

Achievement Diversity Community

Crocker Farm Elementary School

A handbook for the school community

2011-2012

280 West Street
Amherst, Massachusetts
413-362-1600
cf.arps.org

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Dear Crocker Farm Families,

Welcome new and returning students and families! Crocker Farm Elementary is a forward thinking and forward acting community school. We are dedicated to reaching and teaching all children and we value your ongoing participation in the life of the school. Your child's learning and growing will be maximized by our home-school partnership.

This handbook is a reference for you and your child(ren). Please read and review the handbook with your child(ren) and return the tear off slip below to your child's teacher.

About 400 young students attend Crocker Farm School. Maintaining our exemplary reputation requires that we have a shared understanding of the school's educational vision. During the year, you will see the regular implementation of professional practices, which are consistent with that vision. Each day, the staff works toward knowing your child well, fostering in your child a sense of belonging, and encouraging, supporting, and motivating your child toward high-level achievement.

As parents and guardians, you are automatically members of the Parent Guardian Organization-our PGO. Regular PGO communications come home via your child or online during the year. Additionally, parents/guardians are welcome to attend monthly School Governance Council meetings. The PGO and School Governance Council meetings schedules are shared regularly by the principal in the Crocker Chronicles.

Finally, please help us maintain the following essential routines. First, call the absent line (362-1659) to let us know when your child is absent. Second, always sign in at the main office before you enter the main building each time you come to school.

We look forward to a productive and rewarding year with your support. Thank you and WELCOME AGAIN TO THE 2011-12 SCHOOL YEAR.

Michael Morris
Principal

Derek Shea
Assistant Principal

Please return this tear off slip to your child's teacher.

I have read this handbook, discussed it with my child, and will support the school's efforts to consistently provide a safe, productive learning environment.

Child's name _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Date _____

MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Crocker Farm Elementary School to provide each child with an appropriate and meaningful educational experience that is characterized by academic excellence, personal challenge, mutual respect, and shared responsibility. Inherent in our mission is the commitment to strive for excellence in our approaches to issues of equity, curriculum development and instruction, student achievement, professional development, social justice, and school/community issues.

Vision Statement

Crocker Farm is a school where:

- All children feel successful every day
- All children develop an awareness of their strengths and challenges and have an active role in creating a learning community
- All children feel valued and believed in
- Our students' cultures and backgrounds are embraced and are integral parts of our school community
- Curriculum is consistent throughout the school, inclusive, and relevant to a variety of student experiences
- Differentiated instruction addresses a variety of learning styles, skills, and interests
- We honor that parents/guardians are their children's first teachers
- School communication effectively reaches all families
- Our staff is committed to growth through collaboration and communication
- A strong sense of community resonates throughout school
- We foster connections with the greater community

The School Day

ATTENDANCE

Daily attendance is fundamental to a child's success at school. This year all of the schools in Amherst will once again be making a concerted, coordinated effort to improve the attendance of our students and to make certain that they arrive to school on time. We will be using the *School is Where It's At* program which is coordinated by the District Attorney's office.

ABSENSES

Parent/guardians are asked to call the school absence number, 362-1659, before 9:15 AM if their child will be absent. This is a voice mail system to record reported absences. If you do not call this number you will receive a message from our School Messenger system, and your child will be marked for an unexcused absence. Absences are tracked daily by office staff who will be monitoring our attendance records. A doctor's note is required when your child is absent three or more days from school or when concerns have arisen about a child's attendance. When a child accumulates a number of absences it begins to seriously impact his/her learning. Therefore, please plan family vacations to coincide with the regularly scheduled school vacation days.

TARDINESS

Children are expected to be in their classrooms at 8:40 A.M. ready to begin class. Arriving on time helps children settle into their day in school. The beginning of the day is also important since teachers give directions and set an agenda for the day during that time. Tardiness will not be excused, so please try to ensure that your child arrives at school on time each day. Tardy students must sign in at the main office and take a late pass to class. Three tardies will equal an unexcused absence.

ADDRESSING CONCERNS ABOUT ABSENSES AND TARDINESS

We will be monitoring all students' attendance and late arrivals closely this year. When we begin to be concerned about the number of student's absences or late arrivals we will send you a letter to alert you of the situation. The guidance counselor, assistant principal or principal will contact you if the problem continues and will set up a meeting to discuss the issue. The *School is Where It's At* program will be implemented to address ongoing attendance and tardiness issues. This plan will support our partnership in working together to ensure that all children have good attendance.

