

# Little Bennett Elementary School



## Family Handbook 2018-2019

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*School Hours: 9:00 a.m. – 3:25 p.m.*

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# School Operations and Policies

## *Getting to School and Leaving School*

### **Bicycle Policy**

On the recommendation of the Montgomery County Police and the Board of Education, only children in grades 4 and 5 are permitted to ride their bicycles to school. Each year, a parent must send a note to school granting permission for his or her child to ride a bicycle to and from school. Children riding bicycles should be reminded to wear safety helmets, watch for motor vehicles and pedestrians, and to generally exercise caution at all times. Students must lock their bicycles to the rack that is provided. The school is not responsible for stolen or damaged bicycles. Bicycle riding on school grounds is not allowed.

### **Bus Safety, Rules, and Regulations**

At the elementary level, parents are responsible for student safety at bus stops (safety patrols will assist). Students who wish to go home with a classmate after school (either walking or **riding with another parent/guardian**) must bring a note to their teacher in the morning for verification. **There is often limited space available on the buses; therefore, students are not permitted to ride home on the bus with another student, regardless of parent permission.** A schedule of bus stops will be provided and is on our school website under *Announcements*. For problems or questions concerning bus routes and stop locations, call the route supervisor at (240) 740-4720.

The bus driver has full responsibility for the safety of the bus and passengers. The driver must report all cases of disorder, disobedience, or misbehavior to the principal. Students who are reported may temporarily or permanently lose the privilege of riding the bus.

### **Kiss and Ride Procedures**

We have established a “Kiss and Ride” lane to the right of the school to provide a safe, supervised drop-off and pick-up area for parents who drive their children to school. The lane is open from 8:40 a.m. until 9:00 a.m. and beginning at 3:25 p.m. If a child arrives after 9:00 a.m., the parent must park in a marked parking space, walk the child into the office, and sign him or her in. Parents should follow the traffic pattern through the lot as they drive to the Kiss-and-Ride lane outside of the gym and cafeteria. Students should have all of their materials ready, exit or enter the vehicle as quickly as possible on the curbside, and to the extent possible, while the driver remains in the vehicle. Please note that the lane at the front entrance is exclusively for buses and should not be used by parents to drop-off or pick-up their child prior to 9:00 a.m. and after 3:00 p.m.

### **Morning Line-up**

Beginning at 8:40 a.m., students may enter the building and should either report to the All-Purpose Room for breakfast or proceed directly to their classrooms where they will line up outside of the room until 8:50 a.m. at which time they may enter their classroom. Students arriving after 9:00 a.m. must report to the office with their parent or guardian who should sign them in.

### **Traffic Safety**

Please obey the “No Parking” signs in the bus lane and refrain from parking in the handicap and reserved spaces on the side of the school. If you drive your child to or from school, please use the lot to the right of the school for pick-up and drop-off purposes and follow the traffic pattern marked by signs and pavement paint. Parents are particularly cautioned not to drive in the bus lane in front of the school prior to 9:00 a.m. and after 3:00 p.m. Vehicles should never park directly in front of the school, particularly in the bus lane, at any time. Numerous signs with parking restrictions are posted along Burdette Forest Road to ensure safety of commuters to and from school and to avoid traffic incidents. Traffic and parking laws will be strictly enforced by the Montgomery County Police during the school year.

### **Walking Students**

All students walking to school will be admitted into the school building through the main entrance at the front of the building starting at 8:40 a.m. to line up in the designated area (next to the child’s classroom). Please instruct your child to use a walking route that ensures safety. Children should walk with a responsible adult or sibling or should be encouraged to walk in groups. Students must walk directly home after school unless participating in a school or PTA sponsored activity. Students crossing Burdette Forest Road should use the marked crosswalk with the

assistance of the crossing guard. Students who walk home, should exit through the kindergarten playground door closest to the front of the building.

## ***Attendance and Absences***

### **Attendance**

Daily, consistent attendance at school equates with success in school. We urge parents to make school a priority and to schedule vacations around the school calendar. If your child will be absent, please call the school office as soon as possible. If you suspect your child has a communicable disease, please note that at the time of your call. The school will attempt to verify the apparent absence of any student whose parents have not called using our automated attendance system. Dated notes, stating the specific reasons for absences, signed by a parent or guardian, are required no later than one day following an absence. A dated note explaining the student's absence is also required even when the absence is reported by telephone. Excused absences from school include: illness, doctor or dentist appointment, death in the immediate family, observance of a religious holiday, or a court order. All student absences will be recorded as unexcused until the office receives a written note from the parent or guardian.

The following changes in recording attendance in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) are being implemented in accordance with the *Maryland Student Records System Manual* revised effective July 1, 2007, by the Maryland State Department of Education.

- Students will be recorded as *a.m. absent*, if they arrive at school more than two hours late.
- Students will be recorded as *p.m. absent*, if they leave school more than two hours early.
- Students will be recorded as either *a.m. absent* or *p.m. absent*, if they are absent from school for more than two hours, but less than four hours during the school day.
- Students will be recorded as *full-day absent*, if they are present for less than two hours of the school day.
- Students will be recorded as *full-day present*, if they are present for more than four hours of the school day.

