

# Whitehouse Cubs



**PARENT HANDBOOK  
READINGTON TOWNSHIP**



## Whitehouse School

Ann T. DeRosa, Ed.D., Principal

[aderos@readington.k12.nj.us](mailto:aderos@readington.k12.nj.us)

[www.readington.k12.nj.us](http://www.readington.k12.nj.us)

P.O. Box 157 • 50 Whitehouse Avenue • Whitehouse Station, NJ 08889 • (908)-534-4411 • (908) 534-9157 fax

Dear Whitehouse Families,

Welcome to Whitehouse School, *Home of the Cubs (and Cubby!)* We are looking forward to an exciting and rewarding school year with you and your children. We hope that you find our parent handbook informative and helpful. Its purpose is to help you and your child understand school routines and district policies. Please review the handbook to familiarize yourself with its contents. It is a good place to start whenever you have a question.

As your child's primary educator, you are entering into a partnership with the school. Together, we can create and nurture a learning community. The staff and I are committed to providing the best we can for all of the children at Whitehouse School. Our work is important and, together, we can achieve a great deal.

We hope this handbook is beneficial to you and supports your child's success this year.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ann T. DeRosa".

Ann T. DeRosa  
Principal

# WHITEHOUSE SCHOOL



## **Mission Statement**

The mission of Whitehouse School is to provide children with a nurturing environment where they will feel safe and accepted. Our school community encourages respect and builds independence while fostering academic and personal growth and creating a love for learning.

## **Table of Contents**

	Page
<b>Introduction</b>	
Principal's Welcome	
Mission Statement	
<b>Arrival/Dismissal Procedures</b>	
Morning Arrival	1
Early Student Pick-Up	1
Afternoon Dismissal	1
Emergency Closings	2
Daily Schedule	2
Early Dismissal Schedule	2
Emergency Delayed Opening	3
Emergency Early Dismissal	3
<b>Absences and Attendance</b>	
Attendance Requirements	3
Attendance/Tardiness Committee	4
Chronic/Lengthy Illness	4
Family Vacations	4
Make-Up Work	4
Reporting Absences	5
Returning to School	5
Tardiness	5
<b>General Information</b>	
Animals in the Classroom	5
Backpacks/Book Bags	5
Before and After School Child Care	6
Bicycles	6
Birthday Celebrations	6
Class Trips	6
Computers & Technology	6
Dangerous Articles/Violent Actions or Threats	7
Discipline	7
Dressing for School	7
Early Intervention	8
English as a Second Language (ESL)	8
Enrichment	8
Fire Drills	8
Gifted and Talented	9
Guardianship of Students	9
Guidance	9
Intervention and Related Services (I&RS)	9
Lockdown Drills	10
Lockout Drills	10
Lost and Found	10
Money	10
Parking	10
Personal Property	11

Recess	11
Registration	11
School Property and Books	11
Snacks	12
Special Education Services	12
Speech and Language Therapy	12
Substitute Staff Members	13
Telephone Use	13
Transfers	13
Transportation	13
Visitors	14
Website	14
World Languages Program	14
<b>Health Services</b>	
Allergies	15
Communicable Diseases	15
Emergency Information	15
Health Services	15
Illness or Injury	16
Insurance	16
Immunizations and Physicals	16
Medical Awareness Information	17
Medication on Class Trips	17
Medication in School	17
<b>Family and School Connection</b>	
Back-to-School Night	17
Communication during Weather Emergencies	17
Communication with Teachers and the School	18
Homeroom Parents	18
Homework	19
Orientation and Information Sessions	19
Parent Organizations	19
Parent/Teacher Conferences	20
Report Cards	20
Teacher Assignments	20
Title I – Parental Involvement	21
Volunteers	21
<b>Lunch Program</b>	
Bringing Lunch From Home	21
Free and Reduced Price Lunches	21
Ice Cream and Snack Purchases	21
Menus and Lunch Purchase	21

## **ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL PROCEDURES**

### **Morning Arrival**

While we always encourage you to have your child ride the bus, if you chose to drive him/her to school, it is essential that you make sure that he or she does not arrive prior to 8:25 a.m. because staff will not be available to supervise. It is also important for his or her safety that you drop off your child in the "loop" facing Whitehouse Avenue, where a staff member will receive your child. Staff members will be at the "loop" between 8:25 a.m. and 8:30 a.m., daily, to assist with your child's safe arrival.

### **Early Student Pick-Up**

It is always best if you can schedule doctor, dentist, or important appointments outside of school hours. However, if you find you need to pick up your child before the end of the school day, please send a note to the teacher indicating the pick-up time and reason. When you arrive at school to pick up your child, please go to the front office to sign out your child. At that time, office personnel will notify the teacher, so that your child will come to the office to meet you.

