.
- Articles deemed unacceptable in the school building under this objective are as follows: winter coats, thick jackets, bulky pullovers, etc. may not be worn throughout the normal school day unless administrative permission is extended for special circumstances.

Dress must not interfere with the educational process or the rights of others and clothing should not, in any manner, affect the safety or welfare of the wearer or other students. Students wearing unacceptable clothing may be presented with school owned replacement garments or may be sent home for a change of clothes. Multiple violations may necessitate appropriate disciplinary measures as deemed necessary by the Principal or Assistant Principal. School-directed changes to a student's attire or grooming should be the least restrictive and disruptive to the student's school day. Any school dress code enforcement actions should minimize the potential loss of educational time.

Dress code procedure: When a student is not in compliance with the dress code, the teacher or faculty member will send the student to the nurse without confrontation. Simply say, "the nurse needs to see you." The teacher or faculty member will then send the nurse a message to alert her why the student is being sent to the office.

CAFETERIA RULES

In the best interest of safety for all children it is important that EVERYONE adhere to the basic cafeteria rules. The climate in the lunchroom shall promote healthful eating habits, proper manners, responsibility, and respect for others. It is expected that once seated, children will remain seated, unless permission is given otherwise.

- Students shall raise their hands to alert lunchroom supervisors of their needs.
- Students and adults shall use a moderate tone of voice when talking.
- Students shall walk safely at all times.
- Students should keep their table and nearby floor area clean.
- Students should use good table/eating manners.
- Students shall show respect to each other and to all adults, including cafeteria employees and parent volunteers.
- Students are expected to be quiet when the lights are turned off.
- Carbonated beverages of any kind are discouraged. Students are not permitted to take food or drinks out of the lunchroom unless they are placed in the appropriate closed container. Glass containers are not permitted.

Each student will be assigned a seat in the cafeteria at the discretion of the teacher, principal, and/or cafeteria supervisors. However, the principal, working in conjunction with the teachers and cafeteria supervisors, may waive the assigned seating policy for a specific time period based on the positive behavior of the students.

Students who violate lunchroom rules will be disciplined as follows:

- Verbal warnings
- Change of assigned seat
- Written lunchroom conduct form to the principal
- Lunchroom detention OR after-school detention, as determined by the principal

SAFETY TO AND FROM SCHOOL

Proper habits of safety must be followed. This includes:

- Depart from home so as to arrive at school not more than ten (10) minutes before the entry time. Starting time is 8:05 a.m.
- Walk safely on the sidewalk.
- Cross only at an intersection protected by a crossing guard and school patrols where possible..
- Proceed directly to school or home.

- Children are not permitted on the playground before school or within one-half hour after school unless accompanied by a parent/guardian.
- Be considerate of others, especially children who are smaller.
- Follow all SPARK expectations when interacting with others
- Do not congregate on sidewalks or lawns, or in front of buildings.

POSSESSION OF WEAPONS OR FACSIMILE - SUMMARY OF BOARD POLICY

Weapons and replicas of weapons, including toys, are forbidden on school property, while traveling to and from school, or at school sanctioned events. Weapons shall include, but are not limited to, the following: firearms, knives, metal knuckles, straight razors, explosives, incendiary devices (matches, lighters, etc.), or other items fashioned with the intent to use, sell, harm, threaten or harass students, staff members, parents, and patrons.

“Dangerous weapon” means any weapon, device, instrument, material or substance, animate or inanimate, which under the circumstances in which it is used, attempted to be used or threatened to be used is readily capable of causing death or serious physical injury.

Procedures

Any professional staff member or school employee shall immediately inform the principal, who will conduct a complete investigation. Upon confiscation, the principal must immediately notify and/or summon:

1. the local police
2. the Superintendent
3. the parents of any and all students involved in the incident

Upon just cause for suspicion of possession of a weapon, the principal will request the student to volunteer to be searched by a school official (in the presence of a witness). If the student resists being searched, the principal will immediately summon the police and request assistance in this matter from the local police. Parents should be notified as soon as possible. A student who is in possession of any weapon will be removed from the general school setting and the appropriate police department will be notified.

ALCOHOL, DRUGS, TOBACCO

Alcohol, drugs, tobacco, lighters or matches are not permitted on school property. Students will be removed from the general school setting if found to use or be in possession of these products. A substantiated charge against a student shall subject that student to disciplinary action including suspension or expulsion, consistent with the student discipline code.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

It is the policy of the Northgate School District to maintain a learning environment that is free from sexual harassment. It shall be a violation of this policy for any student or adult to harass a student or adult through conduct or communications of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment shall consist of unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other inappropriate verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when made by any student/adult to another student/adult.

