

McKnight Elementary

Student and Parent
Handbook
2025-26



McKnight Elementary
500 Cumberland Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15237

412-635-4105
www.northallegheny.org

2025-2026

McKnight Elementary Student and Parent Handbook

Welcome to McKnight Elementary and the 2025-2026 school year! We extend a warm welcome to our new Kindergarten students and all of the families joining us for the first time. At McKnight, we are always excited to have new members join our family. We look forward to learning and growing with each of you this year.

This Handbook has been prepared to act as a guide to learn about McKnight and the many amazing things that your family can experience. It is important that you have a clear understanding of the procedures, regulations and provisions outlined in this booklet. It is essential in providing and maintaining the safe and orderly environment necessary for the progress of all the people in our school.

The Student/Parent Handbook should help explain many of the procedures you will need to know during the year. If you or your parents have additional questions, please call the Front Office at **412-635-4105**.

We wish you an exciting, creative, and enriching 2024-2025 school year.

Principal: Dr. Christopher Shute, cshute@northallegheny.org
Assistant Principal: Mr. Keith Gillis, kgillis@northallegheny.org
Secretary: Ms. Shannon Tieppo, stieppo@northallegheny.org
Secretary: Ms. Linda Bookleiner, lbookleiner@northallegheny.org



Phone: 412-635-4105

Fax: 412-635-4115

Website: <https://www.northallegheny.org/Domain/13>

Office Hours: 8:00 am - 4:00 pm

School Hours: 9:00 am - 3:30 pm

Kindergarten Hours: 9:00 am - 11:45 am & 12:45 pm - 3:30 pm

North Allegheny School District's Mission and Vision

Mission Statement

The mission of the North Allegheny School District is to prepare all students for success in a changing world. Each school fosters a safe, respectful, and engaging environment where students grow academically, socially, and emotionally, with a focus on responsible citizenship, creativity, and lifelong learning.

Vision Statement

The vision of the North Allegheny School District is to be a premier school district that inspires excellence in academics, athletics, arts, and activities for every student every day.

NASD Shared Core Values

We will exceed the expectations of those we serve.

We believe:

- All individuals can learn.
 - Learning is a life-long process that occurs inside and outside the classroom.
 - Effective teaching is both an art and science that results in increased levels of critical thinking, achievement, and growth.
 - Embracing, valuing, and promoting diversity enriches our community and learning experiences.
 - Integrity, trust, compassion, and open communication are hallmarks of an excellent educational community.
 - Educational excellence requires effective leadership, high expectations, teamwork, and the responsible utilization of resources.
 - Collaboration among students, parents, staff and community enriches our ownership of the education process.
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District Goals



McKnight Staff Directory

Office	
Principal	Dr. Christopher Shute
Assistant Principal	Mr. Keith Gillis
Counselor (K-2)	Mrs. Katie Wisniewski
Counselor (3-5)	Mrs. Christie Biro
Nurse	Mrs. Rachael Hunt
Support Nurse	Mrs. Sarah Gold
Principal Secretary	Ms. Shannon Tieppo
Assistant Principal Secretary	Ms. Linda Bookleiner
School Resource Officer	Officer Heather Bristow

Homeroom Teachers	
KA/KD	Mrs. Mary Beth Rieck
KB/KE	Mrs. Diane Regule
KC	Mrs. Dena King
KF	Mrs. Jillian Mackenzie
1A	Mrs. DJ Pison
1B	Ms. Marie Noonan
1C	Mrs. Ginger Clarke
1D	Mrs. Allie Hluhan
1E	Mrs. Carley Tudi
1F	Mrs. Robin Napper
2A	Mrs. Amber Shulik
2B	Mrs. Emily Torchia
2C	Ms. Lisa McPherson
2D	Mrs. Renee Morgan
2E	Mr. Ray Conway
2F	Mrs. Lindsay Kerzmann
2G	Mrs. Stephanie Conrad
3A	Ms. Allison Kauffman
3B	Mrs. Maggie Rice
3C	Mrs. Amy Eyerman
3D	Mrs. Janet Merlino
3E	Mrs. Chelsea Emma
4A	Mrs. Katie Farrell
4B	Mr. Gannon Holleran

4C	Mrs. Kylie Lang
4D	Mrs. Elisa Capozoli
4E	Ms. Brittany Rupert
5A	Mrs. Angela Lesinski
5B	Mr. Kyle Zaspel
5C	Ms. Alicia Anton
5D	Mrs. Deb Goehring
5E	Mr. Tom Ward
5F	Ms. Stacey Mrazek
Special Education	
Learning Support	Mrs. Meghan Susi
Learning Support	Mrs. Sara Kowalski
Learning Support	Mrs. Kathy Egnaczyk
Learning Support	Mrs. Amy Stinelli
Learning Support	Mrs. Susan Ciccone
Emotional Support	Mrs. Kate Shephard
Emotional Support	Mrs. Rachel Schulte
Social Worker	Mrs. Amber Friend
GOAL	Mr. Patrick Frank
Speech	Mrs. Carly Summers
Speech	Mrs. Ellie Proksell
Support Staff	
Reading Specialist	Mrs. Amy Libert
Reading Specialist	Mrs. Jenn Channel
Reading Specialist	Mrs. Samantha Edmonds

Interventionist	Mrs. Bethany Trettel
Interventionist	Mrs. Jamie Harvey
Interventionist	Mrs. Kaitlin Bucciarelli
English as Second Language	Mrs. Nicole Carroll
English as Second Language	Ms. Melissa Zarra
English as Second Language	Mrs. Diane Scott
English as Second Language	Mrs. Sara Rebmann
Building Substitute	Ms. Maureen Hickel
Building Substitute	Ms. Ally Kristy
Special Areas	
Art	Ms. Becky Jackson
Art	Mrs. Chelsea Attwood
Music	Mrs. Amy Reese
Music	Mrs. Jennifer Dabbs
Strings	Mr. Dennis Morton
Band	Mr. Marshall Henry
Library	Mrs. Kristin Falkner
Library	Ms. Darcy Mautino
Health/Physical Education	Mr. Kurt Zaspel
Health/Physical Education	Mr. Brian Hudec
Paraprofessionals	
Special Education Para	Mrs. Alisa Balkey
Special Education Para	Dr. Amy Piersol
Special Education Para	Mrs. Bridget Kiley
Special Education Para	Mrs. Cathy Williams

Special Education Para	Mrs. Claire Groll
Special Education Para	Mrs. Karen Froehlich
Special Education Para	Mrs. Kathy Moberg
Special Education Para	Mrs. Katie Grottenthaler
Special Education Para	Mrs. Kim Pillage
Special Education Para	Mrs. Leslie Waldfogle
Special Education Para	Mrs. Lisa Schneider
Special Education Para	Mrs. Maria Roach
Special Education Para	Ms. Katy McCourt
Special Education Para	Ms. Heather Schall-Lucas
Special Education Para	Ms. Skylar Davis
Student Service Assistant	Mrs. Sharon Murphy
Student Service Assistant	Mrs. Melissa Bartins
Student Service Assistant	Mrs. Julie Muljanto
Student Service Assistant	Mrs. Sarah Kozej
Student Service Assistant	Mrs. Louise Loscar
Student Service Assistant	Mrs. Colleen Husok
Title 1 Assistant	Mrs. Sue Senneway
Library Secretary	Mrs. Elizabeth Porter

Address/Telephone Changes

It is very important that every student maintain an up-to-date address and telephone number record at the school office. If you have a change in address or telephone number during the school year, notify the school immediately to assure efficient communication between school and home and to update your child's transportation services. Emails are often not updated and lead to loss of electronic notifications if not maintained.

Admissions

New kindergarten students must be five (5) years old and new first grade students must be six (6) years old on or before September 1 of the school year in which they are enrolling. A physical examination is required when a student enters school for the first time. Ages must be verified by a birth certificate and immunization records must be complete along with proof of residency.

Animal Visits

Due to health concerns for students throughout the building, animals are not permitted to be brought into the building without approval from the office. On the day of the visit, you are to register at the office and at the time will be given further instructions regarding access to certain areas of the building.

