

## McKnight Elementary School



McKnight Elementary School  
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[www.northallegheny.org](http://www.northallegheny.org)

Dear McKnight Families,

Welcome to McKnight Elementary and the 2016-17 school year! We extend a warm welcome to our new Kindergarten students and all of the families joining us for the first time. At McKnight, we are always excited to have new members join our family. We look forward to learning and growing with each of you this year.

Our school theme this year is, “*Solving Problems.*” Staff and students will incorporate this idea as a continuation from last year’s “*The Power of an Idea.*” We will consider how problems challenge, shape, and push us to discover our potential. We hope to show that problems have a way of inspiring us, bringing unexpected gifts, and providing an opportunity to discover possibilities.

This handbook helps us all to know what to expect no matter what the situation. Everyone is encouraged to read it completely--new and returning families alike. It contains a lot of useful information that may explain things, ease concerns, and even rest some of those first day jitters. Please take some time to review this as a family. It is just as important for the students as it is for the parents and guardians in their lives. If you don’t see the answer to your question in these pages, please reach out by calling the main office. You can contact us at any time and we’ll always be glad to help.

We wish you an exciting, creative, and enriching 2015-2016 school year.

The McKnight Faculty and Staff

**Mission Statement:**

The mission of the North Allegheny School District is to prepare all students for success in a changing world.

**Vision Statement:**

The vision of the North Allegheny School District is to be a premier school district that inspires excellence in academics, athletics, arts, and activities for every student every day.

**Shared Values:**

We will exceed the expectations of those we serve.

We believe:

- All individuals can learn.
- Learning is a life-long process that occurs inside and outside of the classroom.
- Learning occurs best in a safe, nurturing, and respectful environment.
- Effective teaching is both an art and a science that results in increased levels of critical thinking, achievement, and growth.

- Embracing, valuing, and promoting diversity enriches our community and learning experiences.
- Integrity, trust, compassion, and open communication are hallmarks of an excellent educational community.
- Educational excellence requires effective leadership, high expectations, teamwork, and the responsible utilization of resources.
- Collaboration among students, parents, staff, and community enriches our ownership of the educational process.

**2016-17 McKnight Goals:**

<i><b>ACHIEVEMENT</b></i>	We will continue to use data to make instructional decisions that support student growth and achievement. We will support the whole child by providing opportunities through music, art, and physical education programs.
<i><b>INSTRUCTION</b></i>	We will continue to differentiate instruction to enrich and remediate the District approved curricula. Students will be provided with interventions in order to meet the diverse and changing needs of all learners.
<i><b>TECHNOLOGY</b></i>	We will continue to use technology to incorporate rich and varied resources into daily instruction. Interactive white boards are now installed in all homerooms and special education classrooms. We will continue to utilize our iPad carts and prepare our students for the FOCUS 2020 initiative.
<i><b>BEHAVIOR</b></i>	We will continue to model and promote respect and appropriate behavior at all

	times so that students have the optimal conditions for learning.
<b><i>BULLYING PREVENTION</i></b>	We will continue the use of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program school wide to reinforce the anti-bullying policy.

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## **Address/Telephone/Email Changes**

It is very important that every student maintain an up-to-date address, email address, and telephone number with the school office. If any of your contact information changes during the school year please notify the homeroom teacher and school office immediately. You may also update your information using the Tyler SIS Parent Portal.

## **Admissions**

New kindergarten students must be five (5) years old and new first grade students must be six (6) years old on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> of the school year in which they are enrolling. A physical examination is required when a student enters school for the first time. Age must be verified by a birth certificate and immunization records must be complete along with two (2) proofs of residency.

## **After School Programs**

The North Allegheny School District and McKnight Elementary School offer several after-school programs for students. For these programs, students will be called to their assigned area at dismissal. Transportation home is *always* the responsibility of the parent.

## **Animal Visits**

Animals are not permitted in the school without permission from the office.

## **Arrival**

The building is open to children at **8:50 a.m.** Supervision is not available for students prior to 8:50. Students will report directly to their classrooms upon arrival at school. They must be in their homerooms at 9:00 a.m. All students riding the bus will enter through the main doors.

*All car riders **must** enter through the West Entrance, closest to North Allegheny Intermediate (NAI). The front driveway and McKnight parking lot are closed to all traffic except for busses and those individuals dropping off for the YMCA program in the cafeteria between 8:40 and 9:00 to ensure student and staff safety. Car riders should use the NAI driveway, NAI parking lot, and the West Entrance traffic circle to ensure safe drop-off at McKnight. Students should not be dropped off in the McKnight parking lot because this requires them to cross the driveway and walk between busses in order to get into the building..*

## **Assemblies**

Assemblies may be scheduled throughout the school year. Notification of the assemblies will be made in advance and posted online. Students are expected to pay special attention to behavior and good citizenship during assemblies.