### **Early Departure**

Children who need to leave school during the day must bring a written excuse to the school office in the morning. The parent or guardian must sign the child out when leaving school, and sign in when returning to school. Individual children, leaving school early, will be called to the office when the parent arrives. **Parents are reminded that there is no parking in the bus lane at any time and that they should not drive through the bus lane during dismissal from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.**

### **Late Arrival**

Parents of children who arrive late to school are expected to sign their children in at the office. *After 9:00 a.m. a parent must accompany their child into the office.* **Parents are reminded that there is no parking in the bus lane at any time and that they should not drive through the bus lane from 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.** Students are expected to have a written excuse for tardiness from their parent or legal guardian.

## ***Other School Policies***

### **Cell Phones**

According to Montgomery County Public Schools' Regulation COG-RA, elementary students are not permitted to possess or use portable communication devices (i.e. cell phones) on MCPS school campuses during the instructional day. By written request from a parent and upon approval of the principal, an elementary school student may possess a portable communication device on an elementary school campus during the instructional day. The waiver forms for cell phone use is available in the school office. Principals will grant waivers to the regulation based on consideration of the following factors: safety to and from school, communication during off campus school activities, or medical concerns. Other factors may be considered at the discretion of the principal. The principal may revoke this privilege at any time.

### **Delivery of Articles to Students**

When it is necessary to deliver messages, books, lunches, umbrellas, or other articles to students during school hours, please take such items to the school office for distribution. This avoids disruption to the instructional programs.

### **Elevator Use**

Little Bennett Elementary School (LBES) has an elevator designed to be used by students, staff, and visitors who require assistance moving from one floor to another. Students are permitted to use the elevator only when necessary and with permission from a Little Bennett staff member.

### **Food Brought to Classrooms**

The Division of Licensure and Regulatory Services of the Montgomery County Health Department is concerned about food prepared in the home and brought to schools to be served. These concerns, in view of increased incidences of salmonella contamination, deal primarily with egg and poultry products, but also focus on other food products that are highly susceptible to spoilage. Many students have dietary restrictions based on medical conditions. Parents should also notify their child's teacher about special dietary or medical restrictions of their child. Little Bennett Elementary School requires that store bought items are provided by parents in lieu of homemade food products. Store-bought food items may be purchased and sent to school, in cooperation with the teacher and room parent(s), for Halloween and Valentine's Day celebrations.

### **Lost and Found**

Found articles of clothing, lunch boxes, and other items are displayed throughout the year in the all-purpose room (cafeteria). Children are encouraged to check the display for missing possessions. Eyeglasses, wallets, keys, and other small or valuable items are secured in the school office. Please label all clothing. If items are labeled, we will get them to the students eliminating the need to search the lost and found area. Periodically throughout the year, unclaimed items will be donated to charity.

### **Telephone Calls**

Teachers and students will be called to the telephone from classrooms only for emergencies. The most convenient time to call teachers is before or after school or when a specific teacher recommends. Students may use the telephone at school for emergencies only and must have permission from their teacher.

## **School and Safety Security**

### **Animals on School Grounds**

Montgomery County ordinance forbids unleashed dogs or dogs not in their owner's immediate control to be on school grounds. This ordinance is in effect at Little Bennett Elementary School. The Montgomery County Department of Animal Control will be called immediately to remove any animals roaming unleashed. Parents who bring leashed dogs on or near school property should consider that some children are fearful of dogs leashed or not.

### **Emergency Plan for Shelter and Lockdown Drills:**

As part of each Local School Emergency Plan and to prepare for any potential emergency, each Montgomery County Public School (MCPS) is required to practice with staff and students a minimum of seven safety drills each school year. One Shelter situation drill will be a tornado drill. In addition, we schedule a minimum of six fire drills each school year.

Shelter is a term used in an emergency at an MCPS facility that requires all students to be accounted for and under supervision. A Shelter situation could be called in the event of severe weather, hazardous material release, or an increase in security due to an incident in the community. Students, staff, and visitors would be alerted by an announcement via the intercom system that a Shelter situation was in effect. All emergency team members would report to the office while students either remained in or reported to their classrooms. Attendance would be taken immediately to account for all students. An announcement would be made notifying everyone that the Shelter situation has ended.

Lockdown is a term used at an MCPS facility when an immediate lockdown of classroom and other doors is warranted. A Lockdown would be called in the event that someone either near or in the school building posed an

immediate threat to students or staff. Similar to a Shelter situation, students, staff, and visitors would be alerted by an announcement via the intercom system that a Lockdown was in effect. All students would either remain in or report to their classrooms or the nearest securable location. In the event of a Lockdown all window blinds would be drawn, lights turned off, and silence maintained. Following the Lockdown, an announcement would be made notifying everyone that the Lockdown has ended and attendance would be taken and submitted to the office.

### **Fire Drills/ Evacuations**

We are required to complete at least 6 fire drills per year. During the first weeks of school, we will discuss with student's procedures for exiting during a fire drill or *evacuation*. To prepare students (particularly Kindergarten and first grade) for these procedures, we begin with an announced drill without sounding the alarm. Our next drill will also be announced, but the alarm will sound. Subsequent drills will all be unannounced.

