

Pine Grove Area
Elementary School
Kindergarten– 4th Grade



Student/Parent Handbook
Code of Conduct
2026-2027

PINE GROVE AREA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
107 School Street
Pine Grove, PA 17963
570-345-2731
<http://www.pgasd.com>

****This handbook serves to supplement the School Board's discretionary authority to maintain safety, order, and discipline in the school zone. The rules in the handbook support, but do not limit, the school's authority. In case of conflict between a Board Policy and the provisions of this handbook, the Board Policy most recently adopted will prevail. This Handbook may be amended at any time at the discretion of the School District.**

Pine Grove Area School District
Promoting Growth, Achievement, Success, and Direction
for ALL Children!

Mission Statement

The mission of the Pine Grove Area School District Board, faculty, and staff is to Promote Growth, Achievement, Success, and Direction for all children. PGASD for all children!

SUPERINTENDENT: Mr. Heath Renninger

Mrs. Brittney Harner, Administrative Assistant/Board Secretary

PINE GROVE AREA SCHOOL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Mr. David Lukasewicz

Vice-President: Mr. Donald E. Brown Jr.

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Member: Mr. Walter R. Stump

Member: Miss Genavieve Moyer

Member: Mrs. Amanda Daubert

Member: Mrs. Lauren Potter

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Elementary Principal- Mr. Corey Mentzer

Dean of Students- Mrs. Corrine Stricker

Grounds Supervisor- Mr. Nolan Hatfield

Buildings and Maintenance Supervisor- Art Aungst

Social Worker- Mr. Sean Lyons

Director of Technology- Mr. Todd Lenge

Director of Curriculum- Mrs. Stephanie Ziegmont

Special Education Director- Mr. Bill Kimber

Special Education Supervisor- Mrs. Mary Jo Nabholz

Food Services Director- Mr. Bernie Kelly

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Message from the Principal

Hello and welcome to the opening of what promises to be a wonderful school year at Pine Grove Area Elementary School. At this time of the year, there is great anticipation of what is to come. I am just as excited as our dedicated faculty, our creative and energetic student, and our supportive parents, to see what opportunities this school year will bring. Throughout the year every decision I make will be in each student's best interest to continue to promote growth, achievement, success, and direction for all our children. The teachers and staff in our school are committed to working collaboratively with you and with one another to provide instruction that focuses on the success of every Pine Grove Area student.

It is my goal, as principal, to support Pine Grove Area School District's long tradition of striving for excellence while providing a safe and nurturing environment. I have an open-door policy, and I welcome the opportunity to get to know all of you. It is my belief that the best way to educate your child is for everyone to join together in this effort. Nothing motivates a child more than when learning is valued by the schools, families and community in partnership. We know that in partnership we will achieve incredible success. We are counting on each and every parent to partner with us as we continue to raise the challenge bar and close the achievement gap.

It is my pleasure, and honor to serve the district, the community, and our most valuable assets, the children.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Corey Mentzer". The script is cursive and fluid.

Corey Mentzer

Pine Grove Area Elementary Principal

cmentzer@pgasd.com

Pine Grove Area Elementary School Staff

Pine Grove Area Elementary School			
OFFICE			
Name	Position	Extension	Email
Mr. Corey Mentzer	Principal	337	cmentzer@pgasd.com
Mrs. Corrine Stricker	Dean of Students	308	cstricker@pgasd.com
Mrs. Darcey Brommer	Principal's Secretary	440	dbrommer@pgasd.com
Mrs. Kelly Jochems	Nurse	446	kjochems@pgasd.com
Mr. Rahn Richards		320	rrichards@pgasd.com
Mr. Bill Kimber	Director of Special Education	325	bkimber@pgasd.com
Mrs. Mary Jo Nabholz	Supervisor of Special Education	317	mnabholz@pgasd.com
PRE-K COUNTS			
Mrs. Mary Debus	Pre-K Teacher	432	mdebus@pgasd.com
KINDERGARTEN			
Mrs. Susan Halcovich	Kindergarten Teacher	454	Shalcovich@pgasd.com
Miss Erica Lis	Kindergarten Teacher	439	elis@pgasd.com
Mrs. Donna Medeiros	Kindergarten Teacher	409	dmedeiros@pgasd.com
Mrs. Amber Moyer	Kindergarten Teacher	457	amoyer@pgasd.com
Mrs. Lorna Shollenberger	Kindergarten Teacher	455	lshollenberger@pgasd.com
Miss Hannah Werley	Kindergarten Teacher	402	hwerley@pgasd.com
FIRST GRADE			
Mrs. Joelle Bretz	First Grade Teacher	408	jbretz@pgasd.com
Miss Alexa Devitt	First Grade Teacher	428	adevitt@pgasd.com
Mrs. Mary Pontician	First Grade Teacher	449	mpontician@pgasd.com
Mrs. Elizabeth Quinn	First Grade Teacher	404	equinn@pgasd.com
Mrs. Dawn Reiter	First Grade Teacher	431	dreiter@pgasd.com
Miss Jolene Schneck	First Grade Teacher	426	jschneck@pgasd.com
SECOND GRADE			
Mrs. Selina Daubert	Second Grade Teacher	382	sedaubert@pgasd.com
Miss Abigail Daukaus	Second Grade Teacher	411	adaukaus@pgasd.com
Mrs. Amber Holland	Second Grade Teacher	426	aholland@pgasd.com
Mrs. Melissa Masser	Second Grade Teacher	435	mmasser@pgasd.com
Mrs. Cindy Moyer	Second Grade Teacher	433	cmoyer@pgasd.com
Mrs. Susan Skripko	Second Grade Teacher	405	sskripko@pgasd.com
THIRD GRADE			
Miss Angela Brand	Third Grade Teacher	436	abrand@pgasd.com
Miss Amy Jo Brixius	Third Grade Teacher	406	abrixius@pgasd.com
Mrs. Katie Cawthern	Third Grade Teacher	417	kcawthern@pgasd.com
Miss Courtney Krise	Third Grade Teacher	376	ckrise@pgasd.com
Mrs. Megan Schwartz	Third Grade Teacher	410	mschwartz@pgasd.com
FOURTH GRADE			
Mrs. Nikkole Brown	Fourth Grade Teacher	452	nbrown@pgasd.com
Miss Kennedy Cannon	Fourth Grade Teacher	416	kcannon@pgasd.com
Mrs. Tiffany Renninger	Fourth Grade Teacher	407	trenninger@pgasd.com
Mrs. Selena Slackus	Fourth Grade Teacher	422	sslackus@pgasd.com
Mrs. Christine VanTries	Fourth Grade Teacher	429	cvantries@pgasd.com
ARTS/SCIENCES			
Mr. Robert Frankford	Vocal Music Teacher	423	rfrankford@pgasd.com
Mrs. Darla Rodriguez	Art Teacher	450	drodriquez@pgasd.com
Mrs. Susan Seavey	STEAM Teacher	430	sseavey@pgasd.com

Mrs. Shannon Shughart	Instrumental Music Teacher	413	sshughart@pgasd.com
Miss Megan Sondag	Library Teacher	448	msonday@pgasd.com
Mr. Joshua Zelinsky	Physical Education Teacher	493	jzelinsky@pgasd.com
SPECIAL EDUCATION			
Mrs. Myranda Aponte	Autistic Support Teacher	456	maponte@pgasd.com
Miss Tayla Breisch	Autistic Support Teacher	421	tbreisch@pgasd.com
Mrs. Mary Chappell	Kindergarten and First Grade Learning Support Teacher	414	mchappell@pgasd.com
Dr. Suzanne Dubbs	Occupational Therapist	463	sdubbs@pgasd.com
Mrs. Jessica Enge			jenge@pgasd.com
Mrs. Jamie Hitz	Gifted Support Teacher	408	jhitze@pgasd.com
Mrs. Justine Hosler	Fourth Grade Learning Support Teacher	424	jhosler@pgasd.com
Miss Tiffany Kohr	Life Skills Support Teacher	442	tkohr@pgasd.com
Mrs. Mary Pleva	Emotional Support Teacher	442	mpleva@pgasd.com
Miss Kamryn Stine	Speech Pathologist	466	kstine@pgasd.com
Mrs. Julianne Vuksta	Third Grade Learning Support Teacher	437	jvuksta@pgasd.com
Mrs. Kelly Weiss	Second Grade Learning Support Teacher	469	kweiss@pgasd.com
Mrs. Katie Wolfgang	Speech Pathologist	470	kwolfgang@pgasd.com
SCHOOL RESOURCES			
Mrs. Shandra Allar	Title 1 Reading Teacher	451	sallar@pgasd.com
Mr. Noah Allegretta	School Counselor	447	nallegretta@pgasd.com
Miss Michelle Brand	School Counselor	447	mbrand@pgasd.com
Mrs. Susan Kuchinsky	Interventionist	418	skuchinsky@pgasd.com
Mrs. Kristin MacCready	School Psychologist	403	kmaccready@pgasd.com
Mrs. Karen Raugh	Title 1 Reading Teacher	458	kraugh@pgasd.com
INSTRUCTIONAL AIDES			
Mrs. Michelle Brown	Instructional Aide		mbrown@pgasd.com
Mrs. Cheryl Felty	Instructional Aide		cfelty@pgasd.com
Miss. Alexis Guidas	Instructional Aide		aguidas@pgasd.com
Mrs. Brenda Lingle	Instructional Aide		blingle@pgasd.com
Mrs. Tina Joseph	Instructional Aide		tjoseph@pgasd.com
Mrs. Shannon Kahl	Instructional Aide		skahl@pgasd.com
Mrs. Janine Mehta	Instructional Aide		jmehta@pgasd.com
Mrs. Dana Moser	Instructional Aide		dmoser@pgasd.com
Mrs. Jennifer Walker	Instructional Aide		jwalker@pgasd.com

FORWARD

All students enrolled in the Pine Grove Area School District are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the rules of the system and the school. Administration and faculty are directed to maintain order in the schools so that learning can occur. Maintenance of order applies during those times when students are under the direct control and supervision of school district officials. This authority is granted in the Pennsylvania Public School Code. The Board of School Directors has granted authority to the administration and faculty to maintain appropriate decorum in the building and classrooms and to make and enforce reasonable rules and regulations governing students' behavior.

ADMISSION OF BEGINNER

A child is eligible for admission to kindergarten if he/she has attained the age of five (5) years before the first day of September. The district policy that addresses the age of an incoming kindergarten student is a part of this document, no exceptions. Please refer to (Pine Grove Area School District's Policy #201

SCHOOL DAY

Our school doors open at 8:20 a.m., and classes begin promptly at 8:45 a.m. We strongly encourage all students to be settled in their homerooms by 8:45, as late arrivals disrupt the flow of instruction and learning. During regular arrival times, students must be dropped off at the rear of the elementary building at the kindergarten entrance. If a student arrives late, a parent or guardian must accompany the child into the elementary office and sign them in. For the safety of all students and families, please do not drop off or pick up students at the inner-circle entrances or double-park on School Street. Additionally, please refrain from parking in any reserved (numbered) parking spaces, and visitors should never park in the inner-circle entrances.

