

Southern Elementary School Parent and Student Handbook 2026-2027



The Colonial School District is an equal opportunity employer. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, disability, age, genetic information or veteran's status in employment or its programs and activities.

Important Contact and Information

DISTRICT

Colonial School District 318 E. Basin Road New Castle, Delaware 19720	
District Office Phone Number	(302) 323-2700
Transportation Office Phone Number	(302) 323-2851

SOUTHERN ELEMENTARY

Southern Elementary 795 Cox Neck Road New Castle, Delaware 19720 (302)-832-6300 Fax: (302) 832-6305 www.colonialschoolsdistrict.org/southern/			
Principal	Assistant Principal	Assistant Principal	Student Advisor
Mr. David Distler	Mrs. Kimberly Hayman	Mrs. Heather Campbell-Molitor	Ms. Stephanie Wollaston
david.distler@colonial.k12.de.us	kimberly.hayman@colonial.k12.de.us	Heather.Campbell-Molitor@colonial.k12.de.us	stephanie.wollaston@colonial.k12.de.us

Secretaries	Guidance Counselors	Nurses	Special Education Coordinator
Lindsay Newell (Main Office) Carmen Ward (B/O Office) Kim Briscoe (G/Y Office)	Lisa Gale Tamika Smith-Badson	Lorita Ross Elizabeth Grimm	Ashley Rossello Heather Cern Megan Candler
lindsay.newell@colonial.k12.de.us carmen.ward@colonial.k12.de.us kimberly.briscoe@colonial.k12.de.us	lisa.gale@colonial.k12.de.us tamika.smith@colonial.k12.de.us	lorita.ross@colonial.k12.de.us elizabeth.grimm@colonial.k12.de.us	ashley.rossello@colonial.k12.de.us heather.cern@colonial.k12.de.us megan.candler@colonial.k12.de.us

School Psychologists	Community in Schools (CIS)	Cafeteria Manager
Victoria Bunting Abigail Cash	Michelle Roberts	Shannon Huhn
victoria.bunting@colonial.k12.de.us abigail.cash@colonial.k12.de.us	michelle.roberts@colonial.k12.de.us	302-832-6307 Cafe.Southern@colonial.k12.de.us

School Hours

8:45 a.m. Doors Open
9:00 a.m. Classroom instruction begins
3:30 p.m. Dismissal

- Students WILL NOT be permitted to enter the building prior to 8:45 a.m.
 - Instruction begins at 9:00 a.m. A student is considered late after 9:00 a.m. If your child is late for school, he/she must be brought into the office by an adult and recorded as present. A late pass will be issued to admit your child to class.
 - Late arrival to school impacts your child's instruction.
 - Early Dismissals - Students are not permitted to wait in the office to be picked-up. They will be called down upon your arrival, your ID or authorized person's ID will be checked.
- NO EARLY DISMISSALS WILL BE GRANTED AFTER 3:00 pm**

Calendars

The Colonial School District calendar can be found at <https://www.colonialschooldistrict.org/calendar>. Check often for updates regarding school closings, special events, and other important items.

Colonial School District's Vision and Mission

Vision Statement:

We envision a school district where every student graduates prepared to thrive in an ever-changing world—equipped with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to lead and succeed.

Mission Statement:

Our mission is to empower every student to reach their full potential through innovative instruction, meaningful relationships, and equitable opportunities. We are dedicated to creating learning environments where all students feel valued, supported, and inspired to achieve.

Our Core Principles:

At Colonial, our work is guided by three core principles:

Bold

We challenge the status quo, embrace innovation, and take purposeful risks to improve outcomes for students.

Inclusive

We create welcoming environments where every student, staff member, and family feels respected, represented, and heard.

Authentic

We lead with integrity, build genuine relationships, and stay true to our commitment to students and community.

