



Benton Community Schools



K-6 Student Handbook 2018-2019



2018/2019 School Year

Dear Families,

This handbook has been designed to acquaint the students and parents with necessary information about Benton Community Elementary Schools. It is intended that this booklet be looked through carefully with your child, be kept, and used as a reference for questions that may arise.

It is our hope that the handbook will provide a basis for mutual understanding between home and school.

At Benton Community School we Care about being Safe, Responsible and Respectful.

Your questions and suggestions will be welcomed at any time. We want to work together to create the best possible learning environment for the students.

Sincerely,

K-6 Principals
Benton Community Schools



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Assignment Books

Students in grades 4, 5 & 6 will be given assignment books at the beginning of the school year. These books are structured to promote organization and good study habits. Students who lose their assignment books will be required to purchase another one.

Please communicate with your child about his/her progress in working with this assignment book. Students with good organizational skills get better grades.

Attendance

Good attendance is conducive to academic gains. However illness certainly hits most every child throughout the school year. **If a student is going to be absent, please call or email your child's attendance center before 9:00 a.m. If notification from the home is not received, the school will call to verify the child's absence.** When a child is going to be absent for an extended period, it is not necessary to call the school every day, as long as the office is aware of the absence. After 8 absences we would request an excusal note from your physician for our records.

When a child is going to be late to school for whatever reason, please call and let the office know the approximate time of arrival.

If a child needs to leave school early, send a note to the teacher. Please have him/her report to the office and sign out before he/she leaves the building.

Your child will be marked tardy if they arrive to school between the hours of 8:15 - 10:00 a.m. After 10:00 a.m. your child will be counted 1/2 day absent. If your child leaves school before 2:00 p.m. they will also be counted 1/2 day absent. No credit will be given for attending if the child comes to school after 2:00 p.m.

On early dismissal days, students arriving after 10:00 am will be counted ½ absent, and will be recorded as attending a full day if they are at school until noon.



Band Participation

Students in 5th & 6th grades are encouraged to participate in Band. Parent/Teacher communication is required before any child can drop Band.

Breakfast Program

Breakfast is available for all students. Breakfast is served from 7:30 - 8:15 a.m. Menus can be sent home with your child or found online.

Candy/Gum/Pop

With the exception of birthday parties and class parties, K-6 students are not allowed to have gum/candy/pop in the buildings.

Care of the Building

We are very proud of our school. Please show your respect toward the school by taking care of the environment around you (desks, restrooms, classrooms, hallways, equipment). Vandalism will not be tolerated. Students found to be involved in the damage or destruction of school property may be required to reimburse the school district. In certain circumstances, students may be reported to law enforcement officials.

Cell Phones/Electronic Devices

K-6 students are not allowed to activate or use cell phones or their electronic devices on school grounds during the day **unless a staff member has given permission to do so**. If students need to contact their parents during the day, they will be allowed to call from the school office or classroom telephones.

No device is permitted which allows students to send or receive personal messages that would contribute to cheating, accessing the Internet or take pictures. Inappropriate use of an electronic device or a prohibited item will result in disciplinary action. Students found in violation of this policy may be subject to discipline and, in cases where the law may be violated, law enforcement may be contacted. Students need to remember whatever they put on a personal electronic device could be seen by anyone so they need to ensure the



devices are used appropriately.

Electronic device violations consequences:

1st Offense: Device is confiscated, brought to the office and returned to the student at the end of the day.

2nd Offense: Device confiscated and parent/guardian must pick it up in the office.

3rd Offense: Administration recommendation, electronic device confiscate and parent/guardian must pick it up in the office. Meeting with administration.

Change of Parent/Guardian Contact Information

Parents are expected to contact the school when there is a change in:

- an email address
- physical address
- home or cell phone number
- place of employment
- employer's telephone number
- emergency telephone number

Changes in Transportation

A student must bring a written note to the school if he/she is going to have a change in their transportation (riding the bus home with a friend, not riding the bus, etc.) We want your child to be safe on his/her way to and from school.

Church Night

Church night is on Wednesday night. In honor of this, Benton K-6 will make a sincere effort to have no school activities scheduled for this night.

