



## **Routines and Year At-A-Glance 2024-25**

Thank you for your incredible partnership and support so that we may have a safe, healthy, and positive year of growth ahead.

Here is some information that will help you and your child(ren) prepare for the start of the school year and throughout the year:

### **FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL:**

Tuesday, September 3: 8:10 a.m.-2:50 p.m.

### **SCHOOL HOURS:**

- Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday: 8:10am-2:50 p.m.
- Wednesdays: 8:10am-12:20 p.m.

### **EARLY RELEASE DAYS:**

Students are dismissed at **12:10pm** on the following dates:

- Thursday, September 26, 2024
- Tuesday, October 29, 2024
- Wednesday, November 27, 2024 (Thanksgiving Recess; staff early dismissal)
- Thursday, December 5, 2024
- Thursday, February 6, 2025
- Thursday, March 20, 2025
- Thursday, May 8, 2025
- Final Day of School (June 20, 2025 if NO snow days)

**ARRIVAL TIME:** 8:10am - Please be prompt; we monitor attendance. Students are marked tardy if they arrive to the classroom after 8:20am. School doors open at 8:10am. Please do not drop your child off early as they will not be allowed to enter the building AND there is no supervision outside of the school.

### **ARRIVAL AREAS:**

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Teachers will meet their students to enter the building at 8:10am. Grade levels will meet in the following locations (when looking at the school) for the 2024-25 school year:

- Kindergarten: Path by playground entrance door (in back of the school); enter recess doors
- 1st Grade: Picnic tables to the right of the flagpole; enter main entrance
- 2nd Grade: Grass area to the right of path at front entranceway; enter main entrance
- 3rd Grade: Flagpole at front of school; enter teacher's room
- 4th Grade: Front field by trees; enter main entrance
- 5th Grade: Front field by trees; enter main entrance

\*Do not block the main entrance path.

**DROP OFF:** Students are greeted by teachers and staff members at 8:10am. Please plan to say goodbyes outside as students will enter the building with staff members. Details regarding safe arrival and dismissal are below.

**DISMISSAL:** Grades K through 2 are dismissed in front of school by Classroom Teachers directly to parents or parent authorized guardians (nanny, family friend, relative, etc.).

In order to facilitate a safe and efficient dismissal process:

- ★ Parents/Guardians will be expected to complete this [dismissal plan form](#) during the first week of school that will be maintained by the classroom teacher and a copy will be kept in the main office.
- ★ Parents/Guardians must send a note in with their child if the dismissal routine differs from the usual practice.
  - Day of dismissal changes require a call to the main office: (617)559-6450.
- ★ Parents/Guardians shall make every effort to notify their child(ren) before school of a change in routine.
- ★ Please use this template to create a [Dismissal Sign](#) to be posted on the passenger side of the vehicle if/when using the Blue Zone.

**DISMISSAL MEETING LOCATIONS FOR WALKERS:**

- For dismissal at **2:50pm/12:20pm**, classroom teachers will dismiss students being picked up by car/foot from the following locations:
  - Kindergarten- Picnic tables in front of school
  - 1st grade- Flagpole
  - 2nd- 5th grade- Field by trees

**SAFETY FOR ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL:** Please share this information with family members or others who may drive your child. We need everyone's cooperation to make arrival and pick-up work. The blue painted curb, known as the Blue Zone, has its limitations as does our school building and property which were built for the community in 1928. We ask you to help make it work by following all safety expectations. All caretakers are asked to please comply with safety procedures and do their part to ensure safe and smooth arrival and dismissal from

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school each day:

- Walk on the sidewalk
- Keep pathways and stairs clear
- Blue zone is for **live** pick up/drop off only.
  - ◆ Children must be able to enter/exit the car **independently on the sidewalk side**
  - ◆ **Driver and other passengers remain in car**
  - ◆ Driver must attend to flow of traffic and move up the line as far as possible
  - ◆ Follow staff directions
  - ◆ Do not stop as close to the school as possible because it seems that no cars are behind you-- this causes a domino effect
  - ◆ Playdates and other plans need to be arranged prior to dismissal or in a safe location other than the blue zone
  - ◆ If your child(ren) are not out and ready at the time of your arrival, you will need to circle the neighborhood and rejoin the pick up line
- Do NOT drop off/pick up in the bus zone or in front of the driveway during arrival/dismissal times
- Park only in designated spaces. There are paths to Ward from adjoining streets- please park and walk.
- Be attentive to pedestrians and patient of other drivers stopping for pedestrians when driving to and from Ward
- Please check out this video from Mason Rice and share with other caretakers regarding [How to Use the Blue Zone](#)
- If your child is being picked up from kindergarten, you must meet your child outdoors at dismissal time. However, when you feel your child is ready, kindergartners can be dropped off in the Blue Zone and walk to the front door.