After School Programs

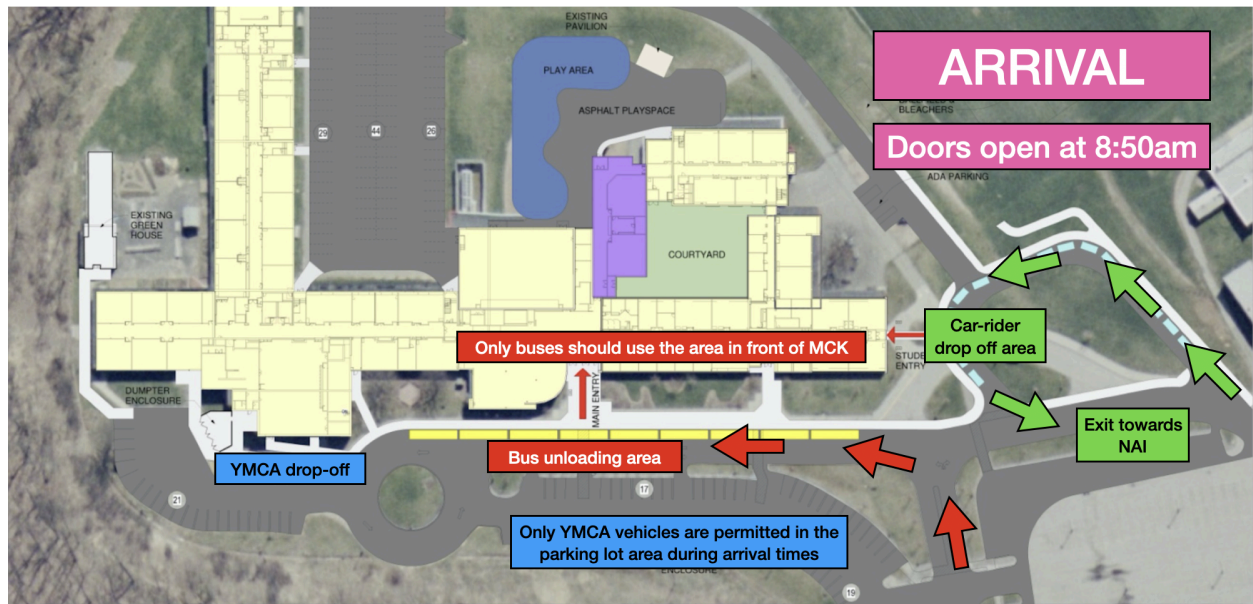
The North Allegheny School District and McKnight Elementary School offer several after-school programs for students. For these programs, students will be called to their assigned area at dismissal. Transportation home is *always* the responsibility of the family. Information regarding these programs will be shared from the school.

Arrival

Students should arrive on time and follow building-specific drop-off procedures. Arrival times typically begin at 8:50–9:00 AM. There is no supervision of students prior to 8:50 AM. Dismissal occurs at 3:30 PM unless otherwise specified. For early dismissals or changes in pickup, parents should notify the school office in writing or through approved digital forms before 2:30 PM. Students must be signed out by authorized individuals listed on their emergency contacts.

The building is open to children at **8:50 a.m.** Supervision is not available for students prior to 8:50 and students should not be left on their own. Students will report directly to their classrooms upon arrival at school. They must be in their homerooms at 9:00 a.m. All students riding the bus will enter through the main doors.

Arrival Information for McKnight Elementary



Parent/Guardian Drop-Off: All students should be dropped off in the loop (green area) near NAI no sooner than 8:50am. Please do not use the area in front of the main entrance as this is for buses only.

Bus Drop-Off: All students will be dropped off at the main entrance once exiting the bus.

YMCA: Only YMCA drop-offs should drive through the parking lot across from the main entrance. The YMCA entrance is located at the cafeteria doors.

Assemblies

Assemblies will be scheduled periodically throughout the school year to enhance or reinforce the North Allegheny School District's curriculum. Announcements for the assemblies will be made and posted on the website. Special attention to etiquette and good citizenship is expected of all students during assemblies.

Attendance

Regular attendance is crucial for learning. Absences are classified as legal (illness, bereavement, religious holidays, pre-approved educational trips) or illegal (unapproved vacations, truancy).

When students return to school after any absence, the E-Form must be completed in PowerSchool within three days. If the form on PowerSchool is not completed, the absence(s) will remain unexcused.

To request approval for a Family Educational Trip, parent(s)/guardian(s) must submit the [Educational Tour Form](#) for excusal at least five (5) school days prior to the absence and the absence must be for 10 or less school days. Students who will be participating in an extended absence due to a request for an educational tour or trip for more than 10 days will be withdrawn after the tenth consecutive day (on day 11) and the withdrawal date will be dated the first day of the consecutive absence. These days are considered legal absences when approved. No absences will be approved during standardized testing windows.

Parents of students who are absent (regardless if the absences are excused or unexcused) will receive a letter from the principal after a total of ten (10) days absent. This communication from the building administration is sent to emphasize the importance of daily attendance at school and as a reminder of Pennsylvania's Compulsory Attendance Law. A second notice for excessive absenteeism will be sent after a total of eighteen (18) days and an Elementary Support Team (ESAP) meeting will be held to address excessive absenteeism. After the 18-day letter is delivered, all future absences must be supported by documentation from the child's physician, the school's nurse, or another administratively approved agency. If the proper documentation is not provided after the 18-day letter is sent home, the absence will be documented as unexcused and may be referred to the District Magistrate.

Students with legal absences may have the opportunity to complete any missed assignments upon returning to school. Our responsibility is to promote consistent school attendance and address the underlying risk factors that may lead to truancy. As a requirement of Act 138, students who accrue three (3) illegal absences will be asked to participate in the creation of a School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP). Students who accrue six (6) illegal absences will be referred to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program or to the local children and youth agency. In addition, the District may file a citation for truancy with the District Magistrate.

Requests for absent students' homework assignments may be made on a student's second day of absence. Parents are asked to call the main office before 10:00 AM on the second day of absence to make the request. Students who miss a single day of school can get their missed assignments upon their return to school the following day. Students may also check their teacher's Canvas page for assignments. Students will be granted additional time to complete their assignments upon their return to school, typically equal to the number of days they were absent.

For an extended illness, please contact your child's teacher and make arrangements for absences of a week or longer.

Tardy/Late Arrivals

A student who arrives at school after 9:05 AM is considered tardy. The parent/guardian must escort their child into the office and sign him/her in upon arrival. All students entering school

after 9:05 AM, must check in the office prior to going to their classroom. Failure to sign the student into the office may result in an absence being recorded for the entire school day.

Tardiness is also tracked and addressed accordingly.

Birthday Celebrations

Due to allergy concerns and wellness policies, edible birthday treats are generally not permitted. Families are encouraged to send in non-food items such as pencils, stickers, or erasers. Arrangements should be coordinated with the classroom teacher in advance. Invitations to outside parties should not be distributed at school unless all students in the class are invited.

Bullying Prevention and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

Being proactive to create an anti-bullying school environment is the best way to prevent bullying and conflict. Staff educates students on inclusiveness and tolerance. Various lessons and modeling are completed throughout the school year to support students to make school the best environment for everyone in the school community. The Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports Program provides realistic expectations necessary to take a proactive rather than a reactive approach when responding to behavioral and social issues including bullying. Any bullying observed or reported is addressed to resolve conflict quickly. Please see the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports section. Please review [Policy 249](#) Anti-Bullying/Cyberbullying School Board Policy.

The Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports Program provides realistic expectations necessary to take a proactive rather than a reactive approach when responding to behavioral and social issues. We maintain an inclusive environment for all students. Expectations are taught, modeled, and communicated to all students throughout the school day:

As part of the program, students receive “Shields” used for classroom and school-wide rewards. Parents are integral in the process. Positive communication from the staff will occur to parents, and notification when expectations are not being followed will also occur.

Bus Safety

Students are expected to behave appropriately on school buses. Bus drivers have authority and will assign seats. Drivers will use the first two weeks of school to allow students to pick a seatmate and a seating chart will be developed. Changes to the seating charts can be made by the driver or the principal. Rules include remaining seated, speaking quietly, and keeping

hands and belongings to oneself. Misconduct may result in temporary or permanent loss of bus privileges.

Video cameras are mounted in all school buses. The purpose of the cameras on a school bus is to increase safety and discourage disruptive behaviors.

