

Benjamin B. Comegys School

Student and Family Handbook

Principal
Rauchaun DuPree

School District of Philadelphia
Learning Network 1

Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Tony B. Watlington, Sr.

Assistant Superintendent
Donna Ragsdale

All School District of Philadelphia processes and procedures are guided by Board of Education policies. To find all the District's policies in one place, please visit the policy website here.

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OUR SCHOOL

Principal's Welcome



Dear Comegys Families and Community Members,

As Principal, I am honored to lead our community alongside our dedicated Assistant Principal, Jessica Culp as well as our amazing teachers and staff. At Comegys, we firmly believe in the potential of every child who walks through our doors. Our commitment is to provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) that challenges and supports all students from Kindergarten through 8th grade.

Our school community is built upon a foundation of high expectations, encapsulated by our focus and call to Be Ready, Be Respectful, and Be Responsible. We work hard every day to cultivate a safe, supportive, and academically rich environment where every student can achieve success and grow into a self-motivated leader.

Our greatest partnership is with you. Your involvement in your child's education—whether by ensuring regular attendance, engaging with homework, or participating in school events—is essential to their achievement.

We are committed to open communication and welcome your questions, feedback, and collaboration. Together, with the support of our dedicated staff and community partners, we will continue to ensure that the Comegys students soar to great heights.

Thank you for your continued trust and partnership in your child's educational journey.

Warmly,
Principal DuPree



School Pride

Our Vision

The vision of The Benjamin B. Comegys Elementary School is to create a safe and nurturing learning environment in which scholars achieve academic excellence through exemplary teaching that incorporates differentiated, data-driven instruction and effective team planning. Teachers will model the core values and encourage positive self-awareness and social responsibility. As lifelong learners, the faculty, staff, parents, along with community members pledge to create an environment where our scholars will be safe, respected, and academically empowered to become goal-oriented, self-motivated leaders.

Our Mission

The mission of The Benjamin B. Comegys Elementary School is to educate our scholars to become independent readers and writers, critical thinkers and problem solvers, and lifelong learners.

School Colors:

- Blue: **#00365f**
- Yellow: **#f5ab17**
- Orange: **#f26123**

School Mascot: Comet

COMEGYS SCHOOL
COMETS

Contact Information

Phone: 215-400-7860
Fax: 215-400-7861

Address:
5100 Greenway Ave.
Philadelphia, PA 19143

Visit our school website

Please use the Main Office number to reach all staff members.

Stay Connected

- District Academic Calendar
- Parent Portal
  View grades, test scores, attendance, immunization records, report cards and more.
- Google Classroom
  To view your student's classwork and homework

Staff Directory

Grade/Role	Name	Email Address
Principal	Rauchaun DuPree	rdupree@philasd.org
Assistant Principal	Jessica Culp	jculp@philasd.org
SBTL/Dean	Kimberly Ross-Robinson	kross@philasd.org
Secretary	Tatiyanna Wilmer-Moore	twilmermoore@philasd.org
Nurse	Michael Corbit	mcorbit@philasd.org
SPECM	Emma Glazer	eglazer@philasd.org
Counselor	April Walker	aywalker@philasd.org
Behavioral Health Counselor	Ifraj Kerr	ikerr@philasd.org
School Improv Support Liaison	Sanaa Durham	sdurham@philasd.org
Netter Center - After Sch/Summer	Jequan Major	jequanm@sas.upenn.edu
Autistic Support K-2 Teacher	Malinda Bell	mbell2@philasd.org
Autistic Support K-2 Teacher	Maureen Schork	mschork@philasd.org
Learning Support Teacher	Kristen Brown	kbrown@philasd.org
Learning Support Teacher	Tameka Ross	tross@philasd.org
Intervention/Small Group Teacher	Sherkera Cato	srcato@philasd.org
Art	Simone Williams	swilliams20@philasd.org
PE/HE	Blayne Pierce	new hire
Kindergarten Teacher	Nicole Daniels	ndaniels@philasd.org
Kindergarten Teacher	Courtney Asbury	casbury@philasd.org
First Grade Teacher	Jeanine Fennal	jfennal@philasd.org
Second Grade Teacher	Lauren Stiteler	lwooters@philasd.org
Third Grade Teacher	Ruben Galvan	rgalvan@philasd.org
Fourth Grade Teacher	Latasha Day	lday@philasd.org
Fifth/Sixth Grade ELA/SS Teacher	Stephanie Latimore	smlatimore@philasd.org