## **Attendance**

Daily, on-time attendance is essential to each student's success and should be established early. Personal illness, family illness, death in the family, and religious holidays are acceptable excuses

for an absence. Appointments and vacations should be scheduled outside of school hours to ensure students are present and learning each day. When students return to school after any absence, they must bring a written excuse signed by their parent or guardian, stating the reason for dates of the absence. When your child is marked absent in the Tyler System a phone call is generated notifying you of the absence. If you receive an automated call which you believe to be in error, please contact the main office immediately.

### Make-Up Work

No assignment can replace the classroom instruction a student has missed for any absence; however, students are expected to complete all assigned make-up work. Parents/guardians may request to pick-up assignments during the absence. Requests for assignments may be made on a student's second day of absence. Parents are asked to call the school before 10:00 a.m. on the second day of absence. Students who miss a single day of school can get their missed assignments upon their return to school the following day. Students will be granted additional time to complete assignments upon their return to school.

### Request for Family Educational Trip

In order to be excused for absences other than those listed above, a Request for Excused Absence application should be completed. The forms are available in the office or the school's Web site and should be completed 14 days prior to the absence. These forms are only needed for absences of more than 3 days. **No absences will be approved during standardized testing windows.** Students requesting absences of more than ten (10) days will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Pursuant to Board Policy #3130 absences of more than ten (10) days will cause the student to *"be removed as a full-time student. The District will attempt to provide support to the student during the extended absence so that he/she is able to make successful reentry into the school upon their return. The family will need to reenroll the child upon return."*

### Excessive Absences

Parents of students who are excessively absent will receive a letter from the principal after a total of ten (10) days absent. This communication from the building administration is sent to emphasize the importance of daily attendance at school and as a reminder of Pennsylvania's Compulsory Attendance Law. Second notice for excessive absenteeism will be sent after a total of 18 days and an Elementary Support Team [ESAP] meeting will be held to address the excessive absenteeism. After the 18-Day Letter is delivered, all future absences must be supported by documentation from the child's physician, the school's nurse, or another administratively approved agency. If the proper documentation is not provided after the 18-day Attendance Letter is sent home, the absence will be documented as unexcused and may be referred to the District Magistrate.

## **Birthday Treats**

Edible treats are not permitted in the school. This decision has been made to respect both the District wellness policy and students with food allergies. McKnight administration recognizes that on their birthdays, children often want to share a treat with their classmates. Non-edible treats (pencil, eraser, stickers, etc.) are highly recommended for this purpose.

## **Bullying Prevention Program**

The McKnight Bully prevention plan is modeled after the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, which is a research-based program. This program provides the structure and strategies necessary to take a proactive approach to addressing social and behavioral issues. The McKnight Bullying Prevention Rules are:

1. We will not bully others.
2. We will help students who are bullied.
3. We will include students who are left out.
4. We will STOP WALK TELL.

## **Bus Behavior**

Proper behavior is an absolute necessity while riding on the school bus. The bus driver is in charge and will enforce discipline on the bus. Students involved in misconduct, showing disrespect for the driver or fellow students, and those who cause damage to the bus may lose their bus riding privileges. The North Allegheny School District has established the following rules to maintain bus safety.

1. Report to your bus stops no earlier than 5 to 10 minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive.
2. While waiting for the bus, stay a safe distance from the roadway. Inappropriate behavior at the bus stop will not be tolerated.
3. Board the bus in a safe, orderly manner and go directly to your seat.
4. Cross 15 feet in front of the bus only when the red lights are flashing and traffic has come to a complete stop.
5. Never cross behind or reach under a bus. Remain visible to the driver at all times. Stand clear of the danger zone.
6. Talk in a normal tone of voice so the driver can concentrate and hear warning sounds.
7. Ask the driver for permission to open windows. You must keep your arms and head inside the bus at all times.
8. Eating, drinking, smoking or chewing gum is prohibited on the bus.
9. Help keep your bus clean. No littering. Throwing objects inside or outside is prohibited.
10. When the bus arrives at school, exit in an orderly fashion and go directly to your assigned room.

*NOTE: Students must ride their assigned bus. If a change is necessary call the Transportation Department at 412-369-5500. Then send a note to the school office explaining the change as approved by the Transportation Department.*

### Ladder of Discipline – District Transportation

Bus discipline is a topic of serious conversation at North Allegheny. When a child acts inappropriately on a school bus, the safety of every person on the bus is in jeopardy. The Ladder of Discipline has been identified for all elementary and middle school buildings. Depending on the seriousness of a child’s inappropriate behavior, first time offenders may receive more than a warning from the bus driver, bus monitor, or building administrator. If the child continues to behave inappropriately, he/she will be assigned to Bus Safety School. Should he/she continue to misbehave, the transportation privilege which is normally extended to North Allegheny students will be revoked.