Dismissal time begins at 3:15 p.m. Regular attendance and full participation in the school day are essential, as the amount of time a child spends in school directly impacts academic success. Students who are being picked up by car will report to the Kindergarten and STEAM wing for dismissal. Parents and guardians should drive to the rear circle and remain in their vehicles while waiting for their child. A valid driver's license must be readily available for student sign-out to ensure the safety and welfare of all children. Parents are not permitted to enter the building during dismissal. Students who ride the bus will also begin dismissal at 3:15 p.m. To help maintain a safe environment, please drive slowly and cautiously when exiting the parking areas, as many pedestrians will be present. For kindergarten students who ride the bus, an adult (18 years of age or older) must be present at the designated bus stop during drop-off. If no adult is present, the student will be transported to the Bus Barn at 1000 Rock Road, Pine Grove, PA 17963, where they must be picked up by an adult with proper identification (driver's license or valid ID). This policy is in place to ensure the safety of all students.

If a student requires pickup during school hours, the person picking them up should enter the elementary office to sign them out. The person picking up the student must present a form of identification, such as a driver's license or other valid ID. Children shall be released from school only to their parents/guardians or to persons authorized by their parents/guardians.

DISTRICT CALENDAR

The school calendar will be available on the district website. Please refer to the district website for any updates. www.pgasd.com

ATTENDANCE

- A. **Illegal/Unlawful Absences:** Refer to School Board Policy #204 (Attendance) for further information. Feel free to stop by the building office to request a copy of the attendance policy.
- B. **Lawful (excused) Absence:** Excused absences include the following: sickness, quarantine, a short-term family emergency, death in the immediate family, pre-arranged medical or dental appointment, authorized school activities, approved educational field trips, emergency domestic permit, or other urgent reasons.
- C. Students who arrive at school after 9:45 a.m. will be issued a ½ day absence. Students who leave prior to 2:25 p.m. will be issued a ½ day absence.
- D. Tardy times are 8:46 a.m. to 9:45 a.m.
- E. A written excuse/email must be turned in within three school days of an absence, or it will be changed to an unlawful absence.
- F. If a student is absent from school for 3 consecutive days, a doctor's note should be provided upon return.
- G. Students sent home by the nurse may not participate in extra-curricular activities that day.

Please note that after 10 days of accumulated absences (without a doctor's note), a letter will be sent home, and the student will be required to bring a medical note for every absence after the letter is received.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Pine Grove Area School District recognizes that attendance is a vital component to success in education, and all students, regardless of age, will be subject to disciplinary actions for inappropriate attendance, lateness, or tardiness.

*State law requires that a parent must send his/her child to school between the ages of 6 and 16 18, and the child must attend regularly. According to Pennsylvania law, all absences are unexcused with the exception of those caused by illness, quarantine, family emergency, recovery from an accident, required court appearance, death in the family, religious holidays, family educational travel with prior approval, or educational tour or trips with prior approval. A student absent from school must present a written excuse to the office stating the dates absent and the

reason for his/her absence. This note must be signed by the parent/guardian. This excuse is due to the day the student returns to school. If the students fail to turn in an excuse within three school days stating that he/she is present, the absence becomes an illegal/unlawful absence. A phone call by the parent/guardian is necessary before an emergency "Need at home." Whenever a student is ill, and a doctor's services are obtained, the student is expected to provide a doctor's excuse.

*Students are not permitted to leave the school grounds at any time during the school day without permission from the school office. If students must leave the building because of illness or any other emergency, a parent/guardian must sign them out in the office. Students leaving school for dental or doctor appointments must report to the office and a parent/guardian must sign them out.

TRUANCY

Refer to either the Schuylkill County Truancy Handbook for Parents and Youth or School Board Policy #204 (Attendance). Feel free to stop by the building office to request a copy.

The following is information that every family should be aware of regarding truancy and how truancy situations will be handled:

Initially, it is important to know that by definition, compulsory school age is the period of a student's life from the time the student's parent or guardian elects to have the student enter school, which shall be no later than six (6) years of age, until the student reaches eighteen (18) years of age. The term does not include a student who holds a certificate of graduation from a regularly accredited, licensed, registered, or approved high school

- A. Procedures when a student is truant: The law defines "**truant**" as a student subject to compulsory attendance who has three or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year.
- Within 10 days of the student's third unexcused absence, the school will provide written notification that the student has been truant to the person in parental relation to the student. The school may offer an attendance improvement conference.
 - If the student continues to accumulate unexcused absences after the written notice is provided, the school will convene a school attendance improvement conference (SAIC). The school will invite the child, the person in parental relation to the child, other individuals identified by the person in parental relation who may be a resource, appropriate school personnel, and recommended service providers. The school will provide the parent with advance written notice of the meeting. The conference may occur if the parent declines to participate or fails to attend the scheduled conference after advance written notice and attempts to communicate via

telephone. The school will complete a written school attendance improvement plan to document the outcome of the conference.

B. Procedures when a student is **“habitually truant”**: The law defines “habitually truant” as six or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a child who is subject to compulsory school attendance.

- When a child is habitually truant and under fifteen years of age at the time of referral, the school will refer the child to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program or to Schuylkill County Children and Youth Services for services or for possible disposition as a dependent child.
- When a child is habitually truant and fifteen years of age or older at the time of the referral: The school will refer the student to a school or community-based attendance improvement program or file a citation with a magisterial district judge. If the student continues to incur additional unexcused absences after being referred to a school attendance improvement program as recommended through the school attendance improvement conference, the school may refer the child to Schuylkill County Children and Youth Services.

The school may file a citation in the office of the appropriate magisterial district judge against the person in parental relation to the student.

C. Upon receiving a truancy referral, Children and Youth will review the student’s attendance record and determine if an investigation is warranted based on the frequency of the absences and the length of time over which the absences occurred. If Children and Youth determine the student’s absences do not warrant an investigation, the agency will notify the district of their decision.

D. Citations may not be filed if

- A school attendance improvement conference has not occurred.
- A proceeding is already pending for violating compulsory school attendance.
- A referral has been made to Schuylkill County Children and Youth Services, and the case is active with the agency.
- A petition has been filed alleging the child is dependent due to being habitually truant, and the case remains under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court.

Additional Services that can/will be offered

Children and Youth programs

Family Group Decision Making

Family Support Unit/Signature Family Services/Justice Works

Access Services

District Programs

Student Assistance Program

Penalties for Violation of Compulsory School Attendance:

- Citations through the Magisterial District Justice Office can be issued to both the students and the parent. A person convicted of violating compulsory school attendance requirements may be sentenced to pay a fine not exceeding \$300, together with court costs, for the initial offense, not to exceed \$500, together with court costs, for the second offense, and not to exceed \$750, together with court costs, for a third or subsequent offense. In addition, if the parents are issued a fine and they fail to pay the fine, the Magistrate can impose a jail sentence, not to exceed three days.
- Community Service can be ordered by the District Magistrate for both the parent and truant youth.
- Students may be required to complete a school attendance improvement program.
- At their discretion, district judges may send the Department of Transportation a certified record of a student's conviction for license suspension. Upon a first conviction the child's operating privilege for operating an auto mobile will be suspended for 90 days. Upon a second subsequent conviction, the child's operating privileges will be suspended for six months. Children who do not yet have a driver's license will be ineligible to apply for a license for the time periods of 90 days for the first conviction and 6 months for the second and subsequent convictions.
- If a student is adjudicated dependent and continues to incur unexcused absences, the agency can recommend, to the Court, a weekend placement program. This program can be utilized for one weekend or as many as needed in order to encourage the student to attend school regularly. Students who are court-ordered into a weekend placement program will be required to complete assignments provided by the school. In addition, the youth will complete chores and any physical requirements of the program.

If there are any questions regarding truancy, please feel free to contact the school Social Worker, Sean Lyons, at slyons@pgasd.com or our Truancy Prevention Specialist, Meghan Grady, at mgrady@pgasd.com.

EDUCATIONAL TRIPS

A student going on an educational trip should complete and return an educational trip form to the office for the principal's approval at least 5 days prior to the trip. Upon approval, the absence will then be considered an excused absence. Students are responsible for all missed work during an educational trip. Students are limited to a maximum of 5 educational trip days per school year. (PGASD Board Policy #204.1)

DELAYS/CLOSINGS/EARLY DISMISSALS

Due to inclement weather, the hours school is in session sometimes vary. All changes in the regularly scheduled day will be posted on our district's website at www.pgasd.com, Facebook, and announced on television stations. The television stations are WNEP-TV, WGAL-TV, and WBRE. School days canceled due to inclement weather will be made up throughout the school year, or if excessive school cancellations occur, additional days may be added at the end of the school year, according to the school calendar adopted by the PGASD Board of Directors.

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

Each year, there are occasions when it becomes necessary to delay the opening of school and/or conduct an early dismissal due to emergencies or weather. In the case of such a closure or early dismissal, parents/families will be notified via a mass communication system. Other pertinent information affecting the school community will also be disseminated in this way. Parents will be contacted by phone if requested.

MCKINNEY VENTO HOMELESS STUDENT RESOURCES

The Pine Grove Area School District believes that homeless youth should have access to free and appropriate public education and wishes to remove the barriers that homeless children may face. Our goal is to have the educational process continue as uninterrupted as possible while children are in homeless situations.

Homeless students are defined as individuals lacking a fixed, regular, and nighttime residence, which includes students living under the following conditions:

1. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship
2. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of adequate alternative accommodations.
3. Living in emergency, transitional, or domestic violence shelters.
4. Abandoned in hospitals.
5. Awaiting foster care placement.
6. Living in public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings.
7. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations, or similar settings.

8. Living as migratory children in conditions described in the previous examples.
9. Living as run-away children.
10. Being abandoned or forced out of homes by parents/guardians or caretakers.
11. Living as school-age unwed mothers in houses for unwed mothers if they have no other living accommodations.

Please visit our website at <https://www.pgasd.com/domain/62>

HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION

There are times in students' lives when accidents or illness occur, and students are well enough to learn but unable to attend school. At such a time, homebound instruction is possible.

To qualify for homebound instruction, parents/guardians must request special instruction for their child by providing a doctor's certificate stating the nature of the illness or disability and the length of time the student will be confined at home. The request for homebound instruction should be given to the office of the elementary principal, where it will be reviewed and forwarded to the superintendent for approval.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS FOR FLEXIBLE INSTRUCTIONAL DAYS (FID)

Pine Grove Area School District has been approved to utilize up to five Flexible Instructional Days (FID), per school year. This means we would utilize synchronous (live) virtual instruction if inclement weather did not allow for in-person instruction. This document will provide you with expectations for students on those days. Students will utilize their assigned Chromebook to connect with their teacher(s) for synchronous instruction.