Our Commitment to Students:

We are committed to:

- Delivering rigorous, engaging instruction that meets the needs of all learners
 - Supporting the whole child—academically, socially, and emotionally
 - Providing safe, welcoming, and inclusive school environments
- Preparing students for real-world success through career exploration and hands-on learning
 - Partnering with families and the community to support student growth



Mission Statement:

At Southern Elementary School, WE are dedicated to creating a positive environment where we learn and thrive. WE encourage curiosity, a love for learning, and taking ownership of our actions while embracing challenges with a growth mindset. WE believe in the power of compassion and belonging within our joyful community.

Vision Statement:

Our vision is to inspire a generation of learners. WE strive to nurture an inclusive community where compassion guides our actions and inspires students to embrace challenges. WE will empower students to reach their full potential, achieve their dreams, and contribute to a world that values diversity and kindness.

Accountability	Joy	Belonging
Accountability – Taking responsibility for one’s actions and decisions. Holding others accountable for their actions and decisions. Honesty – Being truthful and transparent in all interactions. Ethics – Upholding strong moral principles in personal and academic conduct. Trust – Building relationships based on reliability and integrity. Respect – Valuing others’ perspectives, rights, and contributions.	Curiosity – Encouraging and inspiring a sense of wonder and a desire to explore new ideas and perspectives that fosters innovative thinking and self-expression in problem-solving and learning. Engagement – Creating interactive and meaningful learning experiences that spark excitement for future aspirations. Growth Mindset – Embracing & persevering through challenges and seeing mistakes as opportunities for learning and improvement. Achievement – Celebrating progress, effort, and accomplishments to build confidence and motivation.	Collaboration – Learning with and from others to achieve shared goals that enhance understanding and joy by building connections. Compassion – Showing kindness and empathy toward others. Diversity – Celebrating and respecting differences among people. Inclusion – Ensuring everyone has a sense of belonging and is valued.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS / LATE OPENINGS

Any cancellation or late opening of school due to weather or emergency will be announced using the School Messenger automatic calling program. This telephone message system is automated and will contact you as soon as the decision regarding closing, early dismissal or delay has been made. **It is vital that you keep your telephone contact information current with us so that you receive all important announcements.**

In addition, the following are alternative methods for obtaining school closing or delay information:

- Toll Free School Closing Hotline (free) 1-877-831-7215
- www.colonialschooldistrict.org
- Local Radio Stations: WSTW 93.7 FM, WJBR 99.5 FM, WDEL 1150 AM, WILM 1450 AM



Please do not call the school to ask if the school is open or closed. The phone lines need to remain open to receive communication from the District Office. If inclement weather or an emergency occurs during the school day, and schools are dismissed early, the School Messenger Automated calling system will be utilized to inform families. **Should there be a need to contact you in an emergency, it is vital that the school office is informed with the most updated address and phone number(s).**

ATTENDANCE

We are very proud of the attendance record of the students of Southern. We have found that those students who have good attendance patterns also have good academic records. At Southern, learning is often a hands-on experience and cannot always be made up. If illness or family emergencies occur and your child must stay home, please send your student in with an excusal note or fill out the district's absence form here:

<https://form.jotform.com/202313732094144>. **10 unexcused absences will result in an open truancy case.**

The following reasons are recognized as valid excuses for an absence:

- ☐ Illness of the student
- ☐ Medical diagnosis and/or treatment
- ☐ Death in the immediate family or of a close family friend.
- ☐ Contagious disease in the home of the child subject to regulation of the Division of Public Health, Department of Health and Social Services
- ☐ Legal business
- ☐ Suspension from school
- ☐ Observance of religious holidays
- ☐ Authorized school-sponsored activities

Arriving Early

Students may enter the Southern building at 8:45 a.m. Classroom instruction begins at 9:00.

Late Arrival

Homeroom begins promptly at 9:00 a.m. **If your child is late for school, he/she must be brought into the office by his/her parent/guardian and recorded as present.** A pass will be issued to admit the child to class. EACH LATENESS IMPACTS YOUR CHILD'S INSTRUCTION. 8 Tardies equals 1 unexcused absence. 10 unexcused absences will result in an open truancy case.