- First Offense....Warning
- Second Offense....Detention
- Third Offense....Bus Safety School
- Fourth Offense....Bus Suspension\* - 3 days
- Fifth Offense....Bus Suspension\* - 5 days
- Sixth Offense....Bus Suspension\* -semester

\*A conference between administrator, parent, driver, and child is required.

Bus Safety School is a program that attempts to heighten the awareness of safety and proper bus behavior in those students who choose continually to violate district transportation policies. Bus Safety School is held on the second Wednesday of each month from 3:45 p.m. to 4:45 p.m. at one assigned building in the district.

Parents will be notified if their child must attend Bus Safety School and, upon completion of the course, students will be required to sign a Safety Agreement. Should it become necessary for bus-riding privileges to be denied, transportation to and from school will become the parent’s responsibility.

### **Cafeteria**

Students may purchase lunches and snacks during their lunch time. Students may use cash or enter a Personal Identification Number (PIN) to access their Point of Service (POS) account. POS account funds can be established and maintained by going to [www.Payforit.net](http://www.Payforit.net). Using PayForIt.net parents/guardians can place money in their student’s lunch account, monitor student balances, and request student activity reports. Lunch menus and pricing can be found on the district website.

Parents/guardians may send in cash or a check payable to *NA Cafeteria Fund* at any time to deposit money into their child’s account. Cafeteria Payment envelopes should be used and include student name, PIN, and payment option. For families with more than one child attending McKnight, please use separate envelopes for each child.

All students are expected to eat daily. Students who do not have a packed lunch or money to purchase a lunch will be given a lunch from the cafeteria. The cost of the lunch may be billed to the student's lunch account.

Lunches are served during the following times:

**First grade 11:45 - 12:15**  
**Second grade 11:50 - 12:20**  
**Third grade 12:20 - 12:50**  
**Fourth grade 12:25 - 12:55**  
**Fifth grade 1:00 - 1:30**

Cafeteria time is meant to be a pleasant break in the day. Each student is expected to use proper table manners, remain seated, and speak quietly.

### Overdue Cafeteria Balances

Reminders will be sent home with the student when his/her Point of Service (POS) account accrues a negative balance. If there are any questions or concerns, please contact the Food Service Office at 724-934-7201 or 7236. Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that student POS accounts are up-to-date with a positive balance.

## **Child Care**

Before and after school child care is available. This program is run by the YMCA of North Hills. **For further information, schedules, and pricing please call the YMCA at 412-761-1227.**

## **Crisis and Emergency Communications**

In the event that a need to disseminate emergency or crisis communications to parents/guardians should arise, the North Allegheny School District has a number of communication vehicles in place. These include:

- the District website ([www.northallegheny.org](http://www.northallegheny.org))
- NATV Cable (Armstrong 50, Comcast 98, Consolidate 406, Verizon 33)
- local television and radio stations.

The district utilizes SchoolMessenger as an additional tool. SchoolMessenger is a telephone notification system that delivers a message to parents/guardians. Parents/guardians can access the Contact Manager feature of this system via the District website to establish their own account.

## **Custody/Court Orders**

At times, there are legal papers in the form of custody agreements or court order documents that pertain to students and their specific circumstances. A notarized copy of any of these forms must

be presented to the school office. After the initial submission of this paperwork, any revisions to paperwork or newly issued documents must be notarized and presented to the school office. Notarized paperwork that is on file in the principal's office will be considered up-to-date unless a parent presents new paperwork or revisions to these legal documents. Any paperwork that was on file prior to the 2015/2016 school year must be resubmitted and notarized.

## **Dismissal**

The instructional day ends at 3:20 p.m. Students who are a "pick-up" will be called to the West Entrance at 3:20. All students riding the buses will leave the classroom with the 3:25 bell. Students will line up at the designated position inside the school. They will be walked to their busses by a staff member. Students who are being picked up will line up inside the building at the West Entrance door.

*While waiting for buses students should be seated, quietly, with their backs against the walls. Students may read a book or begin homework during this time. Students should not use loud voices or move about the line.*

Parents/guardians who are picking up their child at the end of the day must do so via the West Entrance, which is between McKnight and North Allegheny Intermediate (NAI). Parents/guardians are encouraged to park their vehicles in the NAI lot and walk to the West Entrance to greet their child. Those who use the pick-up loop must remain inside their vehicles. Each student and parent/guardian will be identified by a matching numbered card. This card should be visibly displayed in the car window, if using the pick-loop, or visibly held at the West Entrance door, if parking at NAI. Those standing at the West Entrance will have their students dismissed first before pick-up loop numbers are called. Please understand that these procedures are in place to ensure the safety and security of each child who attends McKnight Elementary. We do our best to ensure that all children are dismissed in a timely manner.