Access

- Every elementary student has been provided with a Chromebook
- Families are able to request a mobile hotspot for students who do not have access to the internet at home. To request a hotspot, families can complete this form Jotform Link <https://tinyurl.com/PGAhotspot>. Mobile hotspots are limited.
- Students will utilize Google Classroom as the main learning platform for accessing content, synchronous Microsoft Teams, and the submission of assignments

Attendance

- IN order to be marked present for the day, each student will access a Daily Attendance Assignment Google for in their learning Google Classroom each day between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m.
- On a flexible instruction day, a student is considered present if they complete one of the following:
 - Fill Out Google Attendance Form

- Log on to Microsoft Teams
- Complete Assignments
- If a student cannot attend virtual instruction due to illness or a doctor's appointment, please contact Darcy Brommer at dbrommer@pgasd.com.

Student online expectations

- Students must connect at least 3 minutes before the class is scheduled to begin
- The camera must be turned on so teachers can monitor active engagement in the lesson.
- Students should appropriately use the Microsoft Teams tools available to raise their hand and interact with the teacher.
- Students are not permitted to record any portion of a live-streamed lesson.
- Students must adhere to Board Policy #815: Acceptable Use of Communications and Information Systems (CIS).
- Students will be placed in a waiting room upon joining a meeting. Please wait patiently until the teacher admits you to the room
- If a student's behavior is inappropriate, the teacher may place the student back into the waiting room or remove them from the classroom. If permitted to re-enter, the student is expected to follow school rules.
- Any comments placed in the chat box are viewable by the entire class. All comments must be school-appropriate and on topic for the lesson. The teacher will be able to save a copy of all chat activity.
- The link or access information provided by the teacher is intended for members of the class only. Do not share the link with others.

ACADEMICS

REPORT CARDS / GRADING SYSTEM

Student growth will be reported using the Achievement Level (percentage grades) defined below:

- A- 90-100
- B- 80-89
- C- 70-79
- D- 60-69
- F- 0-59

Report cards are sent electronically through email and are also visible on the students' ALMA system.

Retention in grade will occur when a student meets at least one of the following criteria:

- 1. The student has a final average of "F" in any two major subject areas.**
- 2. The student has not demonstrated adequate growth in his/her reading level.**

3. **The established educational team has determined that retention is the very best decision for a particular student.**
4. **Please see the attendance policy for other criteria on student retention.**

For more information, please see Board Policy #215: Promotion and Retention.

PROGRESS REPORTS

In addition to report cards, progress reports are utilized in grades 1-4. Progress reports are issued for all students to inform parents of their child's progress. Progress reports will be sent via email and will be available through ALMA. PGAES strongly encourages parents/guardians to contact their child's teacher to discuss the progress report for clarification and/or strategies that will facilitate the child's success. Feel free at any time to call and set up a meeting with your child's teacher to discuss any academic concerns you may have.

Reporting Pupil Progress

The primary purpose of our school is to provide maximum opportunities through which pupils can achieve their greatest learning potential, each according to his/her own abilities. It is therefore necessary that teachers evaluate pupil achievement and report pupil progress to both the pupil and Parent/guardian, and recognize proficiency levels through the following:

1. An option of pupil and parent/guardian conferences when needed
2. Interim progress reports
3. Issuing of report cards (electronically through email and ALMA)
4. Phone calls
5. E-mail
6. ALMA
7. Letter

MISSED ASSIGNMENTS AND MAKE-UP WORK

If a student is absent due to illness, the student is responsible for finding out what tests and assignments were given. Students will be given one day for each excused day of absence to make up assignments and tests.

Any previously assigned tests, class work, or homework will be due on the date the student returns to school. For example, if a student is present on the day a test or homework is assigned but absent on the day it is due, it will be due on the day the student returns to school. Any rescheduling will be up to the teacher's discretion.

If more than one day of absence occurs between the time the test or work is assigned and the day it is due, the teacher will make arrangements with the students to make up the test or work on an alternate day.

Students with planned absences should make every effort to keep up with classwork during the absence. It is the student's responsibility to notify the attendance office and his/her teachers of the planned absence, to take all necessary steps to complete missed coursework during the absence, and to turn in completed work upon returning to school.

When a course grade is incomplete (I), all work must be made up within 10 school days of the end of the semester, or the course grade may be deemed failing.

HOMEWORK AND HOMEWORK REQUESTS

The purpose of homework is to reinforce learned material. Each teacher provides homework at his/her discretion. Assisting your child with homework is another method of becoming involved in your child's education. Therefore, the staff at PGAES makes every effort to accommodate the parents/guardians need to be informed about homework assignments and to facilitate attaining homework materials when children are absent from school.

If your child is absent for three or more days, you may call the main office to request missed assignments and/or textbooks. Requests for homework must be made no later than 11:00 a.m. in order to provide the classroom teacher with enough time to prepare work and send it to the office.

STANDARDIZED ASSESSMENTS

State Mandated Assessments

In 1999, Pennsylvania adopted academic standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Mathematics. These standards identify what a student should know and be able to do at varying grade levels. School districts possess the freedom to design curriculum and instruction to ensure that students meet or exceed the standards' expectations.

The state-mandated assessment is a standards-based, criterion-referenced assessment used to measure a student's attainment of the academic standards while also determining the degree to which the school program enables students to attain proficiency of the standards.

Individual student scores, provided only to their respective schools, can be used to assist teachers in identifying students who may be in need of additional educational opportunities, and school scores provide information to schools and districts for curriculum and instruction improvement discussion and planning

In compliance with 4.51(b)(4) of the PA School Code the State Board of Education approved, "Specific criteria for Advanced, Proficient, Basic and Below Basic levels of performance".

Pennsylvania's General Performance Level Descriptors
Advanced- The Advanced Level reflects superior academic performance. Advanced work indicates an in-depth understanding and exemplary display of the skills included in the Pennsylvania Academic Content Standards.

Proficient -The Proficient Level reflects satisfactory academic performance. Proficient work indicates a solid understanding and adequate display of the skills included in the Pennsylvania Academic Content Standards.
Basic - The Basic Level reflects marginal academic performance. Basic work indicates a partial understanding and limited display of the skills included in the Pennsylvania Academic Content Standards. This work is approaching satisfactory performance, but has not been reached. There is a need for additional instructional opportunities and/or increased student academic commitment to achieve the Proficient Level.
Below Basic -The Below Basic Level reflects inadequate academic performance. Below Basic work indicates little understanding and minimal display of the skills included in the Pennsylvania Academic Content Standards. There is a major need for additional instructional opportunities and/or increased student academic commitment to achieve the Proficient Level.

Standardized Tests

PA System of School Assessment (PSSA)

Testing is given as follows:

*Grades 3 & 4 English/Language Arts and Math

IXL

IXL is an online learning platform that supports student growth in math, language arts, science, and social studies through personalized, skill-based practice. Students work on targeted skills aligned to grade-level standards, receiving immediate feedback and step-by-step explanations to help them learn from their mistakes and build confidence. IXL adapts to each child's progress, providing questions at the right level of challenge while tracking mastery over time. Teachers use IXL data to monitor student performance, identify areas of need, and provide additional support or enrichment. Families can also view progress reports to stay informed about their child's learning and celebrate growth throughout the year.

DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills)

DIBELS Assessment is given to students in grades K-4

The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) is a set of standardized assessments used to measure the development of early literacy skills in students. DIBELS helps teachers identify students who may be at risk for reading difficulties and provides information to guide instruction and intervention.

Students are assessed in key areas of reading development, including phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension. Assessments are conducted three times throughout the school year (beginning, middle, and end) to monitor student progress and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction.

DIBELS results are used to:

- Identify students who may need additional reading support.
- Monitor student growth and progress over time.
- Inform instructional planning and intervention decisions.
- Support the school's efforts to ensure all students develop strong foundational reading skills.

DIBELS is one of several assessment tools used by the school to provide targeted instruction and promote reading success for all students. Assessment results are shared with families and may be discussed during parent-teacher conferences.

FIREFLY

Firefly is an online diagnostic assessment tool used to measure student understanding of grade-level standards and identify areas of academic strength and need. The assessment provides detailed information about individual student performance and helps teachers make data-informed instructional decisions.

Students participate in Firefly assessments throughout the school year to monitor academic growth and progress in core subject areas. The results provide immediate feedback and help educators identify specific skills that may require additional instruction, practice, or intervention.

Firefly data is used to:

- Identify student strengths and areas for improvement.
- Guide classroom instruction and targeted interventions.
- Monitor student progress toward mastery of academic standards.
- Support data-driven decision-making within classrooms and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).
- Prepare students for success on state and local assessments.

The information gathered through Firefly allows teachers to personalize learning experiences and provide support that meets students' individual needs. Assessment results may be shared with families and used in ongoing discussions about student achievement and academic growth.

RTII

PGAES provides the services of a response intervention team. Members of this team include the interventionist, regular education teacher, school psychologist, school counselor, principal, Title 1 teachers, gifted teacher, and parent/guardian. This team is designed to serve as a safety net for students who may be struggling in the classroom with issues ranging from academic difficulties to behavioral issues.

Parents/Guardians or any professional staff member may initiate involvement in this process. As previously established, strong parental involvement at the classroom level is encouraged. Once the tiered intervention process is initiated, the team will develop an action plan that includes strategies that seek solutions to identified issues. Expectations are that all team members will be involved in the development of a solution.

TITLE 1

PGAES offers remedial reading instruction through Title I services. The program focuses on students in grades K-4. The goal is to assist students who struggle with learning to read to become successful readers as quickly as possible in the educational process.

The program is a team process that involves remedial instruction by reading specialists. The program is data-driven. Student progress is reported frequently using data derived from DIBELS and teacher input. Title I services are designed to provide additional academic support that strengthens, rather than replaces, classroom instruction.

TEACHER REQUESTS

Preparing classroom rosters is a collaborative effort amongst all staff members and administration. This process begins in early spring and can continue well into summer. Please understand that in our elementary school, we are preparing our students to adapt to multiple teachers with different personalities. This is what they will see in the middle school, and it is excellent for each child's social development. While we are always excited to hear your views about your child's education, we also will not honor teacher requests for the upcoming school year. We take into consideration the characteristics your child exhibits and the settings that are most appropriate. We always value parent input, but it is simply impossible to honor 600 parent requests. Our outstanding, nurturing, elementary teachers go above and beyond to meet the needs of every student. If you have concerns, please feel free to reach out to your child's teacher and begin the year off with open communication. Thank you for your support. We are positive that it is going to be another great year!