Class Parties

K-6 students have the opportunity to participate in class parties on the following occasions; Halloween, Christmas, and Valentines' Day. We encourage parties to include healthy snack alternatives.

Communication

Communication between home and school is important for quality



relationships and the success of your child at school. If you have questions or concerns regarding your child, please contact his/her classroom teacher first. If you continue to need additional assistance, contact the principal.

Disaster Drills

In order to maintain a safe environment in our school, it is important that we routinely have disaster drills. Each classroom will have special instructions for the drills.

Discipline

When we talk about discipline we are talking about a set of guidelines that will structure an environment that is conducive to social interactions and learning. Students will learn through natural consequences of the behaviors appropriate in our society. Our ultimate goal throughout all of this structure is to empower students to work towards self-discipline. Our goal is to ensure that as students grow older they become more self-disciplined, as well as display an increased responsibility for themselves and their actions. Benton Community Schools uses a program called PBIS (Positive Behavior and Interventions Supports).

Dress Code

Students are expected to come to school looking neat, clean, and dressed in a manner considered in good taste. This is primarily a parental responsibility. Bare feet are not permitted. Hats are not to be worn inside the building. Garments that promote alcohol, drugs, tobacco, sex, or obscenities are disruptive. Straps on shirts must be at least 1" in width. Shorts and skirts must be long enough so that when a student's arms are at their sides, their fingers are above the bottom of the shorts or skirts. **Open toed shoes/flip flops are discouraged for safety reasons on the playground.** The administration will retain the right to make a final decision as to what constitutes appropriate attire, and whether requested deviations will be allowed.



Expectations of Students

Benton students are expected to:

- Respect themselves and others.
- Be on time to class and with assignments.
- Be prepared for classes.
- Complete assignments.
- Cooperate with their teachers and classmates.
- Be responsible for their behavior, as well as their learning.
- Treat others in a way they would like to be treated.

Fees

Current student fees are found on the front of the school calendar.

Fee Waiver

Students whose families meet the guidelines for free and reduced price lunch, the Family Investment Program, (FIP), Supplemental Security Income (SCI), transportation assistance under open enrollment, or who are in foster care are eligible to have their student fees waived or partially waived. Students whose families are experiencing a temporary financial difficulty may be eligible for a temporary waiver of student fees. Parents/Guardians who believe they may qualify for temporary financial hardship should contact the Central Office for a waiver form. This waiver does not carry over from year to year and must be completed annually.

Field Trips

Field trips, which reinforce different areas of our school's curriculum, will be offered throughout the school year. Please sign the field trip blank on the emergency card at the beginning of the school year. This will cover all field trips your son/daughter will participate in this year. Classroom teachers will notify you regarding specific trips they have planned throughout the year.



Food Service Program

The food service program is set up on a computerized software system called the School Dining System. Each family in the district will have one account for all the students in that family. Money can be deposited at any Benton Community center and will be applied to all students on that account. Students will be given a card that will remain at school. The card will have a student ID number that will belong to the student the entire time they are in the Benton Community School District.

Low balance notices will be sent home on Tuesday's and Friday's once a family's balance reaches the low balance point. (Families with one child start receiving notices when the account reaches \$5.00, two children - \$10.00, three children - \$15.00 and so on). They will continue to be sent home until money is deposited in the account. Families can set up an e-mail notification through the lunch account system and may set custom notification limits. For more information on how to access your lunch account through the web, contact the **Food Service Department at 228-8701, x118 or x119.**

Accounts may go negative and students will still be able to eat breakfast and/or lunch, however they will not be allowed to purchase any a la carte items, except afternoon milk. Once the account reaches -\$10.00 the student(s) will no longer be able to participate in the breakfast, lunch, or afternoon milk program. They will need to eat breakfast at home and bring a sack lunch until the account is cleared and additional monies deposited.

If there are extenuating circumstances, arrangements may be made through the Food Service Director at the above listed number.

All negative accounts are to be paid by the end of the school year. If money is left in the account, it will carry over to the next school year. If a family is leaving the district, they will need to provide Food Service with a forwarding address and any remaining balances will be refunded.