Early Dismissal

We discourage early dismissals because children miss instruction whenever they are not in class. If you must take your child out of school prior to the end of the school day, we ask that you send a note in the morning. Upon your arrival at the school, report to the office where you will be asked to sign your child out. **Do not go to the child's classroom.** (Teachers have been instructed to release children only when they are called to the office.) Students will be allowed to leave the building with parents/legal guardians ONLY. If it is necessary to have a neighbor or relative pick up your child, a note signed by the parent/legal guardian is required. This is for the protection of all students and families. **No parent will be permitted to remove a student from class after 3:15p.m. Parents will be required to wait in the car rider line.** Please bring ID.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

We pride ourselves on the safe and secure atmosphere of Southern Elementary School. One reason this exists is because we have emergency drills to teach children what to do in case of a natural disaster or fire. In addition students will have 2 lockdown drills a year. Fire drills, lockdown and bus evacuation drills are held regularly throughout the year. Please remind your child to always listen carefully to adults during any drill.

COMMUNICATION

We believe that an important component to a student's success is maintaining a positive and open line of communication between the school and families. We encourage families to participate in all school events, such as conferences, assemblies, concerts, and Open House, which we believe you will find both informative and rewarding!



School Communication

There are a number of ways to communicate with the school and your child's teacher. All staff have phones in their classroom. However, only voicemails can be left during the school day. We understand that schedules do not always make it possible to speak on the telephone; therefore, each staff member has an email address that will be checked frequently throughout the day. Mr. Distler will also send out weekly updates to families regarding school updates, events and other important information.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

The Colonial School District schedules two opportunities for parent-teacher conferences. During these conferences, your child will discuss his/her academic, social, emotional and physical progress at school. Also, a parent may request a conference with a teacher (only) at any time during the year by contacting the school and scheduling a date and time. Telephone conferences are very effective for minor concerns or when it is impossible for the parent to come to the school. We ask that you keep teachers informed of a telephone number that allows them quick access to you. **If you have any questions, call your child's teacher first.** If more information or assistance is needed, contact the main office. Your concerns will always be addressed.



VISITING THE SCHOOL

If you need to come to the school during the school day, you must ring the buzzer and have your ID readily available.

- Every visitor must be buzzed in separately; therefore, do not let anyone enter the building behind you.
- Every adult must have a valid photo ID.
- **Under no circumstances should visitors report directly to a classroom.**
- **Entry to the school for any reason, will not be granted without proper ID.** This is for the safety of our students and staff.
- Field trip chaperones and parent volunteers must complete the district's volunteer form found here: <https://apps.raptortech.com/Apply/MTM2Njplbi1VUw==>

ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

Staff members are not available before or after official school hours each day for student supervision. Families are responsible for supervising their child when arriving earlier than or later than the regular school day. Once the doors (auditorium and bus court) have closed, students will be considered late. If the door is closed, a parent/guardian must report, with the student, to the main office to sign the student in and obtain a late pass before the student heads to breakfast or class. **Students are not permitted to sign themselves in.**

Car Riders

For both arrival and dismissal, all vehicles must enter and exit using the Gunning Bedford Middle School entrance and approach Southern Elementary via the access road. During arrival, cars will follow the directions of the staff and drop students off on the sidewalk from the passenger side of the vehicle. Parents must not exit their cars when picking up their child during regular arrival and dismissal times.

DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Dismissal will begin at 3:30 p.m.. Dismissal is staggered, student groups will be called in groups: Car Riders, Day Care, and Bus Riders. Please make sure your student and the staff are aware of your students dismissal routine.

Car Riders

Car riders will receive a car tag with a number at the beginning of the year. Please make sure the tag is displayed when picking up your child. The car tag is attached to your child and helps us have a smooth dismissal process. During dismissal, cars will follow the directions of the staff and pick their children up in front of the school. Students will enter their car on the passenger side of the car. Parents must not exit their cars when picking up their child during regular arrival and dismissal times.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation includes all vans, buses, car service (contracted and Colonial).