STUDENT RECORDS POLICY

The Student Records Policy contains provisions from the regulations of the State Board of Education on pupil records and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. Included in this policy are administrative responsibilities for student records, definitions, collection of data, classification, destruction, and maintenance of data. Parents or eligible students (eighteen years of age or older) have the right to inspect the student's educational records, to receive copies of the records within a reasonable time period, and to have a school official explain the records, if requested. A complete copy of this policy is available in each of the district's buildings and in the District Office.

CLUBS AND ACTIVITIES

Little Aevium- Mrs. Hosler, Mr. Allegretta
Guys with Ties- Mr. Allegretta
Achieve- Mrs. Holland
Cardinal Chorale- Mr. Frankford
Band- Mrs. Shughart
Good News Club
I Matter

BUILDING PROCEDURES

ASSEMBLIES

Assemblies are a regularly scheduled part of the curriculum and are designed to be both educational and entertaining experiences. These programs provide one of the few opportunities held in school to learn formal audience behavior. Regardless of the program type, courtesy demands that the student body be respectful and appreciative. In live entertainment, unlike radio, television, or movies, the performers are very conscious of their audience. Talking, whispering, whistling, foot stomping, and booing are discourteous and will not be tolerated.

CAFETERIA RULES

Students should report to the cafeteria during their assigned lunch period. Good manners and proper conduct are expected of all students while eating lunch. Everyone is expected to “clean up” their own area, including items such as trays, utensils, milk containers, and lunch bags. Students are not permitted to leave the cafeteria during their lunch period without permission from teachers or staff. Any student displaying unacceptable behavior during lunch will be handled accordingly.

No student should be in the cafeteria during a period in which he or she is not assigned.

All students are REQUIRED to remain in the designated areas during lunch periods. The teacher on duty reserves the right to assign seats due to unacceptable behavior.

Morning Procedure: Students are not allowed in the building until 8:20, when they may report to the cafeteria for breakfast.

FOOD/DRINKS

Food and drinks are permitted only in the cafeteria or designated areas. Open containers are prohibited. Teachers may have food and drinks in their rooms for special occasions. Students are permitted to carry water; no other food or drinks are allowed in the halls, gymnasium, or library without prior authorization.

HALLWAY

Students must proceed through the halls in an orderly manner, and noise should be at a minimum. It is important to be respectful to others learning.

STUDENT VALUABLES

The school is not responsible for lost, stolen, and/or damaged personal items. Students are responsible for their personal property. If it is necessary to bring money or valuables to school, students may bring it to the office for safekeeping.

BACKPACKS/BOOKBAGS

Backpacks and bookbags are permitted to carry books into and out of school and should then be stored in the classroom cubby. Students are not permitted to carry their bags throughout the day. Students are permitted to go to their cubby throughout the day with teacher permission.

LOST AND FOUND

All items found are sent to the office. If a student loses something, he/she should get a pass from his/her teacher and go to the office to look for the missing item in the lost and found box. All found items are kept in the office and may be claimed by the owner. We also welcome parents/guardians to look through the lost and found for items that may belong to their child. The office is not responsible for items placed in the lost and found. During the school year, lost items will be kept for several weeks before being donated to a charitable organization. Any items not claimed by the end of the school year will be donated to a charitable organization.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

Substitute teachers are a vital part of the educational process and must be extended all rights as a professional member of the teaching staff. Substitutes should be treated with the highest level of respect by all students, and failure to follow a substitute's directives will be considered a serious violation and will result in disciplinary action.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Comfortable clothing and sneakers should be worn for all physical education classes. If your child has any medical or physical limitations, please notify the physical education teacher. A note from the parent/guardian must be sent to the physical education teacher stating their child may again participate in physical education class. Our school is pleased to hold "Adapted PE" for any students with physical limitations.

PLAYGROUND

Students are provided with recess each day. When the weather is inclement or the temperature drops below 32 degrees, recess occurs indoors. Recess provides many benefits, including increased creative and critical thinking through "free play".

Playground rules are established to help ensure the safety of all students. Our staff will review the playground safety rules with all students. Our staff's expectation is that all students will follow the safety rules and enjoy their recess sessions. However, students who choose not to follow the safety rules will be subject to our discipline procedures. Please dress your child appropriately for cold weather.

ATTIRE

The Pine Grove Area School District requires students to follow its policy on dress and grooming. To view the complete policy, please go to the end of this handbook to view the policy in its entirety (#221). If a student dresses in a manner that does not comply with the board's policy, his/her parent will be called to bring a change of clothing to school. Repeat violations will result in more severe consequences.

We recognize that each student's mode of dress and appearance is a manifestation of personal style and individual preference, but such attire must comply with reasonable guidelines.

1. **Mandatory and Allowable Dress:**

- a. Students must wear an appropriate top, bottom, and footwear while on school premises.
- b. Some courses may require adjustments to attire and hairstyle to ensure safety during academic activities (i.e., science labs, physical education)
- c. Some courses (i.e., science labs, physical education) and school-sponsored activities may require specific attire (safety gear, athletic attire, hair tied back, etc.)

The following are a few items that are deemed inappropriate and may **NOT** be worn in school:

- 1) Clothing that is too short, small/tight
- 2) Clothes that are so large that walking is impeded, or undergarments show
- 3) Unsafe footwear
- 4) Items that make the student's face unidentifiable; please note, however, protective masks, clothing/headgear worn for religious and medical purposes are excepted.

Weather Appropriate Attire Must be Worn

School Administrators have the final responsibility for interpretation and enforcement. Violations of these may result in disciplinary violation. (PGASD Board Policy #221)

ADDRESS/PHONE NUMBER CHANGES

When a child's and/or parent/guardian's address or phone number changes during the school year, please contact the school immediately. Also, notify the school if any changes are made in the emergency contact information. There are times it is necessary to contact parents/guardians, and the correct address and phone number are needed.

DRILLS – SAFETY

All students practice a safety drill at least once a month. These drills include fire, intruder, bomb-scare, and weather-emergency drills. The principal and teachers supervise students to ensure the evacuation from the building is performed safely and efficiently

VISITORS

In the interest of safety, we require all visitors entering our building to register at the elementary school office with their license. We require all persons to wear a printed identification badge at all times while in the PGAES. They will be returned when you exit the main office.

You will notice that all entrances are locked, and the only entrance available for the public is the main entrance on School Street. Please ring the bell, and our office staff will greet and provide you with entrance to the building.

For your convenience, virtual meetings are always an option for parents.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Students and parents are assured that the Pine Grove Area School District is an equal opportunity education institution and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or handicap in its activities, programs, or employment practices as required by various federal and state statutes. The Pine Grove Area School District, in conjunction with the Intermediate Unit #29, provides a variety of Special education services. Information regarding services, activities, and facilities that are accessible to and available for individuals with special needs can be obtained by contacting Mr. Bill Kimber at 570-354-2731 ext. 325.

Does your child need special education?

Your child may be eligible if:

1. Has a physical, sensory, mental or emotional disability, and
2. Needs specially designed instruction to make academic progress

Children must meet both qualifications in order to qualify as an eligible student. All exceptional children have a right to free and appropriate public education (FAPE). Special education services are provided in accordance with The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Pennsylvania School Code Chapter 14.

If your child has a disability but does not qualify:

Students who have disabilities which substantially limit their participation in or access to school programs, but do not qualify for reasonable accommodations in the regular classroom under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or Chapter 15 of the PA School Code. The rules,

which apply to their education, are different from those for special education students who qualify as eligible students by meeting the two-part criteria listed above.

Special Education Evaluation:

A multidisciplinary Evaluation is completed by the Multidisciplinary team (MDT) to gather information to determine if a student qualifies for special education services. Students may be referred for an evaluation by the school or by the parents through the School Counselors. The school may not proceed with an evaluation without written parental permission unless approval is granted by an impartial hearing officer. The evaluation is conducted at no cost to the parents. The school psychologist evaluates a student and collects input from parents, the school and any other sources such as doctors or specialists if health problems or related services such as speech, occupational, or physical therapy will be considered. An Evaluation Report (ER) is completed and is utilized in developing an IEP should a student qualify. Once a student qualifies for special education a re-evaluation occurs at least every two years for students with Intellectual Disabilities and every three years for students with other disabilities. The IEP team may waive, however, the mandated re-evaluation if no additional information is needed. This option is not applicable for students with Intellectual Disabilities.

Parental and Student Rights

A Procedural Safeguards Notice is provided to parents once a year except for initial evaluations, due process hearings or upon parent request. The notice describes the rights and procedures that safeguard students under state and federal law. A copy may be obtained upon request and questions and/or clarifications can be addressed by contacting Mr. Bill Kimber at 570-345-2731 ext. 325.

Special Education Programming:

Special education programs for eligible students are provided by the Pine Grove Area School District to meet the needs of exceptional students in the district. Those needs may be met through a variety of programs available:

- Learning Support
- Emotional Support
- Life Skills Support
- Speech/Language Support
- Physical Support
- Autistic Support
- Multi-Handicapped Support
- Sensory Support

Additional information:

Anyone with questions regarding programs and/or services for eligible students with special needs or students who are thought to be exceptional may contact: Mr. Bill Kimber Director of Special Education at the Pine Grove Area School District at 570-345-2731 ext. 325.

GIFTED PROGRAM

The PGASD provided a gifted support program in compliance with Chapter 16 of the School Code and district policy. Students who display exceptional cognitive ability can be referred for psychological testing to determine eligibility. Questions concerning the gifted program should be directed to the elementary principal.

GUIDANCE PROGRAM

The mission of the Guidance program at PGAES is to provide support to students in order to meet their personal/social, career, and academic needs, enabling students to maximize potential success within our educational community. The process used to meet these goals includes classes, small group instruction, individual student interviews, career awareness, and crisis counseling. In addition, school counselors also assist in the management of the referral process for special education and gifted programs. When you have any questions or need assistance, please contact Ms. Brand or Mr. Allegretta at 570-345-2731 ext. 447.

Counseling service includes:

- **Xello-** (ZELLO) is a program designed to help students with college and career preparation. Students will be assisted with using Xello by School Counselors via class meetings, classroom presentations, and individual sessions. Every student will have the opportunity to use Xello to help plan for their future successes and endeavors.
- **Personal and Social Adjustments-** The School Counselors are there to support you when you have a question or concern that needs special attention. The School Counselors will not provide a “right” answer; however, they will listen to your problems and talk over different solutions to your problem. It is the School Counselor's hope to give new insights into your problems so that you will be able to make wise decisions in solving them on your own. All School Counselors' sessions are strictly confidential. This means that what is discussed will not be told to anyone without your permission. Exceptions to confidentiality include when keeping the information confidential leads to foreseeable harm.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SAP)

The Student Assistance Program is an intervention program staffed by teachers, the guidance counselor(s), the nurse, administration, and appropriate counselors from county agencies. The Student Assistance Team is trained to identify and help “high-risk” students seek the help that they may need. High-risk concerns may include emotional or social problems, substance abuse problems, physical and sexual abuse, eating disorders, depression, school phobia, suicide

prevention, and truancy. Team members have been trained to identify” high-risk” students. Referrals can come from students’ parents, teachers, counselors, administrators, and can be made anonymously in the guidance office or online on the PGASD website.