### **Afternoon Dismissal**

We dismiss our students at 3:20 p.m. on regular school days and at 1:00 p.m. on early dismissal days. As teachers take attendance, they record where each child will go at the end of the school day. If there is a change in your child's regular dismissal pattern, you must notify the teacher in writing as soon as possible, but no later than the morning of the day in question. If the change affects more than one child, we need a separate note for each. In the case of an emergency change, please call the office as soon as possible and we will inform the teacher. It is always important that your child knows where he or she is going at the end of the day.

We encourage you to have your child go home on the bus each day. If it should become necessary to pick-up your child at dismissal time, we ask that you not double park, park in the bus lane, or park on the lawn. Visitor spots are available in the parking lot. Once parked, you can enter the building through the outside gymnasium door where you will sign-out your child.

## **Emergency Closings**

Situations can occur that require schools to close unexpectedly. A weather emergency, lack of heat, electricity, or water, etc., might mean that all schools or a particular school cannot open. The decision to close school is made by the superintendent.

To notify parents of a school closing, the district will contact several radio stations that broadcast in the area with a message. The decision to close school is normally made by 6:00 a.m. You may also log onto the district website at [www.readington.k12.nj.us](http://www.readington.k12.nj.us) to check for changes to the opening of school. In addition, you will receive an automated call informing you of the school closing.

## **Daily Schedule**

The daily schedule is as follows:

<b>8:25a.m.</b>	<b>Doors Open</b>
<b>8:30a.m.</b>	<b>Homeroom Begins</b>
<b>3:20p.m.</b>	<b>Dismissal</b>

## **Early Dismissal Schedule**

Each year, the district calendar indicates days when children are dismissed after four hours of instruction. Usually the days before Thanksgiving, winter break, spring break, the dates of parent/teacher conferences, and curriculum development activities are early dismissal days. During conferences and on staff development days, teachers are in the district working with their colleagues or meeting with parents after students leave. On the days before major holidays, staff and students are dismissed early. Lunch is served on early dismissal days.

Early Dismissal Times:

<b>8:30a.m.</b>	<b>Homeroom Begins</b>
<b>1:00p.m.</b>	<b>Dismissal</b>

### **Emergency Delayed Opening**

When emergency situations affect the school or the district, it may be necessary to delay the start of the school day by **two hours**. This most often occurs on winter days when road conditions are expected to improve within a short period of time. Announcements for delayed openings are made via an automated telephone call. The delayed opening schedule will be in effect and lunch will be served. Together, with your child, please plan ahead for delayed openings and anticipate that they most often happen in the winter when road safety for the buses is a concern.

Delayed Opening Times:

**10:30a.m.**  
**3:20 p.m.**

**Homeroom Begins**  
**Dismissal**

### **Emergency Early Dismissal**

On rare occasions, it may be necessary to close school early because of inclement weather or another emergency. The decision to close early would be made by the superintendent. Usually, the decision is made by mid-morning. An automated call may follow. Parents should take particular care in designating individuals who are close to home to pick up students in the event of an emergency early dismissal.

## **ABSENCES AND ATTENDANCE**

### **Attendance Requirements**

To ensure continuity and completion of instructional programs, it is important that all children attend school regularly. Regular attendance is important to academic and social success and mandated by law for children between the ages of six and sixteen. State law requires that children attend school 180 days each year. A student who is absent from school, arrives at school after 12:00, or is sent home from school early is ineligible to participate in any co-curricular activity, competition, or program held during the afternoon or evening of that day.



### **Attendance/Tardiness Committee**

The principal, the school nurse, the guidance counselor and other staff, as needed, make up the Whitehouse School Attendance/Tardiness Committee. This committee reviews student attendance and arrival patterns. You will be notified if we are concerned about your child's attendance/tardiness or if the number of absences approaches the twenty-day limit established by New Jersey state law. We will discuss the reasons for your child's absences/tardiness and determine an appropriate solution.

### **Chronic/Lengthy Illness**

If your child has a chronic health issue that causes frequent absences, please call and discuss the situation with the school nurse. We are very sensitive to issues of this nature and will work with you to see that your child receives the best possible support and educational program we can offer.

### **Family Vacations**

Days taken for family vacations are not considered excused absences. Therefore, it is best to schedule vacations when school is not in session. If your family does take vacation during the school year, advance schoolwork is difficult to provide. The "hands-on" and differentiated instruction that goes on in our classes daily, do not always make it possible for teachers to provide work in advance for students going on vacation. They may recommend reading material and suggest that children keep a written or picture journal of their trip.

### **Make-up Work**

If you wish to have the teacher prepare homework for your child when out of school, you may request this when you report the absence. If your child will be absent for a day or two, he or she will most likely not need to have make-up work sent home and will be given time and assistance upon return to make up work. If you expect that your child will be out for an extended period of time, please make arrangements to speak with the teacher to discuss the possibility of sending assignments home. These assignments can be brought home by siblings or neighbors, or picked up after 3:20 p.m. in the school office.

