

# Welcome to Leeds Elementary School



**A Resource Guide for  
Caregivers**

**Updated August, 2023**

# Contact Information



**Leeds Elementary School  
20 Florence Street  
Leeds, MA 01053**

**Phone: (413) 587-1530**

**Fax: (413)587-1539**

**Be Kind, Be Amazing, Be Leeds!**

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# Important Contact Information

## Leeds Elementary School

**Chris Wenz, Principal**

[cwenz@northampton-k12.us](mailto:cwenz@northampton-k12.us)

**Sandy Bombard, Admin. Asst.**

[sbombard@northampton-k12.us](mailto:sbombard@northampton-k12.us)

**Caelin Mottor, School Nurse**

[cmottor@northampton-k12.us](mailto:cmottor@northampton-k12.us)

**Susannah Bastek, School Adj. Couns.**

[sbastek@northampton-k12.us](mailto:sbastek@northampton-k12.us)

**Gabrielle Hollender,**

[ghollender@northampton-k12.us](mailto:ghollender@northampton-k12.us)

**Early/Late Bird Coordinator**

## Northampton Public Schools

**Dr. Portia Bonner**

[pbonner@northampton-k12.us](mailto:pbonner@northampton-k12.us)

**Superintendent**

**Michele Jarvis**

[mjarvis@northampton-k12.us](mailto:mjarvis@northampton-k12.us)

**Executive Secretary**

**Jennifer Towler**

[jtowler@northampton-k12.us](mailto:jtowler@northampton-k12.us)

**Registrar & School Choice**

**Tammy Lieber**

[tlieber@northampton-k12.us](mailto:tlieber@northampton-k12.us)

**Transportation Supervisor**

**Joshua Dickson**

[jdickson@northampton-k12.us](mailto:jdickson@northampton-k12.us)

**Director of Student Services**

**Lauren Barry**

[lbarry@northampton-k12.us](mailto:lbarry@northampton-k12.us)

**Family Engagement Coord. &**

**ELL Coordinator**

# Welcome

Welcome to Leeds Elementary School! We are part of the Northampton Public School District. Leeds Elementary School is a wonderful, eclectic mix of students, teachers and staff who strive daily to create an optimal environment for learning. With efforts focused upon the [Responsive Classroom](#) approach to create climate, culture and values, we are committed to building a kind and caring citizenry with the clear understanding that there is an emphasis on social, emotional, and academic growth in a strong and safe community.

Students are recognized for positive actions through our “Bee” program, which is rooted in being respectful and recognizes positive or contributory deeds with a symbolic bumble bee eraser. Community Meetings are held throughout the year with each one being hosted by a different grade level to showcase student work and our values.

Family involvement, enrichment activities, community partnerships, a commitment to increased technology and most importantly a committed and dedicated staff all mesh to create a vibrant, child-centered elementary school. We have an active PTO. Please check out their web page for more information. Additionally, we have our Leeds School Council that is an advisory board to the principal. At Leeds Elementary, we are about:

**ALL THE KIDS... ALL THE TIME!**

# Getting To and From School

**Kindergarten through Grade 5 School Hours: 8:00-2:10**  
**Preschool Session 1 - 8:10-10:40 / Preschool Session 2 11:30-2:00**

## Arrival

- Kindergarten through grade 5 students may participate in the Early Bird program (our before school program). This program begins at 7:00. Please do not drop off your child before 7:00. Students will join the other students at 7:45.
- All kindergarten through grade 5 students may be dropped off at 7:45. We do not have supervision prior to 7:45. All students are able to have breakfast each day.
- Kindergarten students enter through the preschool/kindergarten playground. Caregivers should park in our parking lot.
  - Please do not park in our bus loop for drop off.
  - Please be patient in the parking lot as we have children and adults walking through to drop off and limited space.
- Grades 1-5 students who arrive by car come to the upper loop. Students walk to the back playground until 7:55 or enter the school for breakfast. We have staff along the way and on the playground to greet our students. Teachers will meet students on the playground to begin the day.
  - Please be patient and NOT pass another car. Over the years we have seen several accidents that could have been avoided by just waiting until the car in front of you moves ahead.
- Grades 1-5 students who arrive by bus will walk from the bus loop around the kindergarten playground to the back playground. Students will enter the main entrance and proceed to the cafeteria for breakfast.
- Preschool session 1 begins at 8:10. Students enter at the preschool entrance. Caregivers may park in the bus loop as long as our buses have left.
- Preschool session 2 begins at 11:40. Students enter at the preschool entrance.