**DOGS/PETS:** Pets are not allowed in the school or on school grounds during school hours. Please keep dogs and other pets leashed and away from all walkways, the front meeting area, the entrance to the school and blue zone. (Service dogs are an exception.)

**EARLY DISMISSALS:** When it is necessary to dismiss your child early, for example, for a medical or dental appointment, please write a note to your child's teacher or the office stating the time of dismissal so your child and the teacher can be prepared. When you arrive at the early dismissal time, please check in at the office and your child will meet you in the office to be dismissed.

**ATTENDANCE MATTERS:**

Regular attendance and prompt arrival at school are essential for a child to make progress in school. If a child is absent or tardy, it is necessary that you send a note of explanation upon his/her return to school. Please call the Ward School attendance line to leave a message whenever a student is absent. If the school is not notified, the parent will be contacted.

Please note that the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education also

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holds schools accountable for student attendance. Families should plan vacations during school vacation periods to ensure the continuity of teaching. It is impossible to replace classroom instruction with worksheets or other materials. Children miss valuable teaching time each day they are not in school. Teachers are not responsible for providing work if students take vacations during school time. It is the responsibility of the child, with parents' help, to make up the work as quickly as possible.

**REPORTING ABSENCES/LATE ARRIVALS:** Please report your child's absence by calling **617-559-6470 by 8:30am**. Please leave a voicemail with your child's name, teacher, and reason for absence. Emails/notes to teachers are helpful, in addition, but do not replace the required call to the absence line.

**COMMUNICATION:** Parents will receive a weekly school news update from the principal or PTO. Classroom teachers will explain their communication system with you at the start of school. We value open communication, however staff are focused on student needs throughout the school day. Please know that immediate response to email and phone calls is not possible.

**FREE AND REDUCED MEAL PROGRAM:**

Our schools offer free and reduced breakfast/lunch to qualified families. Please complete the [Free and Reduced Meal Application](#). By completing the application, your student and family may be eligible to receive additional benefits beyond the free and reduced meal program.

A few important notes:

- If you have had a change in job status or income, you may now be eligible for the free and reduced meal program. We encourage you to complete the application by September 1.
- If your student was enrolled in the Newton Public Schools last year and you are now eligible for the free and reduced meals program (but have not yet completed the application), you can receive a summer P-EBT card. To receive the card, you must complete the application. A P-EBT card is a debit card with funds already loaded onto it that can be used to purchase food items at your local grocery store.
- To receive the P-EBT card benefit, you **MUST** complete the free and reduced meal application by September 1.
- If you are already enrolled in the free and reduced meal program and received a P-EBT card last year, you do **NOT** need to reapply. You will remain enrolled in the free and reduced meal program this year.

**SNACK:** Children should bring a **light** snack for refueling. Please do not pack large "lunch-size" snacks as time is limited. Please...no candy, gum, soda, or glass bottles. Clearly label the inside of lunch boxes or bags, containers/tupperware, and reusable water bottles with your child's name.

**WATER BOTTLE:** Children should bring a reusable water bottle to school daily. This should be clearly labeled with your child's name. There are water filtration bottle fillers on each floor of the school.

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**CLOTHING:** Durable, washable, comfortable clothing, **labeled with your child's name (we don't want the items to end up in the lost and found)**. Backpacks should be roomy enough for folders, children's work, lunch boxes, and extra clothing (kindergartners), without wheels, and able to fit into a locker. Students go outside almost every day and should dress appropriately for the weather. Unclaimed lost and found items will be collected and donated monthly.

**SCHOOL SUPPLIES:** Essential supplies for student learning will be provided by the school as in years past. If teachers have specific needs or requests (which are minimal!), they will be in touch directly with their families.

**PARENT INVOLVEMENT:** We welcome parent participation and support at Ward. Teachers encourage parents to share their skills, cultures, and interests with the class. Keep this in mind after school gets rolling and the class settles into a routine. Let the teacher know of your willingness to help and any special interests or talents you may have. On Back to School Night and through newsletters, teachers will share the best means for communicating with them. They will also share how parents are made part of the classroom – this varies from teacher to teacher.

