

Como Park's Student/Parent Handbook



Como Park Elementary School
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COMO PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HANDBOOK

INTRODUCTION

As your child journeys through the elementary school years, you will no doubt have questions regarding the policies and procedures here at Como Park Elementary School. This handbook is intended to answer those questions.

Please take the time to read through this book. Certainly you will find much of the information to be helpful right away. You should also keep the book as a reference in case something that doesn't apply to your circumstances now becomes relevant in the future.

Attendance/Absences

1. Students are required by law to be in attendance every day that school is in session. **A student's attendance at school directly affects academic success and dropout rates later in a child's school career.**
2. If a student is ill, a parent should call each day and notify the office of the absence and reason. Call 686-3235 anytime and leave a message with the office staff or on the school's answering machine.
3. The Attendance Clerk will place a call to the home of any absent student if we do not receive a phone call.
4. Even though a phone call is made, a written excuse for the dates of absence is required upon the child's return to school. This note should include the student's full name, dates of absence, teacher, reason, and parent signature.
5. If no written excuse is received within five days, the absence is considered unexcused.
6. Parents should send a note stating the dates a student will miss school due to vacation at least one week in advance. This is an unexcused absence. The Attendance Clerk will issue a vacation letter.
7. As per Como Park Attendance Policy, class work/homework that is missed during a vacation will be made up when the student returns to school. Teachers will not be expected to provide work prior to vacation.

8. Advance notice of any lengthy absence is appreciated.
9. Students may **NOT** be dropped off before 8:45 a.m. There is no supervision for students before 8:45 a.m. Students coming before 8:45 will receive a notice stating that they will need to attend the YMCA program in the morning. The phone number for the YMCA is 684-2395.
10. Students are to be in their classrooms by 9:00 a.m. Students arriving to school tardy (after 9:00 a.m.) will need to be signed in at the office to get a pass to class.

According to the Lancaster Board of Education Attendance Procedures, if a child has excessive absences the following procedures will be followed:

- The principal will be notified.
- A letter will be sent home identifying that there is a concern about absences and/or tardies.
- If appropriate, a referral will be made to Como Park School's Student Support Team.

If further absences occur:

- A parent conference will be scheduled with the principal and/or school social worker.
- The principal, social worker, and/or the district SRO officer will visit the home.

Bus Transportation



All students in Lancaster are eligible for bus transportation. Students will be bused to and from the designated bus stop each day unless an *Alternate Transportation Form* has been submitted to the Transportation Department (available at the Transportation Office - 686-3290). This would be needed when a child requires before and/or after school care at a location other than his/her own address.

Bus Behavior

Students receive instruction in bus safety each year. Students are required to follow the rules for bus behavior.

1. Students must remain seated at all times.
2. Students are to use "inside" voices.
3. When moving to the front of the bus, walk slowly.
4. Listen to the driver's directions at all times.
5. Respect all other riders.
6. Absolutely no bullying behavior.

If the bus driver has spoken to a child about inappropriate behavior and the behavior continues, a *Bus Conduct Form* will be written and sent to the principal. The principal will take disciplinary action which can include the following: lunch detention, phone call home, after school detention, and/or suspension from the bus. Please help us keep the children safe by reminding your child of the school bus rules and supporting the transportation staff.

Changes in Dismissal Arrangements

If there is a change in dismissal arrangements for your child, **please send a note in with your child on the morning of the day of the change** and your child will submit it to the teacher. We prefer that you send a note in rather than call the office. However, if you have to call the office, we ask that you do that as soon as you are aware of the change. **Please avoid making calls close to dismissal time.** Thank you for your cooperation with this matter.

Early Dismissal (between 9 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.)

Students requiring an early dismissal should bring a note stating the student's full name, date, time, reason, name of person picking them up and parent signature. These students will be included on a Daily Pickup List that is created in the Main Office. The early dismissal information will be noted on the student's attendance record. Students having an early dismissal during the school day (before 3:25 p.m.) are signed out in the main office. Student will be called to the office. The adult picking child up will be required to present photo ID.

Dismissal of Students

Students being picked up by a parent or other adult at dismissal should submit a note including the student's full name, teacher, by whom and day/days child will be picked up. The student's name will be added to the Daily Pickup List.

Students being picked up are dismissed at 3:25 p.m. The person picking the child up should report to the front lobby to sign him/her out. The adult picking the child up must have photo ID.

Walkers are also dismissed at 3:25 p.m. Those students wishing to walk should bring a note stating parental permission to walk from school. This note may be sent to school at the beginning of the year for the duration of the school year.