Parents/guardians must send in a note with their child on any day that he or she will be picked up from school. The note should include the name of the adult picking the child up. If a situation arises requiring a student to be picked up without a note being sent in, please call the office before 3:00 p.m. to make arrangements. After 3:15 p.m. no students will be dismissed through the office and all parents/guardians will be directed to the West Entrance for this purpose.

## **Dress Code**

A student's individual dress indicates both self-respect and respect for others. While the school accommodates individual tastes, inappropriate dress is not acceptable. The guidelines below should be used to determine acceptable dress for school. Students without acceptable dress may be asked to remove or cover the unacceptable item or sent to the office to request a change of clothes. These decisions are at the discretion of the McKnight staff.

1. Articles must be clean (not soiled with grease, oil, paint, or dirt).

2. Slogans or emblems that depict illegal substances, indecent writing, or indecent pictures are unacceptable.
3. Warm weather clothing is appropriate with the following guidelines: halter tops or tank tops with spaghetti straps, tops exposing the midriff or immodest display of undergarments, and torn or ragged clothing are not permitted.
4. Footwear must be worn by all students. Flip-flops and other backless shoes are discouraged. Wheelie shoes are not permitted at school. *Please remember that when students are scheduled for Physical Education class, athletic/tennis shoes are required for participation.*
5. Shorts, dresses, and skirts must reach the end of the fingertips while arms are hanging naturally at the sides (even when wearing opaque tights underneath).
6. Students are not to wear head coverings inside the building. This includes hats, bandanas, and head scarves of any kind. *Exceptions will be made for religious observance.*

### **Early Dismissal**

If a student needs to leave the school at any time other than the normal dismissal time, the parent or guardian must send a note to the homeroom teacher who will then forward it to the office. The note must state the name of the adult picking up the child, the time of the dismissal, and the reason for the dismissal. All early dismissal students must be met in the office by the parent or guardian. Adults who are unrecognized by office staff will be asked to show identification. Children are not permitted to leave the building before they are signed out by an adult. Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to schedule medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.

### **Electronic Devices**

Students are not permitted to bring cell phones, mp3 players, tablets, portable CD players, or electronic games to school unless the Administration or classroom teacher grants permission. If permission is granted for these items they must remain turned off and stored in the student's backpack until the time designated for their use. The McKnight staff assumes no responsibility for the safety and security of these items.

### **Electronic Student Data Portal/Tyler Student Information System**

The district uses a student information system called Tyler SIS. This electronic Parent Portal provides parents and guardians with access to a web-based gradebook, which shows grades, schedules, periodic student performance, and demographic information. The information provided through Tyler SIS is not in final form and is subject to change and correction. Teachers are expected to post assignment scores within five (5) school days of the return of the assignment. Some assignments may take longer to complete and the grade and may not be updated as quickly.

## **Emergency Drills**

It is the practice of the North Allegheny School District to prepare our students to act should they ever be confronted with an emergency situation during school hours. To do this, teachers review emergency procedures with their classes throughout the year. During drills all students should remain quiet, proceed to their assigned area, and listen to their teacher for further directions.

The following is a listing of drills and their scheduled frequency:

- Fire Drills - Monthly
- Lockdown Drills - Semester
- Emergency Weather Drill – Annually

If you believe that your child could be negatively impacted by these drills please contact the homeroom teacher or school counselors so that arrangements can be made to prepare your child for these events.

## **Emergency School Closing and Delays**

If it becomes necessary to cancel or delay a regularly scheduled day of school because of inclement weather or other abnormal conditions announcements will be made via SchoolMessenger, radio station KDKA AM 1020, and the North Allegheny School District website: [www.northallegheny.org](http://www.northallegheny.org). If school is delayed the reporting time will be moved accordingly, such that a two hour delay would result in an 11:00 a.m. start time. Dismissal will still occur at 3:30. Bus schedules will also be delayed by the same amount of time. Kindergarten will follow an alternate schedule. **Morning kindergarten will run from 11:00-12:45 and afternoon kindergarten will run from 1:45-3:30.**

## **ESAP (Elementary Student Assistant Program)**

We operate the Elementary Student Assistant Program (ESAP) at McKnight Elementary School. ESAP is designed to provide interventions and referrals for struggling students. If your child is experiencing academic or social difficulty you can make a referral to the ESAP team through your homeroom teacher.

