

PELHAM SCHOOL

HANDBOOK

2021-2022



**45 Amherst Road
Pelham, MA 01002
(413) 362-1100**

**At Pelham Elementary,
we show our...**



-  Practice kindness**
-  Accept responsibility**
-  Work together**
-  Show respect**

Welcome to Pelham School



Dear Parents/Guardians of Pelham Elementary School,

Updated letter from principal

Pelham School Mission Statement

At Pelham Elementary School, we recognize the uniqueness of each student and commit ourselves to teaching the whole child. We provide a nurturing learning environment where each child feels welcome, worthy, and valued. We establish a culture that fosters creativity, instills passion for learning, supports character development, and promotes good citizenship.

We believe that parents are a vital part of their child's development and education. We aim to improve academic achievement through a rigorous curriculum in all areas and in holding students to high expectations by taking responsibility for their own learning.

Information at Your Fingertips

PELHAM SCHOOL WEBSITE: <https://www.arps.org/>

Pelham School Office:

Hours: 8:00 AM-4:00 PM

Telephone: 413- 362-1100

Absent Hotline: 413-362-1198

Fax: 413-253-4108

Superintendent: Michael Morris 413-362-1810

Office and Other Staff:

Interim Principal:	Micki Darling
Co-Leader/School Adjustment Counselor:	Jess Nardizzi
Administrative Secretary:	Brinay Jackson
School Nurse/Special Education Secretary:	Katy Guisti
Head Custodian:	Amy VanOudenhove

Lunch Prices:

The federal program providing free meals (breakfast and lunch) for all students will continue during the 2021-2022 school year.

School Hours:

Monday - Friday: 8:10-2:40

School Closing or Delays:

District information line: 362-1898

Responsibility for closing schools because of snow or other severe weather rests with the Superintendent or, if the Superintendent is not in town, the designee. The decision to cancel or delay school due to snow will ordinarily be made before 6:00 a.m.

School cancellation for severe weather or other emergencies will be announced on the following radio stations:

WRNX/WTTT – Amherst 1430 AM

WHMP – Northampton 1400 AM or 99.3 FM

WHAI – Greenfield 1240 AM or 98.3 FM

WHYN – Springfield 93.1 FM

WMAS – Springfield 94.7 FM

WPVQ – Greenfield 93.9 FM

Channel 22 – Springfield Channel 40 – Springfield

Should a weather-related or other type of emergency arise during the school day, it may be necessary to dismiss students after school has begun. Parents/guardians would be notified at their emergency contact numbers to ensure that all children can return home safely. The district may also notify parents/guardians via the School Messenger system of an emergency closing.

Pelham School Staff 2018-2019

Administration	Position	Phone Extensions	Email
Micki Darling	Interim Principal	1101	darlingb@arps.org
Jess Nardizzi	Co-Leader/Counselor	1104	nardizzij@arps.org
Brinay Jackson	Administrative Assistant	1102	Jacksonb@arps.org
Professional Staff	Classroom Teacher		
William Lawrie	Kindergarten	1130	lawriew@arps.org
Giselle Gonzalez	Grade 1	1128	gonzalezg@arps.org
Kate Thurston	Grade 2	1118	thurstonk@arps.org
Sara LaPlante	Grade 3	1117	LaPlantes@arps.org
Kelsey Geer	Grade 4	1115	geerk@arps.org
Suzanne Quinlan	Grade 5	1113	quinlans@arps.org
Margaret Light	Grade 6	1111	lightm@arps.org
	Support Staff		
Katy Guisti	Nurse/SE Secretary	1102	Guistic@arps.org
Jess Nardizzi	Counselor	1104	
DeAndre Hinson	Counselor		
Catherine Havens	Speech Language Pathologist	1105	HavensC@arps.org
Leanne Hunt	SE/Intervention- K-3	1125	Huntl@arps.org
Carol Schotte	Interventionist	1120	schottec@arps.org
Kelly Carlisle	SE/Intervention- 4-6	1120	Carlislek@arps.org
	Psychologist	Oasis Room	
Mary Lee Austin	PT		Thorntone@arps.org
Chavae	OT	Room 27	
	Specialists		
Emily Stewart	Art		StewartE@arps.org
Jayshree Krishnan	Computer Technology	1114	krishnanj@arps.org
Kristen Planeaux	Music		planeauxk@arps.org
Eric Arabian	PE		arabiane@arps.org
Heather O'Mara	Orchestra		Omarah@arps.org
Educational Support Professionals	Job Title		
Amy VanOudenhove	Head Custodian	1139	Vanoudenhovea@arps.org
TBD	After school custodian		
Rosalba Booth	Library Paraprofessional	1150	Baroni-boothr@arps.org
Sage Scott	Grade 3 Paraeducator	1130	Scotts@arps.org
Ashley Fuller	Grade 6 Paraeducator	1129	fullera@arps.org
Beata Ciesielska	Grade 2 Paraeducator	1128	Celsielskab@arps.org
Dawn Sawula	Grade 1 Paraeducator	1118	Sawulad@arps.org
Susan Longto	Kindergarten Paraeducator	1115	Longtos@arps.org
Carol Slaughter	Grade 6 Paraeducator	1113	SlaughterC@arps.org
Natalya Kenney	Grade 4/5 Paraeducator	1117	KenneyN@arps.org

The School Day

School Hours: The school day begins at 8:10 am, and ends at 2:40 each day. Any child arriving after 8:20 is considered tardy and should first report to the office. There will be no Playground supervision this year. ***IN ORDER TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF EACH CHILD, IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT CHILDREN NOT ARRIVE BEFORE THIS TIME UNLESS THEY ARE ENROLLED IN THE BEFORE SCHOOL PROGRAM.*** If this should ever present a problem, kindly contact the principal. It is expected that if parents/guardians are picking up a child, they will do so promptly at dismissal. Children waiting for their parents/guardians will be outside the front of the school.