Grade/Role	Name	Email Address
Fifth/Sixth Grade Math/Sci Teacher	Lisa Lockman	llockman@philasd.org
Seventh/Eighth Grade ELA Teacher	Azia Johnson	ajohnson20@philasd.org
Seventh/Eighth Grade Math Teacher	Kirsten Conover	kconover@philasd.org
Seventh/Eighth Grade SS Teacher	Brendan Shanahan	bshanahan@philasd.org
Seventh/Eighth Grade Sci Teacher	Davey Golay	dgolay@philasd.org

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Calendar

School Event Calendar
We maintain a school calendar that highlights important events such as parent-teacher conferences, school performances, testing dates, and more.

➔ View Our School Calendar

District Academic Calendar
The School District of Philadelphia provides an official academic calendar each year that includes start and end dates, holidays, report card conferences, and more.
➔ View the District Academic Calendar

Emergency Contact

Please keep your address, phone number, and email up to date. This ensures we can contact you about your child's progress or in an emergency.

- At the start of the year, complete the Parent/Guardian Location Form.
- Provide medical and insurance information for emergencies.
- If there are custody arrangements, submit a Court Order or legal agreement to the school. This ensures only authorized individuals can pick up your child.

DAILY ATTENDANCE & SCHEDULE

Daily Schedule

School Day: 9:00 AM–3:39 PM
Breakfast:

- Grades 3–8: Grab-and-Go
- Grades K–2: Served in classrooms
- Late students: Grab-and-Go available until 9:30 AM

Lunch & Recess:

- Grades 3–4: 11:00–11:45
- Grades K–2: 12:00–12:45
- Grades 5–8: 1:15–1:45

Lunch is provided for all students, or they may bring their own.

Please note: *Glass containers and soda cans are not allowed for safety reasons.*

Attendance

Consistent, on-time attendance is essential for student success. Students must attend school daily and stay for the full school day to receive the maximum benefit from instruction. This aligns with the School District of Philadelphia policy and Pennsylvania state law.

What to Do If Your Child Is Absent

- A written excuse must be submitted within 3 days of your child's return.
- **Submit an** Absence Excuse Forms
- Phone calls do not replace a written excuse.
- Students are responsible for making up all missed work and tests.

Excused absences include:

- Illness or quarantine
- Recovery from an accident
- Required court appearance
- Religious holidays
- Death in the family
- Educational tours/trips (with prior approval)

All absences will be marked unexcused unless a valid excuse note is submitted. Proper documentation ensures accurate coding in the District's attendance system.

➔ Learn more about the District Attendance Policy & Protocols

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Arrival

Arrival Time: 9 am
Please ensure your child arrives on time to start the day successfully.

Arrival Locations

- Students are admitted through the Schoolyard
- Outdoor admission will take place in the Schoolyard as long as the temperature is above **32°F** with **no precipitation**. On bad weather days, admission may be held indoors beginning at 8:45am only:
    - In the auditorium for grades Kindergarten - 2nd;
    - In the cafeteria for grades 3rd - 8th.

Late Arrival

Students arriving late must enter through the front door, get signed in to be marked as present, grab breakfast, and go straight to their classroom.

Lateness is recorded on the student's attendance and can disrupt learning—please arrive on time.

Important:

- Arrivals at 11:00 AM or later without a note = unexcused half-day absence
- Leaving at 1:39 PM or earlier without a note = unexcused half-day absence
- Two half-day absences = one full-day unexcused absence

Dismissal

- **Regular Dismissal Time:** 3:39 pm
- **Early Dismissal Time:** 12:30 pm

Dismissal Locations

- Students are dismissed through the Schoolyard

Pick-up Expectations

- Students must be picked up by an adult.
- If someone not listed is picking up your child, written permission is required ***along with a photo ID***. Students will not be released without it.

