

Elementary Handbook

Elizabeth Forward School District 2023-2024

Upon receipt of this Handbook, please sign and return the acknowledgment form on the last page of this document to your child's teacher.

We appreciate your cooperation.

Table of Contents

Elementary Schools Directory	page 3
Bullying – Anti-Bullying Rules	page 4
Attendance, Absences, Tardiness, Early Dismissal	page 5-6
Automated Phone/Email Messaging System	page 6
Birthday Treats	page 6
Bus Rules/Transportation	page 7
Communication	page 7
Custody Orders	page 8
Dress Code	page 8
Discipline	page 8
Dismissal Procedures	page 9
Early Dismissal Procedures	page 9
Electronics	page 9
Emergency Information	page 9
Food Services	page 9
Head Lice	page 10
Health Services	page 11
Homeless	page 11
Homework	page 12
Immunization	page 12
Infectious Disease	page 12
Medication Policy	page 12
Party Invitations	page 13
PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention & Supports)	page 13
PTO (Parent-Teacher Organization)	page 13
PSSA Testing	page 13
Required Health Examinations	page 13
Suspected Child Abuse	page 14
Report Cards	page 14
Visitors	page 14

Please sign and return the acknowledgment form for this Handbook and return it to your child's teacher. It is required for the file. Thank you!

Central Elementary

401 Rock Run Road
Elizabeth, PA 15037
Phone: 412-896-2318
Fax: 412-751-0692

Health Office: 412-896-2319

Greenock Primary

1101 Greenock-Buena Vista Road
McKeesport, PA 15135
Phone: 412-896-2324
Fax: 412-751-3818

Health Office: 412-896-2325

Mt. Vernon Elementary

2400 Greenock-Buena Vista Road
McKeesport, PA 15135
Phone: 412-896-2327
Fax: 412-751-3818

Health Office: 412-896-2327

William Penn Elementary

392 William Penn Road
Monongahela, PA 15063
Phone: 412-896-2330
Fax: 412-384-4311

Health Office: 412-896-2331

School Social Worker

School Counselor

Mr. Frank Berdar, Principal

fberdar@efsd.net

Mrs. Lisa Kotewicz, Secretary

lkotewicz@efsd.net

Mrs. Lisa Vay, RN

lvay@efsd.net

Dr. Laura Burns, Principal

lburns@efsd.net

Mrs. Jackie West, Secretary

jwest@efsd.net

Mrs. Rachel Gindlesperger, RN

rgindlesperger@efsd.net

Dr. Laura Burns, Principal

lburns@efsd.net

Mrs. Yvette Guthrie, Secretary

yguthrie@efsd.net

Mrs. Anne Spenny, RN

aspenny@efsd.net

Dr. Brad Simala, Principal

bsimala@efsd.net

Mrs. Carol Hoover, Secretary

choover@efsd.net

Mrs. Beth Gerber, RN

bgerber@efsd.net

Mrs. Lori Rogers, MSW, LSW

Elementary Social Worker for all buildings
412-896-2397
lrogers@efsd.net

TBD

Elementary School Counselor for all buildings
412-896-7473

Anti-Bullying Rules

We will not bully others.

We will try to help students who are bullied.

We will include students who are left out.

If we know someone is being bullied, we will tell an adult.

EFSD Policy #249

Attendance Procedures

Regular school attendance is a significant contributor to school success. The EFSD Policy #204 is available on the website to help parents/guardians understand our attendance policy/procedures and the laws that govern them.

The Board considers the following conditions to constitute reasonable cause for absence from school:

1. Illness
2. Religious holiday
3. Medical/dental appointments
4. Court appearances
5. Death in the family
6. Approved family educational trips
7. Approved educational tours and trips

Reporting Absences/Excuses

Upon the student's return to school, a parent/guardian must submit a written explanation within three (3) school days of the absence. If a parent/guardian fails to submit an excuse, the absence will be PERMANENTLY counted as unexcused/unlawful.