All students must:

- **Follow bus expectations**
- **Sit in the assigned seat** - When possible students will sit (2) two to a seat.

Riding a school bus is a privilege, not a right. Your child's safety is our main concern as he/she goes to and from school. Whether your child rides the bus daily or only when going on a field trip, the rules remain the same and are enforced by the teachers, bus drivers, the transportation department and administration.

Each situation is handled on an individual basis with all circumstances taken into account. For instance, even on the first offense, instances of major hands on behavior will result in bus suspension and, possibly, out-of-school suspension. Whenever possible, in order to not impact instructional time, if a student gets a bus referral, they will be called to the office during a non-instructional time. Generally, if a child fails to obey the expectations, the following steps will take place:

- A. As soon as there is a concern, the bus driver will speak to the child and explain the expectations, reminding the child of the rules.
- B. **First Offense** – The bus driver will complete a bus referral and turn it into an administrator. The child will be reprimanded and a copy of the report will be sent to the parent. This will be considered a warning.
- C. **Second Offense** – The bus driver will complete a bus referral. The child will be reprimanded and the parent will be notified. Depending on the severity of the offense, other consequences may be given.
- D. **Third (and Subsequent) Offense**– As continued offenses occur, consequences may include:
 - Bus suspension for one to five day periods of time
 - Loss of recess or other privileges
 - In-school suspension

- Out-of-school suspension

Continued disregard for bus safety rules may result in your child losing bus riding privileges for an extended period of time.

Due to state law and Transportation policies and procedures, students are not able to ride on a bus other than the one that they are listed on the official bus roster. Students may not be assigned to more than one bus and must have a consistent dismissal.

For Kindergarten and First Grade parents: Someone must be available at the bus stop to pick up your child. The driver will not drop off our youngest students unless someone is there to meet them. This could result in the child being returned to the school, which would result in a mandatory parent/school meeting and transportation privileges possibly being discontinued in the future.

ITEMS NOT PERMITTED IN SCHOOL

Toys, electronic devices, and other items (for example, trading cards, etc.) that distract students from learning are not allowed in school. If items such as these are seen at school, they will be taken and an adult will have to come pick them up. If an item reappears, the item will be kept until the end of the school year, when an adult will have to pick it up. The only exception to this rule is if a classroom or grade is having a BYOD (Bring your own device) event where devices will be able to be used as a reward. Written notification will be sent home in these cases. If an inappropriate item is brought to school and is then lost or stolen, school staff will not be involved in helping to resolve the issue. If a student has a cell phone for safety reasons, it should be powered off and in a book bag at all times. Students must follow bus driver expectations with any device use on the bus, and no photos or videos may be taken.

Any item that could be a safety risk will be taken and the parent will be contacted. Title 14, Delaware Code, 4112 requires school personnel to contact police if serious offenses occur. (i.e. carrying weapons - ****even look-alikes or toy weapons**** - and dangerous instruments) The Colonial School District Student Code of Conduct specifies that a student in possession of weapons (**real or look-alike**) be suspended from school and have possible other consequences. See the Colonial School District Code of Conduct online for more information. Please help your child make good choices and take time to check the materials your child gathers for school.
[Link to Colonial School District Code of Conduct](#)

STUDENT BIRTHDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

Individual celebrations are not permitted in the classroom due to district policy. The Colonial School District's policy #5404 states that no outside food can be served to students during the school day. Parents who would like to provide a birthday or holiday treat for their child's class will be able to order items directly from the cafeteria. The order form and information about costs of different snacks available can be found on the district website. These will then be pre-packaged for your child's class and distributed at lunchtime. In order to place an order, please turn in the form **at**



least 10 days in advance. If you have questions, you can email the cafeteria manager directly at Cafe.Southern@colonial.k12.de.us or visit <https://www.schoolnutritionandfitness.com/index.php?sid=2703121500268035>

Due to safety and distraction issues, **balloons, flowers, and/or other favors are not allowed in school or on the school bus.** Also, no items for students should be sent to the school by a delivery company. Thanks for your cooperation!