Students' responsibilities are as follows:

1. Report to your bus stop no earlier than 5 to 10 minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive.
2. While waiting for the bus, stay a safe distance from the roadway. Inappropriate behavior at the bus stop will not be tolerated.
3. Board the bus in a safe, orderly manner and go directly to your seat.
4. Cross fifteen feet in front of the bus only when the red lights are flashing and traffic has come to a complete stop.
5. Never cross behind or reach under a bus. Remain visible to the driver at all times. Stand clear of the danger zone.
6. Talk in a normal tone of voice so the driver can concentrate and hear warning sounds.
7. Ask the driver for permission to open windows. You must keep your entire body and all objects inside the bus at all times.
8. Eating, drinking, smoking, or chewing gum is prohibited on the bus.
9. Help keep your bus clean. No littering. Throwing objects inside or outside is prohibited.
10. When the bus arrives at school, exit in an orderly fashion and go directly to your assigned area.

NOTE: Students must ride their assigned bus. If a one-time change is necessary due to an emergency situation, please print the Transportation Permission Notice from the NA website (forms are also in the front office). Please send this form to the homeroom teacher.

Any request for a permanent change of a bus stop must be approved through the Transportation Department.

Bus Discipline

Bus discipline is a topic of serious conversation at North Allegheny. When a child acts inappropriately on a school bus, the safety of every person on the bus is in jeopardy. The "Ladder of Discipline" has been identified for all elementary and middle school buildings. Depending on the seriousness of a child's inappropriate behavior, first time offenders may receive more than a warning from the bus driver, bus monitor, or building administrator. If the child continues to behave inappropriately, that individual will be assigned to Bus Safety School. Should he/she continue to misbehave, the transportation privilege which is normally extended to North Allegheny students will be revoked by the District for that child.

First Offense - Warning

Second Offense - Detention

Third Offense - Parent/Guardian Conference

Fourth Offense - Bus Suspension* - 3 day

Fifth Offense - Bus Suspension* - 5 days

Sixth Offense - Bus Suspension* - semester

**A conference between administrator, parent, driver, and child is required.*

Students will be given assigned seats on the bus. Drivers will use the first two weeks of school to allow students to pick a seatmate and a seating chart will be developed. Changes to the seating chart can be made by the driver or principal.

Cafeteria

Students may purchase a lunch daily using either cash or funds that they have on the Point of Sale (P.O.S.) system. The daily menu options with prices is posted on the North Allegheny Website. All students buying lunch or snacks will enter his or her Personal Identification Number (P.I.N.) as they purchase their lunch or snack. Assistance will be given to all students at the beginning of the year as they enter their P.I.N. Parents may send in cash or a check payable to NA Cafeteria Fund at any time to deposit money into their child's P.O.S. account. Cafeteria Payment envelopes should be used to include student name, Personal Identification Number (P.I.N.), and payment option. For those families with more than one child, please remember to use separate envelopes for each child. Reminders will be sent home with the student when their Point of Service [P.O.S.] account accrues a negative balance. If there are any questions or concerns, please contact the Food Service Office at 724-934-7201 or 7236. Parent/guardians are responsible for assuring that a student's [POS] account remains up to date with a positive balance. The District also has an online payment system called PaySchools Central. Log in to PaySchools Central at payschoolscentral.com . More information on PaySchools Central can be found at PaySchools.com . Cafeteria time is meant to be a pleasant break in the day. Every student is expected to use proper table manners and speak in a normal tone of voice so that everyone may enjoy their lunch break. Restaurant-like behavior is expected, and students are to clean up after themselves.

Cafeteria time is meant to be a pleasant break in the day. Every student is expected to use proper table manners and speak in a normal tone of voice so that everyone may enjoy their lunch break. Restaurant-like behavior is expected and students are to clean up after themselves.

Calendar/Newsletter

Each year the North Allegheny School District publishes an Activities calendar to each family. We hope that you will utilize this calendar, the District and school websites and District publications to stay on top of upcoming opportunities and events. A weekly newsletter is sent with current events listed.

Cancellation/Modification of School Hours

In the event that a need to disseminate emergency or crisis communications to parents and/or students should arise, the North Allegheny School District has a number of communication methods in place to facilitate this process. These include:

- SchoolMessenger
- The District website (www.northallegheny.org)
- Local television and radio stations (for example: KDKA TV, 1020 AM radio).

SchoolMessenger is a telephone notification system that will deliver a personalized message to parents in minutes. Since this automated service is web-based, its reliability and availability will not be affected by local power or equipment failures.

In addition, parents will be able to access the Contact Manager feature of this system via the North Allegheny School District website or the internet and establish their own account. This will allow them to determine which, if any, phone number(s) they would like to have messages sent to and/or opt for an email or text alert when they have a new phone message. Parents may choose not to receive SchoolMessenger alerts, if they so desire.

School Messenger will be used exclusively to broadcast weather-related cancellation or delay information, as well as other emergency or crisis-related messages.

On a two-hour delay day, students are not to arrive before 10:50 AM; school begins at 11:00 AM. Lunch is served; however, no recess is held. School hours for Kindergarten on delay days will be 11:00 AM-12:45 PM for morning session and 1:45 PM-3:30 PM for afternoon session.

Canvas

Students in grades K-5 will be using the Learning Management System, Canvas. Canvas is an app available on the student's iPad, where teachers will post their daily agendas, assignments, and resources. Canvas also has a parent app that can be accessed through the parent's Tiger ID account.

Child Care

Before and after school child care is available through the YMCA of North Hills. For further information, schedules, and pricing please call the YMCA at 412-761-1227.

The YMCA Program is not affiliated with McKnight Elementary or North Allegheny.

Communication Changes

It is very important that we maintain an up-to-date address, telephone number, and email with the district. If you have a change of any demographic information during the school year, please follow [these instructions](#) to complete a "Change of Demographics" form.

Conferences

Parent-Teacher conferences will be held in November. Parents are encouraged to attend if they need to discuss academic progress and student well-being. Additional conferences can be requested by families or teachers throughout the year. Information will be sent out prior to conferences for parents to sign up for a conference with their child's teacher.

Counselors

We have two school counselors, Mrs. Katie Wisniewski (K-2) and Mrs. Christie Biro (Grades 3-5), who are available to assist students, parents, and staff with academic, social, and emotional needs of students. To make an appointment with the counselor, please call the main office or email them at kwisniewski@northallegheny.org or cbiro@northallegheny.org

Crisis/Emergency Information

In the event a need to disseminate emergency or crisis communications to parents and/or students should arise, the North Allegheny School District has a number of communication vehicles in place to facilitate this process. SchoolMessenger and the District website www.northallegheny.org are great resources and have current information. Local television and radio stations also communicate delays and closing in a timely manner.

The District utilizes SchoolMessenger, an automated telephone notification system that will deliver a personalized message to parents and employees in minutes. As it is a web-based program, its reliability and availability will not be affected by local power or equipment failures.

Parents can access the Contact Manager feature of this system via the North Allegheny School District website or the internet and establish their own account. This will allow them to determine which, if any, phone number(s) they would like to have messages sent to and/or opt for an email or text alert when they have a new phone message. Parents may choose not to receive SchoolMessenger, if they so desire. SchoolMessenger will be used exclusively to broadcast weather-related cancellation or delay information, as well as other emergency or crisis-related messages. Please review the link for [SchoolMessenger](#).

Custody/Court Orders

If a student is involved in custody arrangements or legal restrictions, parents must submit appropriate court documentation to the school. This ensures student safety and helps staff adhere to legal directives regarding pickups, communications, and access. Custody agreements or court orders must be signed. They will be kept on file in the main office and will be considered the most up to date copy unless a parent/guardian presents revised or new paperwork to the office.

Discipline Issues

Schools follow the District's Code of Conduct and implement positive behavior support frameworks. Students are expected to show respect, responsibility, and safety in all settings. Behavior infractions are addressed progressively and may result in parent contact, loss of privileges, or administrative action. Please review the [District's Code of Conduct](#).

Behavior is expected to be positive throughout the entire school setting including the classroom, arts classes, cafeteria, playground, hallways, field trips, concerts, bus, and assemblies. Students will be made aware of the expectations at the beginning of the year. If a student chooses to break a rule, the student's behavior will be addressed and documented. Parents/guardians will be notified. Consequences may be assigned depending on the severity of the behavior and whether the behavior is a repeated behavior. Students, teachers, and parents are all part of the process allowing a student to learn and improve behavior. We want to assist students with maintaining positive behavior as students learn and grow. For more serious infractions, the principal may get involved. The students will meet with the Principal to discuss the behavior. The Principal will communicate with a parent/guardian to discuss ways to improve behavior.

Teachers and staff members are also encouraged to recognize and respond to positive behavior, as all behavior is monitored in all areas of the school. Students who have maintained positive behavior may be rewarded with a Shield for being Kind, Courageous, Motivated, or Responsible. These core values are part of the school's Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports program.