## **Reporting Absences**

When you know that your child will be absent, please notify the school as soon as possible by calling the main number, 534-4411, and leaving a message in the attendance mailbox. Please include your child's name, the teacher's name, the reason for the absence and his or her estimated date of return to school. As an additional safeguard, we ask that you call the school each day that your child is absent. We retrieve our attendance messages after 9:00 a.m. each day. If a child is absent and no call is on record, a member of the school staff will contact you to ensure that your child is safe.

## **Returning to School**

After each absence we require a note, addressed to the nurse, and signed by you when your child returns to school. A doctor's note is only necessary in the case of a lengthy illness or for a communicable disease. We are required to keep these notes for the year.

## **Tardiness**

School begins promptly at 8:30 a.m. If your child arrives after that time, please accompany him or her to the office and sign the late register. The office staff will give the child a late pass and, in order to minimize the interruption, allow him or her to proceed quietly to class. Please understand that it is not safe to drop off your child at the front door alone and that it can be disruptive to walk him or her to the classroom.

# **GENERAL INFORMATION**

## **Animals in the Classroom**

Because of safety and medical issues, we cannot allow animals in the classroom without prior approval. If you have arranged approval with the teacher and acquired the permission of the principal, you may bring the animal, caged or leashed, to school. However, animals are not permitted to travel to or from school on the bus.

## **Backpacks/Book Bags**

Children are expected to have a backpack in order to transport homework and other materials. The size of the backpack should be age-appropriate. For safety purposes, the backpack should not have wheels.

## **Before and After School Child Care**

The Deer Path YMCA offers before and after school care service. It is a private arrangement that is between the parent and the YMCA. Although the program uses the school building, it is not under the direction of school personnel. If you are interested in arranging this service, you may contact the YMCA at 908-236-4184 for more information. If a change in bus transportation is necessary, discuss arrangements directly with the transportation office at 534-3835 and complete the necessary paperwork.

## **Bicycles**

Students in grades K-3 are not permitted to ride their bicycles to school.

## **Birthday Celebrations**

Birthdays are special times for children and their families. Many families include some or all of the child's classmates in the celebrations. Childrens' feelings can be easily hurt. Therefore, please do not send your child to school with birthday invitations to distribute unless there is one for every child in the class.

## **Class Trips**

During the year, our teachers plan class trips that are designed to enhance and enrich the content of the curriculum. Prior to a class trip, your child's teacher will send home trip details and costs accompanied by a permission slip for you to sign. We will not be able to take your child on the trip unless we receive your signed permission. In the event that a trip is canceled or postponed, the teacher will contact the class. If you do not want your child to go on a class trip, your child is still required to attend school that day. We will provide an alternate program in school for him or her on the day of the trip.

## **Computers & Technology**

Each classroom has several computer stations. In addition, students and teachers have access to a fully equipped computer lab and numerous laptops. Each teacher also has access to the Internet in his/her classroom, as well as software that supports math, reading, writing, and keyboard skills for instructional use with students.

Our children do not have regular Internet access, but they have access to research materials and software packages that are part of the district's network. The library is also fully automated and each library computer has access to the Internet.

The "Acceptable Use Policy" provides information on the rules governing the use of computers, the local area network, and Internet access. You will need to sign (electronically) a copy of this policy early in the school year.

### **Dangerous Articles/Violent Actions or Threats**

Recent events have raised our awareness as to the seriousness of violent threats, actions, or possession of any dangerous article on school property, by even the youngest of children. We will act immediately and decisively if any of these conditions occur. District policy requires that we contact the superintendent and the police if a child of any age commits or threatens to commit a violent act or brings a dangerous item to school. In addition, school suspension could follow. Please be vigilant. Make sure your child does not have access to potentially dangerous articles. Also, it is most important that you discuss with your child the seriousness of any action or threat of action that can be considered dangerous to himself, his peers, or any member of our learning community. Students must refrain from writing about or illustrating pictures that depict violence.

### **Discipline/Code of Conduct**

All district students are expected to comply with [Policy #5600 – Student Discipline/Code of Conduct](#). At Whitehouse School, we consider discipline to be a teaching tool that can help students achieve self-discipline. In the early grades, most discipline issues are minor and are handled by the classroom teacher. If this occurs, the teacher or other member of the staff will offer your child a simple reminder and/or a brief time-out followed by a private discussion of the problem. If the need arises, the teacher may discuss these issues with you and ask for your suggestions for working with your child to help build self-discipline. If necessary, the teacher will consult with the principal and/or guidance counselor and implement a behavior management plan. Harassment, intimidation, and bullying behaviors will also be addressed and may lead to consequences. In the event that the behavior is very disruptive or involves fighting, injuring others, or damaging school property, the principal will be involved and you will be contacted. Disciplinary measures will follow. It is our hope that children receive the same message about behavior expectations from school and home.