### **Safety**

If your child walks to school, please assist him/her in selecting a safe, regular route for walking to and from school. For your child's safety, please send in a note if he/she is to be picked up by someone other than the parent or guardian. Please remind your child(ren) to never leave school without permission from the principal and the teacher. To reduce traffic in the halls and encourage independence, parents should have their children walk to class alone in the morning and meet them at a predetermined area at the end of the school day. We take child safety very seriously and cannot monitor large numbers of adults in different areas of the building at once.

### **Safety Patrols**

Little Bennett Elementary School has an outstanding group of responsible fifth grade boys and girls serving as school safety patrols. They begin their morning duty at 8:30 a.m. and afternoon duty at 3:40 p.m. Safety patrols' primary responsibility is to help keep students safe. Parents should impress upon their children the importance of following patrol directions. If a patrol is observed disregarding school rules and standards, the patrol should be reported to one of the safety patrol co-sponsors, Mr. or Mrs. Horn, or the principal or assistant principal.

### **Security**

To ensure a safe environment for students and staff, all outside doors will remain locked after 9:00 a.m. each day. Access to the building is by the front doors only, press the red button and proceed to the door to gain access. All parents and other visitors must first report to the school office and show their driver's license and/or ID to receive a visitor's sticker during their visit. **There are to be no exceptions.** If suspicious activity is observed after school hours, please contact the Montgomery County Police via the non-emergency number at 301-279-8000.

### **Use of Building/Grounds**

The school is available for use by the PTA and outside groups on a space-available basis after school hours. Application forms for use of the building or playground may be obtained from the school office. Booking for any fee-based activity must be done through the Interagency Coordinating Board (ICB) of Community Use of Public Facilities (CUPF) at (240) 777-2706.

### **Parent Visitors**

Parent volunteers and visitors are welcome. These visits should be prearranged with your child's teacher or other staff member. Unannounced visits or impromptu parent/teacher conferences interrupt instruction, routines, and teacher planning. Please schedule, in advance, visits to volunteer or meet with a staff member. If a message needs to be communicated to your child's teacher, please speak with one of our secretaries.

## **Student Code of Conduct**

### **Behavior and Discipline**

Children are expected to conduct themselves in such a manner that they and their classmates will gain the most from their school experience. School provides many opportunities for children to develop respect for others and the ability to work, learn, and cooperate together.

Little Bennett Elementary School has implemented PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support), a school-wide system that teaches and reinforces positive behaviors. There are a range of consequences for each infraction of the school-wide discipline policy. The discipline policy and components of PBIS are reviewed and revised each

school year with input from parents, staff, students, and administration. As part of the positive behavior management program, students will “Go for the Green” each day they come to school. Everyday, students begin on the color green. If a student chooses not to follow a Little Bennett High 5 rule, he/she will need to change their color. The Little Bennett High 5 rules and the colored behavior levels are listed below.

Little Bennett High 5 Rules	Behavior Levels
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Be Ready</b></li> <li>2. <b>Be Responsible</b></li> <li>3. <b>Be Respectful</b></li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ GREEN = Following All Rules</li> <li>▪ YELLOW = Warning</li> <li>▪ ORANGE = Reflection</li> <li>▪ RED = Phone Call Home</li> </ul>

A copy of Little Bennett’s discipline policy will be sent home with all students. Please take time to discuss the policy with your child(ren) and return the tear-off indicating that your family has reviewed it together.

Behavior and discipline are shared responsibilities of the home and the school. A cooperative and supportive partnership benefits students in a way that promotes self-discipline. When school disciplinary decisions are required, we use this as an opportunity to educate students about making good choices. School disciplinary measures range from student/teacher conferences to suspension or expulsion. More favored forms of school disciplinary actions include keeping children after school and holding parent conferences. Occasionally, a student’s behavior may warrant suspension. Examples of these offenses include insubordination, obscenity, and repeated violations of school expectations. Each case is handled on an individual basis in accordance with MCPS policy.

**Bullying/Harassment/Intimidation**

Bullying, harassment, and intimidation will not be tolerated. This includes verbal, written, or physical conduct that creates a hostile educational environment by substantially interfering with a student’s educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, or with a student’s physical or psychological well-being, and is motivated by an actual or a perceived personal characteristic such as race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion or disability, or is threatening or seriously intimidating.

Bullying, harassment, and intimidation that occurs on school property, at a school-sponsored activity or event off school property, on a school bus, on the way to and/or from school, **or using electronic communication or social media will not be tolerated.** Student victims, the parent or guardian of a student victim, or a close adult relative of a student victim, who wish to report an incident of alleged harassment or intimidation (bullying), should report the incident to the principal or assistant principal immediately. **Form 230-35**, which can be found under the “Counseling” tab on our school’s website, can be used to report incidences of bullying, harassment, or intimidation.