Insufficient Funds Check Policy

The Food Service Director will notify parents in writing when the district receives an insufficient funds check for the food service program. There will be a 3-day grace period provided to the student. If payment is not received after the 3 days, the child can bring a lunch



from home until payment is made in cash. Any subsequent bad check during the school year will result in the child bringing a sack lunch from home and **all future payments must be made in cash**. Parents will be notified and there will be no grace period for service.

Food Allergies:

If your child has any food allergies it is imperative that the school Nurse and the Food Service Director are both **notified in writing by a physician** of the specific food allergy and the exact diet specifications required. Juice will NO LONGER be substituted for students with milk allergies. Water is available at all centers. See the Food Service Web Page for additional Allergy information.

The Benton Community Food Service Program operates under the policy and guidelines of the Federal Government.

Fund Raising

The different buildings will be sponsoring fund raising activities throughout the school year. The monies will be used to purchase equipment and materials for the school or provide activities for students. All fundraisers through the school must have board approval prior to the calendar being printed.

Hearing Screening

Throughout the year, the school district/GWAEA sponsors health screening. Students are automatically screened unless the parent submits a note asking the student be excused from the screening. The grade levels included in the hearing screening are determined annually by GWAEA. Parents are notified prior to the health screening. However, upon a teacher or parent's recommendation, students not scheduled for screening may also be screened. All new students or students with a known hearing loss will be screened. Parents/guardians with concerns about their child's hearing should contact the school nurse.

Homework

As students progress throughout the K-6 school, homework may be given. Homework serves as a tool that reinforces the skill students learn in class. Because of its importance, students are expected to complete all homework given to them by their teacher. We



appreciate parental support and supervision throughout this process.

Library Book Check-Out Procedures

Library books can be checked out for one week at a time. There is no fine for overdue books, but we ask parents to communicate with their son/daughter as to the books he/she checks out. Please help us get our library books returned to their proper place on time. Students are expected to cover the replacement costs of any book they lose.

Lost and Found

A Lost and Found department will be stationed near the main office. If a student has lost, or found, personal property they are to report it to the office. Property will be kept in the Lost and Found for one month; after this time the unclaimed property will be donated to charity. Labeling your son's/daughter's property is extremely helpful and strongly recommended.

Lunchroom Basics

Students are expected to sit at lunch tables, use good manners and talk in a soft tone of voice in the lunchroom. Any student not meeting these expectations may have restricted lunchroom privileges.

All items purchased in the lunchroom must be kept in the area unless students have received special permission from the principal or teacher.

If you pack a school lunch from home, please remember to pack nutritious food items. NO soda or soft drinks will be allowed.

Medication

Medications required during school, which cannot be managed otherwise, shall be administered when the following are on file at school:

- A physician's signed, dated authorization including name of the student, name of the medication, dosage, administration route, time to be given at school, and reason receiving.
- A parent's signed and dated authorization/permission to administer the medication during school.

The medication shall be in the original packaging as dispensed by the prescriber or pharmacist and shall identify:

- name of pupil
- name of medication
- strength and dosage prescribed



- name of physician
- name and address of pharmacy

Money

Benton Community K-6 Schools are not responsible for any money that is lost or stolen at school.

Parents are strongly encouraged to write a check when sending any money to school with their child. If you write a check to deposit money in your lunch account, please make the check payable to Benton Community Schools. In addition, the following items also require payment with separate checks: preschool payments, activity camps, book orders, picture money, Benton apparel, student store purchases, etc. If you have any questions concerning this policy, please call the school. If you send cash with your child, please send it in an envelope with the child's name and grade on it.

Multicultural, Nonsexist, Disabled Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Benton Community School District not to illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, disability, religion, creed, age, or marital status, in its sexual orientation educational programs or activities. Affirmative steps will be taken to integrate students in attendance centers, programs and classes. If you have questions to related issues concerning MCNS, please contact the building principal at the center.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Benton Community K-6 Schools will have Parent-Teacher Conferences two times during the year. More information concerning these conferences will be provided to you during the school year. Please mark these dates down on your calendar so that you will be able to discuss your child's progress with his/her teacher. Additional conferences may be held as needed.

Participation in Physical Education Classes

Physical Education classes are a required part of our state-mandated curriculum. Students needing to be excused from certain physical activities must provide a doctor's written statement to that effect.