### **Dressing for School**

School is an active and interesting place and children are rarely still for long periods of time. Please be sure your child dresses in clothing that is comfortable and that can be independently managed. Children should dress in a neat, clean, and safe manner. Play clothes with sneakers are ideal and recommended because they are comfortable and

allow the children to safely participate in all activities without restrictions. Children are required to wear sneakers in gym class. Children should not wear flip-flops to school at any time. When flip-flops are worn in crowded hallways and stairwells, children often, inadvertently, step on the back of the flip-flops of the child in front. Parents who choose to send their child to school in open-toe or slip-on style shoes, should have him/her bring sneakers for recess and gym class. Without the appropriate footwear, children will not be able to fully participate in recess and gym class, as they may be asked to sit out during activities for safety reasons. Children go outside for recess, weather permitting. At times, gym classes are also held outdoors. Please be sure that your children are dressed appropriately for the weather each day so that your child may enjoy his or her time outside. Students wear hats outdoors, only unless religious or medical reasons would necessitate the wearing of them indoors. Other special exceptions may include occasional school-wide spirit days such as team sport days or crazy hat days. For art class, we ask you to provide a smock or an old shirt that will be kept in the classroom for the duration of the school year.

### **Early Intervention**

In order to support the development of strong early literacy and/or mathematics skills, we offer the services of specialists in reading and in math. Our specialists are skilled professionals adept at assisting children when they are experiencing difficulty acquiring early literacy and math skills. They work closely with the classroom teachers and assist children, as needed. Students who score substantially below expectations on district developed assessment instruments or standardized tests may be recommended for these programs by their teachers.

### **English as a Second Language (ESL)**

The district provides the services of a teacher who specializes in instructing children for whom English is a second language. The ESL teacher works with eligible children, one at a time, or in a small group. Eligibility for the program is determined by the ESL teacher following an assessment of the child's English language skills and services are provided with permission of the parents.

### **Enrichment**

Enrichment provides voluntary opportunities available to all students that extend the curriculum beyond regular classroom exercises. Activities might include Sunshine Math, Kids' Pages, Science Fair, and writing contests.

### **Fire Drills**

We conduct fire drills each month. During each fire drill, students silently evacuate the building in a quick and orderly manner. Our goal is to make our children comfortable

with this process and trained to act appropriately in case an emergency would necessitate the evacuation of the building.

### **Gift and Talented (G & T)**

The G&T program is a needs based pull-out program designed to challenge the top 2% to 5% of learners, as mandated by the state of New Jersey. The primary focus for kindergarten and first grade is on active reading and math extension. Cross-curricular units of study are emphasized for second and third graders.

### **Guardianship of Students**

If you are separated, divorced or a single parent, it is important that you provide us with a copy of up-to-date custody papers. This will ensure that we have the correct information needed to release a child to the proper, responsible adult. In cases of foster care, and/or other guardianship situations, the legal guardian(s) of the child may need to confer with the school staff concerning custody issues. In cases where conflicts may exist, please notify the office and meet with the principal to share, in confidence, the original custody documents and discuss the issues related to custody and the school's responsibility to the custodial and non-custodial parents. The principal will share the information, in confidence, with appropriate members of the school staff. It is important that everyone responsible for the child have a clear understanding about who may or may not come to school to request release of the child.

### **Guidance**

A guidance counselor with expertise in working with young children is available to assist teachers and parents when children need special support. The counselor can provide individual counseling or small group activities if your child is experiencing school or family difficulties. The counselor also provides whole class lessons on such topics as bullying and making friends. Ongoing individual and small group services from the counselor will not begin without verbal consent from parents. The guidance counselor also works closely with the teachers throughout the year.

### **Intervention and Related Services (I&RS)**

The I&RS Committee is made up of the guidance counselor, learning consultant, early intervention specialist, special education teacher, and several trained staff members. Parents may also participate in the meeting regarding their child. This team meets, as needed, each month to assist teachers with students who are having academic, social, or emotional difficulties. If a teacher wishes to ask for the help of the committee, he or she may do so through the guidance counselor. The committee reviews the information presented by the teacher and makes recommendations to help the teacher meet the child's needs. This is a regular education service.

## **Lockdown Drills**

For safety purposes, we practice lockdown drills throughout the year. Lockdown drills are designed to restrict the movement of people within the building in the event of an intruder, a natural disaster, or another unforeseen event that would prohibit people from exiting the building freely. During a lockdown drill, students and staff will remain in locked classrooms, move away from windows, shut off the lights, and close the window shades. Each year, we will explain this process to the children prior to implementing these drills. Our goal is to make our children comfortable with this procedure and train them to react appropriately in the case of an emergency that would necessitate activating this code.

## **Lockout Drills**

A modified lockdown or "lockout" takes place when there is a remote or potential external threat to occupants of the school. The following takes place:

- The school remains locked and no one is permitted to enter the building.
- Classes proceed as normal.
- Staff and children remain inside the building.

## **Lost and Found**

All lost and found items are placed in a lost and found area in the Cafetorium. Please check there for missing items. Also, remember to mark your child's clothing and personal belongings with his or her name.

## **Money**

When it is necessary to send money to school, please place it in a sealed envelope or zip-lock bag that is clearly labeled with your child's name, the teacher's name, and the purpose for the money. Be sure your child does not come to school with more money than he or she needs. Send exact change whenever possible, especially for lunch purchases.