EARLY DISMISSAL/CHANGE IN DISMISSAL

If a student is to be dismissed before the end of the day or if there is a change in the way he/she will be going home, this information should be sent in a parent note to school ahead of time. It is the responsibility of the parent to send a note to the child's teacher. Written permission is required for another adult to pick up your child.

MORNING SUPERVISION

Teachers will be on duty to supervise the playground beginning at 8:15 a.m. In order to ensure the safety of each child, it is very important that children do not arrive before this time.

PARENT PICK-UP

Parents/guardians who are picking up a student should do that promptly at dismissal. Students waiting for their parents will meet them in the parent pick-up area near the Community Room. Students will not be allowed to wait outside to be picked up. Please do not wait for your child in the hallways or come into the classrooms.

VISITOR PARKING

Space in the school parking lot is limited. Please be vigilant when parking because children may be outside playing and in cross walks. Please do not park on the playground hardtops. (There may not be children there when you arrive, but a class might be on its way out to that playground.) The area in front of the school must be kept clear for buses from 8:15 a.m. to 8:35 a.m. and from 2:45 to 3:10 p.m. Please note that the state law, which prohibits a vehicle passing a school bus that is loading or unloading children, also applies to buses parked in the bus loading area. Therefore, parents should park at the Shays Street circle to pick up and drop off their children in the morning and after school.

VISITING DAYS

An effective way to learn about your child's classroom and the school is to make a personal visit. We have specific days designated for that purpose. There are no visiting days scheduled for the months of September or June. Special visits or conferences may also be arranged by contacting your child's teacher. A visiting day guidelines handout is available in the office. Please sign our visitor's log and review the guidelines prior to visiting the classroom. All visitors are required to clear their visits, whether formal or informal, through our main office and receive a visitor's name tag. All student information that is observed during a visit must remain confidential. Please note that the goal of visits is to learn about the teaching and learning in our classrooms. Resolving concerns is best handled in meetings with staff and/or administration.

VISITATION PROTOCOLS

To best maintain the safety of our students, we will be utilizing the follow protocol to monitor who comes into our building during the school day.

- a. All visitors will enter the school building through the front door.
- b. All school doors shall remain locked during the regular school day except at arrival and dismissal time.
- c. Access will be granted to the school via the front door after utilizing the door access bell.
- d. Access will be granted by school office personnel, the building principal or other authorized person after visual identification is made or the visitor's purpose for requesting access to the school is accepted.
- e. All visitors will be directed to the school main office where they will sign a visitor log and obtain a School Department Visitor Badge.
- f. Visitors who fail to report to the main office to sign-in or obtain a visitor badge will be reported to the building principal or other authorized person for investigation.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are organized throughout the school year to enhance classroom curriculum. Permission from a parent or guardian is required for children to participate. Permission slips will be sent home before each class field trip. Students are expected to follow the same Standards of Behavior that are expected while on school grounds. Students choosing not to follow these Standards of Behavior while on it field trip may be returned to school and/or lose the privilege

of going on subsequent trips.

SCHOOL CANCELATION AND EMERGENCIES

Responsibility for closing schools because of snow or other severe weather rests with the Superintendent. The decision to cancel or delay school due to snow will ordinarily be made before 6:00 a.m. School cancellation for severe weather or other emergencies will be announced on the following radio stations:

WRNX/WTTT – Amherst 1430 AM

WHMP – Northampton 1400 AM or 99.3 FM

WHA1 – Greenfield 1240 AM or 98.3 FM

WHYN – Springfield 93.1 FM

WMAS – Springfield 94.7 FM

WPVQ – Greenfield 93.9 FM

Channel 22 – Springfield Channel 40 – Springfield

There is also a “Hot-Line” number (362-1898) that parents may call for information as well as the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District website www.arps.org.

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

Community Involvement

SCHOOL COUNCIL

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

- adopting educational goals for the school
- identifying the educational needs of students
- reviewing the school’s annual budget
- formulating a school improvement plan.
- conducting parent/guardian surveys

THE PARENT-GUARDIAN ORGANIZATION

The PGO is designed to provide a forum for communication and the sharing of information. All meetings welcome the entire Crocker Farm Community.

The PGO has two major functions. The first is to foster discussion of topics of school-wide importance. Topics are raised by either PGO members or non-parent members attending the meetings, and often include issues under discussion at the school building level or by the Amherst School Committee.

