

School Policies

Updated August 2015

Student Day

The student day is from 9:00 a.m. to 3:25 p.m. Please do not drop students off before 8:30 a.m., as there is no adult supervision before this time. Students arriving at 8:50 a.m. or later are marked tardy and must be signed in at the office by an adult. The student may then proceed to their classroom. Parents are asked not to accompany the child, as this causes further disruption. In the event that your child stays to participate in after-school activities, please arrange to pick him/her up immediately after the activity ends.

ATTENDANCE

Parents are responsible for informing the school when a child will be absent for any reason. Please call the school office at (301) 924-3140 between 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. You may call earlier and leave a message on the answering machine. Also, a written note explaining the absence must be sent with your child when he/she returns to school.

If a child needs to leave before 3:25 p.m., please send in a note that states what time you will pick up your child. Upon arriving at school, parents should report to the office, and the secretary will call for your child. The parent then signs out the student in the office log. Parents are to remain in the office or front foyer until your child joins you.

EXTENDED ABSENCES

Children who will be absent from school for 3 days or more miss a significant portion of the curriculum. These absences should be avoided. Teachers *may* be able to send home appropriate work in advance if they receive advance notice of the absence. A written note regarding the absence prior to its onset is helpful. Remember, family vacations are unexcused absences.

REQUESTS FOR CLASSWORK

When a child will be absent due to illness for more than one day, a parent may request that his/her child's classwork be sent home with another child or the homework can be picked up in the office by a parent after 3:25 p.m. **Please call the school secretary by 11:30 a.m. to request classwork.**

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Conferences between parent and teacher are encouraged. Contact your child's teacher to make an appointment. Conferences are NOT held at PTA meetings, Back-to-School nights, during classroom hours or during other scheduled events (i.e. parties, field day, etc.).

VISITS TO SCHOOL

Belmont Elementary School has an open door policy, so you are welcome to visit your child's classroom at any time. However, please note that MCPS policy states that a teacher should be contacted prior to a visit to arrange the best time to visit. *First and most important, before you enter into the classroom you must, stop in the Main Office, sign in by presenting your driver's license and get a visitors badge to wear. Please do not go directly to your child's classroom without signing in.* While visiting we ask that you silence cell phones and pagers. We want the least amount of disruptions during the school day as possible. To prevent disruption in the classroom, if the teacher is involved with students, do not engage in a discussion with your child or the teacher. If you would like to speak with the teacher, call to schedule an appointment with the teacher.

DRESS CODE

MCPS has no formal dress code. However, children should wear clothing that allows for full participation in the instructional program. Shoes should be sturdy and provide support for running and climbing. Appropriate shoes are required for physical education (no sandals, flip-flops or slip-ons). Clothing should be appropriate, comfortable and informal. Children sit on the floor for certain activities and must feel free to paint and use clay in the classrooms. Children who are self-conscious about their clothing or clothing that attracts undue attention can interfere with learning. Please label all coats, jackets and boots.

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INCLEMENT WEATHER

When it becomes necessary to close school because of snow or other inclement weather, announcements will be broadcast on local radio or TV stations. A delayed opening decision is made by 6 a.m. Early dismissals are determined by 11 a.m. Parents should make emergency plans with their children, so if school is dismissed unexpectedly, they will know what to do.

DELAYED OPENING

When the opening of school is delayed by two hours, school begins at 10:50 a.m., and children should be at their bus stop two hours later than usual. On rare occasions when there is a one-hour delay, school begins at 9:50 a.m. and buses will run one hour later than usual.

EARLY DISMISSAL (other than scheduled half-days)

When an emergency early dismissal is announced it usually will be for 2 hours early, school ending at 1:25 p.m.. All emergency early dismissal decisions will be made prior to 11:00 AM.

EMERGENCY CLOSING OF SCHOOL

A plan of action to be taken in case of emergency must be available in all Montgomery County public schools. This plan is necessary in situations such as fire, power failure or water loss. Unlike the normal early dismissals or delayed openings during the year, these emergency situations may have no advance warning, and there would not be prior announcement on the radio or TV.