Attendance

Daily attendance is fundamental to a child's success at school. This year all of the schools in Amherst/Pelham will once again be making a concerted, coordinated effort to improve the attendance of our students and to make certain that they arrive at school on time. As instruction begins promptly at 8:10, students that are tardy enter classrooms in which directions and activities are already begun. Students that are on time have a more positive start to the day.

Absences

Parents/guardians are asked to call the absence line, 362-1198 or the main school number, 362-1100, **before 9:00 AM** to report their child's absence. These are voice mail systems to report absences. Please include the reason for the absence so we can determine if it is "excusable" or not. Under Massachusetts law, only the Superintendent and/or his/her designee (in this case the principal) can officially excuse absences. Absences due to illness, death/major family crisis, court case or religious in nature can be excused and parents/guardians can do so by calling the school by the time designated each day the student will be out. If you do not call this number you will receive a message from our School Messenger system, and your child will be marked for an 'unexcused absence'. Absences are tracked daily by office staff who will be monitoring our attendance records. ****A doctor's note is required when your child is absent three or more days from school or when concerns have arisen about a child's attendance**** When a child accumulates a number of absences it begins to seriously impact his/her learning. Therefore, please plan family vacations to coincide with the regularly scheduled school vacation days. Please be aware that three tardies will equal one absence.

Tardiness

Children are expected to be in their classrooms at 8:10 A.M. ready to begin class. Arriving on time helps children settle into their day in school. The beginning of the day is also important since teachers give directions and set an agenda for the day during that time. Please try to ensure that your child arrives at school on time each day. Tardy students must sign in at the main office and take a late pass to class. It is disruptive to the learning process for students to arrive late, therefore we encourage your child's consistent and prompt attendance.

Addressing Concerns about Absences and Late Arrivals

We monitor all students' attendance and late arrivals closely. When we begin to be concerned about the number of student's absences or late arrivals we will contact you to discuss the issue.

Dismissal

If a student is to be dismissed before the end of the day or if there is a change in the way he/she will be going home, this information should be sent in a parent/guardian note to school ahead of time. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to send a note to the child's teacher. Written permission is required for another adult to pick up your child. **If it is an unfamiliar name that is not on the pick-up list, that adult is required to show a picture ID before the child can be dismissed.** If children will be leaving school early or will be going home other than the usual way (e.g. being picked up instead of riding the bus, riding the bus home instead of being picked up, being picked up by a different adult, getting off the bus at a friend's house.)

A NOTE MUST BE SENT TO SCHOOL. These notes will be destroyed at the end of the school year. We request that parents wait in their cars in the Parent Pick-up line at the end of the day.

Visitor Parking:

Space in the school parking lot is limited. **Please be vigilant when parking** because children may be outside playing and in crosswalks. Please do not park on the playground hardtops. (There may not be children there when you arrive, but a class might be on its way out to that playground.) The area in front of the school must be kept clear for buses. Please note that the state law, which prohibits a vehicle passing a school bus that is loading or unloading children, also applies to buses parked in the bus loading area. Parents/guardians should follow the parking plan to drop students off in front of the school in the morning, or park at the back of the library in the designated spaces there for drop off or parent/guardian pick up in the afternoon.