Dismissal

The instructional day ends at 3:25 p.m., followed by pack-up for the end of the day. All students walking to their homes or with a scheduled "pick-up" will leave the classroom at 3:25, when called over the public address system. Parents requesting "pick-up" must adhere to the following procedures to assure the safety and welfare of our students:

A note/email **MUST** be sent to the child's teacher (please copy the front office secretary) on the day the parent/guardian is planning on picking the student up from school. A "blanket note" can be submitted to the homeroom teacher and school secretary detailing a regular pick-up schedule (e.g. "every Tuesday"). Emails must be copied to the homeroom teacher and school secretary. All pick-up messages must be received prior to 3:00 p.m. Emails should not be sent after 3:00 pm because it cannot be guaranteed that the email will be received in time for clear communication. In the event of an emergency close to 3:00, please call the school secretary.

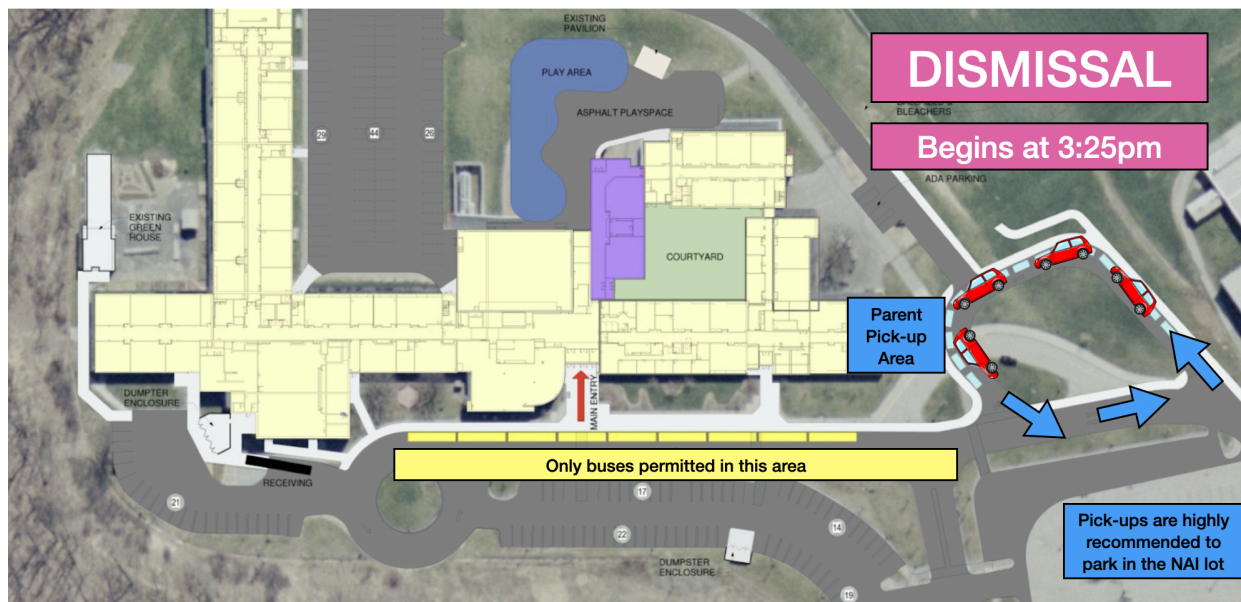
Parents coming to pick a child up prior to 3:15 for an early dismissal, **MUST** report to the office before 3:15 p.m. and adhere to the office policy of signing students out and waiting for their child to meet them in the main office. Under no circumstances are parents/guardians permitted to go directly to the classrooms or bus lines.

All families will be assigned a number and provided with a corresponding school sign for their vehicle students to their vehicles for use during pick-up. Please be patient as a monitor may

check ID in cases where the monitor is unfamiliar with the person picking a student up from school.

Dismissal Information for McKnight Elementary

*All families picking up car riders **must** enter through the West Entrance, closest to North Allegheny Intermediate (NAI). The front driveway and McKnight parking lot are closed to all traffic except for busses between 3:15pm and 4:00pm to ensure student and staff safety.*



Parent/Guardian Pick-Off: Please park in the NAI lot and walk over to the covered doors (blue area) with your number. Details about pick-up numbers will be sent on the first day of school.

Bus Pick-Up: All students will be dismissed from their classrooms to the buses.

Please note that drop-off times will be substantially later than indicated during the first week of school as we verify correct buses for students. We appreciate your patience as we safely get students home.

Dress Code

We are proud of the way our students dress. A student's individual dress indicates both self-respect and respect for others. While the school accommodates a wide variety of individual taste, inappropriate dress is not acceptable.

Guidelines

The following should be used in determining appropriate school attire:

1. Articles must be clean (not soiled with grease, oil, paint, or dirt).
2. Clothing with slogans/emblems, etc., is acceptable as long as they do not depict illegal substances, indecent writing, or indecent pictures.
3. Warm weather clothing is appropriate with the following guidelines: halter tops or tank tops with spaghetti straps, tops exposing the midriff or display of undergarments, and torn or ragged clothing are not permitted.
4. Oversized trousers present problems regarding safety both for the individual student and fellow classmates. School staff will insist that fitting pants are worn so that students can maneuver with ease, particularly in an emergency situation.
5. Items of dress that disrupt the educational process and climate are inappropriate. Students are not to wear hats during the school day inside the building, unless it is for an approved fundraiser or activity. This also includes bandanas and head scarves (unless the head covering is based on religious reasons or approved by administration for a unique situation).
6. Footwear must be worn by all students. Flip-flops and other backless shoes are not encouraged. "Wheelie shoes" are not permitted at school.
7. Shorts or skirts must reach at the fingertips while arms are hanging naturally at the sides.
8. Tights or leggings may not be used underneath shorts or skirts to substitute length. Leggings may only be worn under appropriate length (fingertip) shorts, skirts, or dresses.

We are proud of the way our students dress. A student's individual dress indicates both self-respect and respect for others. While the school accommodates a wide variety of individual tastes, inappropriate dress is not acceptable.

Early Dismissal

To leave school early, a written request must be sent to the office. Authorized adults must sign out the student at the main office. Early dismissals should be minimized to avoid instructional disruptions. Parents are encouraged to schedule medical and dental appointments after school hours if possible.

All students must be signed out at the office by the parent or guardian. When the parent/guardian comes into the office, the Visitor's Dismissal Sign-out Log on the counter should be signed to indicate that they have picked up their child. Children are not permitted to leave the building early and wait outside.

Electronic Devices

Students are NOT permitted to bring personal electronic devices to school.

Cell phones should not be brought to school unless there are extenuating circumstances. A cell phone **MUST** be turned off during instructional hours when permission is granted. If an item has been confiscated from a student, the item will be housed in the office and not returned directly to the student. Parents must pick up confiscated items from the office. School iPads are permitted and considered District property. Use of electronic devices must follow the [Responsible Computer, Telecommunications, and Information Technology Use policy 224.1](#).

In addition, more and more students are wearing smartwatches. These items and others like them fall under the personal electronic policy.

Please do not contact your child throughout the school day. It is disruptive to the school environment. Please contact your child's teacher or the front office if an emergency arises.

Emergency Drills

Emergency drills will be held on a regularly scheduled basis during the course of the school year. The following is a list of drills and their scheduled frequency:

- Fire Drills-Monthly
- Emergency Weather Drill-Annually
- Lockdown Drills- Each semester
- Bus Evacuation Drills- August and March

The Standard Response Protocol (SRP) is based on the response to any given situation using common clear language - not codes or code words.

There is common vocabulary and symbols used with staff, students, parents, and emergency responders:

- **Hold** is a response that would clear the hallways, close and lock doors until the situation has been cleared.
- **Lockdown** is a safety response procedure that contains students and staff in safe locations within the building in the event of a threat to safety.
- **Secure** is a safety response that brings everyone inside the building and the perimeter is secured. No one is permitted in or out of the building during this time.
- If there is a need to **Evacuate** the building several locations are identified pending the emergency situation. Procedures are in place. 10
- **Shelter** is used in situations like weather related incidents such as tornadoes or earthquakes.

IN AN EMERGENCY TAKE ACTION



HOLD! In your room or area. Clear the halls.

STUDENTS

Clear the hallways and remain in room or area until the "All Clear" is announced
Do business as usual

ADULTS

Close and lock the door
Account for students and adults
Do business as usual



SECURE!

Get inside. Lock outside doors.