The second function of the PGO is to organize and coordinate family involvement and fund raising endeavors. In the past, the PGO has been responsible for the coordination of school pictures, class lists and newsletters, pancake breakfasts, spaghetti suppers, playground projects and childcare for major school functions.

All parents and teachers are encouraged to attend meetings which occur regularly throughout the year. A notice is both posted in the school office and sent home announcing the date and agenda of each meeting.

Every year Crocker Farm families financially support the school's educational mission in numerous ways.

The Brown Paper Bag Fundraiser

The PGO asks families to contribute to our school through a Brown Paper Bag Fundraiser. Sometime during the school year you will receive a letter describing this fundraiser with a brown envelope attached. Please contribute what you can (no amount is too small) and return the envelope with your check made out to the Crocker Farm PGO enclosed.

Summer Read-a-thon

Crocker Farm students love to read! They use our school library constantly, withdrawing thousands of books during the course of a school year! Donations to this fund will help us maintain an up-to-date collection of books that will be available to our students.

School Pictures

One of our biggest fundraisers, this annual tradition is run by the PTO. Volunteers are needed to help assist the photographer and children during the photo shoot.

Scholastic Book Fair

The PTO works with Scholastic Books to bring popular paperbacks on-site for an annual school wide fundraising sale. Prices are affordable, and individual parent (voluntary) donations allow children the opportunity to buy at least one book. Assistance is needed in managing the sale, as well as with setting up and breaking down book displays.

Box Tops for Education

General Mills has given over \$50 million to American schools through Box Tops for Education. To contribute on behalf of Crocker Farm, all you need to do is clip the coupons from your food boxes (cereal, taco shells, etc.) and deposit them in the BTE box in the Main Office. Crocker Farm will receive a check when we send them in. Each one is worth \$.10 so it really adds up!

'Passive' fundraising

This fundraising program allows families to financially support the school by making purchases at participating businesses such as national retailers and supermarkets. The school receives a percentage of all sales made by registered or cardholding shoppers. Volunteers are needed with organizing and coordinating this wonderful and lucrative effort!

Communication

CONFERENCES AND REPORT CARDS

Report cards are distributed at the beginning of February and at the close of school in June. Individual conferences for all grades are offered in late autumn, primarily during the early

release days on October 27 and November 1. Spring conferences are scheduled at the discretion of either the teacher or the parent. Parents are strongly urged to use these conference times to discuss their child's progress. While these are specific occasions to discuss concerns, please contact your child's teacher any time you have a question.

QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS

All questions or concerns may be initially directed to our secretarial staff. In most cases they will be able to help you immediately. We suggest taking the following steps when you have other questions or concerns:

1. Make an appointment to see your child's teacher if your questions or concerns involve your child or your child's classroom. For example:
 - If you perceive a problem or have a concern about your child's performance in school, or
 - If you perceive a problem at home that may affect your child in school (e.g. death in the family or a separation)
2. Make an appointment to see an administrator if repeated efforts to resolve problems directly with a staff member have been unsatisfactory

HOMEWORK

We believe that students should be encouraged to achieve at the highest levels possible. We consistently set high expectations for instruction and learning within a nurturing, positive school environment. The district's policy is the foundation upon which our own homework practices are built. Early in the year, your child's teacher will provide information on the purpose of homework at that grade level, general content and type of homework, frequency of homework assignments, method of communication between home and school and a description of home and school responsibilities regarding homework. Please contact your child's classroom teacher with any comments, questions or concerns.

CROCKER CRONICLES

The school's newsletter (The Chronicles) is sent home with students every two weeks. It contains informational letters from administration, classrooms, school-wide news and important dates. Each edition is posted on the Crocker Farm web site as well. Other school related announcements are sent home separately. This year, we will be again be encouraging families to receive the Chronicles via email to reduce the paper use at the school.

CURRICULUM NIGHT

An evening is set aside each fall for families to come to school to see what students are studying across all areas of the curriculum. Your child's teachers will ensure that you leave Curriculum Night with a clear working knowledge of curriculum and instruction at his/her grade level. This special evening provides a building-wide opportunity for families and staff to come together and share in the unique communities of learning established in each classroom. Crocker Farm defines itself as a community school that strives to engage our parents/guardians as our partners in their child's learning and progress. You are invited to attend this very special evening together with us and continue the Crocker Farm tradition of exceptionally high community turnout!