Any person who alleges sexual harassment by another may complain directly to a supervisor, principal, guidance counselor, or other individual designed to receive such complaints. A substantiated charge against a student shall

subject that student to disciplinary action including suspension or expulsion, consistent with the student discipline code.

STUDENT RIGHTS

No student shall be deprived of equal treatment and equal access to the educational program, due process, a presumption of innocence and free expression in accordance with the regulations of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education, Chapter 12.

PARENTAL/GUARDIAN RIGHTS

A parent/guardian who has a concern should bring the matter directly to the teacher, and not rely on hearsay or “second-hand” information. Both oral and written complaints must clearly acknowledge who is making the complaint.

Parents should make an appointment to ensure adequate time to discuss the problem with the teacher. All teachers have time in their daily schedules to meet with parents. Unresolved issues should be brought to the attention of the principal. All parties are expected to conduct themselves in a courteous, cooperative manner that is conducive to communication and conflict resolution.

GENERAL INFORMATION

VALUABLE ITEMS

Students should not bring valuable items or large sums of money to school. Collectable items and other electronic devices are not permitted in the school. The school is not responsible for items lost/stolen by students in any manner.

CELL PHONES, SMART DEVICES, AND WATCHES

Cell phones, smart devices, and smart watches must be turned off and kept in the student’s locker or designated storage area during the school day. Students may not use these devices during the school day. If a student is found using a cell phone, smart device, or smart watch, the student will receive one reminder to put the device away. If the student uses the device again, the device will be collected by a teacher or principal and kept in the school office until a parent or guardian picks it up.

If a student needs to make an emergency call during school hours, they may make a call from the main office.

Electronic devices shall include all devices that can take photographs; record, play or edit audio or video data; store, transmit or receive calls, messages, text, data or images; operate online applications; or provide a wireless, unfiltered connection to the Internet. (Board Policy 237)

LOCKERS

Each student will be assigned a locker. Each student is responsible for keeping his/her locker neat and clean. No food should be left in the locker overnight.

Students are expected to be safe and respectful in their treatment of school property.

Lockers are the property of the school district. Locks are not permitted. Students may not open lockers belonging to other students. The principal has the right to inspect a locker at any time. Parents will be notified concerning any problem that may occur. The district assumes no responsibility for the security of items stored in lockers.

EDUCATIONAL TRIPS

Parents/guardians who plan to take a child out of school for an educational trip must obtain a form from the school office and return this completed form to the principal at least two weeks prior to the trip. The principal will decide upon the legality concerning the use of these days.

WITHDRAWALS

Parents/guardians must complete a withdrawal form prior to the student's last day. Academic and health records will be forwarded to the student's new school.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS AND DELAYS

Parents, staff and community members are encouraged to monitor the District's website, Facebook and Twitter pages, as well as local television stations for the latest closing/delay information.

SCHOOL ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

All students are required to provide the schools with an immunization record, copy of the birth certificate, as well as two (2) proofs of residency when registering for school. Children entering kindergarten must be 5 years old before September 1. Children entering first grade must be 6 years old before September 1.

SCHOOL SAFETY

VISITORS

All visitors to the school, including parents/guardians, are required to register in the school office upon entering the building and must wear a visitor pass. Any deliveries (lunches, notes, etc.) should be left at the office.

No one is to go directly to a classroom or disturb a class when in session.

SECURITY

All elementary school doors are secured during the day. Both schools are equipped with video cameras and entry through the front door of each school is monitored. All doors will open from the inside.

DRILLS

Fire drills are conducted on a monthly basis, in accordance with the procedures established by the school district and the local fire department, to provide practice in the event of an emergency. At times, to comply with state regulations, students also participate in other drills such as the Severe Weather Emergency Drill.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

With the exception of certain special education children, all students walk to and from the elementary school. It is the parent's responsibility to determine a safe walking route for their child(ren). All students are expected to arrive at school between 8:00 a.m. and 8:05 a.m. Breakfast is served between 7:45 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. General school dismissal is at 2:55 p.m. unless students are staying for an after-school activity or detention. It is the student's responsibility to notify parents if they are staying after school. Students are not allowed on either elementary playground directly before or after school, unless accompanied by a parent.

