

Ashburton Elementary School

6314 Lone Oak Drive * Bethesda, MD 20817 * (301) 571-6959



Principals' News First Day of School Information

August 31, 2009

Dear Ashburton Parents/Guardians,

I am excited to welcome you to a new school year at Ashburton. It was nice to see so many of you at the Open House on Friday. We had a great turn-out regardless of the rainy weather. Ms. Cino, our Assistant Principal, and I share your enthusiasm and excitement that a new school year always brings.

Since our summer letter, we have had several staff changes and were allocated another first grade teaching position due to increased enrollment in that grade. We constantly monitor enrollment at all grades and are in contact with our Community Superintendent over staffing. As these tight budget times continue, we appreciate the funding and support the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) has received from the County Council. We recognize that it is imperative to use our resources in the most efficient and effective manner. MCPS staffing allocations are based on projected enrollment. We certainly hope that at the beginning of the school year our actual enrollment matches the projected enrollment. Unfortunately, as a result of this current fiscal situation, it may become necessary for staffing changes to occur in some schools if enrollment comes in below projection and doesn't justify the staffing that was allocated. If there is a need to make an adjustment in staffing based on actual enrollment, I will do my best to minimize the impact of these necessary adjustments. I will keep you informed and alert you of any changes that may occur at our school.

Mrs. Sarah Booth, who was our first grade Reading Initiative teacher last year, will now teach the new first grade class. We are pleased that Mrs. Booth is knowledgeable of the curriculum and that the class size will be better fit for the whole first grade. We are in the process of hiring a part-time reading initiative teacher. Additionally, we have a long-term substitute in the cafeteria; her name is Mrs. Naihsin Chang. We also hired a new part-time building service worker, Mr. Anthony Smith. Finally, we hired Mrs. Sharon Hussey as a special education paraeducator. Please join me in welcoming our new staff members to Ashburton.

In your child's backpack today and throughout this first week, you will find important information and "homework" for parents. Please read, complete and return these important forms to help ensure the safety and well-being of your child(ren). You should receive the following:

1. **Student Emergency Information** — These pre-printed yellow cards have contact information from previous years or from enrollment; please verify the information and make corrections if necessary (OR if you do not receive a pre-printed form, please complete the blank form), sign it and return it immediately. These emergency forms play a critical role in ensuring the safety and well-being of students and are our prime source of contact information from the teacher, the health room or the office. Please include e-mail

addresses, if possible, to ensure that staff can include you on a grade-level listserv with pertinent information to parents. Please remember to notify the office when there is a change in home, work or cell phone numbers and e-mail addresses. Notification of change in residence must be accompanied by proof, such as a new lease or settlement papers. This form should be returned immediately.

2. **Application for Free/Reduced Lunch**—Complete and return immediately. See the eligibility chart on the back page and if your family does not qualify, discard the form. There is ONE FORM PER FAMILY and are pre-printed if your child had an account last year. Applications for Free or Reduced lunch should be returned to the school office as soon as possible, since they become effective as soon as processing is completed by Food Services. Students who received free/reduced meals last year are eligible to continue in the program until the end of September. However, new applications must be filed yearly to continue eligibility. Parents and guardians need to fill out the forms COMPLETELY for the children for whom they are applying. Incomplete applications will be returned and delay approval status. Pre-printed applications are sent to the youngest child in the family in grade one and above.
3. **MCPS Authorization for Releasing Students-** (Release of a student to an adult other than the parent/guardian.) You may complete ONE form per family surname, list each child on the form and complete and return immediately. Please contact the office to make changes throughout the year as needed.
4. **School Lunch Menu-** (Menus can also be found on the MCPS website)
Lunch prices have increased- Lunch is **\$2.50**, milk is \$.60, reduced price for lunch is \$.40. I am requesting that students bring lunch, have money in their SNAP (School Nutrition Accountability Program) account, or bring lunch money each day. In addition to the regular and alternate choices, there will always be a grilled cheese pocket.
5. **Ashburton Parent Handbook-** This revised handbook provides information on Ashburton and MCPS policies and procedures. We will provide all new families with a handbook. We are a Green School so we are not going to hand out copies to all parents, but you may request a handbook or go to our website to access the handbook.
6. **Request to Withhold Directory Information-** (*Complete one for each child **only** if you wish to withhold information- **otherwise discard***). The MCPS Request to Withhold Directory Information must be received in the school office no later than September 11th. Request to withhold information prohibits printing the student's name in the PTA Directory AND from MCPS releasing your child's name to solicitors unless specifically stated.
7. **Ashburton Homework Policy** (*Complete one for each child*)
This document should be reviewed carefully with your child, signed by you and your child and returned by Friday, September 11th. If you have questions about homework, please discuss them with your child's teacher. Grade level homework expectations will be discussed at Back to School Night.
8. **Ashburton Discipline Policy** (*Complete one for each child*)
This policy should be reviewed with your child, signed by you and your child and defined in the policy.