SCHOOL-WIDE TITLE ONE DESIGNATION

Southern Elementary has been designated as a “School-wide Title One” school. This allows us to be more flexible in providing students with reading interventions. Parental involvement is a key factor in the success of all of our students. Please read the Parent Compact and Parental Involvement Policy and call the school to speak with our Reading Coach about any questions you may have.

SPECIALS AT SOUTHERN

Certified specialists in art, music, technology and physical education instruct students in all grades. Specialists make a conscious effort to incorporate academic standards into their daily lessons. This helps to reinforce skills introduced within the regular classroom setting. Students will attend Specials at least once a week with the exception of Physical Education (twice a week).



BAND/CHORUS

Students who are performing well in both academics and behavior can participate in band or chorus. Students who join the band (4th and 5th graders) or chorus (3rd, 4th, and 5th graders) are offered group lessons. The band and chorus will perform in concerts each year. They will also perform at various school functions and assemblies. Students receive information about both the band and choral programs towards the beginning of the school year. Participation may be limited due to scheduling and staffing.



GUIDANCE/FAMILY SUPPORT

The Colonial School District has made a commitment to offering students access to certified guidance counselors in each school. Counselors assist classroom teachers in developing ideas for instruction during the year to help children acquire decision-making skills and positive self-esteem. Small groups of students who have similar challenges such as: ill parents, divorce, new family members, etc. will meet with the counselor to deal with specific topics. Also, the counselor will be available for individual meetings with students who need the assistance of an adult in order to deal with personal issues.

PARTNERSHIP WITH NEMOURS CHILDREN'S HEALTH

The School-Based Wellness Center (SBWC) is a partnership between Nemours Children's Health and Colonial School District. Health care is provided in the SBWC at your child's school by a Physician or Nurse Practitioner and a Psychologist or a Licensed Clinical Social

Worker/Licensed Professional Counselor of Mental Health. To sign up, or learn more, visit [Elementary School Based Wellness Centers](#).

NURSE'S OFFICE INFORMATION

The Colonial School District has a full time registered nurse in each school. All decisions regarding health issues are based upon the State of Delaware and Colonial School District Policies and Procedures.

Emergency Card - Every student must have a completed, **up-to-date** emergency card on file in the nurse's office by the end of the first week of school. The child's parent and/or legal guardian must sign this emergency card. If information changes during the year (phone numbers, emergency contacts, etc.), it is the responsibility of the parent to call the nurse to make the school aware of the change.

Dismissal Due to Illness –If it is deemed that your child is unable to remain at school due to illness or injury, the nurse will call the numbers given on the emergency card. Please give names and numbers of people who can come and pick up your child if it is necessary. Your child will not be allowed to ride home on the bus if he/she has any type of contagious disease.

Medication – The nurse is the only person authorized to administer medications in school. If a prescription drug is to be given to your child during the school day, it must be sent to school in its original container with a note from the parent stating when the next dose is to be given. The note must have a parent signature.

Physical Examinations – All students new to the Colonial School District must have a physical examination. The form may be obtained from the nurse or the main office.

Illness – If your child is ill, do not send him/her to school. Staying home will quicken his/her recovery as well as assure that other students do not become ill. If your child should become sick at school or develop a temperature of 100 degrees or higher, the parent or person named on the emergency card will be called to come and get the child. A child should remain home until he/she is fever free for 24 hours. You will always be contacted by the nurse if your child does not appear to act as he/she usually does.

Communicable Diseases – Children may not be in school if they have any condition that is contagious ("catchy"). Examples include: head lice, pinkeye, ringworm, impetigo, scabies, chicken pox, etc. If your child develops a condition that is contagious, he/she may not ride the bus. Children with these conditions may be required to have a doctor's note to be readmitted to school as deemed by the nurse

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

One of the important educational objectives of Southern Elementary School is the development of individual student responsibility. In order to help students develop this trait and to preserve classroom time for instruction, the students are responsible for bringing to school all items; such as homework, money, lunches, and rainwear necessary to meet his/her needs for the day.