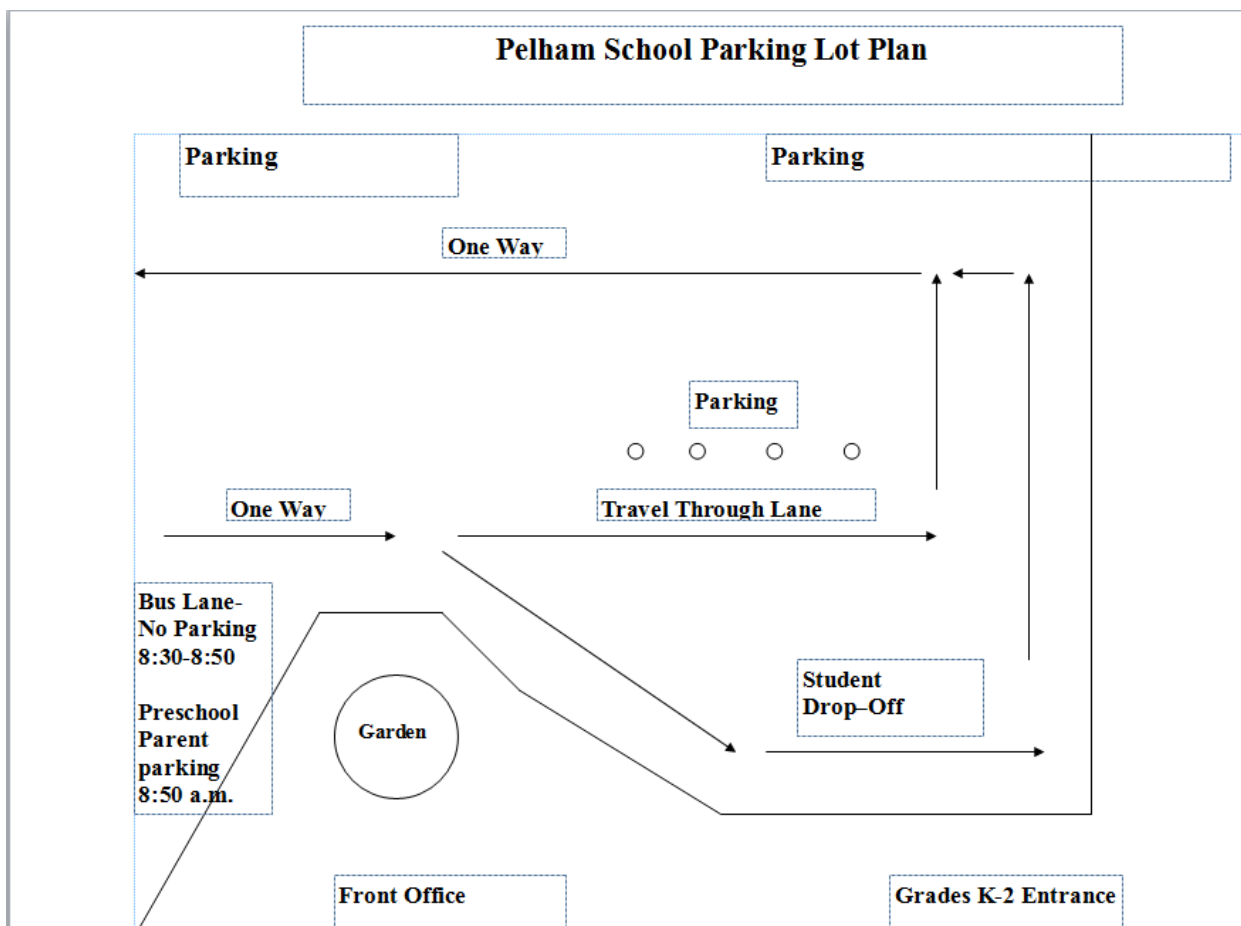
Front Parking Lot Traffic Plan

The parking lot near the front office experiences a high amount of traffic in the morning, and on occasion in the afternoon. Due to the level of activity we have developed a traffic flow plan and request that you please review and help to support. On the following page, a traffic flow map illustrates the drop off point and the direction that traffic will flow. Staff members will be out there daily to monitor and support adherence to this plan. We welcome your feedback and suggestions in making this plan work.

Important Rules to Remember:

- Pull up to drop-off point (nearest spot to K-2) entrance. If there are other cars in front of you, please pull up behind them. Do not try to pull up in front of them as cars pull away from the curb very quickly.
- There is **NO PARKING** in the drop off lane. Parents/guardians are requested to either park in the back parking lot or find a space out front.
- Please **DO NOT** stop by the flower garden to drop off. This backs up traffic into Amherst Road.
- Traffic will be on a one-way flow pattern. Please proceed with caution.
- Please do not drop off and make a U-turn in the parking lot. This is extremely dangerous.
- Students must exit the vehicle in the drop off lane on the passenger side of the car.
- If you plan to park in the parking lot, you **MUST** follow the one-way flow of traffic and go around the parking spaces in the center of the parking lot.

Thank you in advance for your understanding and support in implementing this plan that will increase the safety of our parking lot!



Visiting Classrooms:

Due to Covid, classroom visits are limited for the 2021-2022 school year.

Visitor Admission and Protocols:

Due to Covid, visitors are not allowed to enter the building for the 2021-2022 school year. To best maintain the safety of our students, we will be utilizing the following protocol to monitor visitors during the school day.

- a. All visitors will announce their arrival via the front door after utilizing the door access bell.
- b. School office personnel, the building principal or other authorized person, after visual identification is made, will come out to greet visitors wearing masks.

Field Trips

Due to Covid, many of our field trips that are usually organized throughout the school year to enhance classroom curriculum, will not be permitted. There may be some exceptions, such as walking field trips. Permission from a parent or guardian is required for children to participate. Permission slips will be sent home before each class field trip. Students are expected to follow the same standards of behavior that are expected while on school grounds. Students choosing not to follow these standards of behavior while on a field trip may be returned to school and/or lose the privilege of going on subsequent trips. If there is a cost for field trips that is a financial burden upon parents/guardians, please contact the school as scholarships are available. No student

will be prevented from attending due to financial reasons. **A signed and completed permission slip is required for every field trip.**

Lunch: Children may either bring lunch or receive a school hot lunch (including milk). Each month's menu is sent home so that parents/guardians may plan ahead accordingly, and the monthly menu is posted on the school's web site. Families are encouraged to sign up for meals the night before.

We are pleased to report that the federal program providing free meals (breakfast and lunch) for all students will continue during the 2021-2022 school year.

Before and After School Care: The Pelham Before Care is available from 7:00 a.m. to the start of the school day. The cost is \$4.25 per day. Please contact Dwane Chamble at chambled@arps.org. An independent program of after school child care is available at the school Monday through Friday from the time school is dismissed until 5:30 p.m. Information about fees, activities and space availability may be obtained by emailing pelhamafterschool@gmail.com.

Policies and General Information:

Homework

I. Purpose of Elementary Homework

The district values the balance our students need for academic growth and social emotional growth throughout the hours of school and beyond in the hours outside of school. The district wants our students to understand that learning takes place during the school day and outside of school in all aspects of their lives. There are many learning activities that support the balance of these areas of growth after school including homework, time to pursue other interests, and other activities that children do with their families and friends. Homework should function as a means for families and educators to collaborate on the educational development of their children and is never meant to supplant these other important non-academic activities.

The district homework policy integrates the following three purposes that are meant to promote the relationship between children, teachers, and families:

1. Student Skills

Homework can be helpful in developing students' habits of work and learning. These habits include:

- responsibility
- organization
- independence
- effective time management

Homework can support the practice of academic skills, curriculum concepts, and independent work habits. At the K-4 level, the primary focus of homework is to develop strong foundational literacy skills, in addition to the work done daily during the Literacy and Enhancement Blocks in school. At the 5-6 level, the expectations are designed to prepare students for Middle and High School expectations, while also continuing to engage them in practice of important academic skills.