## **Field Trips**

Field trips that reinforce and enhance the North Allegheny curriculum are scheduled by various grade levels throughout the school year. Parents will receive notices about field trips in advance of the scheduled date and will be asked to sign field trip permission forms. These trips are supported by the McKnight PFA. There are times when a small amount of money may be requested from each student to defray costs if they exceed the PFA's budgeted amount.

## **Forgotten Instrument**

Students are to bring their band and orchestra instruments to school on days when they are scheduled to have small group practice or full ensemble practice. On occasion, students forget their instruments. Parents/guardians may need to bring them to school.

## **Gum**

Students are not permitted to chew gum in or on the school property.

## **Health Services**

The goal of the school health program is to ensure that each child maintains a level of wellness that affords them the opportunity to achieve lifelong benefits.

### *Emergency Information*

At the beginning of each school year parents/guardians are asked to complete and return an emergency form for each student. This information is required for your child's care in case of illness or injury.

It is important that we have your current home, work, and emergency phone numbers. In an emergency, accurate information can save valuable time in helping your child. Please remember to notify us immediately if these contacts change.

If you are planning to be out of town please provide in writing the name of your child's guardian in your absence, especially if it is someone who is not on the emergency form. Without this consent, we cannot release your child to this caretaker.

### *Medications*

Medications will be administered by health office personnel according to school policy, which includes written parent/guardian permission. A copy of this policy will be sent home during the first week of school. Please review this as it includes information on both prescription and nonprescription medications and your responsibility with both.

Listed below are a few important points regarding medications:

- Students are not to carry medication with them while at school.
- When sending medication to school with your child, it must arrive in its original container. Please write the student's name and amount of medication sent on the front of the container. It should be delivered to the health office immediately upon arrival.
- Tylenol may be administered with parent/guardian permission and at the discretion of the school nurse. Please remember to circle the appropriate response on the bottom of the emergency form.

### Illness

Although daily attendance at school is of the utmost importance, an ill child cannot maintain the energy necessary to benefit from the school environment. Students work very hard during the school day. Parents/guardians should use the guidelines below to ensure that your child is ready and able to learn when he/she comes to school.

The child should remain home if he/she has any of the following symptoms:

- temperature of 100 or greater
- vomiting or diarrhea
- persistent cough or thick nasal drainage
- acute cold or earache
- red, itchy eyes with discharge
- temperature above normal within the last 24 hours

### Communicable Disease

A child who has a communicable disease should remain at home for *at least* the length of time indicated below.

*Scarlet Fever* – 24 hours from initiation of medicine

*Strep Throat* – 24 hours from initiation of medicine

*Chicken Pox (Varicella)* – six to eight days after appearance of rash. Scabs must be completely dried.

*Pinkeye (Conjunctivitis)* – 24 hours after initiating treatment and there is no further drainage.

*Head Lice (Pediculosis)* – If a child is suspected of having pediculosis (head lice) the School Nurse will examine the child and siblings. If head lice are found, the Nurse will contact the parent/guardian and provide educational materials concerning treatment and environmental control. Following treatment, which includes the use of a pediculocidal agent and nit removal, the Nurse will examine your child's head. Proof of treatment (pediculocidal agent or prescription packaging) must be provided to the School Nurse. All parents/guardians will be notified via an Email Blast of the lice identification. The class and grade level will not be identified in the message.

Lice Facts:

- Incubation: Eggs hatch in one week and maturity is reached in 8-10 days.
- Symptoms: Irritation and itching of the scalp; presence of small light gray insects and/or their eggs (nits) attached to the base of the hairs that do not come off easily.
- Methods of Spread: Direct contact with an infected person and indirect contact with their personal belongings, especially headgear. **Lice do not jump.**
- Period of Communicability: While lice or nits remain alive on the infected person or belongings.
- Other information: Lice have nothing to do with the cleanliness of one's home. Lice do not live on pets.

While lice are a nuisance, they are not life threatening. A position statement from the National Association of School Nurses states that, "the management of a lice infestation should not

disrupt the educational process. No disease is associated with head lice and in-school transmission is considered to be rare.” (Frankowski & Boochhini, 2010)

The District’s goals are for head lice to have minimal disruption to all students’ educational experiences and minimize the stigmatizing impact on students and families.

## **Homework**

Homework is an important and required part of a child's education. It allows for extra practice and increased student learning. Homework can reinforce, enrich, or extend the curricular outcomes. Homework can help a child develop skills in personal organization, time management, and following directions.

All students will be assigned homework during the school year. All teachers will record homework assignments in the classroom to assist students in organizing assignments. At the beginning of the year, extra time will be spent assisting students in establishing a routine for organizing and recording assignments.