Homework

The purpose of homework is to give the child extra exposure and experience with skills that were taught in class or to have the child relate what is taught with their everyday world. Parents

should designate a time and a place for homework and keep it consistent. This will truly make a difference in the child's progress.

School Supplies

School supplies are to be purchased by the student's family. Please mark all of your child's personal materials with his/her name. **Children are responsible for any school supplies issued to them or any damage that they cause to instructional materials or other school district property.** The full replacement cost of any lost or damaged items, including library books, textbooks, chromebooks, and other instructional supplies, will be the responsibility of the child's parent/guardian. Report cards will be marked at the end of each semester if a child has an unmet financial obligation to the school cafeteria or for lost or damaged books or materials. The parent or guardian will receive written notification about the obligation prior to the end of the semester.

PROPER DRESS

Children need to be comfortable in order to learn. As you select clothing for school, make sure it is appropriate for sitting, working and playing. Due to safety, we do not allow **open-toed or strapless shoes (for example: sandals, flip-flops, clogs, and high heels)**. Sneakers or shoes with non-skid soles are preferred. Heelys (shoes with wheels) are not permitted at school. A student not wearing appropriate shoes will not be permitted to participate in P.E. class or recess. Clothing that is inappropriate for a school setting, such as shirts having offensive language or symbols, will not be permitted. A parent will be contacted to bring the child an alternate outfit. In addition, tops with spaghetti straps, short shorts, bare midriffs, and sleeveless shirts are not permitted.



If the child's fingertips touch their skin when hanging at their sides, the shorts/skirt is too short. Also, please remember to dress your child according to the weather. As the weather changes so do the temperatures in the classrooms; layers or packing a sweater or sweatshirt are always a good way to help be prepared.

Kindergarten students should have a change of clothes marked with their first and last name in their classroom. **(Please remember to switch out when the seasons change)**

REPORT CARDS

Report cards are issued **two times a year**. At scheduled conferences, teachers will review assignments/assessments and discuss the academic progress of students' relative to the common core state standards. If you have a concern at any time about your child's progress, please contact his/her teacher for a conference. All report cards are mailed to the child's home address.

DISCIPLINE

The Colonial School District Board of Education has an adopted Student Code of Conduct that applies to all children in the district unless noted in an Individual Educational Plan. A copy of this Code is available on the Colonial School District website and will be sent home to parents upon request. While we review it at school, we would ask that you, as a parent, take some time

with your child to help reinforce the importance of being a good citizen, making good choices and being responsible for his/her behavior.

Nutrition Services

SOUTHERN CAFETERIA 302-832-6307

Southern Elementary School offers nutritious and well-balanced meals to students and staff daily. The Nutrition Services Department encourages parents/guardians to use our online pre-payment provider at **www.schoolcafe.com**. Please access the link below to set up an account for your student(s) convenience.



Breakfast is offered in ALL Colonial Schools for no cost to ALL students. All elementary students eat breakfast in their classroom allowing them more time to eat their whole meal and the ability to sit with peers.

Lunch is offered in ALL schools for no cost to ALL students. All lunches will be eaten in the school cafeteria. Students have the option to select their lunch meal from a variety of offerings. All meals served meet all federal USDA regulations as part of the National School Lunch Program.

Children may bring their lunch from home. Please pack only what your child will eat. Sharing of food is discouraged as a practice in an effort to promote a healthy eating program and avoid potential risks due to food allergies.

Important Information:

- All menus may be subject to change.
- Appropriate vegetarian meals are offered
- Both hot dogs and sausage **DO NOT** contain pork.
- Every school cafeteria does not purchase or serve any peanuts or tree nut products.