The safety and care of your children is our foremost concern under these circumstances; therefore, parents must complete an emergency procedure form each fall.

Depending on the safety of the building, your child will follow one of these procedures:

1. Return to the classroom
2. Go home or to an alternate place you designated on the emergency procedure form
3. Remain with school staff in a nearby shelter, Rosa Parks Middle School or Longwood Recreational Center.

When the children are settled and secure, every effort will be made to contact parents to inform them of the situation. Children will be dismissed from the evacuation site at the regular dismissal time of 3:25 p.m., circumstances permitting.

In case of emergency, directions will be given to staff and children over the public address system. If this is not possible, a message will be sent to each classroom. The fire alarm will sound for building evacuation in case of fire or similar circumstances.

If immediate evacuation is not possible, the staff and children will go to the safest part of the building and assume shelter position — seated with their head placed between bent knees, and arms folded over the back of the head.

DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

The afternoon dismissal procedures are different for students who ride the bus and students who walk. If there is a change in the normal routine, a written note must be sent to the teacher.

Bus Students: Students are dismissed by bus route number and assigned color.

Walkers: Walkers are usually dismissed from their classroom to the door near the gym and parking lot, where staff is present to ensure safety. Parents may pick-up walkers from this door.

Parents in cars: If you will be meeting your child at the parking lot, please be aware of the procedures and be certain that they are followed. Cars are to form a line and travel around the lot to pick up the students at the sidewalk. Parents who have parked in legal parking spaces may get out of the car and walk to the building to pick up their children and return to the car. Children may not walk into the parking lot unescorted by an adult. There is no parking along either side of Roy Dorsey Drive or in the loading dock. The Montgomery County Police will be helping us make certain these rules are followed. Tickets will be issued if appropriate.

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MORNING LINE-UP

Bus students will disembark from their buses in front of the school. Kindergarten students should then proceed to the cafeteria and grades 1-5 to the gym and line-up in the areas designated for their class

Parents, please be respectful and comply with the blocking off of Audrey Davis Drive (front of school) by use of cones. No vehicle with the exception of handicapped tags is permitted to enter during bus drop off and pick up times.

BUS INFORMATION

Information about bus routes is mailed home in August. Parents determine the most appropriate stop for their children. Each child's bus route number is recorded by teachers the first day of school. If changes occur during the year, parents need to inform the school in writing.

Children must obey the bus operator, remain seated while the bus is in motion, and maintain an acceptable manner of conduct at all times. Students may not stand or play in the road while waiting for the bus. Toys, balls, animals, pets, glass containers or explosives are not permitted on the bus. If the child has items for "show and tell," they should be in a bag or container.

Children should obey Safety Patrols assigned to their bus at all times.

AFTER SCHOOL PLANS WITH FRIENDS

If a child arranges to go home with a friend directly from school, he/she must have a written note giving him/her permission to ride a different bus. The note must first be shown to the classroom teacher and then taken to the office for approval. These arrangements must be made prior to coming to school. No student will be allowed to use a school phone to make after school play plans.

Walkers

Children who walk to school should plan to arrive between 8:40 and 8:55 a.m. They should cross Olney Mill Road only at the crosswalk where the crossing guard can make sure it is a safe crossing.

BICYCLE SAFETY

Only fourth and fifth grade students may ride their bikes to school unsupervised. A letter explaining the general rules for riding a bike to school and containing a permission slip for parents to sign is sent home in the fall.

Bike riding to and from school is permitted providing parents assume full responsibility for their child's operation of the bicycle. Bikes are to be parked at the rack and equipped with a lock. Bike riders must obey the same traffic regulations as automobile drivers. Children who have not mastered the skills of bicycle riding and do not know the "rules of the road" should not be permitted to bike to school. Children are prohibited from riding bicycles on school grounds. Bikes must be walked to parking spaces. The school is not responsible for damage to or loss of bicycles. Skateboards and roller blades may not be brought to school.