The Ashburton staff will continue the "Hats Off" policy. Children are not permitted to wear hats inside of the building, during school hours. Wearing of hats during class is a distraction and can interfere with instruction.

Additionally, we ask that students wear appropriate footwear to school each day. Wearing loose sandals or flip-flops limits activities on the playground. HEELIES are not permitted at school.

MCPS issues a publication “A Student’s Guide to Rights and Responsibilities in Montgomery County Public Schools.” Copies will be sent home.

We are proud of the Ashburton staff as they collaborate to share information and skills. If you did not have a chance to meet everyone at Open House, you’ll have another opportunity at **Back-to-School Night on September 17th, at 7:00 p.m.**

I look forward to working with you, your children and the staff as we begin a year focusing on making every child a successful part of the Ashburton Learning Community. Thank you for sharing your most precious gift—your children—with us.

Sincerely,

Charlene Eroh
Principal

School Policies

Safety on Our Grounds and Streets:

Parents, please remember that our bus circle is closed to traffic during the hours of 8:25 to 9:00 a.m. and from 2:45 until 3:30 p.m. Automobile traffic is NOT permitted to enter or exit during these hours when buses are in the parking lot. Your assistance in complying with this request will help ensure the safety of all the children, walkers and bus riders, who are arriving and departing.

Please drive slowly and carefully whenever on school grounds or neighboring streets. Please remind your children, for their safety, to cross the streets at designated crosswalks. For parents who drop off their children, please use caution in only letting children exit from the car onto the sidewalk and away from the street. Do NOT let them run across the street in front of traffic.

When you park on neighboring streets, please park with consideration for the narrow streets and so that neighbors may use their driveways. Police will ticket if you park illegally on the streets, no parking zones, or in the circle at Ashburton. Instead of making u-turns in driveways, go around the block to safely exit after dropping off students.

The student drop-off on Pomona Drive should be used for dropping off students between 8:30 and 8:50 a.m. The doors will be locked after 8:50 a.m. and students should not be dropped off since they will not be able to enter the building. **Parents should drive to the front of the drop-off lane and let students out, right side only**, OR park to walk students to the door at the breezeway. Walkers or car riders can be met at this drop-off loop in the afternoon between 3:05 and 3:15 p.m. or at the gym lobby. At 3:15 p.m. students are escorted to the main office. Please give the school a courtesy call if you are going to be late picking up your child.

Visitor’s Policy:

We look forward to you visiting Ashburton frequently. However, during school hours, visitors must report to the office upon arrival. Please sign in and obtain a visitor’s badge. Please make arrangements with the teacher prior to visiting your child’s classroom. Visitors (and volunteers) are always welcome in the lunchroom and at recess; please sign-in and wear a visitor’s badge.

Arrival of Students:

Buses arrive between 8:30 and 8:40 a.m. Students report to line up next to their classroom. I hope I can count on you to support me in efforts to maintain safety at all times. For the safety and security of all students, I am asking that parents **“kiss and say goodbye”** at the front door. Students who need assistance will be escorted to class by patrols or staff.