STUDENTS

Return to inside of building
Do business as usual

ADULTS

Bring everyone indoors
Lock outside doors
Increase situational awareness
Account for students and adults
Do business as usual



LOCKDOWN! Locks, lights, out of sight.

STUDENTS

Move away from sight
Maintain silence
Do not open the door

ADULTS

Recover students from hallway if possible
Lock the classroom door
Turn out the lights
Move away from sight
Maintain silence
Do not open the door
Prepare to evade or defend



EVACUATE! (A location may be specified)

STUDENTS

Leave stuff behind if required to
If possible, bring your phone
Follow instructions

ADULTS

Lead students to Evacuation location
Account for students and adults
Notify if missing, extra or injured students or adults



SHELTER! Hazard and safety strategy.

STUDENTS

Use appropriate safety strategy for the hazard

Hazard Safety Strategy

Tornado	Evacuate to shelter area
Hazmat	Seal the room
Earthquake	Drop, cover and hold
Tsunami	Get to high ground

ADULTS

Lead safety strategy
Account for students and adults
Notify if missing, extra or injured students or adults

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North Allegheny School District has a comprehensive safety plan that is continually discussed, rehearsed and evaluated. The District has adopted the use of the ALICE preparedness training model. The staff and students will be trained throughout the year to enhance our safety plans and to prepare everyone in the event of a critical incident. The District works closely with local emergency responders to ensure that safety plans are updated and promote a safe school environment. While safe evacuation from the building is sometimes the most prudent response to a threat to safety, such as a fire within the building, other responses can be appropriate pending the situation.

Emergency Procedures

Drills for fire, lockdowns, and severe weather are held regularly. Staff are trained in protocols to keep students safe. In real emergencies, communication will be sent via the district's notification system.

Encore

Every Friday is Encore Day. Encore is offered to students in grades 1-5. These special subject areas are Art, Music, Library and Physical Education. Please use this [LINK](#) for a program description of each of the classes. Homeroom teachers will notify students of the specific dates for each of the special subject area Encore days. Homeroom teachers will notify students of the specific dates for each of the special subject area Encore days.

Field Trips

Trips enhance learning beyond the classroom. Parents will receive details and must submit signed permission forms. Chaperones must be approved and follow school guidelines. Student behavior expectations apply during all trips.

These trips are typically funded in full by the McKnight Elementary School PFA. There are times that a small amount of money may be requested from each student to defray transportation or facility use costs if they exceed the PFA's budgeted amount.

Forgotten Instrument

Students are to bring their band and orchestra instruments to school on days when they are scheduled to have small group practice or full ensemble practice. On occasion, students forget their instruments. Parents/guardians may need to bring them to school. These items can be dropped off in the office.

Fundraising/Community Service

All fundraising at McKnight Elementary is voluntary for students and their families. An effort is being made to streamline these fundraisers and to shift more towards service projects by students, as opposed to only monetary donations. Each time a fundraiser is conducted approval at both the building and District level must be sought. Forms requesting approval for solicitation are available in the school office and on the forms library of the school's website.

Health/Emergency Information

At all times you can refer to the North Allegheny web site by visiting the Health Services page of our website, under the Pupil Services webpage from the Administration tab for health forms, our medication policy, immunization requirements and health care information. During the first week of school or upon enrolling your child, the parent/guardian is requested to complete and return an emergency form for each student. This form is to be returned ASAP. This information is required for your child's care in case of illness or injury.

- It is important that we have your current home, work and emergency phone numbers. In case of an emergency, accurate information can save valuable time in helping your child. Please remember to notify us at any time during the year of any changes in these numbers.
- If you are planning to be out of town, please provide in writing the name of your child's guardian in your absence if it is someone who is not on the emergency form. Without this consent, we cannot release your child to this caretaker.
- If there is a change in the custodianship of your child, please notify the office and provide copies of any pertinent court agreements in order for this change to be honored.

Homeless Assistance

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

Who is considered homeless—Children or youth living in a shelter, transitional housing, hotel/motel, vehicle, campground, on the street or doubled up with friends or family due to a lack of alternate resources are considered homeless. An unaccompanied homeless youth is a child or youth that is not in the care of their parent or legal guardian and meets the definition of homeless under McKinney Vento.

Where can students experiencing homelessness attend school?—The law indicates that homeless students have the right to remain in their school origin (the school they attended at the time of the homeless episode or last school attended) through the end of the school year in which they find permanent housing, provided it is in the child/youth's best interest. If through consultation between the school and the family and/or unaccompanied youth it is determined that remaining in the school of origin is not in the student's best interest, then the student has the right to immediately enroll in the school that non-homeless students living in the attendance area in which the child/youth is actually living are eligible to attend, even if they do not have all of the required documentation. Additionally, unaccompanied homeless youth have the right to immediately enroll in school, even if they do not have a legal guardian present.

What supports can school districts provide to homeless students?—Homeless students are eligible for supports and services to remove barriers to educational success. This may include transportation to the school of origin, free meals, referrals to physical/mental health providers, clothing to meet school requirements, access to school supplies and resources, assistance with credit recovery, tutoring supports, expedited evaluations and assistance to participate in school activities including parent engagement opportunities, sports, club, etc.

Homeless Dispute Process—If at any time there is a disagreement about homeless status or best interest for school placement, the district will notify the family in writing of their determination that the family/unaccompanied youth is ineligible for McKinney Vento services. At

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

What if I think that I am eligible for services under McKinney Vento?—Contact Dr. Amy Deluca, Homeless Liaison for the North Allegheny School District at 412-635-4120 or adeluca@northallegheny.org.

Homework

Homework reinforces classroom learning and fosters independence. Assignments should be age-appropriate and clearly communicated. Parents are encouraged to support routines but not complete the work for students. If homework becomes difficult, families should contact the teacher. Homework for all students should be listed on their teacher's Canvas page.

Homework is an important and required part of a child's education. It allows for extra practice and/or increased student learning. Homework can reinforce, enrich, or extend the curricular outcomes. Homework can help a child develop skills in personal organization, time management, and following directions.

Students should expect homework on a regular basis in accordance with the following averages:

Grade 1 – 10 minutes	Grade 3 – 30 minutes	Grade 5 – 50 minutes
Grade 2 – 20 minutes	Grade 4 – 40 minutes	

These time allotments are suggested for four - five nights per week for most elementary students. Homework may take your child **more** or **less** time. Homework may be assigned periodically on Fridays, if needed. However, reading literature, trade books, and journal writing is always appropriate for evenings, weekends, and vacations. Any questions or concerns about homework should be addressed to the teacher who made the assignment.

Homework Guidelines

Student Responsibilities

A. The student will:

- Budget time to complete assignments made.
- Arrange to make up missed assignments as required by the teacher.
- Ask for further explanation if original directions are not completely understood.
- Homework assignments can be reviewed daily on the Blackboard agendas.
- Initiate the request for help when needed.
- Properly manage time and task completion on long term assignments.

Parent Responsibilities

B. The parent will:

- Provide a quiet, well-lighted study area with a desk or table and comfortable chair.
- Keep study tools available: pencils, sharpener, pen, crayons, paper, ruler, and dictionary.
- Establish a regular time for homework.
- Limit television viewing and avoid TV or radio listening during study time.
- Inquire about your child's homework and help him/her to budget time for completion and get ample sleep.
- Encourage step-by-step work on long term or major projects to avoid last minute, careless work.
- Review homework on the Blackboard agenda and correspond with teacher if needed.

Health Services

Please visit the Health Services page of our website. You will find useful information about our medication policy, immunization requirements and health care information.

It is important that we have your current personal, work, and emergency phone numbers. In case of an emergency, accurate information can save valuable time in helping your child. Please remember to notify your child's school at any time during the year of any changes in these numbers.

If you are planning to be out of town, please provide in writing the name of your child's guardian and their contact information in your absence if it is someone who is not listed as an emergency contact. Without this consent, we cannot release your child to this caretaker.

If there is a change in the custodianship of your child, please notify the office and provide copies of any pertinent court agreements for this change to be honored.

Medications

Medications will be administered by the nurses according to school policy which includes written parental permission, and a doctor's order for both prescription and nonprescription (OTC - over the counter) medications. Please make sure to log into the SNAP Parent Health Portal to provide the necessary parental/guardian permission for the administration of acetaminophen or ibuprofen (age appropriate) as needed throughout the school year, for your child.

The following are a few important points to remember:

*Students are not permitted to carry medication with them at school. All medication is to be dispensed from the health office.