## Indoor Arrival

When it's raining or below 15 degrees:

- Kindergarten students enter through their kindergarten class doors from the playground.
- Grades 1-5 students who arrive by car come to the upper loop and enter the building there. They then proceed to their grade level location or go to breakfast in our cafeteria.
- Grades 1-5 students who arrive by bus enter the main entrance and proceed to grade level locations or to the cafeteria for breakfast.

### **Late Arrival (Tardy)**

If your child arrives after 8:00 (after 8:10 for preschool students), they should ring the bell and come in through the main entrance. They will check in at the office and then go to class. Students who arrive after 8:00 (after 8:10 for preschool students) are considered tardy. If your child went to an appointment, please bring in a note from the appointment to excuse being tardy. Caregivers should not escort their child to their classroom, but check in at the office.

### **Dismissal**

- Kindergarten through grade 5 students who take the bus or go to the Late Bird program (after school program) will be escorted to the cafeteria or to their assigned bus by a Leeds staff member.
  - As per district policy, students and / or guests are not allowed to ride on any bus other than their assigned bus. If a student does not ride a bus, they are not allowed to ride one with a friend or to a friend's house for a playdate. Other transportation arrangements will need to be made.
- Kindergarten through grade 5 students who walk or are picked up by car will be picked up in the upper loop. Please pull forward as much as possible. A staff member will call for your child.
  - If you arrive early, please shut off your car and not idle.
  - Do NOT pass other cars while cars are loading.
  - Please do not turn around in our neighbors' driveways.
- Preschool students are:
  - picked up at the preschool door at dismissal times.
    - Session 1 - 10:40
    - Session 2 - 2:00
  - escorted to the van/bus by a staff member if they take a van/bus home.

We cannot dismiss your child to an adult who is not listed on your emergency card, unless you have informed the office in writing that someone else is picking up your child. That means that if you plan a playdate, we must have it in writing that your child is going home with another caregiver. We cannot dismiss your child to someone else's caregiver if we don't have it in writing.

### **Late Pick Up**

If you are going to be more than five minutes late picking your child up, please call the school. Students who are not picked up by 2:15 will be brought to our Late Bird program. Mrs. Bombard will call you to let you know your child needs to be picked up.

### **Dismissal before end of day**

If you know you are picking up your child before the end of the school day, please send in a note or email and be sure to include Mrs. Bombard in your communication. If you are picking your child up early, please come to the main entrance and ring the doorbell. Please plan on it taking 10 minutes for your child to get to the door.

If you are picking your child up early, but towards the end of the day, it's easier for the office team if you pick up before 1:40. If you need to pick up your child between 1:40 and 2:10, you are able to, but please know that it will be easier before 1:40.

## **Early Release Days**

- **Kindergarten through Grade 5:**
  - Early Release days will end at 11:30.
  - Kindergarten through grade 2 students will have lunch at school.
  - Students in grades 3 through 5 will NOT have lunch at school, but are able to order a bagged lunch to go home.
  - Please send snack as usual on early release days.
  
- **Preschool:**
  - Session 1 - 8:10-10:40 regular session
  - Full Day students will be picked up at 11:20.
  - Session 2 - Session 2 is NOT in session on early release days.

**Check the [District Calendar](#) for this year's early release days. Just remember October 30, 2023 through November 2, 2023 are ALL early release days for elementary schools.**

## **Parking**

Parking is limited at Leeds. We only have one parking lot. Our bus loop is for buses only from 7:45-8:00 and 1:30-2:30. If you arrive between 8:00 and 1:20, you may park in the loop. If you get caught in the bus line, do not pass the buses when their lights are flashing.

- Please do not block the entry ways to the school.
- Please do not park on Florence Street, unless we have a large event.
- Thank you for helping us keep our students and staff safe.

## **Before & Afterschool Programs at Leeds Early/Late Bird & LEAP**

**Early / Late Bird** - The Early Bird / Late Bird program offers extended day childcare to our Leeds Elementary School students. The program provides quality, affordable childcare services with enrichment opportunities and runs daily from 7:00am until 7:45am and from 2:10pm through 5:15pm. For more information, [click here](#).