### **Time Guidelines**

Students should expect homework on a regular basis in accordance with the following nightly averages:

- Grade 1 – 10 minutes
- Grade 2 – 20 minutes
- Grade 3 – 30 minutes
- Grade 4 – 40 minutes
- Grade 5 – 50 minutes

These time allotments are suggested for four - five nights per week for most elementary students. Homework may take your child more or less time. Homework may be assigned on Fridays when needed. It is always appropriate to read literature and nonfiction books and write freely during evenings, weekends, and vacations, even when these activities are not assigned as homework. Any questions or concerns about homework should be addressed to the teacher who initiated the assignment.

### **Responsibilities**

#### ***The student will:***

1. Budget time to complete assignments.
2. Arrange to make up missed assignments.
3. Ask for further explanation if directions are not completely understood.
4. Record homework assignments daily using the method provided by the homeroom teacher.
5. Ask for help when needed.
6. Manage time and task completion on long term assignments.

***The parent/guardian will:***

1. Provide a quiet, well-lit study area with a desk or table and comfortable chair.
2. Keep study tools available: pencils, sharpener, pens, crayons, paper, ruler, and dictionary.
3. Establish a regular time for homework.
4. Avoid distractions such as television viewing and/or listening to music during study time.
5. Inquire about your child's homework and help him/her to budget time for completion.
6. Encourage step-by-step work on long term or major projects to avoid last minute, careless work.
7. Help the student to prioritize homework over extracurricular activities.

**Integrated Arts**

Every Monday is Integrated Arts (IA) Day. IA Day is an integrated approach to teaching special subject areas in one (1) hour blocks per grade level. These special subject areas are: Art, Music, and Physical Education. Homeroom teachers will notify students of the specific dates for each of the special subject area IA Days.

**Items Brought From Home**

Questions often arise regarding what toys or other items students may bring to school. Please review the Electronics section of this publication for information regarding electronic devices. Trading cards are not permitted at school. Children should not bring valuables or large sums (over \$5.00) of money to school.

**Kindergarten Day and Transportation**

Morning Kindergarten begins at 9:00 a.m. and concludes at 11:45 a.m. Afternoon Kindergarten begins at 12:45 p.m. and concludes at 3:30 p.m. The District provides bus transportation to Morning Kindergarten and from Afternoon Kindergarten. All noontime transportation is the responsibility of the parents/guardians.

**Lost and Found**

All clothing, lunch boxes, or other items found at school are placed in the Lost and Found Chest in the main entrance lobby. Money, jewelry, glasses or other small articles of value are turned into the office. *Parents/guardians and students are encouraged to check the Lost and Found often. All items left in the Lost and Found will be donated to a charitable organization during each semester break.*

**Parent Faculty Association (PFA)**

For detailed information about the McKnight Parent Faculty Association (PFA) please visit the PFA website, which can be found at <http://www.mcknightpfa.org/>.

The PFA is an integral part of *everything* we do at McKnight Elementary. You are strongly encouraged to attend a PFA meeting and find out how you can get involved. The PFA meets at 9:15 a.m. on the first Wednesday of each month at McKnight Elementary School. If your schedule does not permit attendance please contact a PFA officer directly to find out how you can help. The 2016-2017 officers are:

President	Sarah Rodgers <a href="mailto:mckpfapresident@gmail.com">mckpfapresident@gmail.com</a>
Vice President	Tatsiana Costa <a href="mailto:mckvicefpres@gmail.com">mckvicefpres@gmail.com</a>
Secretary	Allyson Minton <a href="mailto:mckpfasecretary@gmail.com">mckpfasecretary@gmail.com</a>
Treasurer	Anne Stalter <a href="mailto:mckpfatreasurer@gmail.com">mckpfatreasurer@gmail.com</a>
Asst. Treasurer	Staci James <a href="mailto:mckpfaassttreasurer@gmail.com">mckpfaassttreasurer@gmail.com</a>

## **Parent Teacher Conferences**

Parent Teacher conferences will be held for all students on dates established by the classroom teachers. Parents/guardians are also encouraged to arrange and attend conferences as necessary throughout the year. All conferences can be arranged by contacting your child's teacher.

## **Parties**

There are three homeroom parties during the school year. They are Halloween, Winter Holiday, and Valentine's Day. These parties are coordinated and planned by homeroom parents with the assistance of the PFA. Parents who volunteer to organize or help at a party must sign up in advance through their homeroom parent. On the day of the party a secure check-in procedure will be implemented to ensure the safety of our students. Parents will proceed to classrooms 15 minutes before the start of each party.

## **Recess**

Recess time is integral to early childhood growth and development. It affords students a time to be active while also providing a mental break from their rigorous academic work. McKnight is fortunate to have three large playground areas, which are utilized during all recess periods. Recess is held indoors *only* during periods of *extreme* weather. Recess is always outside unless it is raining, thundering, or the wind chill factor is **below 20 degrees**. It is important that students dress appropriately on cold-weather days.