Note: The **playground is unsupervised before and after school**. ***Please ensure that students do not arrive before 8:45am.*** The School District is **not responsible** for students remaining on school grounds after dismissal.

Early Release

Students are not permitted to leave early unless there is an emergency.

- If an early release is anticipated, send a note to the classroom teacher, who will notify the office.
- If an emergency arises during the school day, request early release at the Main Office.

In all cases:

- A parent/guardian must sign out the student at the Main Office.
- Students will be dismissed from the office, not the classroom.
- Students may not leave the building alone during the school day.

Please note:

- Early dismissal requests after 2:30 PM will not be honored.
- On half-days, the cutoff for early dismissals is 12:00 PM, per District policy.

SCHOOL OPERATIONS

Visitor Procedures & Building Access

To ensure the safety of all students and staff:

- All visitors must show ID before entering.
- Upon arrival, check in at the Main Office to receive a visitor's pass.
- For safety, do not visit other parts of the building without permission.
- Families are not permitted to walk students to class.
- If your child needs to leave early, please report to the Main Office. Staff will bring your child to you.

These procedures help us maintain a secure and respectful environment for all.

Inclement Weather and Emergency Procedures

*Please ensure children are dressed appropriately for the weather; Admission/Dismissal and Recess **will** take place outside if the temperature is above **32°F** with **no precipitation**.*

In the event of a school closing, delayed opening, or early dismissal, announcements will be shared through:

- **KYW 1060 AM** and www.kyw1060.com
- **School District website**: www.philasd.org
- **ClassDojo** and **School Messenger**

We recommend all families stay connected through ClassDojo and check updates regularly, especially in winter.

Please do not call the main office during weather emergencies, as phone lines must remain open for staff communication.

➔ View the School District's Inclement Weather Policy

TRANSPORTATION

School Bus Cancellations or Delays

Check daily updates on school bus runs that are canceled or delayed by 30 minutes or more.
➔ View Bus Updates

Parent Flat Rate Program

The School District of Philadelphia offers monthly payments to eligible families who choose to drive their child to and from school instead of using District transportation.
➔ Learn more and enroll

SEPTA Student Fare Card

The SEPTA Student Fare Card is a reusable chipped card used by students to board a SEPTA trolley, Regional Rail, bus or subway. **Lost, stolen, or damaged card?** Reach out to your school to request a replacement.
➔ Learn more
➔ SEPTA – Trip Planner

STUDENT LIFE

School Meals

View current menus, filter for allergies, see nutrition information, and more.
➔ Food Menu

Supplies

Below you will find the supplies list for the upcoming year. All students are expected to obtain the appropriate supplies to be kept in the classroom for use during the school day. Do not send students to school with markers or scissors, if needed they will be provided with those supplies.
[insert School Supplies, example text below]

Grades Kindergarten - 2nd	Grades 3rd & 4th	Grades 6th - 8th
• 1 box of pencils • 1 pack crayons • 1 dry erase set • 20 math cubes • 1 sharpener	• 1 box pencils • 1 pack crayons • 1 glue stick • 1 dry erase set • 1 sharpener	• 1 box pencils • 1 glue stick • 1 composition notebook

• 1 primary composition notebook • 1 glue stick	• 1 Primary composition notebook	• 1 pack colored pencils • 2 folders • 1 pack lined paper • 1 sharpener

Field Trips

Field trips are scheduled throughout the school year to enrich students' learning experiences. When a trip is planned, a permission slip with full details will be sent home. All signed slips and any required payment must be submitted by the deadline provided. Verbal permission is not accepted, except in emergencies.

- Trips are for students only; siblings are not allowed to join.
- Parents/guardians asked to chaperone, must follow the School District of Philadelphia's Volunteer Policy; clearances are required. Chaperones must return to the school with the class.

Recess

Recess is held outdoors daily, weather and behavior permitting, and supervised by our Culture Team. Students should come dressed for the weather.

Recess will take place outside if the temperature is above **32°F** with **no precipitation**. On bad weather days, recess may be held indoors in the cafeteria or auditorium.