MISCELLANEOUS

ACCESS TO RECORDS

Parents/guardians of students have a right to inspect, review, copy and request corrections of their child's records. Such requests are to be made to the building principal. Please limit requests to no more than one (1) request per semester for each enrolled child.

Where guardianship is an issue, or if parents are separated or divorced, notice and verification of any court order issued to deny a parent access to records must be provided to the school district.

ASSEMBLIES

Assemblies are scheduled throughout the school year. Topics include school-wide themes, curriculum-related presentations, special speakers and programs. Students are to follow all SPARK expectations during assemblies. Parents are welcome to attend assemblies, permitting they sit in the rear or the balcony.

CARE OF SCHOOL DISTRICT MATERIALS

It is expected that students will take proper care of those textbooks and materials issued to them by the school district. All textbooks must be covered. Students who lose or damage materials or books will be expected to pay for replacement or repair costs. Report cards will be withheld at the end of each grading period if materials or fines are owed.

CLASSROOM VISITATION

Those parents who wish to visit their child's classroom during school hours must make prior arrangements with the building principal. On the day of the visitation, the parent must sign in at the office and wear a visitor pass while in the school.

HOMEROOM ASSIGNMENTS

Homeroom assignments for the next school year are sent home with the final report card.

INTERNET POLICY

Specific guidelines and restrictions concerning Internet and computer use are found in the Northgate School Board Policy Manual, Section 4070. Parents are encouraged to review these pages. The Policy Manuals are available in each school.

FIELD TRIPS

All Northgate elementary students have the opportunity to participate in at least one field trip each year. These trips are carefully selected based on the curriculum and developmental level of each grade. The field trips

are implemented with the cooperation of the elementary Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) and the Northgate School District.

FOOD SERVICE PRICING AND CHARGE PROCEDURES

The Northgate School District participates in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Program which provides a nutritious FREE breakfast and lunch to all children enrolled in the district regardless of family income.

All meals meet federal and state guidelines. This program does not apply to extra entrees and ala carte items. Students must take 3 of the 4 items offered at breakfast, and 1 of those items must be a ½ cup fruit. At lunch, students must take 3 of the 5 items offered and 1 of those items must be a ½ cup fruit or vegetable.

Students who wish to purchase an extra entree, one of our snack options, or just a milk must pay for them. Charging the sale of these items will not be permitted.

Payment Options

The Community Eligibility Provision Program does not cover the cost of extra servings, or ala carte items such as snacks and beverages, you will need to use one of these payment options to fund your child's account.

Pay Online: View your child's purchase history and make payments at www.payschoolscentral.com. Payments can be set up automatically or add money as needed. A convenience fee will be charged at the time of payment. Payments will update to your account within 24-48 hours but as quickly as 30 minutes. You can set up an alert to notify you when your student's meal account has fallen below the amount you have specified. We recommend you set up the low balance reminder at \$10 to provide families with enough time to add additional funds.

Many parents/guardians want to monitor their student's eating habits, but continue to send a check or cash in with the student. It is FREE to create an online account with www.payschoolscentral.com, monitor your student's eating habits and create low balance alerts. The only time you are charged a fee is if you choose to pay online. We recommend all families create an account to monitor spending.

Pay Cash: When sending in cash for elementary students, please place the cash in an envelope with your child's name and have them give it to their teacher. Secondary students may hand cash to the cashier during breakfast or lunch service.

Pay By Check: Make checks payable to the Northgate Cafeteria Fund and please record your student's name and student ID number on the check. When sending a check for elementary students, please place the check in an envelope with your child's name and have them give it to their teacher. Secondary students may hand the check to the cashier during breakfast or lunch service.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to pay for any previously accrued meal charges. For more information, please review the Northgate Food Services Policy.

NORTHGATE SCHOOL DISTRICT FOOD SERVICE AND MEAL ACCOUNT BALANCE PROCEDURES

Purpose

- To establish fair and consistent rules regarding meal account charges and expectations of payment for service rendered.
- To establish fair and consistent rules that allow the food service department to collect all monies due to the school district for meal service provided.
- To build positive and clear communication between the district food service, school district staff, and the community regarding these guidelines.

Payments

- It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to monitor and keep students' meal accounts funded at all times.
- An online account can be set up at www.payschoolscentral.com to monitor student balances.