McKnight's Student Expectations and Bullying Prevention Rules are especially important during recess when students are afforded personal freedom in choice of activities and playmates. To ensure that this time is spent wisely and safely, specific expectations do apply to recess and are to be followed with no exceptions. Violation of these expectations may result in the loss of recess privileges.

1. Recess is over when the whistle sounds.
2. Students should clean up all equipment when recess ends.
3. Students should never be out of view of an adult.

4. No food is to be eaten on the playground.

## **Report Cards**

The school year is divided into four nine week periods. *Report cards are not printed.* Report cards are available for students in grades 1-5 at the end of each nine week period through the Tyler SIS Parent Portal. Kindergarten report cards are available at the end of each semester.

### *Special Area Grades*

Students do not earn percentage grades in Special Area subjects. Elementary students may earn **Strength**, **Proficient**, or **Needs Improvement** in Special Area subjects. When viewing grades in the Tyler SIS Parent Portal you may see percentages reported for the Special Areas. Please use the chart below to interpret these correctly as Strength, Proficient, or Needs Improvement.

<b>Strength</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>
+	-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
90% - 81%	80%-71%	70% and lower

## **Smoking**

McKnight Elementary School is a smoke-free environment. Smoking is forbidden in the building and on all school property.

## **Special Education Services**

The following special education services are available for students who meet the requirements: Gifted (GOAL), Speech, Emotional Support, and Learning Support. Questions about these programs can be directed to the main office.

## **Student Expectations**

Clear expectations create the structure in which children grow and thrive. All students are expected to know and follow all expectations at all times. In McKnight Elementary School:

1. *I will* be respectful in my words and actions at all times.
2. *I will* keep my hands, feet, and objects to myself.
3. *I will* obey directions and requests the first time given.
4. *I will* remain in assigned area at all times.
5. *I will* use school materials appropriately.
6. *I will* travel through the school in a quiet, orderly, and safe manner.

### Violation of Expectations

When elementary-aged students violate school expectations it creates an opportunity for the child to learn, grow, and understand their role in a civil society. As such, violations of expectations will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Consequences will be assigned according to the severity of the behavior, whether the behavior is a repeated infraction, the developmental level of the student, and the North Allegheny Code of Conduct.

Staff members who witness a breach of the Expectations will submit a School Behavior Report form to the Assistant Principal. The student will then meet with the Assistant Principal to discuss the behavior. The student and parent/guardian will sign the completed behavior report and return it to the homeroom teacher the next school day. Students will not be allowed to participate in recess until the signed form is returned. Depending on the severity of the violation the Assistant Principal may contact the parent/guardian via telephone or email to notify them of the discipline issue. Additional information can be found in the Code of Conduct on the District website.

Possible consequences include:

- Lunch detention
- Recess detention
- After school detention (3:30 pm – 4:00 pm)
- Loss of participation in classroom, grade-level, or school event
- In-school suspension from all classes
- Suspension from school

### **Study Island Access**

Students in third, fourth, and fifth grade have been assigned a Study Island account. Teachers will make periodic assignments in Study Island that students are to complete as part of their typical homework assignments. To access their Study Island account, students should visit the following webpage: <https://app.studyisland.com/cfw/login/?button=center>. Each student's username will follow the same model. They will all begin with na and be followed by the student's unique identification number. For example if the student's ID number is 12345, then his Study Island username would be na12345.

### **Tardy Students**

Arriving on time daily is as important as attending daily. Students who arrive late miss important announcements, lose instructional time, sacrifice social time with friends, and forego the opportunity to organize and prepare themselves for the day. Homeroom begins at 9:00 a.m. A child who arrives at school after 9:05 a.m. is considered tardy. All students entering school after 9:05 a.m. *must* check in at the office before going to the classroom. Failure to sign in at the office may result in an absence being recorded for the student for the entire day.

## **Telephones**

Students are not to make calls from any telephone other than the office telephone. The telephone is to be used in emergencies only. Students must have permission from an adult to use the telephone. Students are never permitted to use personal cell phones during the school day. Parents/guardians should contact the office to get a message to their child, if necessary.

## **Testing**

Various standardized tests are administered throughout the school year. Results are used to help determine individual student progress and to make adjustments to curriculum and instruction if necessary. Students are to be in school during the District assessments and State (PSSA) testing, except in cases of illnesses or religious observance. The dates for all tests are listed on the school calendar as well as announced by the school. These tests are important. No vacation will be approved during the weeks of these tests.