**LEAP - Leeds Enrichment Afterschool Program** - LEAP provides after school enrichment clubs for our Leeds Elementary School students. Clubs focus on Visual Arts, Crafts, Sports, Performing/ Movement/ Sound Arts, Computer Programming, Robotics, Engineering, Science, Languages, Movement/ Meditation/ Mindfulness, Cooperative Group Games, and Nature. For more information, [click here](#).

For more information contact:

Gabrielle Hollender, Early/Late Bird Coordinator 413-587-1530 ext. 3659  
[ghollender@northampton-k12.us](mailto:ghollender@northampton-k12.us)

# Absences

If your child is going to be absent or late, please call (413)587-1530 or email your classroom teacher, and cc: Mrs. Bombard ([sbombard@northampton-k12.us](mailto:sbombard@northampton-k12.us)).

School attendance is compulsory for Massachusetts children ages 6 to 16. Attendance is also compulsory for children who are 5-years-old and enrolled in the Northampton Public Schools. Kindergarten registration is mandatory for children who turn 5-years-old by January 1st. The Northampton Public Schools believe that on-time, regular attendance is a critical factor in student academic success. It is the District's responsibility to work collaboratively with families to assist with identifying and removing barriers to regular attendance and to communicate to families the importance of regular attendance.

**Please get documentation for all medical, dental, and therapy appointments for the office.**

The following are considered **documented** absences. These instances may include, but are not limited to:

- Sickness (with a note from the students' physician)
- Death in family (with a note from the caregiver/guardian)
- Impassable roads or weather
- Religious holidays
- Court appearances (with official documentation)
- Approved college visits (with a note on official letterhead or correspondence from the school)
- Military obligations (as documented by official documentation)

The following are considered **undocumented** absences. These instances may include, but are not limited to:

- Vacations
- Missing the bus
- Sickness without documentation from the physician
- Participation in other activities not listed above

A student visiting with their caregiver related to military leave or deployment activities shall be granted additional excused absences at the discretion of the superintendent or their designee and may not be penalized.

The school notifies the Community Outreach Social Worker when a student is repeatedly absent. The school may file a criminal complaint against a caregiver whose child is absent for more than seven (7) full days or fourteen (14) half-days in a six-month period. See M.G.L. c. 76, sect. 2. The court can take a variety of actions against a caregiver including the imposition of a fine. Provisions within Chapter 119 of the Massachusetts General Laws grants caregivers and guardians the right to file an Application for Assistance with the courts for Children Requiring Assistance, who are statutorily defined as a child between 6 years old and 18 who:

1. Repeatedly runs away from the home of a caregiver or legal guardian;
2. Repeatedly fails to obey the lawful and reasonable commands of a caregiver or legal guardian, thereby interfering with the caregiver's or legal guardian's ability to adequately care for and protect the child;
3. Repeatedly fails to obey lawful and reasonable school regulations; or
4. "Habitually truant"- a school-aged child is "habitually truant" when not otherwise excused from attendance in accordance with lawful and reasonable school regulations, willfully fails to attend school for more than 8 school days in a quarter.

By filing an Application for Assistance at court, a child will gain access to help and services that can improve behavior, support the child and help them avoid future incidents with the criminal justice system.

# Communication

## **Parent/Caregiver Communication App - Parent Square**

ParentSquare is a simple and safe way to connect and communicate with your child's teachers and school. [Click here for more information on how to sign up](#). Our district is moving to Parent Square to centralize our communications and will be used instead of Class Dojo or Talking Points.

## **Robocalls**

It is extremely important to make sure your phone number is up to date in our office. We will periodically send out robocalls with important information.

## **School Newsletter - The Buzz at Leeds**

Every Monday you will receive "The Buzz at Leeds" via email or Parent Square. We are trying to conserve paper. However, if you need a paper copy of the newsletter, please contact Mrs. Bombard ([sbombard@northampton-k12.us](mailto:sbombard@northampton-k12.us) or 413-587-1531).

# Code of Conduct

The Northampton Public Schools Code of Conduct, Character and Support adheres to our district's discipline philosophy:

The Northampton Public Schools believe that all students have the right to be educated in an environment where they are safe, respected, and are accepted for who they are. We believe that by teaching students strategies to manage conflict and to problem-solve together, relationships will be nurtured and repaired as needed. As a result, students will be able to gain the skills and knowledge they need to be engaged citizens in a global society. The new Code of Conduct is intended to be a living document that will continue to change over time to reflect the district's core values and beliefs around racial justice.

This document serves as a starting point, and we as members of the NPS recognize that as we move forward in our implementation, our school councils will continue to assess and make changes as needed to ensure that this document reflects who we are and who we want to be as a school district.