All students will need a pair of gym shoes to keep at school.

Personal Party Invitations

Parents are asked to mail personal party invitations rather than passing them out at school. This creates conflict among students. Many times, students who are not invited get upset and therefore cannot concentrate during the school day.

Pets

If a student has a pet that he/she would like to show to his/her classmates, you must first contact the classroom teacher for permission. We ask that a parent (or responsible adult) bring the pet to school and take the pet home when the class is through observing it. We do not want pets to stay in school all day with students!

Picking Up Students at School

We ask parents to come into the school when picking up students during the school day. You can help your child check out, and we can see who is actually picking up the student. Please cooperate to ensure a higher level of safety for your child.

Recess & Playground

Students in grades K-6 get a minimum of one recess per day. All students are expected to go outside unless they have a medical condition and a parent notification exists. If a child is not well enough for recess; she/he probably should not be in school that day. Therefore, we ask that parents save such requests for special times such as when a child has just recovered from a serious illness or injury. Student may be kept inside to get additional assistance on homework, make-up work, or assignment completion. In the event of inclement weather, students will remain indoors. During cold weather, students will remain inside if the temperature or wind chill is below 10 degrees. During heat, students will go outside, but they will be encouraged to limit their running and their exposure to sun.

Playground Basics

There are a set of basic expectations that the elementary staff



expects when a student goes out for recess. Those expectation include the following:

- Follow the playground rules
- Dress appropriately
- Demonstrate good sportsmanship
- Respect authority
- Follow directions
- Respect your peers
- Keep your hands/feet to yourself
- Use appropriate language

Playground Rules, Expectations, and Consequences:

These basic expectations lay down the foundation for a safe play environment. To further strengthen this foundation, the following is a more in-depth set of playground rules and expectations. These rules and expectations were established to further define the play practices that help create a safe play environment on our playground. Students are expected to follow these rules and expectations. **If a student chooses to not follow them, the student can be removed from the playground temporarily or be denied recess privileges altogether.** The level of consequences administered for playground infractions will be dependent on the type of action, as well as the student's recess history.

Reporting Student Progress

There will be two ways that teachers will report student progress to parents. They are through:

1. Progress reports may be made throughout the quarter, if needed.
2. Report cards - will be sent home three times with students.

Students and parents may check grades on-line via PowerSchool. (See Student Management)

If at any time you have questions or concerns about your child's progress, please contact his/her teacher to discuss the matter.

School Cancellation

If school is cancelled, WMT radio (AM 600) and television stations KWWL, KCRG, and KGAN will be contacted. Parents may also call the Bobcat Voice Link. This **toll free number** may be called day or night. Announcements regarding school delays and cancellations (Benton and Central Lutheran) as well as a complete



listing of the day's activities will be provided when you dial this number.

- **Bobcat Voice Link – 830-2164** (within district)
- **Outside calling area – 515-830-2614** (outside district & cell phones)
- **Iowa School Alerts Program - sign up free at <https://schoolalerts.iowa.gov>**

Please have arrangements made for your child in the event of an early dismissal ahead of time and inform your child of their instructions and/or where to go.

School Hours

Classes will begin at 8:10. Early bus students will be dismissed at 3:15; walkers and late bus students will be dismissed at 3:20. Students enter classrooms at 8:10.

School Pictures and Videotaping

School pictures are taken each school year by LifeTouch Photography. You will receive a reminder note about the dates in advance. Pictures are used for school records and may be purchased by parents. Please understand that the purchase of school pictures is optional and not required. They are offered in the fall and the spring of the school year.

Videotaping of school sponsored events and classroom learning often take place. If you would prefer your child not be videotaped for school purposes, please let the office know of this option.

Sexual Abuse and Harassment

It is the policy of the Benton School district that school employees not commit acts of physical or sexual abuse, including inappropriate and intentional sexual behavior, towards students. Relative to Iowa Code 280.17, a Level One investigator and alternate have been appointed to respond to allegations of abuse of students by school employees.

The processing of a complaint or allegations will be handled confidentially to the maximum extent possible. Level One investigator: Jason West Ph 446-7525. Alternate investigator: Kelly Buscher, Ph 227-7142.