## **Parking**

The parking lot that is adjacent to the Main Entrance is primarily used for staff. However, there are several spaces for visitors. If you are dropping-off or picking-up your child for the before school or after school programs, please use the front doors nearest the Cafetorium for entrance.

## **Personal Property**

Children may not bring radios, tape players, CD players, video games, cameras, expensive watches, toys, large sums of money, cell phones, pagers, fad items, etc., to school. (This includes the popular trading and game cards.) School personnel cannot assume responsibility for these items and they can easily be lost, broken, or stolen. In most cases they are a distraction to the instructional process. If brought to school, the item will be taken from the student for return to the parents.

## **Recess**

Recess is scheduled daily, weather permitting, in all grade levels. Children go outside together and are supervised by the classroom teachers. Please have children dress appropriately for the weather.

## **Registration**

Children entering kindergarten must be five years of age on or before October 1 of the year for which they are registering. First grade students must be six years of age by the same date of their first grade year. You may request copies of the Board of Education policies governing early admission to kindergarten or first grade from the staff in the office. Kindergarten registration is usually held in early spring. Information about the dates is available from the school office, as well as posted on the website.

In order to register a child for any grade, you will have to contact the district Board of Education office for an appointment. You will have to complete a registration form and bring the following original documents: birth certificate, proof of residency (deed, lease, or contract of sale), and immunization records signed by a physician. Immunizations must be up-to-date, signed by the physician, and be on file 10 days from the first day of attendance. For students transferring during the year, the sending school will provide up-to-date copies of health and academic records. At registration, parents complete a transfer request for records, which the office staff mails to the prior school.

## **School Property and Books**

In the primary grades, many of the materials are "hands-on" and are kept at school. Your child may take home library books, math games, and reading materials belonging to the school so that he or she can share them with you. Please help your child to carefully keep track of all such items. He or she is responsible to return all school-owned items in good condition, or you will be asked to replace them. In addition, in the event that your child defaces any school property, you will be expected to repair or replace that property.



## **Snacks**

Your child should bring a snack to school each day. These snacks should be nutritious, easy for your child to manage and something that your child enjoys eating. Please do not include items such as candy, soda, or anything in a glass container. Individual classroom teachers will notify parents of the exact time for snack in their classroom. You will receive special notification if your child is scheduled in a class that is "nut-free", etc. due to severe allergies.

## **Special Education Services**

A Child Study Team, whose members include a school psychologist, a learning disabilities teacher consultant, and a social worker, is available to evaluate students and determine eligibility for special education services. Parents of special education students transferring from another district must inform the school and contact the Child Study Team as part of the enrollment process. The team members are professionals with special training in the evaluation of a child's learning potential and current academic achievements. Child Study Team evaluations are completed in accordance with state and federal legislation and cannot begin without a parent's signed consent.

The district has a variety of programs to assist youngsters who require special intervention: pre-school handicapped classes, special education classes, resource centers, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech & language therapy. With parental permission, children are placed in these programs and their progress is carefully monitored.

When a child is evaluated by the team, an evaluation plan is created in consultation with the child's parents. Members of the team observe the child in the classroom and assess the child, one-on-one, in a private testing environment. They also interview the parents as part of the evaluation. Testing by other health and/or educational professionals may also be recommended and included in the child's evaluation plan. Once testing is completed, parents meet with the team to review its findings and, if the child is eligible for services, the team and the parents discuss and create the child's Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). With the parents' consent, the child then receives services as outlined in the IEP. The team meets with the parents at the end of each year to review the child's progress and make recommendations for the following year.

## **Speech and Language Therapy**

Speech and language therapists provide assistance to children requiring speech and/or language therapy. If a child needs the services of a speech and language therapist, the parents must provide permission and an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) will be developed for the child. The IEP will be implemented only after the therapist has received the parent's signed permission.

## **Substitute Staff Members**

The district provides certified substitutes for staff members who are not able to be in school during the regular school day. If there is no substitute nurse available, we make arrangements for medications to be administered by another district nurse or by the child's parent. In that case, a staff member will notify you immediately if your child is ill or if there is some question affecting his or her health.

## **Telephone Use**

Your child may use the classroom or office telephones only under the supervision and direction of an adult. Teachers may ask children to contact you if they have forgotten their lunch, lunch money, or homework. Your child may also contact you if there are changes in after-school activities. If you need to contact your child in the case of a family emergency, please call the office at 534-4411 and speak with the office personnel.

## **Transfers**

Please notify the office staff in writing regarding a child's pending transfer out of school. This will allow us to update school records and plan a suitable farewell for your child. Before your child leaves the school, he or she will be expected to return library books and other property belonging to the school. You will be required to complete a transfer card indicating the name and address of the new school your child will be attending. Once you have registered your child in the receiving school, that school will request official records. These records will be mailed from Whitehouse School directly to the new school.

