

Washington Elementary School

Parent/Student Handbook



Home of the Panthers
331 Emory Avenue
Trenton, New Jersey 08611
609- 656-4960 ext. 4951

Ms. Tara U. Ingram
Principal
"It's A GREAT Day to Be A Panther!"

TRENTON BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr. James Earle
Superintendent of Schools



Principal's Message



Principal's Message

Dear Students and Families,

Welcome to a new school year! It is with great pride and enthusiasm that I extend a warm welcome to all of our returning families and a special greeting to those joining our school community for the first time.

Our school is a place where curiosity is encouraged, diversity is celebrated, and every student is empowered to reach their fullest potential. We believe that a strong partnership between school and home is key to a student's success, and this handbook is just one of the many tools we offer to help you stay informed, connected, and engaged throughout the year.

Inside this handbook, you'll find important information about school policies, expectations, and procedures, as well as resources to support student learning and well-being. Please take the time to review it carefully and refer to it often.

As we embark on this journey together, know that our entire staff is committed to creating a safe, inclusive, and inspiring environment where all students can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

We look forward to working alongside you to make this year one of growth, achievement, and memorable experiences.

With gratitude and excitement,

Ms. Tara U. Ingram
Principal

School/ District Information

District Mission Statement

All students will graduate with a vision for their futures, motivated to learn continually and prepared to succeed in their choice of college or career.

School Mission Statement

To create a safe, nurturing environment where diversity is celebrated; students become inspired learners and responsible citizens.

Our Panther PRIDE Principles

(**P**ride, **R**esponsible, **I**nspiring, **D**edicated & **E**xcellent)

School Colors: Navy Blue/ Yellow

School Symbol: Panther

School Motto: “*Show Your Panther PRIDE*”

PANTHER PRINCIPLES

**Positive
Responsible
Inspiring
Dedicated
Excellent**



School Hours



Full Day Session - 8:45 a.m. - 3:15 p.m. Reduced Day Session - 8:45 a.m.- 1:55 p.m.

Breakfast Program 8:10 a.m.

For liability purposes, staff will not be responsible for students arriving at school prior to the start of the school day and/or special programs. Breakfast Program starts @ 8:10 a.m.



School Phone Numbers & Information

Main Office: 609- 656-4960 Ext: 4951
[Website for Washington Elementary School](https://www.trentonk12.org/)

Delayed School Openings & Emergency School Closings

If it is necessary to open school later or close school due to severe weather or other emergency conditions, you can check the Trenton School District's website (<https://www.trentonk12.org/>) for information and our School Messenger phone calling system will be activated. You can also call- 609-656-5444 for school closings and delays.

60-minute delayed start time: 9:45 a.m. 90-minute delayed start time: 10:15 a.m.

Visitors



All parents and guests must enter the building using the main entrance door. All visitors must sign in and receive a visitors' pass from the front desk (Security desk). Proper identification must be presented at the time of sign in to be permitted into the main office. Visitor passes must be worn at all times and clearly visible. Visitors are asked not to consult

with any teaching staff or students that they were not given prior approval to by building administration; this is especially important during instructional time.

Parents picking up or dropping off children must remain in the office; your child will be brought to their class or to the office, whichever applies. Following these procedures will assure the integrity of our programs and the security of our students and staff. Every effort will be made by the administration to accommodate parents in a timely manner. **Please return passes to the security desk when leaving the building. Sign-in and Sign-out (District Policy #5113)**

Students with appointments out of the school are required to have a parent/guardian to sign him/her out in the Main Office and sign-in when returning from an appointment. Students may not leave the building without proper supervision and representation. Adults who will be responsible for picking up students (including parents) must be on the student's Emergency Contact Form or the child will NOT be released under any circumstances. Proper identification is required at all times.

Arrival Procedures

Student Arrival/Entry: Doors Open @ 8:10 a.m.

It is important for all students to learn to be punctual and consistent in their attendance. Student attendance is taken each day. If your child is absent from school, you will receive an automated call. Students arriving after 8:45 a.m. are considered late.

Students Walking to School

Students will enter through the cafeteria door #4.

Kindergarten, First, Second, and Third Grade Students will be seated at their assigned table in the cafeteria and monitored by a designated staff member. Students will eat breakfast in the cafeteria starting at 8:10 a.m. and tardy students will be offered breakfast after the bell (8:45 a.m.).

Students Dropped off by Car

Students will enter through the cafeteria door #4.

Kindergarten, First, Second, and Third Grade Students will be seated at their assigned table in the cafeteria and monitored by a designated staff member. Students will eat breakfast in the cafeteria starting at 8:10 a.m. and tardy students will be offered breakfast after the bell (8:45 a.m.).