Netter Center University-Assisted Community School (UACS) After School and Summer Programs

The University of Pennsylvania's Netter Center offers extended learning programs that provide a safe, supportive space for students after school (3:39–6:00 PM) and during the summer (9:00 AM–4:00 PM). Designed for K–8 students, these programs include academic support, arts and cultural enrichment, recreation, and hands-on, project-based learning.

A major component of the Netter Center's work is mobilizing the vast resources of the University of Pennsylvania to help traditional public schools become and function as innovative University-Assisted Community Schools (UACS).

A University-Assisted Community School (UACS) is a community school in which universities serve as the lead partner in providing broadly based, sustained support. Academic partnerships connect the university's and school's curricula through a focus on helping to solve local community-identified problems. This approach is designed to improve both the quality of life in the community and the quality of learning at all levels of schooling.

UACS, as well as community schools in general, are comprehensive neighborhood centers built on partnerships that educate, engage, activate and serve students, their families, and other members of the community. For neighborhood schools to function as community schools, they need additional human resources and support. Universities are particularly well-suited to be a lead partner in the creation, growth, and ongoing development of community schools, including providing academic, human, and material resources.

The Netter Center has more than thirty years of experience developing and adapting the University-Assisted Community Schools (UACS) model that was created with its school and community partners in West Philadelphia.

➔ **To learn more, contact:** *Site Director Mr. Jequan Major* | **jequanm@sas.upenn.edu | 445-213-3013**

Summer Programs

➔ Visit the District Summer Programs site for additional opportunities for your student over the summer.

STUDENT BELONGINGS & TECHNOLOGY

Cell Phone & Personal Electronics

We understand that students may need cell phones for safety. However, phones and personal electronic devices can cause major distractions during the school day.

- Upon entering the building, students will turn their cell phones off and turn them in to their Homeroom Teacher
- In the event a student is late, and cellphones have already been collected, they will be asked to turn their phone into Ms. Latimore (Room 307), our middle years lead teacher
- Phones will be placed in a lock box until the end of the day
- Phones will be returned at the end of the day in the school yard, lunchroom on Early Dismissal days
- If a student refuses to turn in their cell phone, It will be collected by the Principal or Assistant Principal with a phone call to a parent to be picked up
- If a student refuses to give the phone to an administrator a parent meeting will be required

➔ Comegys Cell Phone Policy Parent Student Contract

Chromebooks

All students will receive a Chromebook device & charger for their educational use throughout the year. It is expected that all students will bring their device to school each day and maintain safe care of it. If there should occur a problem with the device, please contact your child's teacher. We will ensure that the device is repaired.
➔ Chromebook resources

Lost and Found

The Lost and Found is located in the back of the auditorium. Lost/unclaimed items are placed there on a daily basis and students may retrieve misplaced items. Unclaimed items are donated monthly. Parents/guardians are asked to clearly mark children's clothing and personal property. The school accepts no responsibility for lost articles and money.

Textbooks

Students are responsible for all textbooks and library books issued to them during the school year. All lost or damaged books may be paid for.

EQUITY & STUDENT RIGHTS

LGBTQIA+ Policies & Resources

Policy 252 – Transgender & Gender Non-Conforming Students
We are committed to creating a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for all students. In alignment with the School District of Philadelphia's Policy 252, we affirm the rights of transgender and gender non-conforming students and will follow these key practices:

Names & Pronouns
Students will be addressed by the name and pronouns that align with their gender identity. No legal or medical documentation is required. Intentional or repeated misuse of a student's name or pronouns is a violation of this policy.

Privacy & Confidentiality
A student's transgender identity will not be shared without their permission, even with parents or staff. Students have the right to decide when, how, and with whom they share this information.

School Activities & Spaces

- Students will be included in all school activities, groups, and spaces that match their gender identity.
- We aim to minimize separating students by gender whenever possible.
- Gender-neutral language (like "they" instead of "he/she") will be used in written communication when appropriate.

Restroom Access

Students may use the restroom that aligns with their gender identity. A private, single-stall restroom will be available to any student seeking more privacy, but use of that space is optional, not required.

PE & Intramural Sports

Transgender and gender non-conforming students may participate in physical education classes and intramural sports in a way that aligns with their gender identity.