**Dress Guidelines for Students**

All clothing worn to school during the school day or during school functions should reflect the fact that school is a place where students and adults do important work. Clothing worn at school should not cause disruption, nor endanger health or safety. Guidelines are as follows:

- Moderation and good taste are always advised when evaluating what is appropriate for the school setting. For example, excessively short shorts, short skirts, or midriff-bearing tops should not be worn to school.
- Any wording or pictures on clothing should be respectful of our learning environment.
- For safety reasons, flip flop sandals are not recommended to be worn at school (secured sandals are not considered flip flops). Flip flops can cause falls on stairs or get caught on recess equipment.
- Hats should not be worn in the building (unless during a school-sponsored “hat day”).
- The principal or designee makes the final judgment regarding individual dress code issues.

**The School Day**

**Homework**

Homework is an integral part of school and learning. It is expected that students will spend time nightly on extending their attainment of skills and knowledge. A detailed description of Little Bennett’s Homework Policy will be sent home with students during the first week of school. Please take time to review the policy with your

child(ren) and help us communicate the importance of homework and good study habits. *In most instances, homework cannot be provided to students prior to an absence, but to the extent possible, can be made up once the student returns to school.*

### **Library Media Center**

All students have the opportunity to check books out from Little Bennett's Media Center. Students may visit the media center, with teacher permission, to borrow books from the media center during the school day, beginning at 8:50 a.m. before school, and until 3:45 p.m. after school. Just like the public library's books, care should be taken when checking items out of our media center. Students who lose or damage items from the school will be charged the material's replacement value. For more information on our media center, including information on things such as online resources, please visit our webpage.

### **Lockers**

Students in grades 1-5 will be assigned a locker in which to keep their belongings. During the school day, students should store their backpacks and coats in their lockers. Each student is responsible for ensuring that his or locker is kept in good condition and that the door remains closed and belongings are entirely inside the locker when students are in class. Locks should **not** be purchased for student lockers.

Expectations regarding lockers will be communicated to students as follows:

- Go to your locker only with your teacher's permission at times other than before and after school.
- When you arrive to school, take all materials from your backpack to your classroom.
- Use only your own locker.
- Open and close your locker door quietly.
- Keep all materials completely inside your locker.
- Decorations and locker accessories are **not** permitted in or on lockers (i.e. stickers, magnets, mirrors).
- Empty all materials from your locker at the end of each day.
- Remove items from only your own locker.

### **Lunch and Recess**

Lunch and breakfast menus are sent home on the first day of each month. Hot lunches are served daily with an alternative choice. The procedure for ordering lunch through our computerized SNAP program is described on an attached notice. Students coming to LBES from another Montgomery County Public School will have any money remaining in their SNAP accounts transferred to LBES, but will be assigned a new PIN. Parents may pay for school lunches by sending payment directly to the school or through [MySchoolBucks.com](http://MySchoolBucks.com), an online service which allows parents to make prepayments to their child's cafeteria account with a credit/debit card using the Internet. Once the account is established, you can check balances, view student purchases, set up recurring payments, and receive low balance e-mail notification. Prepayments will generally be available at the school the next day. To establish your account, go to [MySchoolBucks.com](http://MySchoolBucks.com) and register."

The Board of Education increased the price of lunch for elementary school students to \$2.55. The price of breakfast will remain at \$1.30 for elementary students. Income eligible students will continue to receive meals that are either free or if reduced-price eligible, 40 cents for lunch, and no charge for breakfast. The price of milk will remain at 60 cents. Summary of school meal prices is as follows.

▪ Lunch	\$2.55
▪ Reduced Lunch	.40
▪ Breakfast	1.30
▪ Reduced Breakfast	no cost
▪ Milk	.60

For students who choose to eat breakfast at school, it is served from 8:40-9:00 a.m. All children are supervised during breakfast, lunch, and recess. Rules and consequences for lunchroom and playground behavior will be reviewed with students at the start of school and throughout the school year.

On early dismissal days, please note that the length of time students have to eat is sometimes less than on regular days. No recess is held on early dismissal days, days when the opening of school is delayed two hours for inclement



weather, or on days when school closes early due to weather-related or other emergencies. No breakfast is served when the opening of school is delayed. The lunch and recess schedule for the 2016-2016 school year is as follows.

	<b>Kindergarten</b>	<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
<b>Lunch</b>	11:40 a.m. – 12:15 a.m.	11:05 a.m. – 11:40 p.m.	11:40 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.	12:20 p.m. – 12:55 p.m.	12:55 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.	12:40 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.
<b>Recess</b>	11:05 a.m. – 11:40 p.m.	11:40 a.m. – 12:15 a.m.	12:20 p.m. – 12:55 p.m.	12:55 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.	12:20 p.m. – 12:55 p.m.	1:15 p.m. – 1:50 p.m.