Student Illness or Injury at School

A student who becomes ill or is injured at school must notify his or her teacher or another employee as soon as possible. In the case of serious illness or injury, the school shall attempt to notify the parents according to the information on the emergency form. Therefore it is **absolutely imperative** that the school be notified if there are any changes in the parents' home, work and cell numbers during the school year, as well as emergency contact information. If the student is too ill to remain in the school, the student is released to the student's parents or with parental permission, to another person directed by the parents.

While the school district is not responsible for treating medical emergencies, employees may administer emergency or minor first aid, if possible. The school contacts emergency medical personnel if necessary and attempts to notify the parents where the student has been transported for treatment.

Student Records

The Benton K-6 School maintains records of each student in order to facilitate the instruction, guidance and educational progress of the student. All student records must show the child's legal name. Students and parents have the right to view and have copies of any information located in these records.

The following persons and organizations may have restricted access to student records without prior written consent of the parent. Any other access to student records shall be only upon written consent or upon court order or legally subpoenaed.

1. School officials, teachers and AEA personnel with a legitimate educational interest.
2. Officials of other schools in which the student proposes to enroll.
3. Representatives of state and local government when auditing and evaluation federal education programs.
4. Appropriate parties in a health or safety emergency.

Information regarding students and their records will be released to natural parents unless the "legal rights of a parent" have been severed. The school must be provided official documentation from the "parent of rights" that the other natural parent's "rights have been severed".



Telephone Messages

Students receiving telephone calls during school hours are not called to the telephone. The office will take a message and forward it to the student. During instructional times students will be removed to take a phone call **only** in emergency situations. If you need to leave a message for your child, call before 2:30. **We cannot guarantee any messages left after 2:30 will be delivered.**

Threatening Behavior

Harassment, bullying and abuse are violations of school district policies, rules and regulations and, in some cases, may also be a violation of criminal or other laws. The school district has the authority to report students violating this rule to law enforcement officials.

Students who feel that they have been harassed or bullied should:

- Communicate to the harasser or bully that the student expects the behavior to stop, if the student is comfortable doing so. If the student needs assistance communicating with the harasser or bully, the student should ask a teacher, counselor or principal to help.
- If the harassment or bullying does not stop or the student does not feel comfortable confronting the harasser or bully, the student should:
 - ✓ tell a teacher, counselor or principal; and
 - ✓ write down exactly what happened, keep a copy and give another copy to the teacher, counselor or principal including:
 - what, when and where it happened;
 - who was involved;
 - exactly what was said or what the harasser or bully did;
 - witnesses to the harassment or bullying;
 - what the student said or did, either at the time or later;
 - how the student felt; and
 - how the harasser or bullying responded.

Sexual harassment may include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Harassment or bullying on the basis of age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual



orientation, gender identity, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status or familial status includes conduct of a verbal or physical nature that is designed to embarrass, distress, agitate, disturb or trouble persons when:

- places the student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or property;
- has a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health;
- has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's academic performance; or
- has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- verbal, physical or written harassment or abuse;
- pressure for sexual activity;
- repeated remarks to a person with sexual or demeaning implications; and
- Suggesting or demanding sexual involvement, accompanied by implied or explicit threats.

Harassment or bullying based upon factors other than sex includes, but is not limited to:

- verbal, physical, or written harassment or abuse;
- repeated remarks of a demeaning nature;
- implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, job, etc;
- demeaning jokes, stories or activities.

Transportation

It is the parent's responsibility to inform the bus driver if your child/ren will not be riding their country route school bus in the morning. If you know ahead of time, you can write a note for the child to give the bus driver, or call Tim Lyons at 228-8426 after 6:00 a.m. and he will radio the bus driver.

Most of the students in Benton Community are transported on buses some time during the school day. It is imperative that student's behavior be controlled so as not to create unsafe distractions



for the bus drivers and the students. It is impossible to drive safely if the driver's attention is constantly diverted. We are asking that parents assist the school in informing student of the need for self-discipline and follow the bus rules. Good conduct contributes to safety. It helps avoid accidents.