2. Family Communication

Fostering pathways in our family-school partnerships is a priority in the Amherst schools, and communication about ways to support student learning at home is an essential element in those partnerships. Shared information about educational resources, links to useful sites, and apps for digital access to learning, enable families to make choices about supporting students' ongoing learning outside of school. Homework helps to foster one pathway in our family-school partnerships. Homework can be a window into your child's learning. Homework may also convey strategies being used in the classroom. Classroom newsletters provide additional information from the classroom to connect families to ongoing learning and events in school. In addition, school-wide newsletters that include information on curriculum, school initiatives, events, and learning opportunities for families are yet another way our schools aim to keep families well-informed. Families are also encouraged to have meaningful conversations with their child about what they are learning at school.

3. Student Creativity, Discovery, Play, Fitness, and Opportunities Outside of School

Students' time outside of regular school hours is an ongoing opportunity to be curious, creative, inquisitive and physically active. Play and family time, in balance with homework and other learning occasions, encourages students to communicate, think critically, solve problems, persevere and learn from mistakes.

Appropriate Workload & Balance

Keeping in mind the three purposes explained above, the Amherst & Pelham Public Schools also strive to help children develop an appropriate work-life balance that encourages them to become well-rounded adults. To that end, we are keeping to a practice of thinking about homework assignments as gradually increasing in the amount of time they require in each grade by ten minutes. For example, a first grader would spend an average of 10 minutes on homework, while a sixth grader may spend one hour. While this is not a perfect formula, it is a useful guideline for teachers and families. One exception is that, from time to time, other homework may be assigned to support practice that offers review and reinforcement of learned concepts, to prepare students for upcoming content or assessments, to extend learning to contexts and situations outside the classroom, or to promote creative and critical thinking skills with problem solving, challenges, or maker options.

Additional Enrichment & Practice

Families are encouraged to seek out other ways to enrich their children's learning in meaningful ways. As a means to this, you will find an appendix to this document that includes other suggestions that families and children can do to facilitate stronger learning habits and skills.

II. Responsibilities

Responsibilities of Teachers

- Provide children with homework that corresponds to grade-specific guidelines.
- Prioritize reading at home on a daily basis to foster a love of literacy.
- Ensure homework assignments leave school with clear expectations.
- Provide opportunities for students to ask questions and receive clarification of expectations when assignments are given.
- Make homework as engaging as possible.
- Provide homework assignments that take into account the differences among students so that the work can be completed independently.
- Collaborate with students' other teachers to ensure that the students do not receive an excessive amount of homework across academic areas (Special Education, ELL, Intervention Teachers).
- Share homework expectations at Curriculum Night and in a newsletter that is sent home early in the school year.
- Ensure that families are aware of topics that are being learned in school, so they can opt to extend that learning at home.
- Offer families specific suggestions on how to help their children with homework.
- Review and provide feedback to students that may include self-evaluation and/or tracking of progress, peer feedback, or teacher comments.

Responsibilities of Families

- Support your child's completion of homework by making it a priority on a daily basis and set a routine that works for your family.
- Provide a quiet, well-lit space for your child to do homework.
- Encourage reading for pleasure, and let your child see you reading, too.
- Show confidence in your child's ability; never do your child's homework for him/her.
- Hold your child accountable for getting homework to and from school.
- Let the teacher know if your child is experiencing difficulty with homework.

Responsibilities of Students

- Know homework assignments before leaving school.
- Take homework assignments and all necessary supplies home.
- Spend the expected time on homework each evening.
- Contact a homework buddy for support if there are questions.
- Ask for help when it is needed.
- Submit finished homework to the teacher, neatly done and on time.

Cell Phones: We understand that many students have cell phones to facilitate important communication before and after the classroom. To ensure student attention is focused upon school, students are not permitted to use or view cell phones/ electronic devices during the school day unless granted permission by staff (8:10-2:40 pm). If a parent/guardian must contact a child during the school day, please call the Main Office (362-1100). If a student is using or viewing cell phones/electronic devices (including text messaging, game system and other

functions) in the school building, the cell phone/electronic device will be confiscated and will be returned to only the student's parent/guardian. We also ask all adults to refrain from using cell phones in public areas in our school that may impact teaching and learning. **THIS INCLUDES I Watches**

Telephone Policy: Pelham School has only two lines to serve both incoming and outgoing calls. In order to keep the lines as free as possible, we discourage children from calling home except in emergency situations. We ask parents/guardians for cooperation in helping children make their after-school plans in advance. To minimize distractions during the school day, we also ask that students not bring cell phones to school unless prior arrangements have been made with the teacher.

We ask parents/guardians to plan ahead so that phoning children at school is unnecessary except in emergencies. We will always deliver phone messages from parents/guardians to their children, but under normal circumstances will not page children to come directly to the phone. We will not deliver messages to children from people unknown to us without parent/guardian permission.

Teachers are not generally available to speak with parents/guardians on the phone during the school day. Ordinarily, if a parent/guardian calls a teacher, office staff will take the message, and the teacher will return the call at his or her earliest convenience. Teachers are usually available from 2:45 – 3:30. Some teachers may prefer to correspond through email. Teachers will let parents know the best ways to reach them in their weekly announcements or at the Fall Curriculum Night.

Fragrance-Free School

Several of our community members suffer from a multiple-chemical sensitivity disorder. Their reactions to a variety of fragrances can cause a multitude of symptoms including severe migraines, respiratory difficulty, asthma episodes, vomiting, red itchy eyes, etc. A reaction can be triggered from exposure to the softest scent or to a combination of multiple scents. Each individual responds differently. Potentially, a multitude of perfumes, colognes, lotions, hair products, and clothing cleaned in strongly scented detergents could come into our building on any given day. For this reason we ask children and adults to refrain from wearing fragrances in the school building whenever possible. MCS is caused by repeated low-level exposures to toxic chemicals such as those found in synthetic fragrances, cleaning products, detergents, car fumes, etc or by one acute exposure to a toxic chemical. It is not a contagious disease. It is important that our school environment is healthy for everyone in the community, and especially so for anyone with allergies or asthma. I realize this can be an inconvenience, but we very much appreciate anything you can do on your part to address this situation.