*Medication is to be brought to school by the parent/guardian in the original container. Never allow your child to transport medication. The health office cannot and will not administer any medication in a baggy, paper towel, etc. This is for your child's safety and is against school policy for medications.

*Acetaminophen or ibuprofen may be administered with parental/guardian permission and at the discretion of the school nurse. Please remember to provide permission for the administration of these medicines via the SNAP Parent Health Portal.

Illnesses

Please keep your child at home if he/she has any one of the following symptoms:

- Temperature of 100 degrees or more
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Persistent hacking cough or thick nasal drainage
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)

Immunizations

State Law requires every student who intends to enroll in a public school to provide evidence of a successful vaccination history. At various ages, different vaccinations are necessary for enrollment. Should you have a question regarding the immunizations necessary for your child, please contact your School Nurse. These can also be found at <https://www.northallegheny.org/Page/1957> .

The following illnesses require 24 hours of an antibiotic before returning to school:

- Strep throat
- Scarlet fever
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)

Pediculosis – (Lice)

If a child is suspected of having pediculosis (lice), the School Nurse will examine the suspected child and siblings. When head lice are found, the School Nurse will contact the parent of the child and provide educational materials concerning treatment and environmental control. Following treatment (this includes use of pediculicidal agent and nit removal), the School Nurse will examine your child's head. Proof of treatment (pediculicidal agent or prescription packaging)

must be provided to the School Nurse. Parents of the building will be notified via an Email Blast of the lice identification. Class or grade level will not be identified in the message.

Lice Facts

- Incubation: Eggs of lice hatch in one week and maturity is reached in 8-10 days.
- Symptoms: Irritation and itching of the scalp; presence of small light gray insects and/or their eggs (nits) which are attached to the base of the hairs and do not come off easily.
- Methods of Spread: Direct contact with an infected person and indirect contact with their personal belongings, especially headgear. Lice do not jump.
- Period of Communicability: While lice or nits remain alive on the infested person or belongings.
- Other information: Lice have nothing to do with the cleanliness of one's home, nor live on pets.

While lice are a nuisance, they are not life threatening. The District's goals are for head lice to have minimal disruption to students' educational experiences and minimize the stigmatizing impact on students and families.

Internet/Technology Use

All students have access to the Internet. The internet is accessible through their iPads. All students are expected to follow the North Allegheny Acceptable Use Policy when using technology at school. Policy 224.1 can be found at <https://go.boarddocs.com/pa/nasd/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=BFFUFP7BE044>.

As part of our [NASD Strategic/Comprehensive Plan](#) and continued commitment to providing innovative and effective learning experiences, students in grades K-12 may be given access to district-approved generative AI tools (such as writing assistants, content generators, and tutoring aids) to support instruction, creativity, and productivity. These tools are [carefully vetted](#) by the district to ensure compliance with data privacy, security, and instructional standards. As students engage in our classroom learning experiences and instructional programs, families understand that their child may use district-approved learning tools under the guidance of a teacher and in accordance with district policies, including alignment with Board Policy [224.1 Responsible Computer, Telecommunications, and Information Technology Use](#).

Students are expected to use school-issued devices responsibly and only for educational purposes. Violations such as visiting inappropriate sites or damaging devices may result in restricted access or disciplinary action.

Intramurals

After school intramural sport activities are offered to all 4th and 5th grade students. The purpose of this intramural program is to provide every student with a foundation for an active and healthy

lifestyle, in which athletic competition is only a component of overall wellness. Our program stresses cooperative skills and team activities, such as basketball, soccer, hockey, and kickball.

Items Brought From Home (Water bottles are permitted.)

Items like toys, sports equipment, trading cards, or game-like items from home should not be brought to school. Students are NOT permitted to bring electronic equipment to school without the permission from the principal. Some students may have a need to use sensory items. Teachers can ask students to place spinners or other sensory items distracting from instruction in their backpacks. Children should not bring valuables or large sums of money to school. Water bottles should be brought to school, and filling stations are available to all students.

Kindergarten Day and Transportation

AM Kindergarten begins at 9:00 AM and concludes at 11:45 AM.

PM Kindergarten begins at 12:45 PM and concludes at 3:30 PM.

The District provides bus transportation to AM Kindergarten and from PM Kindergarten. The noontime transportation is the responsibility of the parents/guardians.

Knight of the Month

The McKnight “Knight of the Month” Program is based on qualities such as character, leadership, and citizenship, not solely on academics. The knight of the month must be a diligent student, complete his/her assignments on time, show a strong effort to learn subjects to the best of their ability, come prepared for class; and has good classroom participation. The knight of the month demonstrates excellent behavior in and out of the classroom, is well mannered, and respectful to both peers and teachers. The knight of the month displays excellent citizenship by working together with classmates while maintaining a cooperative attitude and demonstrates good behavior. These students should display leadership qualities and serve as role models for their peers. Lastly, the knight of the month demonstrates exemplary character through his/her compassion, honesty, trustworthiness, responsibility, optimism, and loyalty by helping to create a positive school environment.

Each month homeroom and learning/emotional support teachers will nominate 1 student from their homeroom/classroom. If the special area teams, SSA’s, or paraprofessionals have a student in mind that they think should be nominated, they can speak to that student's homeroom teacher.

The students nominated should demonstrate our 4 key words:

Kind
Courageous
Motivated
Responsible

Library

The library is open on a regularly scheduled basis and is supervised by the librarian or the library secretary. Library classes are held for all grade levels in the school, with the purpose of enhancing literacy skills, introducing students to research, and engaging them in the use of technological tools.

Students are allowed to access the library with permission of their classroom teacher. They may use the library to read, check out books, use audio materials, access their electronic files or projects, and to complete research. Each student may check out a set amount of books for a one-week period. There is no fine for overdue books, but lost or damaged books must be paid for to keep the library up to date.

Our library collection is constantly updated and expanded. Books are chosen for their educational or leisure value. A variety of audio-visual material is also available through the library for teacher use in the classroom. Students are encouraged to find “just right” books to match and challenge their reading level. Should you have any questions regarding the library, please contact our Librarian.

Litter Policy/Recycling

Students are encouraged to help keep the building clean by depositing litter and garbage in the provided receptacles and to discard any litter that they see. We recycle at McKnight Elementary School and work with students to instill in them an appreciation for the Earth and its care. Paper materials and bottles are recycled regularly and bins are made available to the students for use throughout the building.

Students are not permitted to chew gum in or on the school property, as a preventative measure to avoid vandalism, an unclean environment, and the potential for choking.

Lost and Found

Unclaimed items are placed in a school's Lost and Found in the front of the school. Parents and students should check it periodically. Labeling items with names is encouraged to ensure a prompt return. Money, jewelry, glasses or other small articles of value are turned into the office. *Parents/guardians and students are encouraged to check the Lost and Found often. All items left in the Lost and Found will be donated to a charitable organization during each semester break.*

MTSS

The North Allegheny School District is committed to helping all children succeed. There are many ways to help children learn and ensure those who need additional supports are successful. The Multi-Tier Systems of Support (MTSS) is one of the recommended best practices from the Pennsylvania Department of Education [PDE] to ensure ALL students meet continual academic and behavioral success. This support will be given to ALL students through ongoing collaboration involving teachers, administrators, families, and specialists. Through systematic District and school-wide efforts, students will be provided services based on the evaluation of

individual needs through a universal screener (aimswebPlus), consistent progress monitoring, and collaborative problem-solving efforts.

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Parent Faculty Association (PFA)

For detailed information about the McKnight Parent Faculty Association (PFA) please visit the PFA website, which can be found at <http://www.mcknightpfa.org/>.

The PFA is an integral part of *everything* we do at McKnight Elementary. You are strongly encouraged to attend a PFA meeting and find out how you can get involved. The PFA meets at 9:15 a.m. on the first Wednesday of each month at McKnight Elementary School. If your schedule does not permit attendance please contact a PFA officer directly to find out how you can help.

Parent Teacher Conferences

Parent Teacher conferences will be held for all students on dates established by the classroom teachers. Parents/guardians are also encouraged to arrange and attend conferences as necessary throughout the year. All conferences can be arranged by contacting your child's teacher.

Parties

There are three homeroom parties during the school year. They are Halloween, Winter Holiday, and Valentine's Day. Currently these parties are run by classroom teachers with supplies given by the PFA. At this time, volunteers are not permitted in the building.