Negative Meal Account Balances

It is expected that student meal accounts be funded for extra servings or ala carte items . We do understand that occasionally negative balances can occur; therefore, the following rules will apply regarding charges to students' meal accounts:

- No student who requests a meal will be denied a lunch option, unless the student's parent or guardian has provided a written request to the Food Service Department to withhold a school lunch or to not allow a la carte options. When documentation from the parent or guardian has been provided, items can be removed from the student's tray at the register.
- A school meal option must include three of the five components: one must be a fruit or vegetable. The five lunch components are: Meat/Meat Alternative, Grain, Fruit, Vegetable, and Milk. Entrees consist of the Meat/Meat Alternative and Grain options(i.e., pizza slice, grill sandwich, salad bar or deli sandwich).
- When all components of a breakfast or lunch are not taken, the cashier must charge a la carte prices for the food items.
- Students will not be reminded at the register of their current balance. Students may request their balance from the cashier. All balance notifications will be sent to the parent/guardian.
- When purchases are made with cash, change should be issued to the students except when the student asks for the balance to be applied to his/her meal account.
- In the event that a student's meal account is over - \$50.00 and two attempts have been made to collect the debt without response, the district will use a third party collection agency to complete the collection process.

End of Year Meal Account Balances

- Students in Grade 12 – All monies owed to the district food service must be paid in full prior to graduation.
- Students in Grades K-11 – If a positive or negative balance is left in a student's account at the end of the school year, that balance will remain and carry over into the next school year.

LUNCH IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS

We employ a computerized meal service system. The purpose of the system is to allow parents to prepay for extra servings, or ala carte items. All students must have their student ID number daily to obtain a lunch.

LOST AND FOUND

Lost articles, when found, are taken to the school office where they can be claimed. Please label your child's belongings. Lost and found items not claimed at the end of each school year will be donated to a charitable organization.

SCHOOL PICTURES

Notification concerning school pictures will be sent home with your child. Pictures are taken early in the school year.

TELEPHONE

Incoming calls with messages for students should be kept to a minimum. Use of the school phones is restricted for emergency purposes only. Students will not be permitted to use office phones unless they have a note from their teacher stating that it is an emergency.

HOMEWORK

Students should budget their time to complete homework assignments properly and in a timely manner. They should ask questions to clarify and fully understand their assignments.

If a student is absent, he/she should arrange to make up all missed assignments as required by the teacher, upon return to school. Arrangements for picking up work on the day of the absence can be made by contacting the building office before 11 am on the day of the absence.

It is beneficial to the students if parents are familiar with classroom homework expectations and procedures. A work atmosphere conducive to successful completion of assignments and time to review the day's learning experiences and assignments with your child is helpful.

HOMEWORK TIPS

1. Use your planner every day. Write in your assignments as they are given. Teachers say assignments out loud and also write them on a chalk or white board in each room.
2. Be sure to check your planner near the end of the day for books and materials you will need.
3. Ask your parents to help set up a study area. Have study tools, such as pencils, pens, a ruler, paper, calculator and dictionary there.

4. Make time to study and do homework each day. If you don't have a specific assignment, review math facts, spelling words, or reread the social studies lesson. Read a library book.
5. Get organized. Decide what to do first, second, third.
6. Do long assignments in small parts.
7. Have someone proofread your homework.

HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS CONFERENCES

Parents are welcome to initiate conferences, and may do so by contacting the child's teacher. Teachers may also contact parents to meet with them personally, to review a child's academic progress. By sharing information, teachers and parents can build a strong foundation for a positive and rewarding school experience. Conferences may also be arranged by or with the principal.

DISTRICT WEBSITE

It is important to us that our families have updated information and answers to any questions. Families should visit our website for the most up-to-date information at www.northgatesd.net. If you have any questions, please contact your building principal directly.

OPEN HOUSE

The traditional Open House is a time for students and their families to visit the school and meet the teachers in a more informal setting.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Parents are encouraged and welcome to volunteer in the schools. Each school PTO distributes information about their various types of volunteer programs.

For the safety of the children, all volunteers must secure Act 34 (Request for Criminal Record Check), Act 151 (Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance), Act 114 or Act 153 Affidavit for PA 10-year resident (fingerprinting or notarized Act 153 Volunteer Affidavit if you have lived in Pennsylvania for 10 years and have not committed any reportable offenses), and the PDE-6004 (Arrest/Conviction Report and Certification Form).

PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION

The PTO in each elementary school is a viable organization that brings parents and teachers together to benefit the students. In addition to monthly business meetings, each PTO sponsors educational and recreational activities that support the schools. Membership information may be obtained from each school.