## **Transportation**

The transportation department schedules buses based on home addresses. In order to arrange for pick-up and drop-off at a sitter's house, you will have to contact the transportation office directly at (908) 534-3835. These arrangements have to be made each year. If an emergency situation requires an unanticipated change in babysitting arrangements, contact the transportation office directly to arrange the necessary change. We are not able to make bus or bus stop changes in order to accommodate play dates. You and your child will be notified of the bus route, the bus stop, the time of pick-up and the time of drop-off shortly before school begins.

Your child may not board the bus at any other place than their assigned stop. Once boarded, he or she should be seated and belted until the bus arrives at its destination. In accordance with P.L. 1992 c.92, mandatory use of seat belts on school buses became effective in September 1994.

During the ride, children may engage in quiet conversation. They may not change seats, put their feet in the aisles, eat or disrupt the bus ride in any way. Please bring concerns about the behavior of children on the bus to the bus driver or principal's attention immediately. We make every effort to work with children who exhibit disruptive bus behaviors. However, considering the safety implications of such behaviors, children who disrupt the ride or repeatedly engage in dangerous behavior may be denied transportation on the bus for a specified amount of time or be disciplined, as determined by the principal. The school staff periodically reviews bus safety with the children and we would like you to do the same.

### **Visitors**

We all agree that our schools must be safe places in which our children can feel free to learn. As one measure to ensure that Whitehouse School is safe for all of our children, parents and other visitors are expected to enter through the front door after being "beeped-in" and proceed immediately to the main office. We require that you sign-in and obtain a visitor's badge each time that you visit. At the end of your visit, please stop in the office, sign-out, and return your badge.

Staff members are required to stop and question any adult, other than a district staff member, who is in the building without the proper badge. Our external doors are kept locked during the school day. The office staff monitors the front entrance through a security camera and visitors are admitted in response to the door buzzer.

### **Website**

Parents may visit the district website at [www.readington.k12.nj.us](http://www.readington.k12.nj.us) to obtain information about the district's four schools and central office happenings. The Whitehouse School section of the website is updated regularly during the school year. It provides staff information and an overview of the curriculum and programs.

### **World Languages Program**

Our Spanish language program is taught by an elementary world language teacher. The Spanish language and culture are shared with our students. The program is designed as an overview to develop awareness and interest in world languages and Spanish-speaking cultures outside of the United States.

## **HEALTH SERVICES**

### **Allergies**

If your child has any allergies or takes any medications, it is important to share this information with the school nurse. The nurse puts the teachers on alert about the allergic condition so that proper steps are taken to ensure your child's well-being. The parent should update this information annually or as changes occur.

### **Communicable Diseases**

If your child has a communicable disease such as chicken pox, strep throat, etc., he or she may not remain in school. Your child will be permitted to return to school once necessary medical steps have been taken and he or she has recovered. It is important, however, to remain in contact with the school nurse about your child's health.

### **Emergency Information**

Early in the school year, please review your contact information in our student information system (Genesis). We will need you to carefully review it in order to confirm its accuracy. Please make any necessary changes as soon as possible. The information will be made available to school personnel and must be up-to-date. It will also be used as parental permission for emergency medical treatment at the Hunterdon Medical Center or another hospital, if needed.

If moving within the district, changing jobs, etc., parents must notify the school of these changes before they occur. Failure to do so would place your child at risk, should an emergency occur during the school day.

### **Health Services**

In order to provide an environment where all children are safe and are not unnecessarily exposed to communicable diseases, each school in the district has a full-time certified school nurse. The school nurse is a licensed, registered nurse whose responsibilities include maintaining student health records and providing emergency assistance when children are ill or injured. Teachers send children to the nurse when they appear ill or complain of stomach aches, headaches, etc. Children who are injured in the classroom, on the playground, or during physical education instruction are immediately referred to the nurse. Each visit is recorded in the nurse's log and a referral form is completed. A copy of this form is sent home with the child.

At the beginning of the school year, the district-appointed physician reviews the nurse's standing orders and authorizes him or her to treat minor illnesses or injuries, as well as to dispense medication under the guidelines of state law and district policy. The nurse may apply ice to a bump, a topical ointment and/or Band-Aid to a cut, conduct checks for head-lice, and administer hearing and vision screenings depending on the child's need and district requirements. Annual screenings may include height, weight, and blood pressure. Additional information regarding screenings can be found on the website under Health Services. The nurse cannot administer over-the-counter or prescription drugs without additional permission from the child's physician and/or parents or guardians.

### **Illness or Injury**

If the nurse determines that your child is too ill to stay in school or if your child has been injured and needs additional medical attention, parents will be contacted to pick up your child. Children should be picked up from school as quickly as possible. If your child is sent home with a fever and/or vomiting, and/or diarrhea, he/she should not return to school for at least 24 hours of being symptom-free. If your child has a temperature of 100 degrees or higher, he/she must be fever-free for 24 hours **without** the use of fever-reducing medications such as Advil or Tylenol. Also, please keep your child at home if he or she has a contagious disease or condition such as a stomach virus, impetigo, chicken pox, roseola, Fifth's Disease, strep throat, conjunctivitis (pink eye), head lice, etc., until it is medically appropriate for him/her to return to school. Please feel free to contact the school nurse with questions regarding your child's return to school.