Parents are not allowed to enter the building in the morning except through the main door for a scheduled appointment.

Breakfast

- Kindergarten – Third Grade Students - Cafeteria
(Students should not arrive early to school) Breakfast starts @ 8:10 a.m.



Tardiness

Lateness prevents the student from beginning classes promptly and distracts the pupils who report on time. Students in all grades are required to present a written note from the parent or guardian explaining the tardiness upon arrival to school. Late students arriving after 8:45 a.m. must enter through the main door in front of the school building, sign in and receive a late pass from the security officer. Students who are not accompanied by an adult will receive a phone call informing the parent of their child's lateness. Chronic lateness will result in disciplinary action.

Dismissal Procedures

Our instructional day ends at 3:15 p.m. each day. Students will be dismissed using the following procedures.

Kindergarten – All Kindergarten students will be dismissed using the exit doors on the Division Street side.

Grades 1, 2 and 3 – Students will be dismissed from the cafeteria/gym. Doors will open at 3:15 p.m. Parents are to enter through Door #4 on Chestnut Avenue, and exit through Door #6 on the blacktop.



Student Dismissal Information

Student safety is our number one priority. Students in grades K-3 must be picked up each day! Parents will need to identify how their child(ren) will be dismissed from school and by whom on the Emergency Contact Form. Students who are not picked up on time will remain in school until they are picked up by a parent or authorized adult. We strongly encourage parents to complete and return the dismissal form as soon as possible.

Please note: Students in grades K-3 will NOT be allowed to walk home alone.



Late Student Pick Up Protocol

It is important that parents/guardians make the necessary arrangements to pick up their child on time at the end of each school day (3:15 p.m.). While we understand that there are times when an unexpected situation may arise and you may be late, we ask that you give the school a courtesy call to the main office to make them aware of your tardiness. ***Students will***

be kept in the cafeteria/gym. All late pickups must be signed out. Double doors (#4) will close at 3:30 p.m. - please knock on the doors to be let in and follow instructions as given by those staff on duty.

If a phone call is not received by the office, the school will follow the necessary protocol:

- ☐ Phone call to parent/guardian
- ☐ Phone call to other individuals listed on the Emergency Illness and/or Student Dismissal Form

Parents who constantly pick up their students late will be scheduled for a parent conference with administration in an effort to resolve the issue. Please make every effort to be on time each day. Your child(ren) is/are looking forward to seeing you at the end of each school day.

Parent/Guardian Contact Information

It is important to inform your child's teacher and the main office if you have a change of address or phone number. It is important to have accurate information at all times just in case of emergencies or we need to contact you for a specific reason.

TPS Arrival & Dismissal Standard Operating Procedures

- All visitors and parents must show a picture ID, sign in with security and report to the main office.
- Elementary schools' doors open at 8:10 a.m. Prior to 8:10 a.m., staff are not present to monitor students.
- Students' formal school day begins at 8:45 a.m. Students are late after 8:45 a.m. Frequent lateness and absences could result in legal action.
- Dismissal is at 3:15 p.m. Early pick up of students is allowed before 2:30 p.m. for appointments and other excusable reasons. Unless prior approval is granted, after 2:30 p.m., students must remain until 3:15 p.m.
- On reduced days, dismissal is at 1:55 p.m. On these days, students must be picked up by 1:55 p.m.

Late pick up location: Cafeteria/Gym double doors

School Forms

At the beginning of the year, all students will receive important forms to be completed and returned to school to be filed. Please ensure that you update information as needed.



Attendance (District Policy #5113)

Regular attendance is essential to success in school. A student not only misses work on the day of the absence, but also is not prepared for the next day because of missed instruction. The teacher must account for every absence or tardiness. A **written note** explaining the absence or lateness is required for your child when they return to school. A **telephone call** in cases of prolonged illness is requested. Students may be retained if they are not present for at least 165 days of the school year. Students who are chronically absent (missed 10% of the school days) will meet with the school's attendance team to develop a plan for improvement. Parents/Guardians of pupils under the age of 16 will be advised by a truant officer and administration that they could face legal action and be taken to court for the excessive absences of their children.

Important Note: Students who miss more than 15 unexcused days of school may be retained the following school year. (See District Parent/Student Handbook for Attendance Policy)

Written Excuses (District Policy #5113)

Pupils whose written excuses meet board policy shall be allowed to make up all assignments and tests. These excuses must contain written explanations from the parent/guardian and must be presented at the time of the student's return. Pupil's absence verified by a doctor on the physician's stationery/prescription pad will be recorded as an excused absence. It is the parents' responsibility to secure and present these notes from the physician to our school secretary, nurse, teacher, or building principal.