School Notification for Unexcused/Unlawful Absences

- The District's attendance policy will be distributed yearly to parents/guardians.
- Upon the first unexcused/unlawful absence, a written notification will be mailed home.
- Upon the third unexcused/unlawful absence, a written notification will be mailed home.
- Upon the fourth unexcused/unlawful absence, the parent/guardian will be invited to attend an Attendance Improvement Plan Meeting.
- A magistrate citation will be issued upon the sixth unexcused/unlawful absence.
- After a student accumulates eight (8) days of absences, a letter will be mailed home informing parents/guardians of the potential need for a medical excuse.
- After a student accumulates ten (10) days of absences, a letter may be mailed home, informing the parent/guardian of the need for a medical excuse for any additional absences.

Tardiness to School (Elementary Level)

Parents/Guardians will be notified regarding attendance concerns.

- Seven (7) non-medical tardies – Students may be assigned after-school detention.
- Subsequent after-school detentions will be assigned at the principal's discretion.
- Fifteen (15) non-medical tardies – A magistrate citation will be issued.

Early Dismissals

Students will be permitted to leave school early with a written parent request up to five (5) times in a school year unless there is documented medical reason for additional early dismissal. The absence will be unexcused/unlawful unless the medical excuse is recorded.

Family Educational Trips

The parent/guardian must complete the Educational Trip Request Form provided by the school district, which will indicate the school days to be missed and the destination of the trip. The request should be made five (5) days before departure. The principal must approve the absence before the trip.

- The student shall give completed assignments to their teachers and arrange to complete additional assignments and/or tests.
- All academic work shall be completed within a time not exceeding the number of days absent due to the trip.
- The vacation request will be denied if a student requires a medical excuse due to excessive absences.

The Educational Trip Request Form is available on the district website or the school office.

Automated Phone/Email Messaging System

An Automated Phone/Email Messaging System Is utilized district-wide for important announcements, including delays and closings due to inclement weather. Messages will be automatically delivered to your phone number and email listed in Powerschool. Please keep your email and phone number current by notifying the school office.

Birthday/Party Treats

While it is not necessary, some students choose to bring in treats for a birthday celebration. Non-edible treats are preferred for those who would like to send them—examples: stickers, pencils, glue sticks, erasers, and bracelets. Any edible treats must be individually wrapped, and the ingredients must be printed on each package. This includes packages of fruits and vegetables (apple slices, mini-carrots, etc.). No homemade items will be permitted. Bakery items will only be allowed if they are individually packaged and each package marked with the ingredients. *Approved snacks and treats are also available for purchase from our Food Service. If you wish, the order form is available through the school office, and the treats will be delivered to your child's classroom.*

NOTE: Some classroom teachers may need to limit food treats further when there are serious concerns about food allergies in their classrooms. Please be understanding about this.

Bus Transportation

Students are only permitted to ride the bus they are assigned to and from school. This practice is in place for students' safety, health, and welfare. Emergency information is available to the bus driver to which your child is assigned.

Please contact the school office regarding any temporary or permanent changes to your child's transportation needs. The School District requires a form for such requests.

Students are expected to follow all school rules while on the bus. In addition, the following should be observed at all times:

Bus Rules

- Listen to the driver and follow directions
- Stay in your assigned seat
- Use a quiet voice
- No eating or drinking on the bus
- Keep head, hands, and feet inside the bus
- Keep your hands and feet to yourself
- Keep the bus clean (use the trash can)

Students occasionally need reminders. Students who are non-compliant with directions and reminders from the bus drivers will be reported to the principal.

Communication

Regular communication between home and school is an expectation. Classroom teachers send home regular communication with students. The district website offers helpful information for parents and students. Many of our teachers also have classroom websites and/or Dojo that you will find helpful. Please contact your child's teacher by phone or email regarding any concerns you may have.

If you wish to speak to your child's teacher, please call the school between 8:20am - 8:50am or after dismissal between 3:45pm and 3:58pm. If you have an urgent matter during the school day, please contact the school office, and a message will be given to the teacher, who will call you as soon as possible.

We respectfully request that you ***not expect an immediate response to phone or email messages*** from your child's teacher. Their time during their working day must focus on teaching and the supervision of children.

Please keep your address, home, cell phone numbers, email address, and emergency contacts current through the School District and the elementary school to efficiently provide you with information and announcements.

Custody Orders/Agreements

It is your responsibility to keep your child's file current. Please provide the school office with a copy of all current custody orders/agreements to the main office. Please update your child's record if any changes are made throughout the school year. Please remember that the School District will abide by the most current order/agreement in your child's file.