### **Insurance**

Your child is covered by accident insurance, provided by the Board of Education, during the school day and on class trips. This policy is supplemental to any other insurance for your child. If your child is injured in school or on a class trip, the nurse will provide information about the insurance claim process. The district's student insurance company also makes additional coverage available for a fee. Information about this coverage will come home with your child at the beginning of the school year.

### **Immunizations and Physicals**

If your child is a newly enrolled student, immunization documentation is required by the state of New Jersey. The school nurse will update parents with the most current information about these requirements.

## **Medical Awareness Information**

It is the parents' responsibility to update medical information regarding their child. Significant and pertinent information will be shared with the staff. The information is confidential, but critical to the health and well-being of the children.

## **Medication on Class Trips**

School employees, except for a certified school nurse or nurse substitute, may not administer medication to students at any time, not even on a class trip. The nurse or your child's teacher will contact parents to discuss arrangements prior to the class trip, if necessary.

## **Medication in School**

The parents or designated adult must bring all medications and nutritional supplements to the nurse in the original container. Only the nurse may administer medication or nutritional supplements in school. Prescription and over-the-counter medication must be accompanied by a signed note from the physician, as well as by a note from the parent. All medication and nutritional supplements must be stored in the nurse's office. Your child is not permitted to keep any of these items in his/her backpack or desk. Supervised self-medication may be permitted in certain cases (for example allergies and asthma) with physician and parent consent.

# **FAMILY AND SCHOOL CONNECTION**

## **Back-to-School Night**

Early in the school year, parents will be invited to attend Back-to-School Night. The purpose of this evening session is to provide an opportunity to meet the school staff and hear about programs and activities that are scheduled for the year. The officers of Readington's Home & School Association (H.S.A.) will be present to share information about the goals and activities of this organization and to give parents a chance to become involved members. During this evening, there will not be time for an individual conference concerning your child. Please call the teacher and arrange for a different time to address your individual concerns.

## **Communication During Weather Emergencies**

Please do not call the school office when bad weather or another emergency develops, as we need to use all phone lines for outgoing calls at that time. In order to keep parents informed, we will activate an automated emergency phone call message.

Keeping your child's emergency information up-to-date will provide the school with current information in the event of an emergency.

### **Communication with Teachers and the School**

It is important that the school and home communicate frequently. Please contact your child's teacher as soon as possible if there is a question or a concern. If it is necessary to speak with a teacher or to set up a conference, write a note and send it in with your child. A message may also be emailed or left on the teacher's voicemail at school. Teachers will usually return calls and respond to notes or emails within 24 hours. They will readily set up a mutually convenient time to meet or speak with parents.

Like all other professionals, our teachers will want to be prepared and to be as helpful as possible at conferences. In the early morning, teachers are busy preparing for the day, working with children, meeting with colleagues, etc. At the end of the day, teachers are often engaged in staff meetings, preparing for the next day, and/or returning home to their own families. Please call in advance to make an appointment to see a teacher. This will allow him/her to plan his or her schedule assuring that there is adequate time to address concerns. In an emergency situation, the principal, guidance counselor, or another representative of the school administration will do his/her best to meet with parents as soon as possible to address concerns.

Teachers send most written communication home through email or with your child in his or her backpack. Please make it a daily routine to check your child's backpack and to read the information provided by the district or the school. If divorced, separated, or if guardianship arrangements with relatives exist, please share information with each person who needs to know. We will arrange conferences with non-custodial parents, but our primary responsibility is to communicate with the parent or guardian with whom your child resides. If it is necessary to have information sent separately to a location other than the child's residence, the child's teacher must be given self-addressed, stamped envelopes. The teacher will do his/her best to mail pertinent information in a timely fashion. It may not always be possible, however, for us to send every notice. The best plan is for parents to communicate school information directly with each other.

At the school-wide level, an electronic (Genesis) blast will be sent out once per week (usually on Wednesdays). This email will contain information about, and links to, the latest happenings.

### **Homeroom Parents**

Each class has one or more homeroom parents who help the teacher with special projects, field trips, and celebrations. These parents are selected by the H.S.A. through a lottery system after class lists are published in late August. The H.S.A. and/or the

school may call upon homeroom parents to help with other activities during the year, as needed.

### **Homework**

Homework is designed to reinforce skills and concepts taught in the classroom and to help children develop study skills and independence. Please provide a quiet work space for your child and establish a routine for ensuring that your child is able to complete his or her homework, as assigned. Student needs differ, so some assignments may vary from teacher to teacher at the same grade level and from student to student in the same class. Teachers will guide the children and their parents as they work together on assignments at home.