Early Dismissal

Students who may need to be dismissed before the end of the school day need to be signed out by their parent/guardian in the main office. Only individuals identified on the Emergency Illness/Contact Form may sign out a student for an early dismissal. Proper identification is required each time. Students will NOT be released if the person picking them up is not on their Emergency Illness/Contact Form and does not possess the proper identification. Be sure to update student information regularly.

Please note that early dismissal after 2:30 p.m. is a major disruption to the closing of the school day and students are still engaged in meaningful learning. Therefore, early dismissals will NOT occur after 2:30 p.m. unless in the case of an emergency. We strongly encourage that you do not pick up students early, or do so before 2:30 p.m. Kindly plan the student's appointments and/or events well in advance and outside the school-day day when possible.

Cell Phones/Electronic Devices - District Policy #5131.71



Any student in possession of a cell phone or other electronic device deemed not necessary for instructional purposes and not approved by administration will have it confiscated and secured in the main office with the student's name and homeroom number. Students must be accompanied by a parent/guardian when claiming items.

Telephone Messages

Telephone messages are not taken for students. If an emergency arises, a message may be given to the teacher for the student. Students may use the main office phone for emergencies only with proper authorization.

Student Transfers

If a student transfers to another school, the parent must notify the Secretary in the Main Office immediately. Textbooks and chrome books must be returned before the student can receive an official transfer. **Transfers are obtained in the main office with proper documentation.**

Uniform Dress Code (K- 3rd grade) **(District Policy- #5133)**

While dress and appearance are primarily the responsibility of the parents, students are mandated by the Trenton Board of Education to dress in the school uniform and groom themselves in an appropriate manner every day for school. Students may have the opportunity to dress down on special occasions. Parents will receive notification when alternate dress is appropriate.

The reasons for the uniform are as follows:

- Helps parents and students resist "clothing peer pressure"
- Keeps students focused on school work
- Enables school staff to recognize intruders more readily
- Improves behavior as reported by other schools with uniforms
- Students increase in having a sense of belonging, respect and pride in our school
- Cost of uniforms in the long run is less than traditional clothing
- Safety and security of our students



After School Program

Parents/Guardians will be notified of tutoring programs and additional afterschool activities when available. Information about any of the programs held at Washington Elementary School can be obtained in the main office.



Personal Property

The school is not responsible for any loss of personal property. Personal belongings should be clearly marked with the student's name. Toys, expensive jewelry, electronic games, cards, cell phones etc., are not permitted in school. If any of the items are confiscated, they will be kept until the parent picks them up.



Health Services

Washington Elementary School has a full-time nurse available for students during the school day. If illness or injury occurs, parents will be notified. The school cannot administer medicine, including aspirin. Students who need to take prescribed medication must have a note signed by the physician and parent before medication can be brought to school by an adult. The medication, in the original container, and note must be kept in the Health Office. The nurse is the only person who can administer medication.



Counseling Services

The school has a guidance counselor who assists in the growth and development of all students. Some services include individual and group counseling, consultation with parents, teachers, various agencies and facilitation of the Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS).

Child Abuse & Neglect

Cases of suspected child abuse or neglect must, by law, be reported to the state's Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P). Staff members are mandated reporters if they suspect abuse of any student. Anyone having questions about a specific situation may call DCP&P directly at (800) 392-2721 or (609) 530-8770.

Emergency/Crisis Procedures

In the event of a threat of some kind, the following procedures are to be implemented:

- The Washington Elementary School Crisis Team will be activated.
- The District Office will be notified of the nature of the crisis and obtain further direction from the Office of School Support and the Superintendent's Office.
- Students and staff may be put on building and/or classroom lockdown or be evacuated from the building if deemed necessary.



- Parents will receive a call via phone blast or school personnel will explain the nature of the crisis.
- If necessary, staff and students will report to a primary or secondary evacuation site. Information will be communicated to parents via district website or school messenger with specific instructions for student pick up. Off-site locations are:

Primary Site:

ACHIEVERS EARLY COLLEGE PREP CHARTER SCHOOL
544 CHESTNUT AVENUE
Trenton, NJ 08611

Off Site:

SAM NAPLES COMMUNITY CENTER
611 CHESTNUT STREET
TRENTON, NJ 08611



Lunch Program

The Trenton Public School District participates in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) School Lunch and Breakfast Program. This program offers free breakfast and lunch to *all* students. Parents/guardians must fill out a lunch survey. Forms must be completed online via the district's website. If you need assistance with locating or completing the form, please contact the school.