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Standards of Dress and Appearance

These dress code guidelines encourage individuals to dress, groom, and conduct themselves so that they can participate in, benefit from and access the educational environment. These guidelines respect the rights of all and are based on *Massachusetts General Laws Section 83 Dress and Appearance of Students Protected*, which establishes reasonable standards regarding **health, safety, and cleanliness**.

Amherst, Pelham and Amherst-Pelham Regional Public Schools state that individuals should wear clothing that allows them to participate safely in all school activities including specialized learning spaces, such as the swimming pool, gymnasium, shops, etc. Individuals should wear footwear held securely on the feet for protection when on school grounds, aboard school buses and at school events.

Amherst, Pelham and Amherst-Pelham Regional Public Schools state that individuals have the right to freedom of expression through their clothing provided that such right does not cause any disruption or disorder within the school (MA Section 82) or infringe on the rights of others. Disruption, disorder and infringement of rights

can include clothing that contains: words, symbols, suggestions or portrayals of violence, defamation, illegal acts, illegal substance and/or unacceptable products (such as tobacco, alcohol, or drugs).

***The Building Principal will make final decisions about the implementation of the dress code.**

Winter Wear Guidelines

In our elementary schools, children go outside for recess on a daily basis so it is important for them to dress appropriately for the weather. When the temperature is colder outside than it is indoors, children should wear additional clothing (i.e. sweatshirts or jackets and long pants) when going outdoors. When the weather approaches freezing temperatures, the children should have hats, mittens or gloves and warmer clothing when going outdoors. To walk in snow, students must wear waterproof boots, or have a second pair of shoes to be worn inside. To play in the snow, (go sledding, roll around, etc.) students must wear snow pants. Please send your child to school with clothing appropriate for varied weather conditions. In particular, please note that students should have shoes, sneakers or slippers for indoor wear, if they are planning to walk in the snow.

On very cold days our staff will look closely at the wind chill factor in order to ascertain if there is any danger of frostbite. If there is no threat of frostbite, we will hold outdoor recess even on cold winter days. Proper clothing ensures that this winter play is comfortable, safe and fun.

HOW TO KNOW WHEN TO KEEP YOUR CHILD AT HOME

In general, these symptoms warrant keeping a child home for the day:

1.) Fever of 100 or more

Stay home for 24 hours after the fever is gone and encourage fluids.

2.) Vomiting or diarrhea

Stay home for 24 hours after the last episode and encourage fluids.

3.) Sore throat

Note that Strep throat may be present without fever, and may have symptoms of headache and stomach ache.

4.) Runny nose, cough

Often a day or two of rest, and a light diet with extra fluids will help resolve a cold and will help in minimizing the spread of cold virus at school. A child who is feeling run down, losing sleep due to their cold or actively sneezing and coughing is not going to be able to attend to learning.

5.) Earaches

If an earache lasts more than a day or if pain is severe, please see your health provider.

6.) Impetigo or other skin rash

Please have these identified and treated 24 hours before returning to school. Consult with the school nurse with any questions.

7.) Pinkeye or conjunctivitis

A draining, itchy eye that is red must be treated with antibiotic eye medication before the child returns to school.

Please refer to district health policies concerning physical examinations, immunization requirements, accidents, medication policies, vision and hearing tests, head lice, and scoliosis screening in the back of this book.

Internet Safety and Social Networking Sites

The internet is a wonderful and wide reaching tool for adults and children alike. However, it also can pose dangers if precautions are not taken. Unsupervised access can put both your child and your own data at risk from predators. Some children also have access to the internet with cell phones which are even harder for parents to monitor.

Social networking sites, like Facebook have become especially popular with children and teens and can have both benefits and hazards which should be addressed. Though many social networking sites do have age limits, children as young as 7 and 8 have been known to violate these rules by signing up with false birth dates and/or names. In addition, young people often post their full names, contact information and other revealing facts about themselves on their pages. While there are safety features on social networking sites that can prevent strangers from viewing some information, children and teens often do not use these privacy options, and even when they do, their information is never completely private.

Because the content of these networking sites is uncensored, your child can be exposed to all sorts of profanity, inflammatory, violent or sexually-charged language, whether it comes from a “friend,” ads targeting adults, or from other apps they may have purchased. This uncensored on-line environment is the perfect backdrop for ‘cyber-bullying,’ in which students are harassed online (or by cell phone) by other young people. This can take the form of emails, texts, chats, personal quizzes, or photos posted to make another person uncomfortable.

As there are many areas online where students are possibly exposed to confusing and possibly inappropriate and hurtful material, it is important to be actively involved in your children’s internet life and be aware of what sites they are using and how they are presenting themselves. Please contact a school administrator immediately if your child has been a victim of any form of ‘cyber bullying’. Since children and teens are fully involved in experimenting and exploring the internet, their use should be supported in a supervised and productive way so that they will grow to be responsible digital citizens. For more information on keeping your child and yourself safe online, visit some of the following sites: www.wiredsafety.org/, www.staysafeonline.org, <http://webhost.bridgew.edu/marc/>

Lost and found

Any unclaimed, unlabeled items found at school are placed inside the front foyer. Children or parents/guardians who are looking for missing items may check here at any time. Several times during the year, the items will be spread out on tables near the cafeteria in the hope that children may recognize and claim them. Families will be notified when this will take place. Unclaimed items are donated to local charities after the close of the school year.