### *Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS)*

The ITBS is given to students in grades two through five. This assessment is a group administered achievement test battery designed to provide information on student progress in major content areas. The ITBS provides educators diagnostic data that can drive remediation and inform instruction. It also offers a national comparison of students' achievement. The dates for the ITBS are listed on the school calendar.

### *Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)*

The CogAT is given to students in second and fourth grades. The purpose of this test is to assess a student's ability in reasoning and problem solving using verbal, quantitative, and spatial (non-verbal) symbols.

### *PSSA Tests*

The Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) is a criterion referenced test used to measure students' progress toward mastering the Pennsylvania Standards in grades 3-5. The dates for the PSSA Tests are listed on the school calendar. Third, Fourth, and Fifth grade students are given the English Language Arts and Mathematics PSSA Tests. Fourth grade students additionally take the Science PSSA Test.

## **Text Books/School-Issued Materials**

District procedure states that the parent/guardian is responsible for the replacement cost of lost books or those damaged beyond use. School materials such as books, calculators, etc. that are assigned to students must be replaced if lost or damaged. The cost of textbooks/materials varies

due to the original purchase price and age. If an item is later recovered, the amount paid will be returned assuming good condition of the recovered item.

## **Terroristic Threats**

Pennsylvania law defines a terroristic threat as a threat to commit violence communicated with the intent to terrorize another, to cause evacuation of a building, or to cause serious public inconvenience, in reckless disregard at the risk of causing such terror or inconvenience. For the safety of our students, all threats will be thoroughly investigated and the District's Code of Conduct followed.

## **Thursday E-Blast**

Parents/guardians of elementary school students receive a weekly email containing details about upcoming events and links to all of the fliers available on the District's webpage called the "Thursday E-Blast to Elementary Parents". This will contain information about school and community events and opportunities of interest to parents. There will also be important information from teachers and principals. Weekly lists remain posted on the website for six weeks so parents/guardians can go back and reference them.

It is important for parents/guardians to update any changes in their email address so that they can receive the E-Blast. Those who do not have internet access should contact the main office to obtain hard copies of the weekly communication.

Groups interested in letting parents/guardians know about their event or program via the Thursday E-Blast may apply for approval by referring to the Quick Link on the Homepage of the District website or contacting the Office of Communications and Development at 412-369-5445.

## **Visitors**

Visitors are always welcome at McKnight Elementary School! The only daytime entrance is through the main office. All other doors are locked during the school day. Visitors must ring the bell and be "buzzed in" after their identity is confirmed using the video phone. Only one visitor should enter the door at a time. This gives office personnel time to accurately identify each person entering the school building.

Upon entering a building, all visitors will be asked to present a valid state-issued ID, which will be scanned into the Raptor Visitor Management system. Upon reading the information, Raptor will check the national database to identify sexual offenders. The system will also scan the District's volunteer database which lists volunteers who have submitted the necessary clearances as outlined in the Act 153 volunteer clearance legislature. Once approved, the system will generate a name tag for approved visitors which will contain a picture of the visitor or volunteer, the date, and purpose of the visit.

To ensure the safety of our students, visitors will not be permitted to wander through the building. Messages for students or teachers may be given to the secretary in the office so that classroom instruction is not interrupted. No one will be permitted to go to a classroom unless prior arrangements have been made with the classroom teacher.

### **Volunteer Clearances**

Volunteers are required to submit necessary clearances prior to volunteering at any of the District's twelve schools as outlined in Pennsylvania's Act 153 Volunteer Clearance Legislature. For information about the types of clearances or how to submit clearance, volunteers should visit the North Allegheny School District website for important information about the type of clearances and the procedures for submitting the clearances.

### **Weapons Policy**

The North Allegheny School District strictly prohibits the possession or storage of weapons by students on school property. For the purpose of this policy, the definition of a weapon also includes weapon "look-alikes." The District's Code of Conduct will be strictly adhered to if a weapon is brought to school.

### **Wellness**

In an effort to establish and maintain a safe and healthy school environment for all children, the North Allegheny School District approved the guidelines that are within Student Wellness Policy #3441. In support of this policy, no edible treats will be permitted for birthdays or other celebrations. Please reference the "Birthday Treats" section of this handbook for more information.

# *McKnight Elementary School Song*

*We're from McKnight  
and we're feeling alright,  
'Cause we're happy to be  
Where we are.*

*We're saying from East to West,  
We know we'll be the best  
'Cause we got the greatest  
school by far.*

*We're here for Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic  
Art and Music make us click.  
Phys Ed really makes us strong.  
We know we can't go wrong.*

*We're from McKnight  
and we're feeling alright,  
'Cause we're happy to be  
Where we are.*

*We're saying from East to West,  
We know we'll be the best  
'Cause we got the greatest  
school by far...MCKNIGHT!*