[Click here for a full version of the Code of Conduct.](#)

## **Phones & Other Electronic Devices**

If your child brings their phone, smartwatch, or other device to school, it must be powered down, zipped into their backpack, and stored in the classroom closet during school hours. Students may not use their phone, smartwatch, or other device during school hours. If they need to reach home, they may ask to use the phone in the office and will be allowed to do so at their teacher's discretion.

If your child brings a device to school and you'd like them to communicate with you that they have arrived in the morning, they can do that as soon as they arrive on the property, but before they join their classmates at their arrival spot. If your child needs to communicate with you after dismissal using their device, they may do that.

Fitness trackers are allowed at school if they count steps and tell time, and do not have a communication or game function.

## **Meals at School**

Breakfast and lunch continue to be FREE for all students preschool through grade 5.

MILK - Each meal comes with a lunch.

However, if your child only purchases milk, there is a charge of \$0.50.

Milk purchased on its own is not free.

Free & Reduced Applications and Menus can be found at  
<https://northamptonschools.org/project/food-services/>

The classroom teacher will provide a schedule with lunch times.

Each class will have a scheduled snack time. Please provide a snack each day for your child. Some classes may have students with allergies. Your child's classroom teacher will provide you with any information regarding snacks.

### **No Treats Please!**

Please be advised that we ask caregivers to NOT send in treats for birthdays or other parties. To ensure the safe and healthy school environment for all students, we are asking you not to send any food to school for class consumption. On occasion, a teacher may communicate with caregivers about a specific event that they may want food for. There are many ways to celebrate and teachers will communicate with you how they may choose to celebrate or recognize birthdays and or other special events at school. We appreciate your understanding in knowing that any food items sent in, will be returned home. Thank you for your cooperation and please let us know if you have any questions.

## **What To Do If I have Concerns**

## **Regarding My Child?**

If at any time during the school year you have any concerns regarding your child, there are several ways to reach out. If the concern is one that doesn't not require a team to look into the academics/behaviors/social-emotional needs of the child that may require specific accommodations, then caregivers should first contact their classroom teacher. If the concern continues after reaching out to the teacher, caregivers should then contact the principal.

For matters pertaining to a child's academic performance and/or social-emotional-behavioral concerns the first step after speaking with the child's teacher would be for the teacher to bring the concern to the Student Support Team (SST). This team will discuss the concern(s) with the teacher, review the data, and provide action steps for the teacher to use over the course of approximately 6 weeks. During the SST meetings, we discuss accommodations that could be put into place for the child's success. Students may receive Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions. If there is little or no change after a period of time, the SST may request further testing and/or referral for an eligibility meeting for a 504 accommodation plan or an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The caregiver will be involved through this process. We want to be sure that we provide a student with interventions prior to referral for a 504 or IEP. If your child already receives services through the 504 accommodation plan and you are having concerns, please contact the principal. If your child already receives services through an IEP and you are having concerns, please contact your child's special education teacher.

Please see a list of supportive staff members here at Leeds on the next page.

## **Supportive Staff**

*All the Kids ~ All the Time!*

At Leeds Elementary School, we are all committed to caring for and helping children with positive decision-making. These are people who could help your child during the day as we work to create a safe and friendly school:

1. **Classroom Teachers, Special Education Teachers, Service Providers and Paraeducators in the classroom.**  
Paraeducators also do an incredible job in the cafeteria and on the playground building relationships that help our students feel safe and appreciated.
2. **Principal, Chris Wenz** Ms. Wenz works hard to set a positive school-wide tone and to follow up with concerns in a thoughtful, careful manner. She aims to be highly responsive and accessible to our entire school community.
3. **Head Teacher, Jessica Schreiber.** Ms. Schreiber is one of our Tiered Support Specialists and also our Head Teacher. She is quick to support any community needs and gives extra support if Ms. Wenz is ever out of the building.
4. **Office Staff:** Our administrative assistant, **Sandy Bombard**, will be the first person to support children and families. Her role is to de-escalate and show compassion until another member of our team can come and help. She is always available on the walkie-talkies to help with any issues that arise.
5. **Nurse, Caelin Mottor** Nurse Caelin certainly deals with any medical issues, but she is also an incredible support for students who might be having any variety of discomforts.
6. **Tiered Support Specialists, Heide Eriksen & Jessica Schreiber** Their role is to support students in class, in the cafeteria, on the playground, and in the hallways to reach their potential and learn self-regulation strategies. They help our entire school community respond to emotional and behavioral challenges and develop and share opportunities to learn and grow with respectful,

reasonable, and logical consequences and support. They support classroom teachers in providing social emotional learning with our Second Step program.