Items brought from home: Unless you have made a prior special arrangement with your child’s teacher, only books and music should be brought to school for general sharing. Please refrain from allowing your child to bring electronic equipment, or other items that can be broken or misplaced, particularly iPods, Kindles, and other small electronic devices. Knives, toy guns, bullets, and laser pointers are not allowed in school or on the bus. The school cannot be responsible for items that are lost.

Library Policy

The Town of Pelham has a combined school and town library, which serves the needs of both community and the Pelham Elementary School. Each class has a scheduled library time one or two days a week. Students may check out books for two weeks. Some materials (such as some of the school videos and professional materials) do not circulate. During library hours, students may check out books from the children's collection. Students may use the computers in the library to access the computerized library catalogue and the Internet, which is filtered according to the Amherst - Pelham District guidelines. There is a booklet of all the library policies at the circulation desk. In general, students may check out only three books at a time. If a library material is lost or damaged, families will be requested to pay for the cost of replacement. Material will be considered lost when it is six weeks overdue. Material will be considered damaged when its condition is worse than the usual wear and tear on the material, i.e. water and animal damage. Library privileges may be suspended until the lost or damaged material is replaced.

***Students will not be allowed to check out books from the Young Adult section, unless they are in sixth grade AND have a note from their parents/guardians.**

School Bus

Pelham School is served by two school bus routes. Bus stop locations and pick-up times are published in the Daily Hampshire Gazette and the Amherst Bulletin shortly before school begins in the fall. We will also post them on the district web site.


Face coverings will be required for students on buses and bus windows will be open, per public health guidelines. Consistent with state guidance, the buses will no longer require one person per seat. For families who plan to drive their child to school and have sufficient empty space in their vehicles, please consider carpooling with another family (with masks on and open windows as per health guidance). This will help to reduce traffic and congestion at drop off/pick up (as well as reduce ARPS' collective carbon footprint).

Bus Rules

Respectful and safe behavior, both at the bus stops and on the bus, is essential. The bus is where many of our students begin and end their school days, so we want the bus ride to be a positive experience for all. If your child complains of problems on the bus, please let his/her teacher, the principal or assistant principal know immediately.

Children who misbehave on the bus will receive a 'bus conduct report' which will be sent home to be signed. If the problems continue they may have their bus privileges suspended for a period of time. Eligible riders will not be permitted to get off the bus at any stop other than their usual one unless they have a note from a parent/guardian. For their own safety, kindergarten children must be met by a parent/guardian or designated adult at their bus stop or they will be taken back to the school and a parent/guardian will be called to pick them up.

Bus Evacuation programs are held twice a year to review bus safety procedures and to practice evacuation from the bus in case of an emergency.

 State law requires that cars stop whenever a school bus indicates it is loading or unloading children by flashing red lights and showing a stop sign. This law also applies to the bus entrance in front of Pelham School.

BUS RULES (Parents/guardians, please review the following rules with your child.)

1.) WAITING FOR THE BUS

- A.** Be on time for the bus but do not arrive at your bus stop earlier than ten minutes before the time at which the bus usually arrives.
- B.** Do not allow younger children who are not yet attending school to accompany you to the bus stop.
- C.** Observe all safety precautions while waiting for your bus.
 - 1. Do not play in the road.
 - 2. If possible, avoid crossing streets.

3. Whenever you must cross a street, do so only if you are sure that no moving vehicles are approaching you from either direction.
4. Do not push, pull or chase any other pupils.
5. Avoid trespassing on private property and being noisy
- D.** As your bus approaches, line up at least six feet off the highway and do not approach the bus until it has stopped and the driver has opened the door. Again, avoid pushing others in line.

2.) LOADING ON THE BUS

- A.** Get on your bus quickly and be seated at once.
- B.** Listen carefully and obey any directions issued by the driver.

3.) RIDING ON THE BUS

- A.** No food while you are on the bus.
- B.** Do not throw anything while you are on the bus.
- C.** Please keep your arms or any other parts of your body inside the bus at all times. Avoid putting your arms out of the window.
- D.** **DO NOT CHANGE SEATS WHILE THE BUS IS MOVING.**
- E.** Avoid shouting and other excessive noise that may distract your driver and lead to a serious accident.
- F.** Help to keep your bus clean and sanitary.
- G.** Be courteous to other pupils.
- H.** Listen carefully and obey any directions issued by the driver.

4.) UNLOADING FROM THE BUS

- A.** Please stay in your seat until the bus has come to a complete stop and the driver has opened the door.
- B.** Again, obey any directions issued by the driver.
- C.** Leave the bus quickly but in a courteous manner without pushing any other pupils.
- D.** If you must cross a street as you leave the school bus, be sure to walk in front of the bus (never in back) at a distance of at least 12 feet from the bus. If you get too close to the front of the bus, the driver will not be able to see you, and a serious accident could occur.
- E.** Be sure to observe all safety precautions as you travel from your bus stop to your home.

5.) LOSS OF RIDING PRIVILEGES

- A.** Students engaging in inappropriate and/or unsafe behaviors may be suspended from riding the school bus for a specific period of time.
- B.** Any suspensions will be initiated by school principals with prior notification to parents/guardians.
- C.** Suspension of riding privileges for a specific period of time is automatic with a third bus misconduct notice, but suspension for serious infractions may occur after any one infraction.

Cafeteria Rules

Due to Covid, and similar to last year, students will be eating in their classrooms or outside (weather permitting).