Awards

Students who have excelled or who have contributed to the improvement of the school community are honored throughout the year. Teachers/staff choose students who have demonstrated outstanding effort and responsibility in various areas. Other awards are given in music, art, physical education, and extracurricular activities.



Cameras

Security cameras have been installed throughout the school for safety and security reasons. Additional cameras will be installed as deemed appropriate and necessary.



Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

The P.T.O. is an organization composed of parents, staff, and community representatives whose objectives include acting as a liaison between the school and the community, serving as an advisory group making suggestions and recommendations for the improvement of school programs, and providing volunteer services in many school activities. A monthly calendar of events will be sent home each month with your child highlighting special school activities, events and PTO meetings.

We encourage your participation and involvement in school events and activities. As you know, parents are very important to student achievement and school success. Let's build a partnership and work together for your children/our students.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled in the fall and spring. Report cards are sent home four times a year. If needed, parents or teachers may request a conference at any time. You should expect the teacher to show you samples of your child's work. The teacher should also suggest ways in which you can work together to help your child do well in school.

Parent tips:

- Make a list of things you wish to discuss with the teacher
- Ask how you and your child's teacher can work together to help teaching and learning
- Discuss any particular concerns, habits or other things you feel the teacher should know about that may help their understanding of how best to work with your child
- Ask the teacher to work with you to develop an action plan to help maximize your child's learning
- Before leaving a conference, you and the teacher should agree on specific plans that you both will work on to help your child
- Be sure to set up a date and time for your next meeting
- Talk about your plan with your child. Make sure your child knows that both you and the teacher care about their meeting with success in school
- To see if the action plan is working, watch your child's behavior and check on class work and homework
- Stay in touch with the teacher about progress being made
- Meeting with your child's teachers regularly can build strong parent/teacher partnerships that can help your child improve their academic performance and assure a successful school career

Parents can also request and make an appointment for a teacher conference throughout the school year.



Behavioral Expectations for Students

We believe all students can behave appropriately while at school. We will not allow a student to stop the teacher from teaching or prevent other students from learning. Our District's Code of Conduct is practiced in the entire school building and will be followed when students violate the expectations. In the beginning of the school year, a letter describing our District's code of conduct will be sent home to all parents to read, sign and return to school by their child. Our school's behavior committee, which is composed of staff, is responsible for school wide activities rewarding students for demonstrating good behavior. The staff will lead by example.

Harassment, Intimidation & Bullying (HIB) / Student Code of Conduct Policy #5600

Washington Elementary School is committed to providing a safe and secure learning environment for all our students.

Therefore, any instances will be addressed according to District Policy #5212.01. All concerns should be reported to the teacher and/or building administration immediately. It is our goal to address and remedy any situations that may prevent our students from learning on a daily basis. Be sure to read, sign and return the HIB student and parent/guardian agreement.



Cafeteria Rules/Food & Beverage Limitations

Students must respect the rights and property of others. The large number of students present in the cafeteria requires courtesy and cooperation. Students are to follow the posted rules and regulations in the cafeteria. Food may not be taken from the cafeteria to the halls or classroom areas.

Foods and beverages, such as candy, soda and other high sugar sources or unhealthy foods are NOT allowed in school. We are strongly encouraging healthy food choices. Foods containing whole grains and beverages containing 100% real fruit juice are advisable and preferred.

Special Note: No Birthday Party Celebrations are authorized during the instructional day. All students will receive a birthday shoutout during the morning announcements along with a special birthday gift bag.



Academic Curriculum



Children develop in their own unique way. Each child grows at a different rate in different skills and no two children have the same pattern of growth. Our curriculum is organized by grade level and by subject. Classroom teachers devote hours each week to discussing, planning and developing the most appropriate program for their class and each individual

student. Through all subjects and activities, we try to help our students develop self-discipline, self-confidence, intellectual independence, initiative, responsibility and to learn to function happily and effectively in a group. We offer a thorough and complete academic education to students in Kindergarten through grade three. Our curriculum entails a wide variety of creative, critical thinking and research activities taught by professionally qualified teachers and specialists.



BE SURE TO READ WITH
YOUR CHILD(REN) EACH DAY
TO HELP THEM BECOME
GOOD READERS!

WE ARE COMMITTED TO
BUILDING A STRONG
COMMUNITY OF PROFICIENT
READERS AND WRITERS AT
EVERY GRADE LEVEL.

Student Support Services

Students who are experiencing academic or social problems may be referred to the following agencies/programs for remediation and/or intervention: Academic/Behavioral Intervention & Referral Services (I&RS), and/or Child Study Team. Contact the Guidance Counselor for additional information.