SCHOOL LUNCHES

Students may bring lunch from home or purchase lunch for \$2.55 (this includes milk). Milk can be purchased separately for 60 cents. It is the parent's responsibility to provide money for milk and lunch. Students who forget their lunch money or whose money runs out in their account are allowed to purchase up to four lunches or go into debt \$10.00. During that time, we hope that the parents will send in money to replenish their account. If the account is in debt \$10.00, the school will provide a plain cheese sandwich (\$0.25) for the student daily until the account is replenished. Students will receive a notice that their account is getting low if there is less than \$10.00 in their account. Money can not be taken from your child's cafeteria account to repay the main office.

LOST AND FOUND

There is a lost and found rack in the school cafeteria. Children should check the rack for lost items. Lost items can be minimized if articles are clearly marked with the child's name. Lost eyeglasses and jewelry will be held in the office.

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MEDICATION

If a child requires any type of medication during school hours, the parent and physician must complete an authorization form (MCPS 525-13). For emergency medications, such as for bee stings, this form should be completed at the beginning of EACH school year. Parents must deliver any prescribed or over-the-counter medicine to the Health Room. NO medicines of any kind are to be sent to school with a child. For any staff member to give a child medicine, the MCPS 525-13 must be completed and signed by the child's physician.

INJURIES

If a child is seriously hurt or becomes ill at school, parents will be called. If parents are unreachable at home or work, the emergency number on the child's yellow enrollment card will be called. The child should then be picked up as soon as possible. Please notify the school of any changes in home, work or emergency phone numbers as soon as possible so that cards can be kept up to date.

MEDIA CENTER

Student use of the Media Center is encouraged. However, due to the rising costs of books and materials, parents are asked to ensure that books or materials are promptly returned. There is a charge for lost books. Please remind children to return borrowed books when they are finished with them.

TELEPHONE CALLS

Children may not use office telephones, unless approved by the office staff. If you must get an emergency message to your child, call the office and a secretary will deliver the message to your child. Calls to teachers should be made before and after school.

FORGOTTEN ITEMS

If parents need to deliver an item to a child at school, please bring the item to the office. The child will be called to retrieve the item or it will be delivered to the child's classroom by office staff. If a child needs to return after school for a book or other item, call the office to let us know you are coming.

AFTER-SCHOOL USE OF THE BUILDING

The Interagency Coordinating Board (ICB), working with MCPS staff, encourages maximum community use of facilities. Procedures and guidelines have been developed and adopted with input from user groups represented by the Citizens' Advisory Committee. Questions about the use of the building may be directed to the school office.

IF YOU MOVE

Notify the child's teacher and Ms. Butler in the main office, days in advance of the last day of attendance. Please return all library and textbooks. Student records are sent to the new school after they are requested. Please inform Ms. Butler of your new address and name of new school, if known.

CLASS PARTIES

Parties at school are planned as part of the total learning experience. A maximum of three parties — Halloween, Valentine's Day and End of Year parties — are allowed. Parents may assist with these activities as needed. Check with your child's classroom teacher about year-end and birthday celebration policies.

Parents who prefer their children not participate in these activities should notify the classroom teacher. The school arranges for alternative activities. Please try to send costumes children can put on and take off by themselves. Fake guns, swords and other weapons are not appropriate to bring to school. Pack the costumes so that children can easily carry them on the bus, and label everything so that lost items will find their way home. Party guidelines are listed below.

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CLASS PARTIES (continued)

Halloween, Valentine's Day and End of Year Parties

1. All activities must be cleared with the classroom teacher one week prior to the party.
2. All notices must be cleared by the teacher and principal.

Birthdays

Belmont Elementary does **NOT** permit birthday parties in the classrooms. **If your child would like to celebrate his or her birthday, a store bought eatable treat, labeled with ingredients, may be brought to school to share with their class only (not the entire grade level).** Due to food allergies, we prefer items are peanut free and made in a peanut free environment. **NO HOMEMADE ITEMS MAY BE BROUGHT TO SCHOOL for student distribution.** Homemade items or items without the ingredients labeled will **NOT** be accepted for student distribution. If your child does not bring the goodies with them to school, you may leave it in the main office for your child to pick up at their lunchtime. Siblings will not be pulled out of their classroom to join the class for the treat. No balloons goodie bags, toys or favors may be brought to school.