CAFETERIA

The PGAES continues to serve both breakfast and lunch. Breakfast will be free this year for all students and is served from 8:20-8:40 a.m. The cost of an elementary student’s lunch is \$2.55 (adult \$4.00)

The cafeteria debt system allows parents/guardians to deposit money into their child’s lunch account. Prepayments of any dollar amount may be deposited into your child’s account at any time. We accept checks payable to “PGASD Cafeteria Fund”. Prepayments can also be made online using a major credit card at the School Café App at www.schoolcafe.com . This website has all the information needed. The School Café App also provides parents with the ability to view their child’s account balance and to print out a copy of their child’s eating history report. This history report will show you all dates and times that your child has purchased a breakfast and/or lunch within the past thirty days. If you have any questions on the debit system or to request a statement, please contact Bernie Kelly at 570-345-2713 ext. 357.

- Due to serving 600 students, the cafeteria staff. PGASD teachers and aides do not have the ability to heat up lunches from home.

Nutrition, Food Allergies, and Classroom Treats

The Pine Grove Area School District is committed to helping our children grow strong and healthy. Nutritious snacks are welcome for the purpose of celebrating birthdays and other special occasions. Please contact your child’s teacher to inquire about any food allergies with your child’s classmates, please notify the teacher at least two days ahead of time.

HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

At the heart of the mission of PGASD is communication. We constantly strive to facilitate this aspect of our mission. Therefore, parents/guardians must be aware of the many options available for communications between home, school, and community. Communication channels are established in the form of electronic media, print, and verbally.

The PGASD maintains a website and can be located at www.pgasd.com. At this site, visitors can find information about the general functions and information specific to each individual building. All contact information is listed including phone numbers and email addresses.

The phone system allows parents to contact teacher directly. Please note that classroom phones may not be answered during instructional hours, however, callers can access voicemail and staff members will return call in a timely manner. All staff members have access to email and this form of communication is always an option for parents/guardians for any purpose.

PGAES always has an open-door policy for parents/guardians. Please understand our teacher's primary responsibility is classroom instruction, therefore, they may not be available on demand. However, we will make every effort to address your concerns as quickly and efficiently as possible.

In addition to formal communication, teachers often communicate in less formal methods which include notes, communication tablets/notebooks, letters, etc.

Please ask your children about information they may have from their classroom teacher and please check backpacks etc., of young students for important notices and assessment information.

CLASS DOJO

ClassDojo is the school's primary communication platform for connecting families and teachers. Through ClassDojo, parents and guardians can receive classroom updates, school announcements, reminders, photos, and direct messages from teachers. The platform helps strengthen home-school partnerships by providing timely, convenient communication about student learning, events, and other important information throughout the school year.

ClassDojo is integrated with our school's Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program to recognize and reinforce positive student behavior. Students earn ClassDojo points for following our PGA rules: Promote Safety, Give Respect, and Accept Responsibility. Points may be awarded for positive behavior, academic effort, citizenship, and acts of kindness. Students can use their earned points to participate in PBIS incentives and recognition programs throughout the school year. This system encourages positive behavior, promotes a supportive school culture, and helps students take ownership of their actions and choices.

PARENT/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT

Children whose parents/guardians are involved in the educational process enjoy the greatest chance of academic success. Therefore, PGAES vigorously encourages parents/guardians to become involved in the educational process. Many opportunities exist for involvement. Those opportunities range from simply helping your children with homework to volunteering time by serving on committees, as tutors, PTO members, etc. If you are looking for an opportunity to become involved, please feel free to contact your child's teacher.

CONFERENCES

Teachers welcome the opportunity to meet with pupils and/or parents/ guardians to review progress.

Pupils: Pupil/Teacher conferences are arranged during a pupil's study time, and/or before or after classes, and are conducted in a conference room in the school, guidance office, or in a classroom.

Parents: Parent/Teacher conferences are held at school and arranged at a time convenient for both the parent/guardian and the teacher. If the teacher wishes to request a parent/teacher conference, they should arrange the meeting in conjunction with the student's other teachers if necessary. Parental requests for parent/teacher conferences may be arranged by the guidance counselors, teachers, or administration. Parents are encouraged to call their child's teacher to request a conference. The pupil's guidance counselor or principal could be available to attend parent/teacher conferences.

VOLUNTEERS

All volunteers must fill out an Elementary Volunteer Packet and include copies of their Criminal Background Check and Child Abuse Clearance. If you have not resided in PA for the last ten years, you will also need the FBI Fingerprint Clearance. Upon completion of the above process, you will also need to be approved by the board before volunteering. Board meetings are held on the third Thursday of every month, so please plan ahead if you would like to volunteer.

CHAPERONE REQUIREMENTS/EXPECTATIONS

Each year, 5 chaperones are selected via lottery to attend the field trip with their student's class. To be eligible for the chaperone lottery held in March, parents must meet the following requirements:

*****COMPLETING THESE REQUIREMENTS SECURES ELIGIBILITY FOR THE LOTTERY IN MARCH; IT DOES NOT GUARANTEE SELECTION IN THE LOTTERY.*****

1. Complete a PGASD School Volunteer Application (can be printed from the PTO website) and submit it to the PGAES office.
2. Complete a PA Child Abuse History Clearance online and submit the certificate to the PGAES office.
3. Complete a PA State Police Criminal Record Check online and submit the certificate to the PGAES office.
4. IF you have not lived in PA for at least 10 years, complete a Federal Background Check and submit the certificate/reference number to the PGAES office. Register online for an appointment to be physically fingerprinted at an approved location.
5. Complete one of the following volunteering options prior to March:
 - a. Attend at least 1 PTO meeting and complete 2 hours of volunteer service through the PTO
 - b. complete 4 hours of volunteer service through the PTO
 - c. Donate a \$25 buyout (per family) and complete 2 hours of volunteer service through the PTO

PARENTS MUST BECOME PGASD SCHOOL BOARD APPROVED VOLUNTEERS BEFORE THE MARCH PTO MEETING TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE CHAPERONE LOTTERY!

When your Volunteer Application and ALL of your clearance certificates are received by the PGAES office, your name will be submitted to the PGASD school board. After approval at a board meeting, you will be considered a board-approved volunteer. Approval typically occurs at the next regularly scheduled school board meeting after the certificates and application are received by the PGAES office.

This approval is necessary for liability purposes and must occur before a parent/guardian may chaperone. Once a parent has been school board approved as a volunteer, they do not need to fill out the volunteer application again or be re-approved. They simply turn in updated certificates to the PGAES office to replace those that have expired.

PARENT/VOLUNTEER SOCIAL MEDIA CONDUCT

Pine Grove Area Elementary School understands and appreciates the benefits of social media. There are many benefits to using social media; however, if it is misused, the school community can be negatively affected, and our school's reputation can be damaged. As educators, we do our very best to create a safe, accepting, and nurturing environment. Throughout our classrooms, we promote daily what it looks like to give respect. To set the best possible example for our students at Pine Grove Area Elementary School, we would like to invite our parents and volunteers to do the same. The school will not tolerate parents or volunteers sending abusive messages to teachers or staff, or using social media to damage our school's reputation. If a concern arises, please do not hesitate to speak first to the appropriate person involved and try to resolve it with mutual respect and clear communication. Please do not hesitate to make an appointment with the relevant person. If, for some reason, this is not possible, please make an appointment to meet with Mr. Mentzer, Principal. Your comments and suggestions are always appreciated when done so in a respectful manner. Keep in mind, the biggest winners are our students! When walking into Pine Grove Area Elementary School and seeing parents and teachers working together respectfully, it's a sure sign that relationships have been established to ensure the success of our children's educational journey.

PTO

PTO meetings are held monthly. Please refer to the elementary newsletters for meeting dates and times. The PTO officers for 2026-2027 are as follows:

President- Felicia Wylezik

Vice President- Janine Mehta

Secretary- Lynette Lemke

Treasurer- Samantha Moyer

Communications Coordinator- Brittany Noecker

Teacher Representative- Megan Sunday

Check out the website at elpto@pgasd.com

PARENTS' RIGHT TO KNOW INFORMATION

Parent Right to Know Information as Required by the Elementary and Secondary Education Assistance (ESEA) [Section 1112 (e)(1)(A)] and Every Student Succeeds Act [Section 1112 (e)(1)(A)]

Your child attends Pine Grove Area Elementary, which receives Federal Title I funds to assist students in meeting state achievement standards. This letter lets you know about your right to request information about the qualifications of the classroom staff working with your child.

At Pine Grove Area Elementary, we are very proud of our teachers and feel they are ready for the coming school year and are prepared to give your child a high-quality education. As a Title I school, we must meet federal regulations related to teacher qualifications as defined in ESEA. These regulations allow you to learn more about your child's teachers' training and credentials. We are happy to provide this information to you. At any time, you may ask:

- Whether the teacher met state qualifications and certification requirements for the grade level and subject he/she is teaching.
- Whether the teacher received an emergency or conditional certificate through which state qualifications were waived, and
- What undergraduate or graduate degrees the teacher holds, including graduate certificates and additional degrees, and major(s) or area(s) of concentration.

You may ask whether your child receives help from a paraprofessional. If your child receives this assistance, we can provide you with information about the paraprofessional's qualifications.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which was signed into law in December 2015 and reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1956 (ESEA), includes the right to know requests; at any time, parents and family members can request:

- Information on policies regarding student participation in assessments and procedures for opting out, and
- Information on required assessments that include
 - Subject matter tested,
 - Purpose of the test,
 - Source if the requirement (if applicable),
 - Amount of time it takes students to complete the test, and
 - Time and format of disseminating results.

Our staff is committed to helping your child develop the academic knowledge and critical thinking he/she needs to succeed in school and beyond. That commitment includes making sure that all of our teachers and paraprofessionals meet applicable Pennsylvania state requirements.

If you have any Questions, please contact Mrs. Stephanie Zeigmont at the Pine Grove School District at 570-345-2731 ext. 358 or email at szegozmont@pgasd.com

BUS TRANSPORTATION

As students ride the bus, they are under the authority of the school principal, his/her designee, and the bus driver. Students are expected to exhibit proper behavior and follow bus safety guidelines while riding the bus. In the event of misconduct, bus drivers will complete a misconduct report and submit it to the principal. The principal shall decide upon an action accordingly. Consequences will be appropriate to each infraction and will range from a warning to suspension of riding privileges or suspension from school. Please note that in the event of a suspension of riding privileges, parents/guardians are responsible for providing transportation to and from school during the suspension.