School Climate and Responsibilities

Crocker Farm is utilizing a PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) model to improve school climate. Last year, we established our four core values (Cooperation, Accountability, Respect, and Empathy) and we will be teaching those values in a variety of contexts in the school. The Matrix on the following page communicates how students can show their commitment to these values. The PBIS model is a school-wide approach to ensure that we are both clarifying our expectations for student behavior and recognizing the many instances when students are going above and beyond our expectations.

SECOND STEP

The Second Step Program teaches social and emotional skills to reduce impulsive and aggressive behavior in children and increase their level of social competence. The lessons, which are taught by our classroom teachers and guidance counselor, teach, model, practice and reinforce skills in empathy, impulse control, problem-solving, recognition of emotions and anger management.

STANDARDS OF DRESS AND APPEARANCE

The intent of these standards is to encourage all concerned to dress, groom, and conduct themselves in keeping with an atmosphere which reflects an awareness of the overall purposes and functions of the school.

- Students should wear shoes or sandals held securely on the feet for protection when on school grounds and aboard school buses.
- Students should not wear decorations, symbols, mottos, or designs on the body or clothing showing unacceptable products (such as tobacco, alcohol, or drugs) or inappropriate pictures or words. Students should not wear clothing that contains obscenities, fighting words, incitement or defamation on them.
- Students should arrive each day at school with clean clothes, bodies, and hair, in keeping with the practice of good hygiene.
- Students should not wear see-through clothing or halter or tank tops with thin straps, nor should they wear tops that leave the stomach showing, short shorts, or miniskirts. (You can use the tips of your fingers with your hands at your sides as a good estimate of an appropriate length for your shorts or skirts.)
- Students should wear clothing that lets them move and play safely when physical education is scheduled: for example, sneakers, shorts/pants, and t-shirts.
- Students' clothing should be worn appropriately. For example, pants are to be held securely at the waist.
- Jewelry should be worn in a way that does not present a safety or health hazard nor cause a major distraction to the educational process. Wallet chains are not permitted.
- Students should not wear hats inside the school building unless previously approved by either a teacher or principal.

The Crocker Farm Administration will determine if a student's dress/appearance meets school standards.

	Playground	Hallway	Cafeteria	Bus	Classroom	Technology
Cooperation	<p>Be a good listener</p> <p>Wait your turn</p> <p>Take turns</p> <p>Share with others</p> <p>Be a good sport.</p> <p>Follow game rules.</p>	<p>Walk on the right side in a straight line</p> <p>Wait your turn</p> <p>Face forward so you don't bump anyone</p>	<p>Enter cafeteria quietly</p> <p>Wait your turn.</p>	<p>Encourage others to behave appropriately.</p> <p>Wait your turn</p> <p>Stay seated.</p> <p>Sit with your grade group.</p> <p>Keep aisles clear.</p>	<p>Be a good listener: <u>Listen</u> with your ears, <u>look</u> with your eyes, <u>think</u> with your brain</p> <p>Wait your turn</p>	<p>Choose websites, chat rooms, etc. that are appropriate</p>
Accountability	<p>Follow directions</p> <p>Report unsafe or inappropriate behavior to an adult.</p> <p>Ask adults in charge before leaving area</p> <p>Play safely</p> <p>Use equipment appropriately.</p>	<p>Follow directions</p> <p>Go directly to where you need to be</p> <p>Speak quietly</p> <p>Walk safely</p>	<p>Follow directions</p> <p>Stay in one seat</p> <p>Eat your own food</p> <p>Recycle</p> <p>Clean up your space</p> <p>Line up safely, quietly, and quickly.</p>	<p>Follow directions</p> <p>Report unsafe or inappropriate behavior to an adult.</p> <p>Speak quietly</p> <p>Line up safely.</p>	<p>Follow directions</p> <p>Clean up your space.</p> <p>Follow classroom routines</p> <p>Use equipment/materials appropriately</p> <p>Ask for help when you need it</p> <p>Complete your work</p>	<p>Use only websites that you have permission to use and are safe.</p> <p>Report unsafe or inappropriate messages to an adult.</p>
Respect	<p>Keep hands and feet to yourself</p> <p>Use appropriate language</p> <p>Keep school grounds free of litter.</p>	<p>Keep hands and feet to yourself</p> <p>Enjoy the artwork and look with your eyes</p> <p>Yield to younger students in stairways and hallways</p>	<p>Keep hands and feet to yourself</p> <p>Raise hand and get permission to get up from your seat or to leave the cafeteria</p>	<p>Keep hands and feet to yourself</p> <p>Use appropriate language</p>	<p>Keep hands and feet to yourself</p> <p>Use appropriate language</p> <p>Raise your hand to share your ideas</p> <p>Give others time to respond to the teacher's questions before raising your hand</p>	<p>Post messages which are respectful (Would you want your parents to see this?)</p>
Empathy	<p>Include all who want to play and accept skill differences</p> <p>Encourage others to do their best.</p> <p>Give help or get help if someone needs it.</p>	<p>Give help or get help if someone needs it.</p> <p>Greet others.</p>	<p>Include all who want to sit at the table.</p> <p>Use kind words</p> <p>Give help or get help if someone needs it.</p>	<p>Make room for others</p> <p>Greet others.</p> <p>Give help or get help if someone needs it.</p>	<p>Accept skill differences</p> <p>Give help or get help if someone needs it.</p>	<p>Use kind words/appropriate language</p> <p>Give help or get help if someone needs it.</p>