Class Placement

Our teachers play an integral part in placing children. Grade level meetings take place to discuss the best educational setting for each child. We examine academic factors, social skills, physical requirements, class make-up, and parent concerns.

It is important to get input from parents who would like to share information about their child's learning. Parents will be invited to complete a *Parent Input Sheet* in the spring. Please refrain from requesting a specific teacher by name. We believe all teachers have strengths and children benefit from exposure to many different teaching styles and personalities.

Discipline Code

DASA means Dignity for All Students Act. The goal of DASA is to provide public elementary and secondary school students with a safe and supportive learning environment free from discrimination, intimidation, taunting, harassment, and bullying on school property, on a school bus, or at a school function.

For more information about DASA, see page 2 of the *LCSD Code of Conduct*.

Como Park Elementary School's administration and faculty take great pride in providing its students with an inviting, positive environment. The students' behavior plays an important role in maintaining a positive atmosphere.

At Como Park Elementary School students should:

1. Be respectful.
2. Demonstrate responsibility by completing work neatly and in a timely fashion.
3. Follow classroom, cafeteria, gymnasium, and library rules.
4. Walk to and from classes.
5. Take pride in our school by keeping it clean, orderly, and in good condition.
6. Speak politely while using proper manners.
7. Lastly, put forth their best effort in all areas.

On occasion it may be necessary for a teacher/staff member to request that a student who has misbehaved see the building principal. The following steps are possible consequences for inappropriate behavior:

- Visit with Building Administrator
- Call placed to Parent(s)/Guardian(s)
- Conference with Parent(s)
- Lunch detention
- Suspension from activities (privileges)
- After-School Detention/Behavior Workshop
- Bus suspension
- Suspension (in or out of school)
- Visit with school social worker

On occasion the building administrator may be out of the building during the school day. There will be a well-experienced and pre-trained staff member in charge. This staff member will follow the same discipline steps and document the information for the building administrator's return.

For more information about Code of Conduct, see p. 10 of the *LCSD Code of Conduct* under the heading *Student Conduct*.

Dress Code

The dress code for Como Park Elementary School is one of practicality and in compliance with Lancaster Central School District Code of Conduct. Students should be appropriately dressed for the school day and weather conditions.

A student's dress and appearance shall:

- Not create a distraction that interferes with the educational process.
- Be appropriate (no short shorts, low hanging jeans, or no bare midriffs).
- Include footwear (sneakers are recommended) (no flip-flops).
- Not include headwear in the classroom except for a medical or religious purpose (hats, baseball caps, bandanas, or scarves are not allowed).
- Not promote and/or endorse the use of alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs and/or encourage illegal or violent activities.
- Not contain slogans or language that may be offensive.



In the elementary setting, we promote physical activity including Physical Education, recess and/or outdoor play. We highly recommend students wear sneakers or rubber-soled shoes for safety in play. Sneakers are required for Physical Education and on the playground for all students. Flip-flops are also not appropriate footwear for school and will not be allowed during school, after school, or during evenings at the buildings.

Weapons in School

Lancaster Central School District has instituted a *Zero Tolerance Policy* toward students bearing weapons, toy weapons, or items resembling weapons on school property (including school buses). Weapons are defined as **any object which may do bodily harm to others or may appear to do bodily harm to others**. The building principal will investigate the situation and consult with the superintendent of schools as to consequences and resolution of the incident.

Field Trips

Each year field trips are made available to classrooms courtesy of the Como Park PTO. Fundraising done by the PTO supports necessary transportation and total cost of dues, fees, or tickets required for field trips.



We do not have a preset number of field trips. The classroom teacher and/or grade levels determine field trips. Most often parents are asked to serve as chaperones. Younger siblings, however, are not allowed to travel with the chaperones. The individual classroom teacher determines the number of chaperones. All children attending a field trip must return by bus to Como Park for dismissal.

In the event a parent or teacher requests a child not attend the field trip, instructional plans will be made for the child to complete in another classroom while his/her class is away.

Grade Reporting

Parent conferences are scheduled during the month of December at which time your child's progress will be discussed. Additional conferences may be scheduled by contacting your child's teacher. Report cards are now available only online at the parent portal at www.lancasterschools.org. If you do not have Internet access, please make the main office aware so that they can provide a hard copy for you. Kindergarten students will receive a hard copy of the report card which will be sent home in the student folder.

Health Office Information

Illness and Absences



If your child is absent due to illness or injury, the Main Office needs to be notified. If your child has a serious illness, has been hospitalized, or will be hospitalized, the Health Office will need a note from the physician stating the reasons for the absence and restrictions, if there are any.