OTHER PARENT INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS

Throughout the year there are other opportunities for parents to become involved within the school and the school district. Committees consisting of administrators, teachers, staff, and parents are formed as needs arise. Information on these and other parent involvement programs is available through the office.

COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

The Northgate School District will not discriminate in its educational programs, activities, or employment practices, based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, religion, ancestry or any other legally protected classification. Announcement of this policy is in accordance with state and federal laws, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. For information regarding grievance procedures, services, activities, programs and facilities that are accessible to and usable by handicapped persons or, for inquiries regarding compliance with the above nondiscriminatory policies, please contact the Coordinator of Special Services, 591 Union Ave., Pgh., PA 15202. Phone – 412-732-3300, ext. 2000. Northgate S. D. will make reasonable accommodations to its programs & services to assure access to all persons. If, because of a disability, you require an accommodation, please contact the Coordinator of Special Services, Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator – 412-732-3300, ext. 2000.

HOMELESS STUDENTS

Under McKinney Vento all school districts are responsible for identifying students experiencing homelessness and connecting them with the resources needed to ensure academic success.

- Who is considered homeless?
 - Children or youth living in a shelter, transitional housing, hotel/motel, vehicle, campground, on the street or doubled up with friends or family due to a lack of alternate resources are considered homeless. An unaccompanied homeless youth is a child or youth that is not in the care of their parent or legal guardian and meets the definition of homeless under McKinney Vento.
- Where can students experiencing homelessness attend school?
 - The law indicates that homeless students have the right to remain in their school origin (the school they attended at the time of the homeless episode or last school attended) through the end of the school year in which they find permanent housing, provided it is in the child/youth's best interest.
 - If through consultation between the school and the family and/or unaccompanied youth it is determined that remaining in the school of origin is not in the student's best interest, then the student has the right to immediately enroll in the school that non-homeless students living in the attendance area in which the child/youth is actually living are eligible to attend, even if they do not have all of the required documentation. Additionally, unaccompanied homeless youth have the right to immediately enroll in school, even if they do not have a legal guardian present.
- What supports can school districts provide to homeless students?
 - Homeless students are eligible for supports and services to remove barriers to educational success. This may include transportation to the school of origin, free meals, referrals to physical/mental health providers, clothing to meet school requirements, access to school supplies and resources, assistance with credit recovery, tutoring supports, expedited evaluations and assistance to participate in school activities including parent engagement opportunities, sports, club, etc.
- Homeless Dispute Process
 - If at any time there is a disagreement about homeless status or best interest for school placement, the district will notify the family in writing of their determination that the family/unaccompanied youth is ineligible for McKinney Vento services. At this time, the district

will provide the family/unaccompanied youth with the ability to dispute their determination. Throughout the dispute process, the child/youth, including unaccompanied youth, will continue to be educated in the school of origin or immediately enrolled in the school they are seeking enrollment in until the dispute process is finalized. Transportation will continue throughout the dispute process. All disputes will be sent to the ECYEH Regional Coordinator who will issue a determination. If any party is unhappy with the determination, they can elevate the dispute to the state coordinator.

- What if I think that I am eligible for services under McKinney Vento?— Please contact one of the following individuals:
 - Northgate School District Homeless Liaison: Christina Garczewski, Director of Student Services, 412-732-3300 ext. 2000.
 - If you require further assistance, please contact: Storm Carmara, State Coordinator Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program Pennsylvania Department of Education 333 Market Street, 5th Floor Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333 (717) 772-2066.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

A child who has any of the following conditions should remain at home for at least the time indicated:

- CHICKEN POX – Seven (7) days from onset of illness or until all crusts are dry
- IMPETIGO – Readmitted when clear of infection
- PEDICULOSIS (HEAD LICE) – Until free from all lice and nits
- CONJUNCTIVITIS (PINK EYE) – Until seen by physician and treatment is initiated
- RINGWORM (SKIN) – Until area is non-infectious or with doctor's note
- SCABIES – Until skin is clear
- STREP THROAT/SCARLET FEVER – 24 hours from initiation of antibiotic/effective medical treatment.

It is important that children stay home until they are completely well. The child recovering from one of the above diseases may no longer be able to transmit it to others, but his/her resistance may be so low that he/she is easily susceptible to other infections:

- fever: temperature of 100 degrees or greater
- red, watery eyes or crusted lids
- swollen glands or sore throat
- vomiting or diarrhea
- skin sores or rashes
- acute cold and nausea