➔ Learn more and access LGBTQIA+ Resources

Students Experiencing Homelessness

Every child deserves access to a quality education, no matter their housing situation. We support students and families experiencing homelessness by removing barriers to enrollment, attendance, and success in school, as outlined in the McKinney-Vento Act. ➔ Learn more about your rights and available support

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HEALTH & SAFETY

School Nurse

Our school nurse provides immediate care for illnesses and injuries, conducts required screenings, and supports students' overall wellness. The nurse also maintains medical records for every student.

Parents/guardians must notify the nurse about any special health conditions and are encouraged to reach out with questions or to schedule a confidential appointment.

➔Contact your School Nurse, Nurse Mike, at: (215)400-7860

Student Illness

If a student feels ill during the day, they should go directly to the nurse, not call home on their own. Parents/guardians will be contacted if the student needs to go home.

Staying Home When Sick

Anyone who is sick—students, staff, or visitors—should stay home. If someone becomes ill while at school, they must leave the building promptly.

Student Medication

The school will only administer medication with written permission from both the parent/guardian and a physician. A completed Medication Administration Form is required and must be updated if the prescription changes.

Key rules:

- Medications must be in the original container, labeled with the student's name and prescription details
- All medications must be turned in to the nurse's office
- Students may not keep medication in desks, lockers, or backpacks
- Unused medication must be picked up by the end of the school year or it will be disposed of

A new authorization form is required each school year.

Immunization Requirements & Health Services

Pennsylvania law requires all students to be fully immunized or officially exempt before attending school. This is mandated by the PA Department of Health, Philadelphia County Board of Health, and the School District of Philadelphia.
➔ Learn about immunizations, physicals, and wellness programs

Mental Health Resources

Find free support, counseling, and tools to care for your mental well-being. ➔ View Resources

Vaping/Smoking Resources

Family guides, free tools, and support to help quit vaping or smoking. ➔ View Resources

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SCHOOL CULTURE & DISCIPLINE

The Benjamin B. Comegys School follows District discipline policies to support positive behavior and maintain a safe, respectful learning environment. Most issues are handled in the classroom through clear routines and communication between teachers, students, and families.

Code of Conduct

Students are expected to follow school rules at all times—both during school hours and at school-sponsored events. Violations may result in disciplinary action as outlined in the District Student Code of Conduct.
➔ View the District Student Code of Conduct & Discipline Process

Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination

The School District of Philadelphia strives to provide a safe and positive educational environment for all school community members. As such, the District does not tolerate bullying, harassment or discrimination of students, in any form.

Students who believe they have been subjected to any form of bullying, harassment, or discrimination are encouraged to report the conduct or have their parent/guardian report it on their behalf.
➔ Report bullying, harassment, or discrimination

Dress Code/Uniform Policy

To maintain a focused learning environment, students are required to wear appropriate school attire. The dress code ensures clothing supports—rather than disrupts—the educational process. Students should wear suitable shirts, pants, shorts, dresses, skirts, and proper footwear at all times

Allowed	Not Allowed

• Jeans/Pants/Sweatpants
• Shirts with sleeves (long or short)
• Shirts that fully cover the stomach
• Closed-Toe Shoes ONLY
  ○ Toes must be protected by shoes
• Sneakers
• Shorts/Dresses/Skirts - no more than 4 inches above the knee
• School/Age-appropriate clothing
• Uniform - Navy Blue bottoms/tops
	• Shoes that expose toes - NO OPEN TOE SHOES:
	  ○ Sandals, Flip-Flops, Slides, Slippers, Etc.
	  ○ Toes must be protected by shoes
	• Crop Tops/Sleeveless Shirts
	• Undershirts/Bra Tops, etc.
	• Shorts/Skirts/Dresses - shorter than 4 inches above the knee cap
	• Obscene (profanity, sexual content, etc.) language or gestures that appear on clothes

We have outlined this dress code with equity and our student's safety in mind. Students will have recess in the schoolyard. If you have any questions or concerns about our dress code please do not hesitate to reach out to the school.

If a student violates the dress code:

- A parent/guardian may be contacted
- The school may provide loaner clothing, or request a change of clothes be brought to school

If you have barriers to obtaining a uniform, contact April Walker at (215)400-7860.