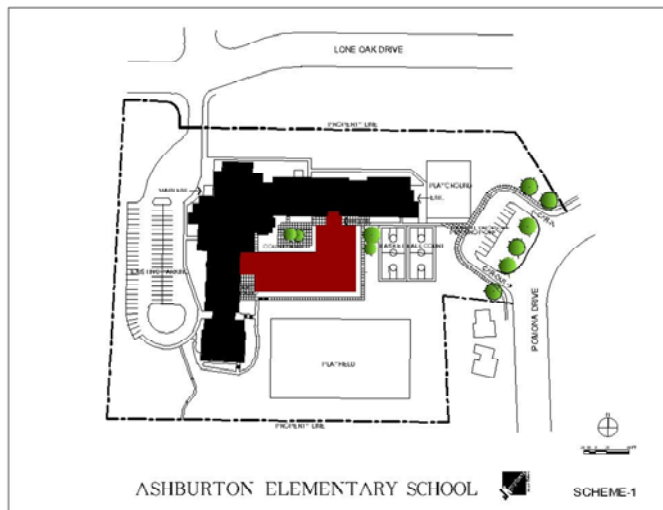
Children who arrive after 8:50 a.m. must report to the office to sign in with their parent and they will get a tardy slip to give to their teacher and order lunch if needed.

Supervision of students is provided at the front and rear of the building each morning from 8:30-8:45 a.m. only. The crossing guard is on duty from 8:30-9:00 a.m. daily. Your support in having children arrive in a timely manner will help us ensure safety and provide your child time to get organized for the school day. Students may NOT arrive before 8:30 a.m. There is no supervision and we will have to call you to pick up your child.

Departure of Students:

Buses are called as they arrive by both number and color. Teachers assist the students in knowing when to leave the classroom and students should report directly to their assigned bus.

Walkers should arrange to either meet in the gym lobby or the breezeway, OR if you choose to meet at a specified location outside the building. All walkers will be sent to the gym lobby or breezeway to meet their parents. This will help alleviate the congestion in our main hall as walkers and bus riders dismiss from school. Remember you may not enter nor exit the parking lot during dismissal from 2:45 until 3:30 p.m.



Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Form:

Bullying, harassment, or intimidation are serious and will not be tolerated. MCPS Form 230-35 is used to report alleged bullying, harassment, or intimidation that occurred on school property; at a school-sponsored activity or event off school property; on a school bus; or on the way to and/or from school, in the current school year. Student victims, the parent/guardian of a student victim, a close adult relative of a student victim, or a school staff member who wish to report an incident of alleged bullying, harassment or intimidation, complete this form and return it to the Principal at the student victim's school. Contact the school for additional information or assistance at any time. *Form 230-35 is attached.*

Bullying, harassment, or intimidation means intentional conduct, including verbal, physical, or written conduct, or an intentional electronic communication that: creates a hostile educational environment by substantially interfering with a student's educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, or with a student's physical or psychological well-being and is motivated by an actual or a perceived personal characteristic including race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attribute, socioeconomic status, familial status, or physical or mental ability or disability; or threatening or seriously intimidating; and occurs on school property, at a school activity or event, or on a school bus; or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a school. Electronic communication means a communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, including a telephone, cellular phone, computer, or pager.

Seasonal Flu Vaccination Process for Students-Fall 2009:

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) is working with the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) regarding seasonal flu vaccinations for students. School nurses and/or other certified health professionals will administer the seasonal flu vaccine (FluMist). We will send more information and a permission slip home later this week. DHHS expects that the H1N1 vaccine will be available later in the fall. More information will be provided regarding details of the H1N1 vaccination plan as it becomes available.

H1N1 Information:

Children with flu-like symptoms or fever should not come to school. Students who are ill at school will be observed in the health room by the School Nurse or Health Room Aide. Students having a fever > 100 F with a cough or sore throat will be sent home.

- Parents may wish to contact your health care provider.
- Children must remain at home until they are fever and symptom free without medication for at least 24 hours.
- Children who are sent home with flu-like symptoms will need to be evaluated by the health room before returning to school.

Communication between parents, the school, and the health room will be critical. If you suspect your child has the flu (a respiratory illness with fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills or fatigue) please inform the health room. We will keep your child's name confidential but will need to track the numbers of cases.

Food Brought to Classrooms:

All food brought into the classroom to be shared at parties, as special treats, or for projects, **must** be store-purchased and not homemade. Please consult your child's teachers regarding food allergies within the class.

Birthday treats must be store purchased. Please notify the classroom teacher prior to bringing in a small treat for your child's birthday. S/he will find an appropriate time to celebrate the child's birthday without disrupting instruction and they will discuss with you the allergy concerns and the number needed for the class.