### Snack Guidelines

Teachers may choose to schedule a snack time during the instructional day, depending on the age of the students and their assigned lunch time. If your child’s classroom does have a designated snack time, it will be a “working snack” and should be able to be consumed in five minutes or less. The snack should be able to be opened by the student independently, should not need utensils, and should not be prone to spills. Some students in your child’s class may have severe food allergies. If this is the case, your child’s teacher may institute special snack guidelines. Students who may need a snack due to medical reasons will be considered on a case by case basis, please contact your child’s teacher in this instance. If providing a snack is a financial burden for you, you may contact your child’s teacher. The following list is a suggestion of quick, healthy, nut-free snacks for your consideration:

- Apple
- Celery
- Cheese stick
- Dried fruit
- Banana
- Blueberries
- Triscuits
- Cherry Tomatoes
- Carrots
- Cucumber
- Popcorn

### Make-up Work

Students who miss school because of an absence are expected to make up work that was missed. We highly encourage parents to plan trips outside of the school year, but understand that there are occasions when this is unavoidable. Teachers, in most cases, are unable to provide work to students prior to a planned absence, but while your child is absent from school, he or she can:

- Keep a daily journal
- Make a collection of objects from a trip
- Take ten or more photographs or draw pictures, and include captions for each
- Take some paperback books and writing a brief summary of each
- Make a list of 50 words that describe the area you are visiting
- Draw and label a map with the places you visited
- Send one or more postcards to the class

### School Hours

Normal school hours are from 9:00 a.m. to 3:25 p.m. for Kindergarten through Grade 5. On early release days, students are dismissed at 12:55 p.m. **Children are expected to arrive at school on time, but no earlier than 8:40 a.m.** Children are considered tardy when they arrive to their classroom after 9:00 a.m. The Little Bennett Elementary School office hours are 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. Parents may leave a message on the answering machine if calling outside of the office hours.

### School Supplies

All items related to the instructional program are provided for each student. Most students enjoy having their own supplies, however. A list of suggested items is located on the Little Bennett Elementary School website. Please refrain from purchasing any school supply item that is not listed unless first discussed with your child’s teacher. To help preserve the white boards in each classroom, students are not permitted to bring magic markers to LBES.

School supplies or materials of instruction are defined as items needed by the educator to teach the course content and/or items needed by the students to demonstrate mastery of the course content. Students may not be charged for materials of instruction unless, as noted below:

- The materials are used to create a product eaten by the student

- The materials are used to create a product that becomes the property of the student
- The materials become the personal property of the student for reasons of personal hygiene

It is the school's responsibility to provide materials of instruction without cost to the student unless the item meets the exceptions listed above. Each elementary classroom should have the supplies required for instruction (classroom set). Examples of materials of instruction are as follows: Calculator, Data binders, Ruler, Circle compass, Glue sticks/white glue, Scissors, Composition book/journal, Jump drive/memory stick, Crayons, or Protractor.

Some items may be materials of instruction for in-class work but also provided by the parent for homework or individual use. These items are commonly found at home or are available in many stores. For example, if students are using scissors or a simple compass or protractor for an in-class lesson, the items are materials of instruction and must be provided by the school for in-class use. If a student is using scissors or a simple compass or protractor to complete a homework assignment— those are personal supplies provided by the parent to support his/her child's learning. The instrumental music teacher should have a reasonable selection of instruments on hand for a student to use at no charge. If a student's preferred instrument is unavailable, a student has the option of renting the preferred instrument from a music store. If the material of instruction becomes the personal property of the student, a fee may be charged. An example of a material of instruction that becomes the personal property of the student is a recorder.

Parent/teacher/school partnerships are key to preparing all students to achieve at high levels. Parents equip students with important organizational tools for success in class. Students may be expected to bring individual organizational tools and personal supplies from home. Each school may decide the items recommended for students to bring from home.

Examples of individual organizational tools and personal supplies that may be supplied by parents are as follows:

- |                              |                                    |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ▪ Crayons                    | ▪ Glue Sticks/white glue           |
| ▪ Eraser tops of #2 pencils  | ▪ Hole-punch, for notebook         |
| ▪ Loose-leaf notebook paper  | ▪ Pens, ballpoint                  |
| ▪ Notebook dividers          | ▪ Personal binders/notebooks       |
| ▪ Pencil box or zipper pouch | ▪ Personal Spiral/Composition Book |
| ▪ #2 Pencils                 | ▪ Pocket folders                   |

Some items may be provided by the parent for homework or individual use but also provided in class sets by the school for in-class work. These items are commonly found at home or available in many stores. Student planners will be available for purchase by students in grades 3, 4 and 5. Parent donations of items that enhance classroom experiences are welcomed. This includes donations from individual parents, organized by class parents, or organized/donated by the PTA. These are not required donations and no parent will be expected to provide these items.

Examples of items that may be donated by parents include the following:

- |                                       |                                     |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ▪ Baby wipes                          | ▪ Paper plates                      |
| ▪ Disinfectant wipes                  | ▪ Paper towels                      |
| ▪ Facial tissues                      | ▪ headphones                        |
| ▪ Hand sanitizer                      | ▪ Gallon size plastic storage bags  |
| ▪ Money for class snacks/celebrations | ▪ Sandwich size plastic storage bag |

In some classrooms where one or more students have a severe food allergy the school has implemented safety guidelines to reduce the risk of a life-threatening allergic reaction. Parents of students in these highly impacted classrooms will receive a letter from their child's teacher explaining those guidelines along with a request that each parent in that classroom make a donation to a snack fee for the purchase of food-allergy-safe snacks for that classroom.

Students and parents are not required to provide documentation to justify a waiver. Teachers have a role and responsibility to advocate for a student through the waiver process.