Student Well-Being Survey

Student Well-Being Surveys will be conducted quarterly with students. Survey results are used to track progress in maintaining a positive learning environment for the entire student population. Survey results will aid the school's responsiveness to student social, emotional, or academic needs. ➔ Learn more about the survey.

ACADEMICS

Curriculum

At Benjamin B. Comegys School, we offer a strong, supportive learning environment where students in grades K–8 thrive academically and socially.

Our curriculum is comprehensive, covering core subjects like reading, math, science, and social studies, complemented by engaging special subjects such as music, art, physical education, and technology to make learning well-rounded and fun.

We are committed to meeting the needs of every learner through personalized instruction and support services, including reading intervention, counseling, and speech therapy. Our primary goal is to help every Comegys student grow into a confident, curious, and successful learner prepared for the challenges ahead.

➔ Learn about the District's curriculum and find resources to support your child's learning.

Homework

Homework is designed to build independence, responsibility, and academic achievement. Assignments vary by grade, teacher, and student needs. Please encourage your child to read daily, and remember they can always work on iReady.

Multilingual Curriculum & Programs/Language Access Support Services/ESOL services

The School District of Philadelphia provides a variety of programs and services in many languages to support our multilingual families. Students whose first language is not English may qualify for ESOL services.

➔ **Need Help?** Contact your school's Bilingual Counseling Assistant

Special Education

Comegys welcomes all students and is committed to providing specialized services to children in the least restrictive environment, as required by the law. Students receive accommodations and modifications as outlined in their Individualized Educational Program (IEP).

The District provides an extensive range of educational services and supports for students with diverse needs within our schools. ➔ Learn more about Special Education Programs and Evaluations

STUDENT PROGRESS

Assessments

- **PSSA**
  - *Grades 3-8* take tests in English Language Arts and Math.
  - *Grades 5 and 8* also take a test in Science.
- **PASA**
  - *Grades 3-8* take tests in English Language Arts and Math.
  - *Grades 5, 8, and 11* also take a test in Science.
- **Star - Grades K-12:** Measure math and reading skills.
- **Keystone Grades 9-12:** Measures Algebra I, Literature, and Biology

➔ Get info on assessments and important testing dates

Report Cards

Report cards are issued four times a year—one for each quarter—and include academic performance, behavior, and progress notes.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent–teacher conferences are scheduled after the first, second, and third quarters. Families are strongly encouraged to attend; if you need to reschedule, please contact your child's teacher.

➔ View the academic calendar for report card and conference dates

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FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

At Benjamin B. Comegys School, we believe strong family and community partnerships are key to student success. When schools and families work together, students do better academically, socially, and emotionally.

There are many ways families and community members can support student learning throughout the year:

Parent & Family University

Parent & Family University provides free resources, courses, and support to help parents and families engage with their children, schools, and community. ➔ Learn more about Parent & Family University

School Advisory Councils (SACs)

SACs are peer-elected groups comprising family members, school staff, students (grades 7–12), and community members who collaborate to support academic success and enhance school partnerships. ➔ Learn more about School Advisory Councils

Volunteer

We love and appreciate parent involvement! Volunteering is a great way to support our school community and make a positive impact on students' daily experiences.

Volunteers can support the school in many ways, including:

- Breakfast or lunch monitor
- Recess or schoolyard support
- Classroom assistant
- Special projects or school events
- Extracurricular program support
- General school maintenance
- Field trip chaperone

Parents/guardians interested in volunteering must first speak with the Assistant Principal to schedule a convenient time and clarify the role. If you're unable to keep a scheduled visit, please notify the school by the start of the school day.

Expectations and requirements
All volunteers serve as role models for our students. **Appropriate dress and respectful behavior** are expected at all times.

To ensure a safe and supportive environment, volunteers must follow the **School District of Philadelphia's Volunteer Policy**:

- Attend a volunteer orientation
- Obtain and submit required clearances before volunteering
- Sign in at the **Main Office** and wear a **Visitor's Pass**
- Always work under the supervision of a teacher—volunteers may not be alone with students

➔ Find out how to become a volunteer