Dress Code

A student's appearance, mode of dress, or cleanliness will not be permitted to disrupt the educational process or constitute a threat to health or safety. Elementary students should be dressed in school clothing with safety in mind. Please be aware that students frequently go outside for recess and have appropriate outerwear given the day's forecast. As students grow and mature, we expect they will dress conservatively within these guidelines with proper guidance from their parents.

Students wearing any of the following will be required to change or will be sent home

- Flip Flops or sandals without backs
- Bare shoulders or midriffs
- Short shorts
- Jeans or pants with large tears or holes
- Any article of clothing that displays tobacco, alcohol, weapons, violence, suggestive or offensive language, or graphics
- Hats, scarves, bandanas, gloves, or other miscellaneous outerwear not weather-related

Discipline

Learning is, by its very nature, discipline. Accepting direction from responsible adults and taking responsibility for one's behavior are lessons we must teach and model for our children. Lessons will be best learned when children know that parents and teachers work together and have the same expectations. Your child's teacher will provide a classroom behavior plan. We ask that you review it with your child.

Teachers will inform you of problems as they arise. We encourage you to contact your child's teacher with any concerns. The building principal will handle serious matters in accordance with District Policy #218, which can be found at <http://www.efsd.net>.

Expectations for Student Conduct

- Come to school on time and be prepared.
- Listen to adults and follow directions.
- Stay in the assigned space.
- Do their own work.
- Ask for help when needed.
- Help others.
- Report bullying and unsafe behaviors to an adult.
- Be respectful of school property.

Dismissal Procedures

Regular dismissal time for elementary students is at 3:45pm. If your child is not riding the bus home and will be picked up by you, please follow the instructions below (for early dismissal) **PLUS** send a note to the child's teacher documenting the change for the day.

Early Dismissal Procedures

Please send a note to your child's teacher if an early dismissal is necessary. The person picking up the student must report to the office, sign the student out, and remain in the office until the student is excused from class. Anyone picking up a student must be listed on the child's Emergency Contacts. Please keep this updated by contacting the school office. You may be asked to show proper ID upon arriving in the office for your child's safety. Early dismissals will not be permitted after 3:15.

Electronics

The use of any electronic device or toys brought from home is not permitted during the school day. The school district is not responsible for any items brought from home. School district-issued devices will be handled according to policy.

Some parents may deem it necessary for children to carry cellular phones for after-school safety. In that event, we request that you notify the classroom teacher and support our expectation that the phone must be turned off and stored during the school day.

Other than school-issued devices, electronic devices may be confiscated and returned to the student on the first offense. The parent/guardian will be responsible for collecting the item on the second offense. The third offense will result in after-school detention.

Emergency Information for Sudden Illness or Injury

The Health Office maintains Emergency Contact Information for each student. This information enables us to care for an ill or injured student. Only those named in that file will be contacted and can give permission for a student to leave the building. **Parents must keep emergency contact information current.** If your contact information is permanently or temporarily changed, ensure that your child and the school office have accurate emergency contact information. The health office is available for temporary care only. Parents/guardians are asked

to develop a plan to allow their child to be picked up from school within a half-hour after notification of an illness or an injury

Food Services/Lunch

Please consult the district website: www.efsd.net and look under the Student Resources tab for current cafeteria pricing and menus. Meals are purchased using a "point of sale" system. You will be responsible for keeping your child's cafeteria account current by sending in money (checks preferred).

The Elizabeth Forward School District uses **PayForIt**, a Food Service Department debit card pre-payment system that can be used immediately. This service will allow parents to track the payment history of student spending in the cafeteria. It will also provide additional services, including:

- Parents can set up automatic recurring cafeteria payments by date or by balance.
- Parents can request to see a report on what their child has purchased in the cafeteria for the last 30 days.
- Parents can see the child's cafeteria balance online.
- Parents can request email notification when their child's cafeteria balance falls below a certain point.

Parents can use a link on the district website: www.efsd.net under Quick Links or log in to www.payforit.net to register a new account. You will need the Student ID Number, the school of attendance, and current grade. Once the account is registered, you can start using the PayForIt site.

Please note: **PayForIt** requires a small service fee charged by the site on each credit card transaction.