The following is a list of expectations for conduct while riding buses. Our expectation is that parents/guardians will review these rules with their children before their children ride the school bus.

- a. Be on time for the bus. Be at the stop at least 5 minutes before the scheduled time.
- b. Remain seated through the entire trip.
- c. Eating, smoking, and drinking are prohibited while riding the bus.
- d. Keep head, arms, and hands inside the window
- e. Keep all objects in your backpack. This includes: Toys, Cellphones, electronic games, audio/video equipment, and any items that could cause a disturbance, which will not be permitted on school buses or vans under any circumstances.
- f. Be Courteous.
- g. Respect others and their property.
- h. Follow the Driver's instructions.
- i. When crossing the street at your stop, please cross in front of the bus.
- j. Assigned seating is mandatory on all buses. The seating will be assigned by the bus driver or school administrators at their discretion. Students must sit in their assigned seats at all times.
- k. Follow PBIS & bus safety expectations.
- l. Please review our current health & safety plan regarding any safety updates that must be followed.

A few important reminders

- All kindergarten students are to be picked up at their designated bus stop by an ADULT (18 Years or Older). Students will not be permitted to leave the bus if an

adult is not present. Kindergarten students will then be taken to the Bus Barn (1000 Rock Road, Pine Grove, PA 17963), and an adult with identification must pick them up.

- Please remember that any changes to transportation, other than a valid emergency, require a minimum of three (3) days' notice to the elementary office or transportation department.
- Work schedule in the form of a calendar is to be turned in promptly for alternate transportation within the guidelines of the board policy for transportation.
- Vehicles that provide student transportation in the Pine Grove Area School District are equipped with audio and video surveillance equipment. Students are to be reminded that their behavior will be recorded, and any disciplinary decisions may be based on the surveillance review.
- **Daily and/or weekly changes in transportation will not be permitted. The fewer changes that are made, the less confusion there will be for the child.**
- If a parent/guardian plans to pick-up his/her child, instead of utilizing an assigned bus, a note, email, or call must be sent to the elementary office prior to 2:50 p.m. on that day.
- If you need to permanently change your child's bus schedule, please complete the appropriate form; it will be sent to the transportation department for approval.

Transportation Department Summary of School Board District Policy # 810

Requests for change in transportation must be received no later than the second Friday of July. Changes submitted to alter the transportation requested on the survey form after this date may not be guaranteed for the first two weeks of school.

Transportation may be provided, upon approval, to one alternate location such as a daycare or babysitter. However, no "on occasion" request will be approved. Alternate location changes shall be for one location only, A.M. and/or P.M. on an established route. Primary and alternate assignments must remain in the same week-to-week unless a schedule is provided in advance. An exception may be made for pre-planned vacations, provided there is room on the bus.

Parents/guardians are responsible for making their own arrangements for periodic babysitting or visits to family or friends. Students will not be dropped off at any location other than their assigned bus stop due to limited bus seating and to ensure the safety of the children.

In case of joint custody and/or work schedules, one alternate bus assignment/stop is permitted. **The entire month's schedule must be submitted, in advance, to the elementary office for approval on the calendar.** Blank calendars are available in the elementary office for your convenience. This policy has been implemented for the safety and welfare of our students.

All students requesting bus transportation have been scheduled to ride a specific bus to and from school. Please understand that **a written, signed note, submitted three days in advance, is**

required to place a student on a different bus or stop. Forms are available in the elementary office for this purpose.

Permanent Alterations to Bus Schedule – If you need a permanent change to your child's bus schedule, please call the office to arrange for a new bus assignment with Mrs. Alisha Hikes, at 570-345-2731 ext.-359

SCHOOL BUS SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS

Vehicles that provide student transportation in the Pine Grove School District are equipped with video and audio surveillance equipment. Students are to be reminded that their behavior is being recorded and any disciplinary decisions may be based on the surveillance review.

HEALTH SERVICES

SCHOOL NURSE- Please contact the school nurse, Mrs. Kelly Jochems, at 570-345-2731 ext. 446 to discuss any health concerns regarding your child.

In accordance with the Pennsylvania School Health Act, medical examinations are required for all new school students. This applies to all new kindergarten students and any other new student who does not have a record of a physical examination.

Dental examinations are performed on all first-grade and third-grade students in school. However, these exams may be done by the family's personal physician and dentist on forms provided by the school. Private examinations are encouraged for the best continuity of care, but the reports must be submitted prior to the scheduled school exams.

All students will be weighed and measured and given a vision screening each year. Students in grades Pre-K-3 will also be given a hearing screening test each year. Fourth-grade students with a known hearing loss will also be tested.

If a child is injured or becomes ill while at school, she/he will receive first aid only. Parent/guardians will be called to take the child home, if necessary. If you can not be reached, the person listed as an emergency contact on the student update sheet will be contacted. Parents/guardians are responsible for providing current phone numbers where they can be contacted. Transportation is the responsibility of parents.

Medication will not be given in the elementary school unless ordered by a doctor. Fluoride will not be distributed to students. Forms for doctor-prescribed medications are available from the nurse's office. If you do not have a form along when you go to the doctor, ask the doctor to write a note for the school nurse.

The number of days that your child must take the medication needed for the school day should be sent to school. An exception is made for students who are on long-term medication. Medication that is brought to school by the child must be given to the school nurse.

Local school district policy and policy guidelines from the State Department of Health will be followed with regard to the exclusion and re-admission of students with communicable diseases such as chicken pox, pink eye, strep throat, impetigo, scabies, and head lice. **With regard to head lice, children may return to school the day following the treatment, provided all egg cases have been removed.**

ASTHMA POLICY

In May 2005, and revised in 2018 (PGASD Board Policy #210.1), the Pine Grove Area School District Board of Directors adopted a policy entitled “Possession/Use of Asthma Inhalers”. This policy requires that all students with asthma have an Asthma Action Plan signed by the parent/guardian and physician. Students who will be carrying an inhaler at school must have an Asthma Inhaler Contract signed by the parent/guardian, the student, and the school nurse, in which all parties agree to certain terms regarding the use of the inhaler at school. The school nurse will mail these forms to the homes of all students who have asthma listed as a health problem on their Student Update form. These forms are also available on the PGASD website at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AfF2u6bOdflfcyL5k9a2Z5VcUKD39uz7/view> (See Board Policy #210.1)

MEDICAL MARIJUANA

A parent, legal guardian, or caregiver may administer medical marijuana to their child/student on school premises, provided that the parent, legal guardian, or caregiver:

- (1) Provides the school principal with a copy of the Patient Authorization Letter, and
- (2) Notifies the school principal, in advance of each instance in which the parent or caregiver will administer the medical marijuana to the child/student. The school principal shall provide notification to the school nurse in each instance that a parent or caregiver will be administering medical marijuana to the child/student as well. The parent/caregiver shall follow all school protocols applicable to visitors to the school during the school day. A parent, legal guardian or caregiver shall bring to the school and administer the medical marijuana to their child/student without creating a distraction, and shall promptly remove any excess medical marijuana and related materials from the school premises after administration of medical marijuana is complete. The school shall provide a secure and private location for the parent/legal guardian or caregiver to administer the medical marijuana to the student. Students themselves shall not be permitted to possess any form of medical marijuana at any time on school property or during any school-sponsored activity.

IMMUNIZATIONS

In order to attend school, the state requires students to have four doses for polio, four doses for diphtheria, tetanus, and acellular pertussis, two doses of MMR (measles, mumps, rubella), two doses if varicella or chicken pox vaccine, and three doses of Hepatitis B. Proof of proper

immunizations is a note from your physician or signed doctor plan. **If immunizations are not completed within the prescribed time (1st day of school), students will not be allowed to continue attending school.**

SCHOOL INSURANCE

Each year, the opportunity is given to students to purchase low-cost group insurance, which provides protection in the event of an accident in school, going to and from school, or to any scheduled school activity. A full explanation of the coverage is included in the brochures distributed by the company and made available to each student. All students are encouraged to buy this insurance.

Since the school is not liable for injuries incurred during the normal school day, the need for the parent/guardian to assume costs in the event of an accident should be considered in the decision concerning the purchase of the insurance. Students who participate in district-sponsored athletic, band, clubs, field trips, and physical education K-12 are covered by a policy purchased by the district. This policy, however, has specific coverage limitations.

It is the responsibility of the insured party to file all claims with the insurance company. All notices of claims should be given to the company promptly after the accident.

The procedures to be followed in filing a claim are:

1. Obtain a claim form from the office secretary.
2. Take the claim form to the doctor or hospital treating the child's injury for completion of their section of the form.
3. Send the claim directly to the insurance company.

DISCIPLINE

One of the most important lessons education should teach is discipline. While it does not appear as a subject, it underlies self-control, character, conduct, and proper consideration for other people. With an understanding of the purpose of discipline in a school, students may form a correct attitude towards it, and not only do their part in making their school an effective place of learning, but also develop the habit of self-restraint, which will make students better people. Students are expected to respect one another, the PGA faculty & staff, and themselves.

A student referred to the office by a teacher will be handled as follows. When a teacher sends a student to the office, it indicates that prior corrective measures taken by the teacher went unheeded or that the student's infraction was serious enough to warrant immediate removal from the classroom. Teachers have the right to impose initial disciplinary consequences for inappropriate behavior in consultation with school administration. Students must complete

teacher-imposed penalties. Failure to do so shall result in referral to the office and administrative action.

Consequences and discipline will be enforced when deemed appropriate. It is within the administration's discretion to determine whether an in-school or out-of-school suspension should be imposed due to a child's behavior.

DISCIPLINE CODE OF DEVELOPMENT

The Discipline Policy was formulated by a committee composed of students, parents, teachers, and administrators. It was formally approved by the Board of Education in August 1998 and revised in February 2007. This policy manual aims to provide an environment conducive to learning. The objective of our discipline code is to help our students develop a sense of citizenship and social responsibility.

PINE GROVE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT DISCIPLINE POLICY

Administration has the ability to enforce, as needed, the guidelines set forth in the Pine Grove Area School District Health and Safety Plan

1. When a student has committed Level II, III, and/or IV violations, a parent conference may be held.
2. The Discipline Policy applies to all school activities
3. At the time of each suspension, the parent will be notified of the suspension by letter.
4. The administration shall develop procedures for gathering documentation on all violations.
5. A student on out-of-school suspension will not be eligible to participate in any extra-curricular activities during the term of the suspension
6. A student on out-of-school suspension will not be permitted on school grounds until after the suspension has been served.

In addition to disciplinary actions, any student who violates the Pennsylvania Crimes Code may be issued a citation or arrested by law enforcement and be liable for fines determined by the court system.