Pictures

The date for Individual student pictures will be communicated by the school. These pictures will be utilized in the yearbook and are available for purchase by families within six weeks of the photography session. Spring pictures are also offered as a service to families, for which details will be announced later in the year.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

The Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports Program provides realistic expectations necessary to take a proactive rather than a reactive approach when responding to behavioral and

social issues. We maintain an inclusive environment for all students, Expectations are taught, modeled, and communicated to all students throughout the school day:

 McKnight Behavior Matrix 						
	Hallway	Cafeteria	Recess	Restroom	Bus	Classroom
K KIND	- Be respectful of others learning Voice Level 0-1 (follow staff directive)	- Voice Level 2 - Listen to cafeteria monitor	- Take turns - Voice Level 3 (outside) - Voice Level 2 (inside) - Fair play	- Give privacy - Respect school property - Voice Level 1	- Voice Level 1 or 2 - Respect others' property	Be respectful of learning
C COURAGEOUS	- Solve problems - Be part of the solution	- Keep food on table - Be honest - Include others	- Be honest - Treat equipment with care - Include others	- Go - Flush - Wash hands with soap - Throw paper towel in trash - Leave	- Be honest - Remember my belongings	- Solve problems - Include others
M MOTIVATED	- Hands and feet to self - Maintain personal space	- Remain seated at table - Hands and feet to self	- Hands and feet to self - Be aware of my surroundings	- Walk at all times - Keep feet on the floor	- Sit in assigned area - Maintain personal space	Do your personal best
R RESPONSIBLE	- Respect hallway displays - Walk to destination	- Throw trash in garbage cans - Keep area clean	- Respect personal space - Make safe choices	- Return to class in a timely manner - Keep bathroom clean - Knock before entering stall	- Hands and feet to self - Listen to adult directions	- Be prepared - Do your work to the best of your ability
VOICE LEVEL	Level 1	Level 2	- Level 2 (inside) - Level 3 (outside)	Level 1	Level 1 or 2	Level 1

Students receive “shields” after being recognized by a staff member.. Parents are integral in the process. Positive communication from the staff will occur to parents, and notification when expectations are not being followed will also occur.

Recess

Recess time is integral to early childhood growth and development. It affords students a time to be active while also providing a mental break from their rigorous academic work. McKnight is fortunate to have three large playground areas, which are utilized during all recess periods.

Recess is held indoors *only* during periods of *extreme* weather. Recess is always outside unless it is raining, thundering, or the wind chill factor is **below 20 degrees**. It is important that students dress appropriately on cold-weather days.

McKnight’s Student Expectations and Bullying Prevention Rules are especially important during recess when students are afforded personal freedom in choice of activities and playmates. To ensure that this time is spent wisely and safely, specific expectations do apply to recess and are to be followed with no exceptions. Violation of these expectations may result in the loss of recess privileges.

1. Recess is over when the whistle sounds.
2. Students should clean up all equipment when recess ends.

3. Students should never be out of view of an adult.
4. No food is to be eaten on the playground.

Report Cards

Report cards are issued quarterly. Families can access grades through their Powerschool portal. Report cards will be available at the end of each nine week period for grades 1 - 5. Kindergarten students receive report cards at the end of each semester.

The school year is divided into four nine week periods. Report cards are not printed. Report cards are available for students in grades 1-5 at the end of each nine week period through the PowerSchool SIS Parent Portal. Kindergarten report cards are available at the end of each semester.

Special Area Grades

Students do not earn percentage grades in Special Area subjects. Elementary students may earn **Strength**, **Proficient**, or **Needs Improvement** in Special Area subjects. When viewing grades in the Tyler SIS Parent Portal you may see percentages reported for the Special Areas. Please use the chart below to interpret these correctly as Strength, Proficient, or Needs Improvement.

Strength	Proficient	Needs Improvement
+	-	☑
90% - 81%	80%-71%	70% and lower

Smoking

McKnight Elementary School is a smoke-free environment. Smoking is forbidden in the building and on all school property. This includes vaping and electronic cigarettes.

Specials: Art, Library, Music, & Physical Education Courses

The art, library, music, and physical education courses make up the special area class rotations. We believe these courses to be an important part of each student's educational experience.

Students in grades 4 and 5 may participate in the school's chorus program. Two concerts are held during the school year for students, parents, and interested community members. In addition, students in grades 3 through 5 are encouraged to participate in the school's orchestra program, and in grades 4 and 5 for the school's band program.

In PE, your son/daughter will learn the significance of developing and maintaining a healthy body, both physically and mentally. We will also create an atmosphere for the development of their leadership, sportsmanship, and congeniality through our program. Your child should wear or bring athletic shoes on their regularly scheduled P.E. day. Since the students have PE every

third Encore Day (Monday), it is a good practice to wear or bring athletic shoes on these days as well.

Special Education Services

The following special education services, among others, are available for those students who meet the requirements: GOAL, Speech, Emotional Support and Learning Support. Contact the school counselor, principal, or Special Education Department if there are any questions about these programs.

Student Information System - PowerSchool

The District has implemented a Student Information System called PowerSchool. An electronic Parent Portal is available, providing parents a web-based gradebook and reporting system with access to student records, schedule and academic performance, as well as the opportunity to update demographic and contact information.

If a parent/guardian or student detects a discrepancy in grade or attendance information, this issue should be addressed with the Teacher of Record for the class in question as soon as possible. Inaccuracies in demographic/contact information can be corrected through the student's building administrative or office staff.

Typically, assignment scores/grades are posted within five (5) school days of the return of the assignment, with some exceptions based on the complexity of the assignment and/or project. The information provided through PowerSchool SIS's Parent Portal is not in final form and is subject to change and correction.

Tardy Students

A child who arrives at school after 9:00 a.m. is considered tardy. The parent/guardian must sign in at the office upon arrival. All students entering school after 9:00 a.m. MUST check into the office before going to the classroom. Failure to have the student sign in at the office may result in an absence being recorded for the student for the entire day.

There are three reasons recognized as valid excuses for tardiness: severe weather conditions; bus transportation difficulties; and personal accident or illness. A tardy student must stop in the office to receive a late slip to enter class and must submit a signed tardy note from the parent/guardian at that time.

Technology

The North Allegheny School District recognizes that the appropriate use of electronic devices can provide great potential for enhanced learning opportunities for all students. However, there are many other uses of electronic devices which can distract from the learning process or otherwise violate the rights of students; thus the use of electronic devices for legitimate educational purposes is permitted, only under the direction of the classroom teacher with

approval from the building administration and in accordance with the Code of Conduct. Any student who violates these provisions of the Code of Conduct shall receive appropriate disciplinary action and may have his or her privileges regarding electronic devices temporarily or permanently revoked. Further, the student's electronic device may be subject to confiscation, either temporary or permanent, and the District reserves the right to hold a confiscated item until a conference has been held with the student's parent or guardian. Finally, if such violations could possibly constitute a crime under local, state and/or federal law, the District will report such conduct to the appropriate law enforcement agencies.

Electronic devices shall include all devices that can take photographs; record audio or video data; store, transmit or receive messages, data, or images; or provide a wireless, unfiltered connection to the Internet. Examples of these electronic devices include, but shall not be limited to, iPods, MP3 players, DVD players, handheld game consoles, Apple Watches, cellular phones and smart phones/watches, laptops or other student-owned computers, as well as any new technology developed with similar capabilities of data storage or transmission. In the event that a student is unsure whether the restrictions set forth in the Code of Conduct apply to a particular device, it is the student's responsibility to verify with the appropriate classroom teacher or building administrator whether the device is subject to the Code of Conduct. The District is not liable for the loss, damage or misuse of an electronic device brought to school by a student.

Appropriate use of electronic devices shall include any use of such devices for educational purposes, such as educational research, which is specifically authorized by a classroom teacher with approval from the Building Administration. Inappropriate use of electronic devices has the potential to negatively impact the educational processes and individual students. Any use of electronic devices that leads to the disruption of the instructional/educational processes and/or violate the rights of individual students is a violation of the Code of Conduct.

***PLEASE DO NOT EMAIL OR CONTACT YOUR CHILD DURING SCHOOL HOURS ON THEIR PERSONAL DEVICE SUCH AS A CELL PHONE OR SMART WATCH. CALL THE FRONT OFFICE.**

Any student found to be inappropriately using electronic devices will be subject to consequences set forth within the Code of Conduct. Infractions of this policy can result in a minimum of Level II consequences. In addition, such acts may be in violation of the North Allegheny School Board Policies:

[#249– Anti-Bullying](#)

[#224.1 –Responsible Computer, Telecommunications, and Information Technology Usage](#)

[#237 Electronic Device](#)

Inappropriate use of these devices includes, but is not limited to the following examples:

- Placing and/or receiving a call, text message, or other communication during instructional time (classroom instruction, study halls, and gymnasiums).
- The use of electronic devices in locker rooms and restrooms.
- Using any application on an electronic device which is not directly relevant to the instruction in the classroom and authorized by the classroom teacher.