## **Medical Information**

### **Allergies**

An increasing number of students come to school with a variety of allergies, some of which are life-threatening. If your child has an allergy (i.e. milk, peanuts, beesstings, etc.) that could affect him or her at school, please notify the Little Bennett Health Room staff. To keep all students safe, it is imperative that food not be distributed to students without prior advance approval from the classroom teacher. In some classrooms, signs are posted and letters may be sent home to all students as a reminder that there are students in that class at high risk to specific foods. To reduce the risk of cross-contamination from specific foods during lunch, students with nut allergies are seated at the Eagle Table with other classmates with similar allergies. As a safety precaution, we ask that if your child has eaten products containing or made in a facility or on shared equipment (i.e. milk, peanuts, eggs) before coming to school, that you have them wash their hands and face thoroughly with soap before entering the building. Finally, please discuss with your child our rule which states, "We do not trade, sell, or share food at school".

### **Chickenpox**

Normally in childhood, chickenpox is a mild illness. The major symptom of the disease is a generalized rash consisting of many small, itching blisters over the body and sometimes in the mouth. Children may also have a fever and generally feel ill. Aspirin should not be given if a child is suspected of having chickenpox, as there is a risk of taking aspirin and developing Reye Syndrome, which is a serious illness. Chickenpox is very contagious.

The period after exposure until development of symptoms is 2-3 weeks (incubation period). A child is infectious 1-2 days before the onset of rash and not more than 6 days after the appearance of the first crop of blisters that develop from small pimples. Newborn babies and persons with low immunity to disease should be prevented from exposure to chickenpox. We need your cooperation in decreasing the spread of chickenpox and other contagious diseases. If you suspect your child has chickenpox, notify the school immediately and keep him or her home from school during the infectious period. The child may return to school after all blisters are dry and crusted, usually 6-7 days. Immunization for chicken pox is required for all students entering kindergarten, and first grade. The vaccination does not entirely prevent chicken pox.

### **Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)**

Conjunctivitis signs and symptoms: redness of one or both eyes with or without discharge. Incubation period: 24-72 hours. Children can return to school 24 hours after treatment begins.

### **H1N1 Flu virus**

In the past there have been concerns that the H1N1 flu virus might cause serious illness. Each MCPS school has developed instructional and operational plans to continue teaching and learning in case school is closes for some period of time. In the event that changes to normal school hours and operations occur, specific information will be shared through a variety of methods, including: Connect-ED, the MCPS website and school websites, letters, and listserves. To be sure that you receive these messages, it is very important that you provide your child's school with your most up-to-date contact information, including telephone number(s) and email address, and let the school know right away if any of that information changes. In addition, you also can receive important school system messages by signing up for the MCPS QuickNotes e-mail service and Twitter messaging service through the MCPS website at [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org). Parents may also receive important school system messages by subscribing to Alert MCPS at <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/emergency/sources/alertmcps/>.

Students, faculty and staff should strictly follow these sanitary measures to reduce the spread of influenza:

- Cover the nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or coughing or sneezing into a sleeve if a tissue isn't available) and disposing of the tissue after use.
- Frequently wash hands with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing, or use Alcohol-based hand sanitizer if hand washing with soap and water is not possible.
- Students, faculty or staff with influenza-like illness (fever with a cough or sore throat) should stay home and not attend school or go into the community except to seek medical care for at least 7 days even if symptoms resolve sooner.
- Students, faculty and staff who are still sick 7 days after they become ill should continue to stay home from school until at least 24 hours after symptoms have resolved.

- Students, faculty and staff who appear to have an influenza-like illness at arrival or become ill during the day should be isolated promptly in a room separate from other students and sent home.
- Aspirin or aspirin-containing products should not be administered to any confirmed or suspected ill case of novel H1N1 influenza virus infection aged 18 years old and younger due to the risk of Reye syndrome, a serious illness.
- Parents and guardians should monitor their school-aged children, and faculty and staff should self-monitor every morning for symptoms of influenza-like illness.

### **Immunization Requirements**

It is State law that school children be immunized and that parents must have proof have of these shots.

- DPT (Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus) 4 doses required
- OPV (Oral or Injectable Polio Vaccine) 3 doses required.
- MMR (Measles [Rubeola]; Mumps, Rubella [German Measles]) 2 doses live virus vaccine on or after first birthday or a titer of 1:4 or greater.
- Varicella- one dose on or after the first birthday or health care providers documentation of disease
- Hepatitis B- 3 doses

### **Lice**

A letter will inform parents if there is a case of lice reported to the school or if a case is discovered in school. If a child is sent home with lice, the child is not admitted back to school for a 24 hour period to give the family time to properly treat the home, the child, and other family members who may require treatment. Children, whom our school health room technician or nurse discover have lice, will not be permitted to ride the school bus home and must be picked up from school by a parent or guardian. The child may not ride the bus back to school after being sent home with lice. Instead, the parent or guardian must bring the child to the health room for a final check before the child can be admitted to class. The parent must also bring proof of treatment, according to MCPS policy. This includes a signed statement and medicine box top, or, in the event of a repeated case, a doctor's note.