Please do not send food to school requesting that it be heated for your child. If this is medically necessary, accommodations will be made by our Food Service personnel based on a doctor's order. In that case, please contact the principal or the school nurse.

Students may also carry their lunches to school. No **glass bottles or cans of carbonated beverages are permitted for safety reasons.**

Food/Environmental Allergies

We see an increasing number of students with serious food allergies each year. When a doctor determines it is medically necessary, a 504 Plan may be developed in collaboration with the student's parent/guardian, physician, and school nurse for students with potentially life-threatening allergies. Parents/guardians are asked to contact the school nurse to discuss their child's health and safety procedures initially and as needed throughout the school year.

Head Lice

All cases of head lice should be reported to the school nurse so that the required examination procedures may occur. The student is not permitted to return to the classroom until proper

treatment has been completed and the school nurse has checked the student. Any student with nits after treatment will be excluded from school until found to be nit-free. The positive action of reporting an incidence of head lice to the school cannot be overstated. Parents who treat their child for lice, yet do not report it to the school, risk the infestation of others and/or the re-infestation of their child. All reports are kept confidential.

Health Services

Emergency care is available in the health office for any illness or injury sustained during school hours. The nurse cannot address injuries that occur at home. By law, a nurse is not permitted to make a diagnosis or prescribe treatment. Children are excluded from school if they have a known or suspected infectious disease, an elevated temperature, vomiting, or diarrhea. Suppose the school nurse suspects or learns that a student has a contagious illness. In that case, they will instruct parents to follow the Allegheny County Health Department guidelines for the child's re-admittance to school.

The School District maintains a practice of Universal Precautions (procedures designed to reduce the risk of transmission of bloodborne pathogens regardless of the presumed infection status of the individual) to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of our students and staff. Students are taught about possible disease transmission through blood/body fluids exposure. Students are to report any blood or body fluid spill to a teacher and never touch or clean up another person's blood/body fluid.

The School District is not equipped to provide advanced emergency care. The local EMS will transport children needing urgent medical attention to an emergency care facility.

Please notify the school nurse if your child has any health concerns that could need emergency services or need to be communicated to emergency personnel.

Required Health Screenings per PA School Health Code

- The School Nurse will administer each child's Vision and Body Mass Index screenings annually.
- Hearing screenings are performed annually for Grades Kindergarten, 1, 2, 3, and Special Needs students.
- If there is a need for further evaluation, referrals will be sent home to parents/guardians.

Possession/Use of Asthma Inhalers

Students are permitted to have in their possession a prescribed inhaler for the treatment of asthma under the following guidelines:

- Physicians written Instructions for Administering Medication completed
- Written authorization by physician and parent to have an inhaler in their possession
- School nurse must be made aware that students are self-caring.

Homeless Information

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act (2001) defines homelessness as living in the following places due to a lack of a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence:

- In an emergency or transitional shelter
- In a hotel, motel, or campground
- In a car, park, public place, bus or train station, or abandoned building
- Doubled up with relatives or friends

Children and youth living in these settings meet the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness criteria and have special education rights. They are eligible for transportation services to their school of origin and additional services within the school.

If you or someone you know is experiencing a homeless situation or you have questions about being homeless, please contact Lori Rogers, the Homeless Liaison Coordinator, at 412-896-2397.

Homework

These are general expectations Monday-Thursday. Teachers are responsible for assigning homework when needed to reinforce a skill or enhance a lesson.

Kindergarten: 15 minutes with adult support

Grade 1/2: 20 minutes with adult support

Grade 3: 30 minutes

Grade 4: 40 minutes

Grade 5: 50-60 minutes

Missed homework assignments in Gr 3-5 will be handled as follows:

- One missed assignment: benched for recess; the assignment made up at that time.
- Two missed assignments: phone call made to parent/guardian; make-up required
- Three missed assignments: after-school detention (4:30 pick-up)

Immunizations

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Health and Allegheny County Health Department Guidelines, each child in school must have required immunizations. Immunizations are not required in cases where special medical or religious factors are involved. Documentation of such will be required.