DISCIPLINE CODE OF CONDUCT

LEVEL I

INFRACTIONS - EXAMPLES

1. Lying
2. Cutting class
3. Eating or drinking in unauthorized areas
4. Horseplay or scuffling
5. Inappropriate wearing apparel (hats, shorts, tank tops, sunglasses, etc.)
6. Loud boisterous noises
7. Possession/use of non-instructional items

8. Public displays of emotion and affection
9. Running in the classrooms, class, cafeteria, locker rooms, etc.
10. Tardiness to school or class
11. Throwing objects (pencils, erasers, snowballs, etc.)
12. Sleeping in class
13. Violation of classroom procedures established by the teacher
14. Violation of safety procedures
15. Inappropriate behavior
16. Other

DISCIPLINARY OPTIONS, RESPONSES

- A. Warning
- B. Change of clothes
- C. Assigned seating
- D. Withdrawal of privileges
- E. Detention (lunch/recess or both)
- F. Special assignments/ work duty
- G. Telephone call or written communication to parents/guardians
- H. Parental conference
- I. Guidance referral
- J. Attendance policy
- K. Confiscation of material
- L. Other consequences as deemed appropriate by the administration.

LEVEL II

INFRACTIONS - EXAMPLES

1. Continuation of Unmodified Level I misbehaviors
2. Acting in an insubordinate manner
3. Bus Disturbance
4. Cafeteria disturbance
5. Cutting class
6. Disruption in the educational process
7. Failure to complete assigned detention
8. Academic misconduct/dishonesty/cheating
9. Minor defacing of school property (writing on desks, walls, books, etc.)
10. Violation of safety procedures
11. Inappropriate behavior
12. Falsification of records, excuses, passes, schedules, etc.
13. Minor physical or verbal altercation
14. Leaving school grounds without permission
15. Loitering in unauthorized areas of the school building/grounds
16. Misbehavior at a school-sponsored activity
17. Possession of obscene material
18. Showing flagrant disrespect to school, in word and/or gesture
19. Violation of computer policy

20. Truancy
21. Use of obscene language or gestures
22. Out of the assigned area
23. Harassment/Intimidation/Bullying
24. Violation of Electronic Device Policy
25. Minor physical or verbal altercation
26. Causing disruption in detention or in-school suspension
27. Other

DISCIPLINARY OPTIONS/RESPONSES

- A. Warning
- B. Detention (lunch/recess or both)
- C. Withdrawal of privileges
- D. Special assignments/ work duty
- E. In-school suspension
- F. Out-of-school suspension
- G. Parental communication/conference
- H. School transportation privileges denied
- I. Confiscation of material
- J. Guidance referral
- K. Referral to outside agency
- L. Attendance policy
- M. Other consequences as deemed appropriate by the administration

LEVEL III

INFRACTIONS - EXAMPLES

1. Continuation of Unmodified Level I and /or Level II misbehaviors
2. Blatant defiance of a school employee's directive
3. Assault and/or battery on another student
4. Dissemination of unauthorized materials
5. Extortion
6. Fighting
7. Indecent exposure
8. Intimidation: threat to student(s) and/or school personnel
9. Leading or participating in a walkout
10. Theft/possession/sale of another's property
11. Vandalism
12. Flagrant disrespect to school/others' property
13. Sexual Harassment
14. Violation of computer policy
15. Use and or possession of tobacco products
16. Possession or use of any inhalant device (i.e., Vaporizers, Vape Pens, E-cigarettes) or any component, part, or accessory of the device
17. Terroristic Threats
18. Truancy

19. Other

DISCIPLINARY OPTIONS/RESPONSES

- A. Temporary removal from class
- B. In-school suspension
- C. Out-of -school suspension
- D. School transportation privileges denied
- E. Parental communication/conference
- F. Withdrawal of privileges
- G. Restitution of property and damages
- H. Referral to outside agency
- I. Referral to appropriate law enforcement agencies
- J. Confiscation of material
- K. Charges under the Crimes Code
- L. Other consequences as deemed appropriate by the administration

LEVEL IV

INFRACTIONS - EXAMPLES

- 1. Continuation of Unmodified Level I, II, and/or III misbehavior
- 2. Assault and/or battery on school personnel
- 3. Arson
- 4. Bomb Threat
- 5. Engaging in any other conduct contrary to the criminal code or ordinances of the Commonwealth/Community on school grounds or at school-sponsored activities
- 6. Engaging in conduct so disruptive as to interfere with the orderly operation of the school or which creates a clear and present danger to the health and welfare of the school community
- 7. Harassment/Intimidation of school personnel
- 8. Leading or participating in a riot
- 9. Possession/use/furnishing/selling of controlled substances (Alcohol or Drugs)
- 10. Possession /use/transfer of dangerous weapons or explosives
- 11. Setting off incendiary devices (firecrackers, smoke bombs, etc.)
- 12. Unwarranted pulling of the fire alarm
- 13. Vandalism of school property or personal property of school personnel
- 14. Sexual Harassment
- 15. Harassment/ hate crime
- 16. Violation of computer policy
- 17. Possession/use/furnishing/selling Drug Paraphernalia
- 18. Terroristic Threats
- 19. Other

DISCIPLINARY OPTIONS, RESPONSES

- A. Up to ten days of out-of-school suspension with an informal hearing
- B. Referral to appropriate law enforcement agencies
- C. Referral to Student Assistance Program
- D. Restitution
- E. Confiscation of materials
- F. Discipline contract
- G. Formal hearing with the Board of School Directors
- H. Expulsion
- I. Alternative education programs
- J. Charges under the Pennsylvania Crimes Code
- K. Other consequences as deemed necessary by the administration

GENERAL CONDUCT

We have always been proud of the conduct of the students of Pine Grove Area Elementary School. The goal of this district is for our students to continue to act in a manner that honors our school. We strive to **P**romote Safety, **G**ive Respect, and **A**ccept Responsibility.

IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION REGULATIONS

Students assigned to a full or partial in-school suspension will report to the elementary school's main office. Students will have access to all assignments and materials from their classes. Students are expected to complete all assigned work from each class, and their productivity will be monitored. There is a strict no-cell phone policy during ISS. Students will be asked to turn in their phones at the beginning of the day. Phones will be securely stored and returned at dismissal. All ISS students will have lunch in the office during their normally scheduled lunch time. The goal of ISS is to establish an environment of de-escalation, positive communication, support, and productivity.

NONDISCRIMINATION

The Pine Grove Area School District is committed to providing a safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environment for all students and employees. The district is also dedicated to ensuring that every student has access to the district's educational programs and activities.

Additionally, the district's policies require that all personnel promote acceptance and respect among students and staff. This policy reflects the Board's support in ensuring that all students are provided opportunities and access to programs, services, facilities, and activities.

To ensure that all individuals are provided with such opportunity and access, the Board authorizes the Superintendent or their designee to develop and promulgate regulations designed to ensure safety, comfort, and healthy development of all students while maximizing social integration with other students and minimizing stigmatization and isolation. The purpose of such regulation is to provide district staff with guidance to create and maintain a safe and supportive environment for all. (Board Policy #359)

POSSESSION OR USE OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS/ ELECTRONIC DELIVERY SYSTEM

No smoking and/or possession of tobacco or tobacco look-alike products, Electronic Delivery Nicotine System (Inhalant Device), or any component, part, or accessory of the device will be permitted in the school building or on school grounds. Anyone found in violation will be placed on suspension and may be issued a citation, in accordance with state law. (PGASD Board Policy #222)

BULLYING

The Elementary School has been state-recognized for our PBIS program, which stresses that bullying will not be tolerated in our school. The Board is committed to providing a safe, positive learning environment for district students. The Board recognizes that bullying creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, detracts from the safe environment necessary for student learning, and may lead to more serious violence. Therefore, the Board prohibits bullying by district students. Please view the entire policy (#249) online at www.pgasd.com.

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

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

Bullying, as defined in this policy, includes cyberbullying.

A School setting means in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop or at any activity sponsored or sanctioned by the school.

1. The Board prohibits all forms of bullying by district students
2. The Board encourages students who have been bullied to promptly report such incidents to the building principal or designee.
3. The Board directs that complaints of bullying shall be investigated promptly, and corrective action shall be taken when allegations are verified.
4. Confidentiality of all parties shall be maintained, consistent with the district's legal and investigative obligations.
5. No reprisals or retaliation shall occur as a result of good faith reports of bullying.

SEARCH AND SEIZURES

The School District recognizes that the Fourth Amendment provides that students have a right "to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures." However, with the passage of the Gun Free Schools Act, and Act 26 of 1995 that

amends the School Code, it is imperative that the school also recognizes its responsibility to protect and maintain the health, welfare, and safety of all students. Consequently, the school district contends that lockers and desks belong to the school and that students are only given permission to use them. It is with this understanding that students should assume no expectation of privacy and realize that searches may be conducted by school officials with or without any suspicion of wrongdoing on the part of the student. Students should be aware that all student desks and lockers may be searched at any time and for any reason, with no qualifications or exceptions.

Student lockers and desks will be inspected from time to time to ensure that they are being properly cared for and that the contents are in no way harmful to the student and other persons in the building. Any illegal materials may be seized. Students may also be asked to empty their pockets, book bags, purses, and other personal articles to search for illegal, controlled, or criminal material. Metal detecting equipment may be utilized in searches.

VANDALISM

The school building and grounds are for your use and not your abuse. You are asked to keep the school property as clean as possible so that we can all be proud of the appearance of our building. Fines will be assessed in cases of damage or loss of school books and other school property. Lockers should be kept in a clean, tidy condition.

Willful destruction of school property will not be tolerated. Institutional vandalism is classified as a felony. Students who destroy or deface school property will be liable for out-of-school suspension. Referral to law enforcement agencies will occur, if deemed necessary, followed by a parent conference, as well as full restitution being made for any damage done.

Students are responsible for books assigned to them. Reimbursement fees for lost or damaged books will be based on the cost to replace or repair the book.

PLAGIARISM/ ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

The Modern Language Association (MLA) describes plagiarism as follows: Using someone else's ideas or phrasing and representing those ideas as our own, either on purpose or through carelessness, is a serious offense known as plagiarism, "Ideas or phrasing" includes written or spoken material of course – from whole papers and paragraphs to sentences, and indeed, phrases – but it also includes statistics, lab results, art work, etc. "Someone else" can mean a professional source, such as a published writer or critic in a book, magazine, encyclopedia, or journal; an electronic resource such as material discovered on the World Wide Web; another student at our school or anywhere else; a prewriting "service" online or otherwise that offers to sell written papers for a fee.

Plagiarism is not only related to written works but also to material such as dates, images, music, formulas, websites, and other computer or electronic programs.