STANDARDS OF STUDENT BEHAVIOR

The following are examples of behaviors that are NOT permitted:

- Chewing gum
- Violating bicycle safety rules
- Bringing toys, radios, collectibles, tape recorders, CD players and similar electronic devices to school without permission from school personnel
- Selling gum, candy or anything else on the bus or at school without permission from school personnel
- Running inside the building; hitting; tripping; pushing or similar acts
- Classroom disruption (talking out, distracting others, out of seat without permission, etc.)
- School disruptions (misbehaving in lunchroom, hallway, or on school grounds, etc.)
- Taking part in a group disruption
- Showing disrespect to others
- Refusing to follow directions given by an adult
- Leaving class with/without permission from school personnel
- Leaving school grounds without permission from school personnel
- Skipping school
- Non-compliance with Standards of Dress and Appearance
- Cheating or copying others' work; forgery; violation of copyright laws or abuse of technology
- Using obscene or inappropriate language or gestures
- Stealing or knowing of someone stealing without telling an adult; having stolen property on school grounds
- Damaging and destroying school property
- Using, selling or possessing alcohol, drugs, drug-related items, or look-alikes
- Fighting, throwing objects, spitting, or any careless/harmful action
- Threatening school staff or student(s)
- Bringing a weapon or explosive on school grounds
- Harassment: saying, doing, or writing about someone's race, national origin, religion, color, sex, orientation, or handicap

CONSEQUENCES

The primary goal of our assigning consequences for disruptive behavior is to ensure that a student learns appropriate behavior and is able to return to the classroom in a way that is not disruptive to the teaching and learning process. This process may be modified by the administration for students with special circumstances.

Some examples of consequences are:

- correction and/or counseling by the teacher
- loss of privileges
- telephone call or note to parents/guardian
- behavioral agreement with student which may involve parent/guardian
- parent conference to discuss the problem
- peer mediation
- referral to guidance counselor or other school personnel
- referral to principal or assistant principal who may counsel the student and/or contact the parent/guardian
- work assignment to correct the problem
- daily or weekly notes to parent/guardian

HARASSMENT AND BULLYING

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

When is it harassment or bullying?

According to Massachusetts State Law: "Bullying means the severe or repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal, or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at another student that has the effect of: (i) causing physical or emotional harm to the other student or damage to the other student's property; (ii) placing the other student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property; (iii) creating a hostile environment at school for the other student; (iv) infringing on the rights of the other student at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupting the education process or the orderly operation of a school."

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

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

SERIOUS BEHAVIOR ISSUES

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

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

SUSPENSION

Suspension from the class or school is reserved for serious offenses. It is only considered after other attempts to change or modify behaviors have failed or in cases where a student jeopardizes the physical and/or emotional safety of others on school grounds. In all cases, the student will be advised of the reason for the suspension and will be allowed to speak on his/her behalf.

Suspension from Class

A disruptive student may be removed from class (time out) for a limited period of time if it is judged to be in the best interest of that class and that student. A teacher or an administrator may remove a student from class.

Out of School Suspension

Only an administrator may suspend a student.

In the event of an out of school suspension, an attempt will be made to contact the parent directly before the suspension is implemented. If not contacted directly, the parent/guardian will be informed through other means.

Under most circumstances, a student will not be removed from the building until a parent or guardian is notified. If we are unable to reach the parent or guardian, we will contact the person(s) named as the alternate contact on the emergency card.

After a suspension, a readmission conference will be conducted including an administrator, the student, and the parent or guardian.