Infectious Diseases

Children with infectious diseases are required to remain out of school for the protection of others. Children may return to school according to Allegheny County Health Department Guidelines. (<http://achd.net>)

Medication Policy

The Elizabeth Forward School District has developed a medication policy in accordance with the Guidelines for Pennsylvania Schools for the Administration of Medications and Emergency Care, which allows prescription or over-the-counter medications to be administered during school. A Physician's Instructions for Administering Medications During School Hours form must be completed and returned to the School Nurse along with the **medication in the Rx bottle**. This form is available in the Health Office or may be downloaded from the district website.

Possession/Use of Asthma Inhalers

Students are permitted to have in their possession a prescribed inhaler for the treatment of asthma under the following guidelines:

- Physicians written Instructions for Administering Medication completed
- Written authorization by physician and parent to have an inhaler in their possession
- School nurse must be made aware that students are self-caring.

Party Invitations

Students are NOT permitted to bring birthday party invitations to classmates. The PTO has created a School Directory with the names, home addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers of families who wish to share that information with their class.

PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention & Supports)

PBIS is built on a foundation of expectations. Students are more likely to behave appropriately when they know what is expected. With that thought in mind, principals, teachers, and staff at every school in the School District work together to set up behavioral expectations and rewards specific to their school. Our elementary school adopted the **Be Brave** expectations (*Be Safe, Respectful, Accountable, Valued, and Empathetic*). Expectations are reinforced, and students are acknowledged in various ways (e.g., individually, in classrooms, and at school-wide events).

PTO: Parent Teacher Organization

The PTO sponsors various activities during the school year that help our school community. Please contact our PTO representatives for more information on how to get involved in this worthy organization.

PSSA Testing

During April and May, 3rd through 5th-grade students will take the Math and ELA Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) exams. Students in 4th grade will also be taking the Science PSSA's. We would like all students to perform to the best of their ability on these state assessments, and we need your help. For them to perform well, we ask that they be well-rested, eat a healthy breakfast, and be at school on time during the days of testing. **Please avoid taking family trips during the scheduled testing date.** If you have specific questions, please contact the building principal. Thank you for supporting your child's achievement and growth!

Required Health Examinations

- Physical exams are required at original school entry (usually Kindergarten).
- Dental exams are required at the original school in Grades K-3.
- Parents/guardians may choose to have their family doctor/dentist perform the examinations and complete the required forms that may be downloaded from the school district website.
- Physical/dental exams can be completed at school by a physician/dentist with written parent/guardian permission.

Suspected Child Abuse

Pennsylvania's Child Protective Services Law requires all school employees (Mandated Reporters) to report suspected child abuse. When the principal and the school nurse have reasonable cause to suspect that a child may have been abused, the principal must notify the Childline and Abuse Registry and Allegheny County Children and Youth Services.

School officials are not responsible for determining if there has been abuse or neglect. The principal will permit authorized personnel from the Department of Public Welfare or Child Protective Services to interview the student at school without prior parental consent if the suspected abuser is unknown or may be the parent/guardian. If the student has suffered severe injuries that warrant medical attention, the principal will take appropriate action and attempt to notify the parent. The principal may request that the police investigate the matter if the suspected child abuse involves law violations under the Crimes Code.

Report Cards

According to the district calendar, Elementary Report Cards (Grades 1-5) are issued four times a year. Please refer to the EFSD website www.efsd.net for the current district calendar. The academic calendar for the year is also available through the school office.

Visitors

A visitor is defined as a person not employed in the school building.

For the overall safety and security, the front of the building is equipped with a security buzzer and a security camera. To gain entrance to the building, visitors must first press an intercom button: identify themselves and their purpose for visiting the building. All visitors must report to the main office and show a government-issued ID (most likely a driver's license) to the office staff. Their ID will be scanned through the RAPTOR System to determine if the visitor is clear or not before going to any other area of the building. The visitor(s) must wear a badge while in the school building. Before leaving the building, the visitor is asked to return to the office, sign out, and return the visitor badge.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT of Receipt FORM

**Elizabeth Forward School District
Elementary Student Handbook**

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Elementary Student Handbook.

I further understand and agree that I will read it and be responsible for abiding by all relevant policies and practices outlined in this Handbook and all other Elizabeth Forward School District policies.

Parent Signature _____

Student's Name and Grade _____

Date _____

Please return this form to your child's teacher.