Consequences may include:

1. Grade adjustment
2. Other appropriate consequences as determined by the building administration

WEAPONS AND DANGEROUS INSTRUMENTS

Possession of weapons in the school environment is a threat to the safety of students and staff and is prohibited by law.

Weapon: the term shall include, but not be limited to, any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nunchaku stick, brass or metal knuckles, firearm, shotgun, rifle, bb or pellet gun, look-alike gun, chemical agent, explosive device, and/or any other tool, instrument, or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury.

Possession: a student is in possession of a weapon when the weapon is found on the person of the student; in the student's locker; under the student's control while s/he is on school property, on property being used by the school, at any school function or activity, at any school event held away from the school campus; or while the student is on his/her way to or from school.

The possession of weapons and replicas of weapons in any school district building, on school property, at any school-sponsored activity, and in any public conveyance providing transportation to school or a school-sponsored activity is prohibited.

The Board shall expel for a period of not less than one (1) year any student who violates this weapons policy. Such expulsion shall be given in conformance with formal due process proceedings required by law. The Superintendent may recommend discipline short of expulsion on a case-by-case basis. In the case of an exceptional student, the Superintendent shall take all steps to comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Board Policy #218.1

SCHOOL BUILDING AND BUS SURVEILLANCE CAMERA NOTICE

Staff, students, and parents/guardians should be aware that the School District has surveillance cameras monitoring various public areas on school property, currently including entrances, hallways, playgrounds, and the cafeteria. The cameras record video images on the property and video and audio on buses. Camera recordings are reviewed by school officials for disciplinary and security purposes, and may be provided to the police or used in disciplinary proceedings. Individuals should understand that their actions in these areas will be recorded and that they should have no expectation of privacy. The use of video cameras in schools and on school buses is intended to prevent discipline problems without threatening normally acceptable student behavior. Video monitoring will not replace the staff's responsibility to monitor students. Video cameras will add a level of certification of student behavior without interfering with the educational environment.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT (PBIS)

The main idea of our school-wide behavior plan is that everyone in our building focuses on the positives, more than the negatives. That said, our school environment is predictable. Our expectations are specifically taught, and there is a **common language** used in our school. We teach this through lessons which include behavior in the hallways, buses, cafeteria, recess, restrooms, and during dismissal. With this shared vision in place and daily practice, all our students have a consistent experience, and everyone knows our school expectations. Students only experience elementary school once in a lifetime, and we want them to thrive on the positivity of our school. We love recognizing our awesome students! Our **PBIS** program does this by giving morning shout-outs to students, Class Dojo Points, behavior tickets, ½-day reward days, and monthly earned activities! Students experience success based on their behavior, and positive behavior becomes contagious! As behavior issues may occur, consequences are in place for specific behaviors and dealt with accordingly. **PBIS** is supported by our PGA data, with office referrals dropping more than 300 student referrals over one school year. Our **PBIS** program also addresses bullying, which is not tolerated.

The PGAES staff takes a team approach to developing solutions to behavior problems. **PBIS** is a whole-school approach to discipline that includes systemic and individualized strategies to achieve social and learning outcomes while preventing problem behaviors for ALL students. PBIS promotes and encourages positive social behavior and climate school-wide, applies function-based problem solving to address the needs of students engaging in repeated behavior problems, and engages staff in routine reflection and data-based decision making to guide intervention planning decisions.

The goal of **PBIS** is to approach behavior in a positive manner. Students are rewarded for making positive choices and face consequences for poor choices, as opposed to solely being punished for wrongdoing. Students are explicitly taught expected behaviors so that they are aware of what is expected of them and can be held accountable for their actions. Because **PBIS** is a multi-tiered behavior system, students who do not reach their behavioral goals may receive higher levels of support and interventions to help them do so.

All students are taught and expected to adhere to the three school-wide rules. All student behaviors can be reflected in these three rules, known as the **PGA Rules**:

Promote Safety

Give Respect

Accept Responsibility

Throughout the day, students will be able to both earn and lose Class Dojo points according to their behavior.

Each month, the teachers from each grade will use Class Dojo Points to set a behavior goal for the students. If a student achieves the goal, they will participate in a reward activity. Most activities will be created and run by the grade-level teachers and will last 1 ½ hours. Near the end of each marking period, a full-day school-wide reward will be held. Students who do not meet the behavior goal will participate in an alternate learning activity for 1 ½ hours on reward days. These alternative activities will center on social skills and behavioral topics.

TEXTBOOKS- LOST OR STOLEN

Lost, stolen, or damaged textbooks or library books will be paid by the student (or the family of said student) to whom the book is assigned at full replacement value. The school has the right to withhold a student's report card until payment is received.

TECHNOLOGY

For the complete Electronic Device Policy, please refer to the district website. (PGASD Board Policy #237)

CELLULAR TELEPHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Cell phone /Technology Policy/Electronic Devices

Definition of Electronic devices shall include all devices that can take photographs; record audio or video data; store, transmit, or receive messages or images; or provide a wireless, unfiltered connection to the Internet. Examples of these electronic devices include, but shall not be limited to, radios, walkmans, CD players, iPods, MP3 players, DVD players, handheld game consoles, Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), cellular telephones, BlackBerries, and laptop computers, as well as any new technology developed with similar capabilities (PGASD Board Policy #237).

Upon entering the school building, cell phones and other technology (Air Pods, Headphones, Smartwatches)/electronic devices shall be turned off and placed in the student's backpack or locker. Cell phones/technology are not allowed in the hallway, cafeteria, locker room, or bathroom during the instructional day. Cell phones should not be visible at any time.

Students are prohibited from using cell phones with or without Internet access, and/or from recording or using a camera/video. And other capabilities and configurations to take videos and images of others, transfer them, and/or place them on websites or social media without the consent of the person(s) in the image and/or building administrators (or designee).

If a student needs to use their phone for an emergency and/or personal purpose, they can call from the main office with permission from an administrator. If a student needs to use their cell phone in class due to a medical issue, they can follow their 504 plan or IEP as stated. Please see the nurse or the Counseling Office for further assistance.

In addition, unless needed for emergencies, cell phones must be kept away during a school evacuation for the safety and security of all individuals.

Use of cell phones during school hours will result in the device being confiscated. When a cell phone is confiscated, an administrative referral is issued, and discipline is imposed. Students will be held responsible for their conduct in the misuse of cell phones and are subject to the consequences provided by the building administrative team. Disciplinary consequences shall be in accordance with the School District's policies and administrative regulations, rules, guidelines, and procedures, including but not limited to Student Code of Conduct, Acceptable Use Policy, Bullying/Cyberbullying Policy, Harassment Policy, and Social Media Policy.

FIRST OFFENSE- If a student has their cellphone/electronic devices out in any area of the school, the phone will be confiscated by the teacher and/or administrator and will be held in the main office. The cellphone can be picked up at the end of the school day, and a formal warning will be given.

SECOND OFFENSE - The student's cellphone/electronic devices will be confiscated and held in the main office. Parents will be notified; the student will receive 1 lunch/recess detention. The cellphone will be available for pickup at the end of the school day.

THIRD OFFENSE AND EVERY OFFENSE AFTER- The cellphone/ electronic device will be confiscated and held in the main office. Parents will be notified, and students will receive 1 day in-school suspension. Students will also sign a Student Phone Contract, which requires them to complete a daily device check-in during homeroom time and a device check-out at the end of the day for 10 days (Students are subject to search). Violation of the Student Phone Contract may result in further disciplinary action, including suspension.

Failure to turn in a cellphone/ electronic device will result in an automatic 3rd offense and can be subject to further disciplinary action for insubordination.

The district shall not be liable for the loss, damage, or misuse of any electronic device brought to school by a student. Please read this policy (No.237) in its entirety.

PGASD COMPUTER/INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Pine Grove Area School District (PGASD) provides students ("users") with access to PGASD electronic communication systems and network, which includes Internet access, whether wired, or wireless, or by any other means. Computers, networks, the Internet, electronic communications, and information systems (collectively "CIS systems") provide vast, diverse, and unique resources. Students may use the CIS to access information for research, to facilitate learning and teaching, and to foster the educational purpose and mission of PGASD.

Students' personal technology devices brought onto PGASD property or suspected of containing PGASD information may be legally accessed by PGASD to ensure compliance with this Policy and other PGASD policies, protect PGASD resources, and comply with the law. Students are

required to comply fully with this policy and immediately report any violations or suspicious activity to the Building Administrator.

Use of the CIS systems by any student requires that PGASD review the policy with the student and that the CIS Acknowledgment and Consent Form be received, read, understood, and signed by the student and parent. (PGASD Board Policy #815)

SCHOOL ISSUED CHROMEBOOK

1. Students are reminded that the Chromebook is owned by the Pine Grove Area School District. A school-issued Chromebook is not a personal device, and, as such, there is no reasonable expectation of privacy regarding the contents stored on the device and/or its use.
2. Students will be expected to use the school-issued Chromebook for classroom use.
3. Students shall be responsible for the care of the school-issued Chromebook just as they would be when issued a textbook or any other educational material.
4. Students will be responsible for the replacement costs for the Chromebook or accessories that are lost
5. Students will be solely responsible for any intentional damage to the Chromebook.
6. Chromebook or accessories that are stolen will require a police incident report.
7. Social media apps that are not used for educational projects or apps that can be used to bypass the district's network will be prohibited, and the student will be required to delete such apps from the Chromebook.

STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION/ EQUAL RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITY POLICY

The Pine Grove Area School District, an equal opportunity employer, will not discriminate in employment, educational programs or activities, based on race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, ancestry, physical handicap or union membership. This policy of non-discrimination extends to all legally protected classifications. Publication of this policy in this document is in accordance with state and federal laws, including Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 and Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Inquiries should be directed to the Superintendent, District Office, 103 School Street, Pine Grove, PA 17963 570-345-2731.

SCHOOL CODE & SCHOOL POLICY

ALL ITEMS LISTED IN THIS HANDBOOK ARE SUBJECT TO REVIEW AND CHANGE BY THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION. SOME ITEMS ARE STATED IN GREATER DETAIL IN SCHOOL BOARD POLICY OR OTHER DISTRICT GUIDELINES. IN ALL INSTANCES, BOARD POLICY AND SCHOOL CODE SUPERSEDES RULES AND REGULATIONS SET FORTH IN THIS HANDBOOK.

A complete layout of all School Board Policies can be accessed at www.pgasd.com

- Acceptable Use of Computers, Networks, Internet, Electronic Communication Systems and Information (No. 815)
- Admission of Beginners (No. 201)
- Bullying/Cyber Bullying (No. 249)
- Dress and Grooming (No. 221)
- Electronic Devices (No. 237)
- Family Educational Trips (No. 204.1)
- Health Examinations/Screenings (No. 209)
- Promotion and Retention (No. 215)
- Use of Medications (No. 210) Weapons (No. 218.1)