- Taking, storing, disseminating, transferring, viewing or sharing of obscene, pornographic, lewd, inappropriate, unauthorized, or otherwise illegal images or photographs, whether by electronic data transfer or other means, including but not limited to texting and e-mailing.
- Using any electronic device for purposes which are in direct violation of other provisions within the North Allegheny School District's Code of Conduct, such as bullying, cyber-bullying, cheating or otherwise violating academic integrity, or harassing or intimidating students or staff members.

The District shall enforce these provisions of the Code of Conduct regarding electronic devices on school grounds, District-operated school buses and other conveyances, and during any District-sponsored activities, whether or not occurring on school grounds. Such prohibited activity shall also apply to student conduct that occurs off school property if the prohibited conduct is (a) directed at another student or students, is (b) severe, persistent, or pervasive, and (c) interferes with a student's education, creates a threatening environment, or substantially disrupts orderly operations of school. Such activities in direct violation of the **North Allegheny School Board Policies** (detailed above) will result in violators being disciplined accordingly.

Testing and Screeners

Various kinds of testing are administered throughout the school year. Results are used to help determine individual student progress and to adjust curriculum and instruction if necessary.

aimswebPlus

The aimswebPlus program is a web-based system that provides teachers data to identify students who will benefit from early intervention strategies and targeted instruction (remediation and enrichment). The screener is used in grades K-2, but it can be used in grades 3-5 when needed. AimswebPlus uses brief, valid, and reliable measures of foundational skills in reading and math. The system is designed to universally screen and progress monitor students. The screener is given three times a year.

STAR 360

Students in grades 3-5 will be utilizing STAR 360. Three times a year, students take an online assessment allowing teachers and students to gain information about learning strengths and areas to improve in the areas of reading and math.

Study Island Benchmark Assessments

The Study Island Benchmark Assessments are administered 2 or 3 times during the school year. This assessment is closely aligned with PSSA content, and is used to provide teachers in grades 3, 4, and 5 with additional information on the skill levels of individual students as well as to enhance instruction and intervention strategies within the classroom specific to students' needs. Students do not receive grades.

Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)

The Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) is a criterion referenced test used to measure students' progress toward mastering the Pennsylvania Academic Standards in grades 3 through 5. The academic standards identify proficiency levels in ELA and Math for grades 3 through 5, and Science in grade 5 (starting 24-25 school year). The dates for the PSSA tests are listed in the school calendar. Students are to be in school during the district assessments and State (PSSA) testing, except in cases of illnesses. The dates for the tests are listed in the school calendar as well as the notifications from the school. As these tests are important, vacations will rarely be approved for the weeks of these tests. Due to the necessity to complete the tests within a given window for all students as mandated by the Pennsylvania State Department of Education, make-ups will occur for students during instructional time if missed.

Textbooks/School Issued Materials

District procedure states that the parent/guardian is responsible for the replacement cost of lost books or those damaged beyond use. School materials such as books, calculators, etc. that are assigned to students must be replaced if lost or damaged. The cost of textbooks/materials varies due to the original purchase price and age. If an item is later recovered, the amount paid will be returned assuming good condition.

Threats

All threats, verbal or written, must be taken seriously. For the safety of our students, all threats will be investigated and the School District's Code of Conduct strictly enforced.

Tyler Student Information System/Electronic Parent Portal

The District has implemented a Student Information System call Tyler SIS. An electronic Parent Portal is available, providing parents a web-based gradebook and reporting system with access to student records schedules, and academic performance, as well as the opportunity to update demographic and contact information.

Use of District-Approved Generative AI Tools

As part of our [NASD Strategic/Comprehensive Plan](#) and continued commitment to providing innovative and effective learning experiences, students in grades K-12 may be given access to district-approved generative AI tools (such as writing assistants, content generators, and tutoring aids) to support instruction, creativity, and productivity. These tools are [carefully vetted](#) by the district to ensure compliance with data privacy, security, and instructional standards. As students engage in our classroom learning experiences and instructional programs, families understand that their child may use district-approved learning tools under the guidance of a teacher and in accordance with district policies, including alignment with Board Policy [224.1 Responsible Computer, Telecommunications, and Information Technology Use](#).

Vacations/Educational Tour or Trip

The parents or guardians of a student who wishes to have the student excused from compulsory school attendance in order to participate in an educational tour or trip must submit an application to the principal of the school in which the student is enrolled. Except for emergency situations, which must be fully explained, this request must be submitted at least five (5) calendar days prior to the date on which the student seeks to be excused for compulsory attendance. If a student will be absent for more than ten (10) school days, the student will be removed as a full-time student. The District will attempt to provide support to the student during the extended absence so that he/she is able to make successful reentry into the school upon their return. The family will need to re-enroll the child upon return.

For students in grades 3-5, no vacations can be approved during the standardized tests, such as during the 3rd-5th grade PSSA testing. Please check the school calendar for the specific test dates. Upon request by a parent/guardian, teachers shall submit a list of student assignments/responsibilities for the period of absence during an approved absence. Assignments/responsibilities may be completed either prior to the absence or upon return to school. All assignments which are to be completed shall be submitted to the teacher(s) upon return to school or within a reasonable time period as designated by the teacher(s).

Days absent for vacation count as days absent from school since students are not present for the learning experience. Parents/Guardians are strongly encouraged to schedule vacations outside of the school year. Parents/Guardians are also encouraged to monitor days absent to avoid excessive absenteeism. [Educational Tour Form](#)

Visitors

All visitors must report to the office, register with Raptor, show ID, and wear a visitor badge. Visits should be pre-arranged and may be limited during testing or other sensitive times. Volunteer clearances are required for classroom or field trip involvement.

The only daytime entrance to school is the main office entrance. All other doors are locked during the school day. Visitors must buzz in through the office and receive a “Visitor’s Badge.” Visitors should wear their badge prominently and should remember to sign out in the office and return their badge when exiting.

To ensure the safety of the children, visitors will not be permitted to wander through the building. Messages for students or teachers may be given to the secretary in the office so that classroom instruction is not interrupted. No one will be permitted to go to a classroom unless prior arrangements have been made with the classroom teachers.

Volunteer Clearances

Volunteers are required to submit necessary clearances prior to volunteering at any of the District’s twelve schools as outlined in Pennsylvania’s Act 153 Volunteer Clearance Legislature. For information about the types of clearances or how to submit clearance, volunteers should visit the North Allegheny School District website for important information about the type of clearances and the procedures for submitting the clearances.

Weapons Policy

The North Allegheny School District strictly prohibits the possession or storage of weapons by students on school property. This is detailed in [School Board Policy 218.1](#). For the purpose of this policy, the definition of a weapon also includes weapon “look-alikes.” The District’s Code of Conduct will be strictly adhered to if a weapon is brought to school.

Weekly Building Level Emails

The North Allegheny School District strives to improve the efficiency of communication with and access to information for parents/guardians. At the elementary level, the District will send an email on Friday with information regarding school and District events. An archive of emails will be available on the District website and updated with the latest newsletters each Monday morning.

Parent/guardian email addresses are collected at the time of registration and are used to share District and building-level communications, and to provide updates from the District’s online gradebook and student information system. It is important for parents/guardians to update any changes in their email address by contacting the building secretary.

Wellness

In an effort to establish and maintain a safe and healthy school environment for all children, the North Allegheny School District approved the guidelines that are within Student Wellness Policy #3441. In support of this policy, no edible treats will be permitted for birthdays or other celebrations. Please reference the “Birthday Treats” section of this handbook for more information.

McKnight Elementary School Song

*We're from McKnight
and we're feeling alright,
'Cause we're happy to be
Where we are.*

*We're saying from East to West,
We know we'll be the best
'Cause we got the greatest
school by far.*

*We're here for Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic
Art and Music make us click.
Phys Ed really makes us strong.
We know we can't go wrong.*

*We're from McKnight
and we're feeling alright,
'Cause we're happy to be
Where we are.*

*We're saying from East to West,
We know we'll be the best
'Cause we got the greatest
school by far...MCKNIGHT!*