7. **School Adjustment Counselor, Susannah Bastek** Susannah supports students' social emotional learning individually and in groups predominantly for students with IEPs or 504s. She also helps caregivers access community resources and assists families navigate difficult times. Joining Ms. Bastek this year is **Remi, our therapy dog**. For more information on Remi, [click here](#).
8. **School Psychologist, Kira Henninger** Kira will be conducting psychological assessments as part of our special education process, but she also has a good deal of experience dealing with behavioral challenges and will work with teachers and our team to help guide students toward positive learning opportunities.
9. **Elementary ETL, Rebel McKinley** Rebel supports Leeds and Ryan Road as our Education Team Leader. More details to come.
10. **BCBA (Board Certified Behavior Analyst), Nina Shroyer** Nina brings experience and a commitment to creating plans to support positive behaviors at school.

Our team of Chris Wenz, Jessica Schreiber, Heide Eriksen, Susannah Bastek, Kira Henninger, Rebel McKinley, Nina Shroyer, and Caelin Mottor have weekly “Core Team” meetings to discuss any students who we have noticed need an increased level of support. Sitting down together on a weekly basis helps us to monitor needs and problem solve together, so that we can best support teachers, families and students at school. Kira Henninger and Susannah Bastek co-facilitate our Student Support Team where teachers and/or caregivers can bring academic or social emotional concerns.

Please contact any of us on the Core Team or your child’s classroom teacher, if you have any questions or concerns at any time during the school year.

## **Volunteers in Northampton (VINS)**

VINS recruits, trains, and places volunteers in 7 Northampton Public Schools at the direct request of Teachers/Faculty. VINS recruits volunteers through our many partnerships with community organizations, local businesses, colleges, parents, and active community members.

At Leeds, we love to have volunteers in our classrooms, on our field trips, and during our field day. There are other ways to volunteer at the school. In order to volunteer at Leeds, you will need to complete a VINS application, which includes a CORI check. It takes approximately 2 weeks to complete the process. If you know you want to volunteer for a field trip or activity in your child's classroom, please complete the application at least 2 weeks prior to the event.

Please come to the office for an application.

## **Leeds School Council**

Parents/Caregivers can get involved in our school through our School Council. Our School Council meets monthly. Officially, school councils are to assist principals in:

1. Adopting educational goals for the school that are consistent with local educational policies and statewide student performance standards
2. Identifying the educational needs of students attending the school
3. Reviewing the annual school building budget
4. Formulating a school improvement plan

Beyond that, a School Council's identity is determined by the members working in tandem with the Principal. It can entail many things. The council the last few years focused on community and engagement. As a result, we created the Class Representative program, the parent survey, Literacy Night and Technology Night, Math Night, the World Cafe, social justice projects, and the all-school read.

What's the difference between the School Council and the PTO? At Leeds Elementary School, the PTO runs fundraising and social events, whereas the School Council is involved more with curriculum and school priorities - though the two groups occasionally work together.

How do I become an elected member of the School Council? Contact Meghan Steed, PTO President at [meghan@leedspto.org](mailto:meghan@leedspto.org). There may be open caregiver positions on the council. We have an election for the open positions in the fall.

If I don't become an elected member of the School Council, can I still come to meetings? Yes. You are welcome at any/all meetings, and you can help out on projects and sub-committees, if you want. Much of the time, there's little difference between the roles of elected and unelected members. The meetings are friendly and relaxed, so feel free to drop in on one.

How much work is involved? We meet monthly. Meetings generally last 60-90 minutes. Outside of meetings, you may choose to work on some of the Council's initiatives, like the Class Rep program. Or maybe you'll bring something new to the group...

## **Leeds PTO**

The Leeds Elementary PTO is a non-profit parent-teacher organization whose membership includes all parents, caregivers, guardians & staff at Leeds Elementary School. You can find lots of information on the [Leeds PTO website](#). They are also found on [Facebook](#). Our PTO is very active. They support students and staff at our school through fundraisers, events, field trips, and volunteering. There are many opportunities to assist our PTO.

If you have a question, please email [info@leedspto.org](mailto:info@leedspto.org)