*Please notify the school nurse if your child has a special dietary need. In order for Nutrition Services to accommodate a special dietary need, such as a severe food allergy a doctor must complete and sign The State of Delaware approved, **PREVENTION & EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN FOR STUDENTS WITH ALLERGIES**, which can be obtained from the school nurse.*

How Can Parents Help?

- **Ensure your child comes to school every day!** Absence from school equates to missed learning opportunities. Schedule appointments for your child after school whenever possible.

- **Maintain communication with your child's teacher!**

Inform your child's teacher of the best way to regularly contact you. Be an active participant at parent-teacher conferences and school events.

- **Read to/with your child!** Research has shown that a child's success in school and the future hinges on their ability to read. Take time to read the newspaper, books, magazines, poems,



etc. with or to your child. 30 minutes a day will show your child that reading is important.

- **Ask your child about school each day!** Let your child describe what they learned or tell stories about books read in school. Don't accept "Ok" for an answer. Forcing the brain to evaluate the day is a higher order thinking skill. Plus, the time together will seem priceless for your child.

Questions to ask your child...

- "What was the best thing that happened at school today?"
- "How did somebody help you today?"
- "How did you help someone today?"
- "Tell me one thing that you learned today."

SPECIAL EDUCATION INFORMATION

SECTION 504 OF THE *REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973* RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a federal law designed to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive federal funds from the U.S. Department of Education. It applies to ensure that eligible students are provided with educational benefits and opportunities equal to those provided to non-disabled students. The purpose of this notice is to inform parents and students of the rights granted to them under the law and to keep parent/guardian fully informed concerning decisions about his/her child and to inform him/her of their rights if they disagree with any of these decisions.

Under Section 504, parents/guardians have the right to:

- Have their child reasonably take part in and receive benefits from public education programs without discrimination because of his/her disability;
- Have the school district advise parent/guardian of their rights under federal law upon request;
- Receive notice with respect to identification, evaluation, or placement of their child;
- Have their child receive a free appropriate public education, including the right to be educated with other students to the maximum extent appropriate;
- Have their child educated in facilities and receive services comparable to those provided to students without disabilities whenever reasonable;
- Have their child be given a reasonable equal opportunity to participate in non-academic and extracurricular activities offered by the school district; have evaluation, educational, and placement decisions made based up a variety of information sources, by a group of persons who know the student, the evaluation data, and placement options; have their child receive reasonable accommodations and related services if they are needed in order for the child to receive a free appropriate public education;
- Examine all relevant education records relating to decisions regarding their child's identification, educational program, and placement; receive a response from the school district to reasonable requests for explanations and interpretations of their child's record.

Disabled parents/guardians will be afforded reasonable accommodation if required to allow participation in their child's education.

Colonial School District's representative, who is responsible for assuring that the District complies with Section 504, is the Director of Student Services. Inquiries concerning potential discrimination can be directed to:

Dr. Jon Cooper, Director of Health and Wellness

Colonial School District

318 East Basin Road

New Castle, DE 19720

Tel: (302) 323-2700

Fax: (302) 323-2748

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE TO ADDRESS SECTION 504 DISCRIMINATION:

The Section 504 Compliance Officer's responsibilities include overseeing all complaints of discrimination and identifying and addressing any patterns or systemic problems that arise during the review of such complaints.

The Colonial School District strives to provide an environment free from discrimination. The District encourages students, parents, and staff to identify barriers to a discrimination-free and appropriate learning environment in all schools. Any employee, parent/guardian of a student enrolled in the Colonial School District, or student eighteen years of age or older may file a grievance if he/she believes they or their child has been subjected to discrimination on the basis of disability by students, employees, or third parties. All grievances will be received and investigated in a fair and expeditious manner.

Steps to Resolution

Step 1: The best solutions to parent/student concerns often occur at the school level. Therefore, the District encourages parents/students to attempt to resolve concerns by working with the building principal or other appropriate building staff to reach a joint resolution of the issue. Contact the building principal to arrange a meeting or to discuss the complaint.