Bus Riding Rules:

1. Stand in a single file line to get on the bus. No pushing or shoving while getting on the bus and go straight to your seat. The driver has the right to assign seats.
2. Sit in seat with your bottom to bottom of the seat and back to back of the seat.
3. All bags and backpacks must sit on your lap. Please refrain from bringing large objects onto the bus that will not fit on your lap.
4. Students must remain seated at all times, keeping aisles and exits clear.
5. Students must refrain from using profanity or inappropriate subject matter.
6. No eating or drinking on the bus as this could be a choking hazard.
7. No use of tobacco products on the bus.
8. No throwing of any objects on the bus or out the windows.
9. All body parts must remain inside the bus at all times no sticking any of them out the windows.
10. All students should be quiet at all times no yelling and screaming and use inside voices. There should be no talking when approaching railroad tracks.
11. No fighting or rude behavior is allowed on the bus.
12. Students must remain seated tell bus comes to a complete stop to get off the bus.
13. No use of emergency exits unless there is an emergency and instructed by the drive to use them.
14. The use of cell phones, iPads, iPods, and Kindles must not be a distraction to others. They must use headphones when playing music and must not be heard by others.
15. No weapons of any kind are allowed on the bus.
16. The students must obey the driver as they are the person in charge of the bus.



17. All the rules are the same for routes, field trip or activity trips.
18. Do not vandalize the bus in any manner or you will be required to pay for the repairs.
19. Once a student is on the bus they will not be permitted to get off and ride to school with friends.

Bus Conduct Report

If your student receives a bus conduct report for bad behavior it must be signed by parent or guardian before student is allowed to ride again. If you have question on what happened or concerns about it please sign it and have student give it to the driver the next day and then contact the building principle about it.

1st Report – Student not allowed to ride bus until white slip is signed and returned to driver.

2nd Report- Same as above, warning letter to parents, sent by principal.

3rd Report- Students may be suspended from riding all buses for up to five days.

4th Report- Students privileges to ride all buses may be suspended for up to ten days.

5th Report- Parents may be required to provide transportation for the remainder of the school year.

Transportation Video/Audio Cameras

We have video cameras on the buses that are used to monitor student behavior to maintain order on the school buses. They are used to maintain a safe environment for everyone. Students and parents are hereby notified that the content of the video recordings may be used in a student disciplinary proceeding. Video recordings will only be retained if necessary for use in a student disciplinary proceeding or other matters as determined necessary by the administration. Parents may request to view video recording of their child if the video recordings are used in a disciplinary proceeding involving their child.

Use of WiFi on Benton School Buses

The Benton Community School District is committed to providing students and staff with a wide range of electronic learning



facilities, equipment and software, including computer network services and WiFi access on the school buses. The Board encourages and expects that all users of electronic learning be responsible and comply with district policy related to its operation and use. Board policy 602.8 and 602.8R1 **Technology and Internet Acceptable Use Policy** will apply to the access and use of WiFi on the school buses.

In accordance with the policy, students will make best efforts to:

- Conduct his/her activities in accordance with the guidelines and policies as established by the district and school.
- Conduct all activities in a responsible, ethical, legal and courteous manner, especially when using network services.

Valuables

K-6 students should not bring valuable property to school. The School is not responsible for any of these items if they are stolen or misplaced.

Visitors

For safety reasons, we ask that all visitors report to the office when they enter the school and pick up a pass before going to classrooms.

Parents are welcome and encouraged to visit classes. Please call before you visit. Classroom visits provide the parents with a more thorough understanding about the operation, educational program, and your child's performance in a classroom learning situation.

Please make the visit after the first three weeks of school and before the last two weeks of the year. As a benefit to all parties involved (parents, teacher, students), all visits will be limited to 2 hours or less. All children who visit the school must be accompanied by an adult.

Weapons

School district facilities are not an appropriate place for weapons, dangerous objects and look-a-likes. Weapons and other dangerous objects and look-a-likes will be taken from the students. Students will be subject to disciplinary action including suspension or expulsion per our districts Dangerous Weapons Policy 502.6.

Winter Dress

For their safety, students are expected to wear proper attire



(winter coat, boots, gloves/mittens, snow pants, and hats) during the winter months. Please contact the principal if you are unable to purchase any of these for your child.

If snow/mud is on the playground, boots are required to be worn during recess.