### **Medication Policy**

In the event that your physician decides that your child needs to receive medication at school during the school day, MCPS Form 525-13, Authorization to Administer Prescribed Medication, must be completed and on file at school. Forms are available in the school office and in the school health room. If you don't have access to the proper form, a written order on the physician's stationary or prescription pad is acceptable, provided it includes the following information:

- Your child's name
- Name of medication being ordered
- Dosage
- Time of administration
- Possible side effects

The first full day's dosage of any new prescription must be administered at home. Medication must be brought to school by the parent or guardian. Under no circumstances will medication be given which is brought to school by a student. Students should never carry their medication to school. A pharmacist must properly label medication. Over-the-counter medication (e.g. aspirin, Tylenol, cough syrup) must also be prescribed by a physician as noted above and brought to the school by the parent or guardian in the original container with the dosage labeled by the manufacturer.

### **Medications and Illnesses**

**Please do not send sick children to school.** Children should be without fever or vomiting for 24 hours before returning to school. The health room is not equipped or staffed to care for sick children for more than a short period of time. Illnesses that may require an absence from school include:

- Diarrhea
- Fever
- H1N1 Flu virus or other flu-like symptoms
- Upset stomach/Vomiting

- Severe headache
- Skin rashes or infection
- Sore throat
- Swollen glands
- Thick nasal discharge
- Persistent cough

A child who is ill is routinely sent to the school health room. The school nurse or school health technician will assess the child, contact the parent or guardian, and send the child home with his/her parent if necessary. Any child with an elevated temperature of 100 degrees or above is sent home. It is recommended that your child be free from fever for 24 hours before returning to school.

It is likely that some time during the school year your child will have a medication prescribed by a doctor. As a general policy, the school recommends that children receive medication at home whenever possible. In the event your physician decides your child needs to receive medication during the school day, certain procedures must be followed. For more information, contact our school community health nurse or school health technician at (301) 540-5535 and refer to the Medication Policy provided in this handbook.

## **Staying Connected with the School**

### ***Communication with the School***

#### **Communication to Parents**

A principal's newsletter featuring important school information will be published every Thursday. Please take time to read this weekly bulletin to keep informed about our school. Classroom teachers will send a newsletter home to parents at least monthly.

#### **Conferences**

Parent/teacher conferences are a planned opportunity for parents and teachers to discuss a child's achievement and to plan cooperatively for continued student progress. ***Parent/teacher conferences will be held in November*** and at other times during the school year agreed upon by the parent and teacher. Please refrain from "drop in" conferences before and after school as teachers use this time to plan and prepare for students.

#### **Grading and Reporting Students' Progress**

Report card grades should reflect academic achievement. Student performance is assessed using multiple measures over time, and all students should be graded on individual objectives. Feedback to students should be timely and specific. Therefore, end of marking period grades should not be a surprise to students or their parents. Information will be provided to parents throughout the school year regarding the changes to the report card format and regarding the policy on grading and reporting.

Standard report cards will be issued four times during the school year to students in Grades 1-5. Kindergarten students will receive report cards at the end of the second and fourth marking period only. June report cards will be mailed to students' homes.

#### **Parent Concerns**

Little Bennett Elementary School encourages open communication at all times. Concerns about your child should first be directed to the classroom teacher. If your concern is about an individual teacher, please speak with that teacher first. Most issues can be resolved through this direct communication. However, if they cannot, your concern should be directed to the principal or assistant principal. At that time, the teacher will be notified and a meeting scheduled to include all three parties if deemed necessary. In the case of a complaint, the teacher will be notified and given the opportunity to respond. The person who initiated the complaint will be notified as to whether or not action was taken and the status of the situation.

#### **Website**

The Little Bennett website has been updated for the new school year and is a wonderful source of information for parents and students and anyone interested in Little Bennett Elementary School. We make every effort to update the site with the most current information available and have included links to other sites that we believe may serve as

resources for parents and students. We hope parents, students and other members of our community will use the LBES website regularly. The website address is: [www.littlebennettes.org](http://www.littlebennettes.org). We always appreciate suggestions from parents and students on how to make our website more effective and useful.

## ***Emergency Information***

### **Contingency Plans for School Evacuation**

Each Montgomery County Public School is required to have a contingency plan should the need arise to evacuate the school building for an extended time. Specific information regarding Little Bennett's school evacuation plan will be reviewed regularly with students and staff and communicated to parents in writing and during PTA meetings. Little Bennett's primary off-site evacuation location is the soccer field located at the corner of Clarksburg Road and Snowden Farm Parkway. In the event an alternate evacuation site is needed, students and staff would be taken by MCPS buses to Clarksburg High School.