Step 2: If the issue is not resolved at the school level, the Colonial School District Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973* Grievance Form shall be submitted to the District Section 504 Compliance Officer (Director of Student Services) within 180 calendar days of the alleged Section 504 violation to request a hearing. The Compliance Officer will be independent and impartial. If he or she has prior knowledge of the situation, an independent and impartial designee shall be appointed. He or she will thoroughly and diligently investigate the circumstances of the concern, obtain information as to relevant witnesses and evidence, obtain all relevant evidence, hear equally from the grievant's witnesses, and other witnesses, equally review all evidence from the grievant and accused and interview and obtain statements from all relevant witnesses, and then present a report of his or her finding of fact and conclusions within 30 business days. The investigation will be adequate and reliable. The report of his or her findings shall be sent to the parties upon completion.

The complaint should be sent to:

Dr. Jon Cooper, Director of Health and Wellness

Colonial School District
318 East Basin Road
New Castle, DE 19720
Tel: (302) 323-2700
Fax: (302) 323-2748

The Colonial School District Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973* Grievance Form must be completed with all information listed below and signed by the grievant.

The child's name, date of birth, address and the school he or she attends; complainant's name, address and phone number; complainant's relationship to the child (parent, guardian, surrogate); name, address, and phone number of the person representing complainant (if complainant has someone); decision of the school with which complainant disagrees and the reason; date complainant received this decision; and complainant's signature.

Colonial School District Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973* Grievance

Step 3: The person filing the grievance may appeal the decision of the District Section 504 Compliance Officer to the Superintendent (or designee) within 10 days of receiving the Section 504 Compliance Officer's decision. The Superintendent (or designee) shall review all statements and evidence as well as the Section 504 Compliance Officer's report (or designee's report), gather such additional evidence as deemed necessary, and then issue a written decision in response to the appeal no later than 30 days after its filing.

In the event there is a finding of discrimination, the District shall take remedial efforts and efforts to prevent recurrence and shall make all reasonable efforts to correct the discriminatory effects of a prohibited action.

Any party aggrieved shall have the right to file a formal complaint after the Superintendent's decision (or designee's decision) with the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Office for Civil Rights, Philadelphia

U.S. Department of Education
The Wanamaker Building
100 Penn Square East, Suite 515
Philadelphia, PA 19107
Tel: (215)656-8541
Fax: (215)656-8605
Email: OCR.Philadelphia@ed.gov

A Message About Bullying

Colonial Community, Families and Staff:

There has been a lot of discussion regarding bullying in schools and how it is addressed. Bullying is taken seriously by all administrators, teachers, and staff within Colonial School District. From the bus ride to the classrooms, to the cafeteria and playgrounds in each of our fourteen schools, district employees are trained to respond to any incidents of bullying and/or harassment.

Principals and Behavior Interventionists have been educated about the importance of creating safe environments for our students. It is expected that all

incidents of bullying be investigated and remediated. Teachers take online courses and repeatedly speak with students about rules, expectations, and consequences.

Our schools offer a variety of programs addressing bullying throughout the school year. Program examples include monthly bully prevention assemblies, specific resources such as the Olweus Anti-Bullying Program, Steps to Respect, The Wise Owl Bully Stopper Kit and the Bully Proof Kit. In addition, specialists from the YMCA conduct anti-bullying programs within the classrooms.

Bullying is a growing problem around the country that cannot be ignored. We, as a school district, address this issue within all of our schools. We all need to work together so that this issue is discussed at home, school, community, and places of worship, in order to put an end to verbal and physical intimidation among our students. All Colonial staff are available to speak with parents whenever they feel their sons/daughters have been mistreated. Together, we must work to provide a safe environment for our students to learn and be the best they can be.

Jeffrey Menzer, Ed.D.

Superintendent, Colonial School District

Bullying Prevention Contact

Delaware Department of Justice ~ Bullying Prevention & School Crime Contact
(Ombudsperson)

1-800-220-5414