School Climate and Responsibilities: A School Where Everyone Feels Safe and Included

Responsiveness Initiative

The Amherst-Pelham Public Schools has established a comprehensive Responsiveness Initiative to ensure that we have a safe learning environment in which all children know that it is “okay to tell” when they feel uncomfortable about a situation at school or in their lives. The message that we want to give to children is that talking to a trusted adult about a concern is the responsible thing to do. We are striving to create a school where our students know that they can speak up about teasing, bullying or anything that is giving them an uncomfortable feeling without fear of retribution, and that adults will listen and respond to remedy the situation. All adults working in the schools have been trained to be a “First Responder” who will listen to our children and then pass on the concerns to a “Second Responder” who is a member of each school’s Responsiveness Committee. At Pelham the “Second Responders” are Micki Darling/Interim Principal, Jess Nardizzi/counselor, and Katy Guisti/Nurse. This group will make sure that each concern that is brought up is examined and

addressed in a timely fashion. Of course, parents/guardians can also communicate issues that their children bring to their attention. At the beginning of each year we will review the importance of ‘responsible telling’.

Social Justice Commitment

The ability to take the perspective of others is an important developmental task for all children to learn. In our elementary schools we attempt to infuse our students’ experiences with opportunities to understand and appreciate others. In creating these learning experiences we build upon children’s natural curiosity and their awareness of the similarities and differences of all human beings. We openly talk to our students about anti racism, embracing differences, and treating others with respect.

The Right to be Safe, Included and Visible

All of the Amherst-Pelham Elementary Schools are dedicated to creating communities in which every family feels welcomed and each child experiences a safe learning environment. We want all children to feel proud of their heritage, to be comfortable being ‘themselves’, and to feel free to express their own interests and talents. It is important to address all types of biases in elementary schools so that we can prevent the development of prejudices and promote respect when children are young. Despite our efforts to create a respectful climate, parents/guardians and students have shared that anti-gay name-calling and exclusion can be a common occurrence in school and may worsen as children get older. Children at an early age may hear the words ‘gay’ or ‘lesbian’ being used as negative put-downs. They may be exposed to derogatory references to gay and lesbian people on T.V., in movies, or from others. In elementary school’s children who do not fit into gender stereotypes are often teased. This harassment causes children to be afraid of being “different” or exploring the interests that they love. Sensing the prevalence of anti-gay sentiments, children from gay and lesbian families may try to hide their family composition at school.

There is much we can do to promote a supportive atmosphere for all children and their families. Prejudice persists when members of a particular group are invisible or are unknown. Mentioning gay and lesbian people in a respectful way or reading stories which include gay and lesbian families or characters will counter these biases. As a staff we will interrupt every incident of anti-gay insults (as we do with all types of name-calling and prejudicial slurs). We will openly discuss why these put-downs are hurtful. Introducing the concept that “love makes a family” showcases all of the different types of families, thus enabling every Pelham student to feel proud of his/her family. It is every family and child’s right to be visible, safe and included in our school.

PBIS

Pelham School is utilizing a PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) model to improve school climate. Our four core values are: **Pelham PAWS: *Practice Kindness, Accept Responsibility, Work Together, and Show Respect.*** We will be teaching those values in a variety of contexts in the school. The PBIS model is a school-wide approach to ensure that we are both clarifying our expectations for student behavior and recognizing the many instances when students are going above and beyond our expectations.

Harassment and Bullying

Harassment and/or bullying of students or staff are extreme violations of the Standards of Behavior. It can also be a violation of civil and criminal law. It will not be allowed in school or at school sponsored activities. Any such offense will result in disciplinary action.

When is it harassment or bullying?

According to Massachusetts State Law: “The repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity, or paraprofessional of a written, verbal, or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at another student that has the effect of: (i) causing physical or emotional harm to the other student or damage to the other student’s property; (ii) placing the other student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property; (iii) creating a hostile environment at school for the other student; (iv) infringing on the rights of the other student at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupting the education process or the orderly operation of a school.”

It is harassment when a student talks inappropriately about a person's ethnic or national origin, race, color, religion, physical appearance, gender, sexual orientation, or handicap. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- calling a person names and/or putting a person down
- writing comments about a person; for example, on a wall or in a note
- teasing a person about his/her body or clothing
- Intentionally omitting a person from an activity

Please see the District Pages for more information. Families are encouraged to go to the school’s website to report any concerns around bullying behavior towards their student. This will trigger an investigation process, overseen by the counselor and school administration.

Serious Behavior Issues


Serious behavior issues (examples below) will be brought to the administration's attention immediately. These behaviors may result in parent conferences, referrals for counseling, replacement of property, internal or external suspension, contacting the police department or other measures appropriate to encourage the student to practice appropriate behavior.

- Behavior which prevents the class from functioning
- Taking or destroying the property of others
- Possession of a weapon or dangerous material
- Attempt to cause or causing injury
- Violation of bullying and/or harassment rules

SUSPENSION- PLEASE SEE THE DISTRICT PAGES FOR UPDATED INFORMATION

Response to Intervention (RTI)

Our school, in conjunction with all of the Amherst Regional Schools, has adopted a Response to Intervention (RTI) model. Response to Intervention is an instructional framework which uses multiple assessment tools in an ongoing way to understand students’ learning needs. At Pelham, the student academic data that we examine includes Teachers’ College writing assessments, Aimsweb Testing, the end-of-unit math assessments, Benchmark Assessment System (BAS), and MCAS scores. Based on this up-to-date data, students receive focused instruction in small groups in their specific areas of need. There will be ongoing progress monitoring to assess how the students are *responding to the intervention* in order to guide our instruction. Our Intervention staff will be using what are called ‘evidenced-based curriculum programs’ since they have been proven to support students’ learning in a systematic way. We have created a half-hour period called the Enhancement Block, which is a time that has been set aside for us to reteach, reinforce or extend skills and concepts in reading and math. While this learning period will take place in addition to the classroom instruction in reading, writing and math, children may also receive extra support during the regular reading and math periods.