**ROOM PARENTS:** Some teachers may want to have a "room parent." A room parent is the communication link between the teacher and parents for class events, school fundraisers, class trips, etc. Information will be sent home from teachers regarding room parent opportunities.

**TRANSITION BACK TO SCHOOL:** Parents frequently ask how they can help make the transition from home to school most successful. A general rule is to establish consistent practices to help your child feel organized and secure:

- Establish regular sleeping hours. Start backing up bed time now as we all have come to enjoy the longer summer days! A rested child is a more productive child.
- Allow time for morning routines and breakfast. Eating gives your child the energy to focus on schoolwork.
- **Ensure that your child arrives at school on time at 8:10am. This is crucial for starting the day with others.**
- Inform teachers of **any** changes at home that may affect your child such as parent trips, family/pet illness or deaths, etc. Teachers can help support in such situations.
- Give daily reminders to your child about before or after-school arrangements, daycare, buses, visits to friends' homes, lessons, etc. Send a note to the teacher regarding changes in these arrangements; we cannot make changes without a direct contact from a parent. Make such arrangements *before* school. Please *do not call the school* during the day to share or update arrangements except in case of emergencies. We understand that occasional changes in after-school plans are unavoidable, but we ask that you please do your best to confirm plans before your child leaves home. Calls to the office in this regard must be kept to a minimum.
- Encourage outdoor play; children benefit from fresh air and exercise.
- Be aware of your child's television choices and time spent watching; monitor screen time/cell phone use. Talk about what they/you are doing when using electronics.

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- **Read with your child every day & practice math facts/problem solving.** This is essential for building skills!
- Establish routines and spaces for homework completion and daily reading in grades 1-5.
- Some families find it useful to lay out clothing and have backpacks ready the night before.

**PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)** – If your child attends Ward School then you are a member of the PTO. Please go to the PTO website for more information on how to get involved. (<http://wardpto.org>)

## *Welcome to Ward!*

Principal: Ms. Rebecca Brogadir	<a href="mailto:brogadirr@newton.k12.ma.us">brogadirr@newton.k12.ma.us</a>	617-559-6450
Executive Assistant: Ms. Susan Tempesta	<a href="mailto:tempestas@newton.k12.ma.us">tempestas@newton.k12.ma.us</a>	617-559-6450
Nurse: Ms. Deana Salameh	<a href="mailto:salamehd@newton.k12.ma.us">salamehd@newton.k12.ma.us</a>	617-559-6453
School Psychologist: Ms. Meghan O'Brien	<a href="mailto:obrienm@newton.k12.ma.us">obrienm@newton.k12.ma.us</a>	617-559-6457
Social Worker: Ms. Erin Byrne	<a href="mailto:byrnee@newton.k12.ma.us">byrnee@newton.k12.ma.us</a>	617-559-6460

A comprehensive school directory will be available to all families during the fall.

## **Planning Ahead**

- Monday, August 19- Ward Main Office Opens
- Friday, August 23- Class assignments shared with families
- Thursday, August 29-
  - 1:30pm-2:00pm- Open House (visit to classrooms)
  - 2:00pm-3:00pm- Popsicles in the Park at Ward playground (All families invited)
- Tuesday, September 3- First Day of School!
  - Principal/PTO Coffee; 8:30am at front picnic tables
  - 2:50pm dismissal
  - Voting in Gymnasium
- Wednesday, September 4- 12:20pm dismissal
- Monday, September 9- 5:30pm-7:00pm- Ward Fall Picnic- free pizza and games.
- Tuesday, September 17- **Back to School Night**; 6:00pm-7:30pm
  - 6:00-6:30 Grades 3-5
  - 6:40-6:55 All School in Gym with Principal and PTO
  - 7:00-7:30 Grades K-2
- Thursday, September 19- School Picture Day
- Thursday, September 26- **Early Release** at 12:10pm
  - Staff Professional Development
- Thursday, October 3- **No School**; Rosh Hashanah
- Monday, October 14- **No School**; Indigenous People's Day
- October 21- November 7- Fall Conference Window
- Thursday, October 24- Ward School Fun Run
- Tuesday, October 29- **Early Release** at 12:10pm

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- PM Fall Conferences
- Wednesday, October 30- PM Fall Conferences
- Tuesday, November 5- **Election Day (no school for students)**
  - NPS Staff PD All Day
- Wednesday, November 6- PM Fall Conferences
- Monday, November 11- **No School**; Veterans' Day
- Wednesday, November 27- **Early Release at 12:10pm**
- Thursday, November 28- Friday, November 29- **No School**; Thanksgiving/Native American Heritage Break

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