Extra-Curricular Activities (Availability of Funds)

Students are encouraged to join and participate in the many extra-curricular activities that are available at Washington Elementary School. Participating in activities of interest enhances a student's education and provides an opportunity to work with other students toward mutual goals. ***Some of the activities may include:*** Robotics - Choir – Art Club- Reader Program.

Participating students must be picked up by a parent/guardian or authorized adult. Administration, security officers, and staff involved in co-curricular activities will supervise dismissal.



Educational Trips

During the school year, various classes will take trips to the theatre, museums, and historical spots, etc. reinforcing classroom objectives. When a school trip is planned, a school permission form must be signed and returned to school prior to the scheduled date of the trip. Without a properly signed parental/guardian permission slip, your child will not be allowed to participate. In addition, students who have demonstrated behavioral challenges may not be permitted to attend a trip or may be required to be chaperoned by his/her parent/guardian or a designee to ensure a successful learning experience.



Homework

Homework is an important part of school. Its purpose is to develop responsibility in students and extend and strengthen lessons taught during the school day. Parents must take the responsibility to help their children complete these assignments. It also provides students and parents with a useful channel of communication. Homework is assigned on a daily basis. Please contact your child's teacher if you have questions regarding homework. Further tips:

- Send your child to school each day well rest
- Ask specific questions about your child's day and how they feel about it
- Establish a quiet, comfortable study area with good lighting for your child
- Set a family "Quiet Time" where you and your children can work together on homework, reading, writing and playing games
- Make homework a daily activity and help your children develop good homework habits
- Assume that your child will have studying to do every night
- Ask your children to show you their homework after the teacher returns it to learn where they are having difficulty and where they are doing well
- Stay in touch with your children's teachers; remember you and your teachers want the same thing – to help your children learn
- Show your children that you think homework is important. If you are at work during homework time, ask to see their homework when you get home
- Praise your children for doing well. Make praise a habit.
- Ask your child's teacher about tips or guides for helping your children develop good study habits



Residency Alert

Students attending Trenton Public School, who do not meet the residency requirement, are subject to transfer to the appropriate school and possible imposition of tuition for educational school services provided by the Trenton Public School District.

District and State Assessments

- Unit Benchmarks - Students in grades K-3 will be assessed using district-developed benchmark assessments four times a year. Benchmark tests will allow teachers to monitor student progress throughout the school year.
- NJSLA - Students in grade 3 will take the NJSLA Test in the Spring to demonstrate their academic progress related to State Standards. The test will be administered using the computer.
- ACCESS - Bilingual and ESL students will be assessed using the ACCESS assessment to evaluate students' levels of English Language proficiency.



Supporting the School Community by Volunteering

Washington Elementary School is currently seeking individuals to become an active part of our school community by volunteering. Parents can volunteer in school activities such as Fun Day, as a classroom parent, reading buddy, our breakfast program, fundraiser projects, trip chaperones, etc. Your talents are needed.

All volunteers must be approved by the Trenton Board of Education. Applications can be obtained in the Main Office. All interested parents should contact the main office @ 609-656-4960. We look forward to working with you!

Parent/Teacher/School Communication

Communication between parents and the school is of vital importance to the success of our students. We recognize that this partnership will help us to help your child succeed in school. The school is committed to communicating regularly with you as it relates to your child's academic, behavior and school activities/programs throughout the school year. In the event of a question or concern, feel free to contact the main office @ 609- 656-4960. Additional parent information will be made available on our school's website:

<https://www.gwes.trentonk12.org/>

Parent Portal - The administration and staff at Washington School are excited to announce that parents are now able to track their child's attendance and academic progress using an internet-based program, Power School. Parents will have 24-hour access. Login information can be obtained from the guidance counselor, Parent Liaison, or main office.



Important School Information & Dates at a Glance

Main Office: 609-656-4960 ext 4951

✓ First Day for Students	September 8, 2026
✓ Back to School Night	September 22, 2026
✓ Fall Parent Teacher Conference	November 10 & 11, 2026
✓ Spring Parent Teacher Conferences	April 13 & 14, 2027

***Reduced Day for Students on these specific days. 1:55 p.m. dismissal

Additional Information will be included on the school's monthly calendar.



Washington Elementary Schools' Panther Pledge

"I'm a proud Washington Panther.
I will maintain a positive attitude, act responsibly,
make wise choices, and ensure safety first.
Watch me show my Panther **Pride!**"

Panther **PRIDE** Principles (**P**ositive, **R**esponsible, **I**nspiring, **D**edicated & **E**xcellent)

We are looking forward to a GREAT school year!