### **Emergency School Schedule Changes**

If snow or other weather emergencies force a closing or delayed opening of schools, radio and television stations will be notified of the County's decision by 6 a.m. or by 11 a.m. for early closing. Please listen to radio and TV for announcements on snowy or icy days. Radio stations to listen to are: WMAL (AM-630), WTOP (AM-1500). MCPS channel 34 on local Cable TV will have a message. Local stations NBC-4, FOX 5, ABC-7, and CBS-9 will usually announce school closings. For a taped MCPS message call: (301) 279-3673. **Do not call the school.** The MCPS website will also post a notice at <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/>. You may sign-up for automatic e-mail notification through MCPS's *QuickNotes* by going to <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/quicknotes/> or join *Twitter* to start receiving MCPS updates on your phone at <http://twitter.com/mcps>. *QuickNotes* and *Twitter* will provide you with up-to-date news and information about the school system through the convenience of e-mail and text messages to your phone. In addition, Alert MCPS provides you with emergency information about school operations via text messages (i.e. SMS text or email messages) to devices you register. Signing up for Alert MCPS is free, but your wireless carrier may charge you a fee to receive text messages. You may register for Alert MCPS by going to <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/emergency/sources/alertmcps/>.

***School Closing*** - In the event of emergencies that make it impossible for Montgomery County Public Schools to open, information will be broadcast over local radio and television stations, beginning by 6:00 a.m. Please listen to local news and weather stations for updates. Do not call the school.

***Delayed Opening*** - In the event of snow or other hazardous weather conditions, school may open two hours later than usual to assure safe transportation of students to school. All students who normally ride school buses will be picked up approximately two hours later than their regularly scheduled pick-up time on delayed opening days. Car riders and walkers should arrive at school no earlier than 10:40 a.m. when a two-hour delayed opening is announced. When a two-hour delayed school opening is announced, no breakfast will be served to students. School will end at the regular time unless otherwise announced.

***Early Closing.*** When early dismissal of students is necessary due to inclement weather, school will close one and one half-hours early. Buses may run late because of hazardous road conditions. The lunch period will be scheduled for all students prior to dismissal. Announcements will be made on local radio and television stations. Parents are urged to tune in to local news stations to find out about school closings. When the school is closed, extracurricular afternoon, and evening activities are automatically canceled.

## **Student Activities and Special Events**

### **Back to School Night**

Back-to-School night is held in September. This forum provides a wonderful opportunity for the staff to share their program with parents, including meeting with specialists and ESOL teachers.

### **Birthday Celebrations**

Student birthdays will be recognized during morning announcements only. Birthday treats are **not** to be a part of birthday celebrations at school. Some problems resulting from treats given in school include significant allergic reactions experienced by students, safety of items prepared at home (not store bought), and students eating birthday

treats in lieu of their lunches. In addition, invitations to private birthday celebrations are not to be distributed at school unless every student in the class is invited. Further, the school is not allowed to release personal information for the distribution of invitations. *Parents are encouraged to use information in the annual PTA Directory to mail birthday invitations to classmates.*

### **Hardships**

If the cost of a field trip, school supply, or other expense required for school presents a financial hardship, please contact the principal. Financial assistance **may be available** through a fund provided by our PTA. A short, handwritten note or email explaining the hardship should be sent to the principal or assistant principal and will be kept confidential.

### **Open House**

Open House, held on the Columbus Day holiday in October is an opportunity to visit classrooms and share in your child's learning. The hours of our Open House typically occur between 9:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

## **Parent Support**

### **Parent/Teacher Association (PTA)**

Our PTA is a volunteer organization dedicated to supporting the school and the welfare of our children. We encourage all parents and staff members to join and become active in our PTA. Meetings are generally held beginning at 6:45 p.m. on the first Monday of the month during the months in which they are held. The Little Bennett PTA benefits our school in many ways, so please consider joining.

### **Visiting Classrooms**

Parents are encouraged to visit the school and may observe in their children's classrooms. Parents must arrange a visit ahead of time by calling their child's teacher or the principal beforehand, since the class may be having a test or be out on a field trip. As you enter the building, please report to the office, have your driver's license and/or ID available and you will receive an identification badge.

While visiting, please remember that a visit is not the time to talk to teachers. If you wish to discuss a matter with your child's teacher, please make a separate conference date. Parent comments are encouraged and valued. Parents are asked to take into account when visiting that much precedes and follows the segment of the day observed.

### **Visitors**

It is a challenge for a school to establish an open and welcoming climate for parents and other visitors while still maintaining security and control of visitors entering the building. All visitors during the school day must first check into the office before proceeding to other parts of the building or school grounds and **wear the visitor's sticker** at all times during the visit. Parents should not escort their children to class nor pick them up directly from class. State laws, safety regulations, and insurance policies require that all persons in the building be identified.

All adults are also reminded that our priorities at Little Bennett Elementary School are academic excellence, social/emotional well-being, and safety; therefore, we believe that every student should have the opportunity to learn skills and values that are necessary for personal development. To achieve this goal, it is important that all members of the Little Bennett community, including students, parents, staff members, and visitors follow the school rules and serve as role models for a safe, respectful, and positive learning environment.

### **Volunteers**

Parent and community volunteers play an important role in our school. Information is available on our school's website to familiarize parents and community members with our school and its policies. Information on this meeting will be sent home this fall. All volunteers are required to complete the MCPS online volunteer training on reporting abuse and neglect and must sign in at the main office with your driver's license and/or ID to receive a visitor sticker. Only trained volunteers will be permitted to use the copier. Copier training dates for volunteers will be announced in the Little Bennett Eagle, the weekly newsletter for Little Bennett families.