CELL PHONES

In general, cell phones are not allowed in school. However, if you feel that your child needs a cell phone for use after school please write a note to the principal stating why and s/he will be able to keep the cell phone in a backpack during the school day. We also ask all adults to refrain from using cell phones in public areas in our school.

CAFETERIA RULES

In keeping with the district's philosophy to provide a climate that promotes healthy human relationships and to enhance the quality of life for children as well as adults, we believe that everyone has the right to eat in an environment that is clean, positive and safe. To maintain this environment, all students must adhere to the following rules and procedures during breakfast and lunch:

General Rules

- Use respectful tone of voice and words
- Keep hands and feet to yourself
- Remain seated at your assigned table while eating
- Be respectful and responsible by cleaning your space and following directions
- Leave balls and recess equipment near the stage when you enter the cafeteria

Health and Safety

RESPONSIVENESS

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

HEALTH NOTES

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

HOW TO KNOW WHEN TO KEEP A CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL

In general, these symptoms warrant keeping a child at home:

Fever of 100 or more

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

Vomiting or diarrhea

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

Sore throat

- Note that strep throat may be present without fever and may be accompanied by symptoms of headache and stomachache.

Runny nose, cough

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

Impetigo or other skin rash

- Please have these identified and treated 24 hours before returning to school. Contact school health professionals if you have any questions.

Pinkeye or conjunctivitis

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

Earaches

- If these last for more than a day or if pain is severe, please see your health provider

WINTER WEAR GUIDELINES

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

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

A SCHOOL WHERE EVERYONE FEELS SAFE

All of the Amherst Elementary Schools are dedicated to creating communities in which every family feels welcomed and each child experiences a safe learning environment. We want all children to feel proud of their heritage, to be comfortable being 'themselves', and to feel free to express their own interests and talents.

SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITMENT

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

A school community is a perfect laboratory for children to learn concepts of justice and equity. Whether it is through daily interactions between peers, conflicts during a game at recess, or by participating in an all-class problem-solving meeting, children are constantly constructing their own ideas of how to be socially responsible human beings.

The Amherst Public Schools have made a commitment to social justice. We have begun to create a framework for teachers to use to facilitate their students' thinking about social justice issues at their developmental level in the classroom and in the world outside of our schools. In doing so, we hope to give our children the skills necessary to be active citizens in a pluralistic, democratic society.

THE RIGHT TO BE SAFE, INCLUDED, AND VISIBLE

It is important to address all types of biases in elementary schools so that we can prevent the development of prejudices and promote respect when children are young. Despite our efforts to create a respectful climate, parents and students have shared that anti-gay name-calling and exclusion can be a common occurrence in school and may worsen as children get older. Children at an early age may hear the words 'gay' or 'lesbian' being used as negative put-downs. They may be exposed to derogatory references to gay and lesbian people on T.V., in movies, or from others. In elementary schools children who do not fit into gender stereotypes are often teased. This harassment causes children to be afraid of being "different" or exploring the interests that they love. Sensing the prevalence of anti-gay sentiments, children from gay and lesbian families may try to hide their family composition at school.

There is much we can do to promote a supportive atmosphere for all children and their families. Prejudice persists when members of a particular group are invisible or are unknown. Mentioning gay and lesbian people in a respectful way or reading stories which include gay and lesbian families or characters will counter these biases. As a staff we will interrupt every incident of anti-gay insults (as we do with all types of name-calling and prejudicial slurs). We will openly discuss why these put-downs are hurtful.

Miscellaneous

LOST AND FOUND

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

BREAKFAST AND LUNCH

Both breakfast and lunch are served each school day. Breakfast is served from 8:15 to 8:40 a.m. The school serves a hot and cold lunch every day. Children may choose to bring a lunch from home.

Families may be eligible for free or reduced lunch meals. Information and applications are sent home at the beginning of the school year. If you believe you may qualify, please fill out an application. Children who received free or reduced lunch price meals last year continue to receive them through the first few weeks of the new school year, but new applications need to be filed as soon as possible.

Prices*

Breakfast is \$0.50 and \$0.30 (reduced price)

Lunch is \$2.50 (full price) and \$0.40 (reduced price)

*Prices are subject to change at the beginning of each school year

INSURANCE

Optional student accident insurance is available from a private agency to students in all grades. Information about this program is sent home with each child in September.

SCHOOL PICTURES

Individual and class pictures are taken in the fall of every year.