### **Orientation and Information Sessions**

Prior to school opening in the fall, parents are invited to tour the school with their child and visit his or her classroom during the scheduled visitation time. We offer this "Open House" to help relieve any anxiety that your child is feeling prior to the start of the new school year and to build excitement about the upcoming year. Children in kindergarten typically take a bus ride through town on that day.

### **Parent Organizations**

**Home & School Association (H.S.A.):** The Home & School Association is the parent group of Readington Township Schools. This group supports the efforts of the staff and the Board of Education for the benefit of our children. The group encourages parents to join the H.S.A. at the beginning of each school year and to become involved in the various events it sponsors. The H.S.A., through its parent-supported fundraisers, provides programs for our children that extend what is provided through district funds. Assembly programs, book fairs, mini-courses, holiday shopping, mini-grants for teachers, Winterfest, the Halloween Read-In, and movie nights are examples of what the H.S.A. sponsors to enrich the school experiences of our children. H.S.A. funds also support the library and help with the funding of other school projects. Without volunteers from the H.S.A., your child's school experience would not be as well-rounded and diverse. We encourage parents to volunteer and to support the fundraising efforts of the H.S.A.



## **Parent/Teacher Conferences**

Formal parent/teacher conferences are held in the fall and may be scheduled in the spring of each year. A conference is scheduled with each parent. The conference is designed to provide both the parents and the teacher with an opportunity to exchange information, share portfolio assessment results and discuss the child's academic, social, and emotional progress. The teacher will share examples of student work and parents will be asked to share insights and discuss any issues that may impact the child's success in school. It is a formal opportunity that the district provides for parents each year, but informal discussions are encouraged all year, and conferences can be set up with the child's teacher at any mutually convenient time, as the need arises.

## **Report Cards**

Report cards are accessed electronically. The purpose of a report card is to share your child's progress. If there are questions about your child's performance, it is not necessary to wait until report cards are distributed before contacting the teacher. Teachers will arrange a mutually convenient time to discuss your child's work whenever requested, and parents should be contacted well in advance of report card distribution if there is cause for concern.

## **Teacher Assignments**

Placing students in classes for the coming school year is challenging. Many variables are considered when making each decision. For instance, a child's personality and ability to interact with other students is reviewed. In accordance with the district's heterogeneous grouping philosophy, balanced academic groups are established. In addition, the relative compatibility of student and teacher is considered. The goal is to provide the very best learning environment possible for your child.

Prior to the start of school, in late August, parents will be notified of their child's teacher assignment. ***Requests for specific teachers cannot be accepted.*** However, each year, in the spring, parents have the opportunity to submit, in writing, any special educational concerns that would influence a child's placement. Factors might include academic, emotional, or social issues. Parents may be concerned about conflicts between students and/or other similar issues that could adversely affect their child's progress in school. It is important that such concerns are received, in writing, before class assignments are finalized.

## **Title I - Parental Involvement**

Please [click here](#) for District Policy 2415.04.

### **Volunteers**

Parents are welcomed and encouraged to volunteer in the school, in the classroom, and for the H.S.A. During Back-to-School Night, parents can sign up to help with classroom projects, school and district activities, and H.S.A. functions. Parents may volunteer to chair or assist with special events at school and through the H.S.A. or to participate in activities in their child's classroom. At the district level, we encourage involvement with curriculum and other district-wide committees. Parents should not bring younger siblings to school when volunteering.

## **LUNCH PROGRAM**

### **Bringing Lunch from Home**

Your child may bring lunch from home on any school day. For safety reasons, drinks in glass containers are not permitted. Children who bring lunch from home may purchase milk or bottled water from cafeteria service personnel.

### **Free and Reduced Price Lunches**

At the beginning of the school year, information about free and reduced lunch prices is made available by the district. If your family is eligible for this assistance, please complete the requested income information, sign the form, and return it to the school. The information provided determines your child's eligibility for a reduced price or free lunch and will be kept in strictest confidence.

### **Ice Cream and Snack Purchases**

Children in second and third grade may purchase snacks at lunchtime. Please be sure that your child has a clear understanding about what he or she is to buy. Snacks are available at specific times and children are called to purchase these items only after they have had sufficient time to eat their main meal.

### **Menus and Lunch Purchase**

A private company, under contract with the Board of Education, operates the lunch program for the district. At the beginning of each school year, information about lunch

prices and standard menu choices will be sent home. Your child may choose milk or bottled water when lunch is purchased. Menus are posted electronically at the beginning of each month and we ask that parents review the menu choices with their child. If your child comes to school without lunch or without lunch money, he or she will be given a plain bagel bag.

Lunches can be paid for with cash at the checkout line, or cash/check may be sent in on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. Checks should be made payable to the *Readington Township Board of Education* and sent to your child's classroom teacher. The classroom teacher will forward your check or money to the appropriate school personnel. In addition, a secure online pre-payment service is available to deposit money into your child's school meal account at any time. This service provides you with the ability to view your child's account balance through a website called *myschoolbucks.com*.

Parents are not permitted to join their children for lunch or to bring outside orders (such as McDonald's) to the lunch room.