This model is based on the understanding that students may need extra time and/or help to develop mastery of skills and concepts. As educators and parents we can give our children key messages about learning such as, *we all have strengths and weaknesses* and that *the way to 'get smarter' is by sustained, focused effort*. We strive to teach children that with the right combination of support and effort they can master skills that they thought were challenging. The Response to Intervention Model does promise to provide a structure for us to meet the needs of our students in a timely way. If your child is receiving this extra help you will be contacted by the school and informed about what specific skills he/she is working on and how you can support this learning at home. 

Safety Planning and Drills

Pelham Elementary School has a comprehensive Safety Plan. Emergency procedures are reviewed and as part of our safety preparedness, we have many drills that we conduct with students present. Each room has displayed a well-marked fire exit plan map and evacuation plans and the staff are trained to respond to several specific safety concerns. We conduct fire drills four times during the school year and bus evacuations twice a year. Pelham School also conducts **emergency response** drills with students. Our emergency response drills are focused on lockdown and shelter-in-place procedures.



For the safety of your children, we request that you walk your children into Before School and make face-face contact with another adult. Although our upper elementary students appear mature enough to get themselves into the building, we are still conscious about the safety of your child and ask that you begin to accompany them into the building in these early hours of the morning when there is little staff supervision onsite. Likewise, if your child is coming in late to school, you **must** escort them to the door to sign them in.

Home-School Partnership & Communication

The relationship between families and the school is centered on our aspirations for our children. Developing mutual trust is an essential part of this relationship. We want families to be an integral part of every child's educational team. We value each family's viewpoint and know that parents /guardians are a child's first teacher and they offer a unique perspective into the hearts and minds of their children.

Home-School Communication

Open communication is the foundation of a successful partnership between home and school. We would like to encourage families to communicate directly to their child's teacher about any concerns. Each teacher will set up a format for families to get in touch with him/her as well as ways to share information. Our voice mail system makes it easy for families to leave messages for teachers. Individual parent-teacher conferences are scheduled in the fall to discuss your child's progress. A second conference may be scheduled in the spring at the request of either the teacher or the parent. School-wide and classroom newsletters are a valuable source of information. Please develop a system with your child to make sure you get all of your 'mail' in order to avoid missing important news from school. Please check backpacks daily!

  **Pelham School Council:** The Pelham School Council was established in response to the Education Reform Act of 1993. The school council is a representative, school building-based committee composed of the principal, parents/guardians, teachers, community members required to be established by each school pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 59C. Meetings are open to the public and parents are encouraged to attend. The function of the Council is to assist the principal in:

- adopting educational goals for the school
- identifying the educational needs of students

- reviewing the school's annual budget
- formulating a school improvement plan.
- conducting the parent survey

* School Council member information and monthly meeting minutes can be found on the school website.

Parent Council/PTO

The Pelham School PTO works to enhance the educational opportunities of our children through fundraising, parent/guardian education, and community-building events. This year there will once again be a PTO Classroom parent serving each class as a contact to keep all families notified of upcoming activities and events. All Pelham parents and guardians are automatically members of the PTO, and no sign-up is needed. We welcome all parents and guardians to participate in any way that is comfortable and convenient for their family. Events and ways to be involved will be included in our school's bi-weekly publication, the Pelham Press, which is sent home with students. *The Pelham PTO minutes are posted monthly to the school website at <http://pe.arps.org/>

The Parent Council/PTO welcomes all parents, staff and members of the Pelham community to its monthly meetings to discuss issues of interest to the school community. These meetings provide an opportunity to learn more about the family-school relationship and to share ideas well as a chance to socialize with friends and neighbors. Every year Pelham School families financially support the school's educational mission in numerous ways. The Council also sponsors several fund-raisers each year which provide scholarships for class trips, non-budgeted items for classrooms, and visiting performers:

*PTO contact information and monthly meeting minutes can be found on the school website.

Report Cards and Conferences

Progress is reported formally twice a year with the distribution of report cards to children in grades 1-6 at the beginning of February and at the close of school in June. Progress notes are distributed to preschool and kindergarten students twice a year as well around the time of report cards.

Individual conferences for all grades are offered in the fall, primarily during the early release days in October. Spring conferences are scheduled at the discretion of either the teacher or the parent/guardian. Parents/guardians are strongly urged to use these conference times to discuss their child's progress. While these are specific occasions to discuss concerns, please contact your child's teacher any time you have a question.

Curriculum Night/Open House

Two evenings are set aside each year for parents to learn about what their children are doing in the classrooms. Curriculum Night is held several weeks after school begins in the fall. This evening is especially designed for parents/guardians to learn from staff about the instructional program. Open House is held in the spring and provides time for students to share their work with parents/guardians.

There is no recording of these events without the permission of the classroom teacher.

Questions or Concerns

All questions or concerns may be initially directed to our secretarial staff. In most cases they will be able to help you immediately.

We suggest taking the following steps when you have other questions or concerns:

1. Make an appointment to see your child's teacher if your questions or concerns involve your child or your child's classroom. For example:

- If you perceive a problem or have a concern about your child's performance in school, or
- If you perceive a problem at home that may affect your child in school (e.g. death in the family or a separation)

2. Make an appointment to see an administrator if repeated efforts to resolve problems directly with a staff member have been unsatisfactory.

Emergency Planning

It is essential that we have a means of contacting every parent or guardian at all times. For the most part, our School Nurse will contact you if your child becomes ill during the school day. Accidents, minor or otherwise, need to be communicated immediately to parents, as well. Our Safety Team uses the School Messenger automated calling system for communicating with families in the event that we must unexpectedly close school (such as for a major snow storm), or evacuate the school in case of emergency.

As soon as a child enters school, we must have both of the following:

- A completed emergency health form
- A completed emergency school closing form

These forms **MUST** remain up to date and contain multiple approved contacts, so that if you are not available, we can call the person you have designated. Please keep the school office informed of any changes or additional contact numbers, at any time during the year. These forms must also be updated at the beginning of each school year, for each child in the family.