In the event a child becomes ill or injured during the school day, the school nurse will immediately contact the parents/legal guardians of the child. If unavailable, calls will be made to those individuals listed on the Emergency Form.

Medication in School

New York State Education Law has specific laws regarding the handling of medication in school. The mandates are:

- Any medication given in school, **whether it is over the counter or prescribed medication**, must have a written note from the physician stating the dosage, time for the medication and duration.
- The parents must sign a permission slip giving the school nurse permission to administer the medication. The medication must be in a labeled bottle and the parent and/or guardian must deliver the medication to school. **Students are not allowed to transport medications to or home from school.** A physician may fax his order to the school.

Physicals and Screenings

All students new to the building **MUST** have a physical by their private physician or completed by the school physician. All students in Kindergarten, Second, Fourth, Seventh, and Tenth grades must also have a physical.

Students in Kindergarten through Tenth grades will have an annual hearing exam. All students will receive an annual eye exam. Scoliosis screening is mandated for students age 8 to 16.

If at any time a parent has a concern regarding their child's vision or hearing, they may request a screening by the school nurse.

Injuries

When a student breaks a bone or suffers another type of injury that will restrict physical education, contact sports, or recess time, there must be a note from the attending physician or family physician stating the physical education restrictions and the length of time the child will be out of physical education. A note is also needed when the child is released from physical education restrictions. **A student will not be allowed to participate in physical education class and playground (during lunch) unless there is a note from the physician.** A note from a parent may not be accepted as

release notes. The school has a fax number to accept a physician's fax. The number is 716-686-3303.

Homework

Homework is an important component of a child's education because it provides an opportunity for students to practice a skill. The content covered in a homework assignment is not new material, but rather reinforcement of what was learned in class.

School Guidelines

- Como Park Elementary teachers will assign homework that is purposeful.
- Como Park Elementary teachers will provide effective feedback about the skills being reinforced in the homework assignment.

Homework Recommendations

- Help your child establish a consistent and organized place for homework to be completed without distractions.
- Help your child establish a consistent time for homework to be completed.
- Encourage, motivate, and prompt your child, but do not complete the homework for him/her. The purpose of the homework is for your child to practice the skills learned in school.
- Encourage your child to read directions and begin homework independently.
- If your child attempts to complete the homework and struggles with a particular skill and/or homework assignment, send a note to the teacher explaining the struggles.

Library Media Center



Our mission is to ensure that students and staff are effective users of information and resources.

The library curriculum is fully integrated within the classroom curriculum. This is accomplished through cooperatively planned research projects,

literature appreciation (i.e., reading and storytelling), and other classes and special projects. We have a well-rounded, extensive print and non-print collection. We also have more than 15 computers available for students, including our automated circulation system and various reference materials.

Computer Usage - The LCSD encourages students to use computers and technology available in our school facilities, however, with this use comes responsibility. For a more detailed description of student computer and Internet use rights and responsibilities refer to the student agenda planner or LCSD Policy #7315 - Student Use of Computerized Information Resources (Acceptable Use Policy).

Loan Periods - books are due every two weeks. Magazines and videos are due in one week. Students who forget to return their book during their weekly class receive a reminder notice. Other late notices may be sent by mail.

*If material is lost or irreparably damaged, a bill for replacement of the item is mailed.

*There is no charge for overdue material. Instead, we hope to instill in our students a sense of responsibility regarding proper care and return of library items. We hope that this will be reinforced at home.

If you have any questions regarding the status of overdue material or lost books, please call the Library Media Center.

Lunch Services

The Lancaster Central Food Service Department designs the lunch and breakfast program and predetermines our cafeteria menu.



Daily Lunches

Every month students receive a monthly lunch menu. The menu lists the items available for the children to buy on a daily basis. Milk is available every day (skim, 2%, whole milk, and chocolate milk.) Snack items are also available every day.

Children wishing to purchase lunches sign up for their selections in their classrooms each morning. When a child comes in late, he/she should stop by

the kitchen to inform the Cook Manager what they would like to order for their lunch. Elementary lunch charges are noted on the menu.

Daily Breakfast

Every morning students have the option of purchasing breakfast. If they choose to have breakfast, they get their breakfast when school starts. They do not come in early for it. Breakfast offerings and prices are also noted on the monthly menu.

An electronic Point-of-Sales system for all food purchases has been established. The Point-of-Sales system offers parent/guardians a convenient and easy payment system to prepay for school meals and snack purchases. By choosing this option you do need your child's ID number, which can be obtained (if not known) by calling the Lancaster Central School District Food Service Department at 686-3246. By making prepayments in advance, lunch lines move more quickly, leaving students additional time for enjoying their lunch period.

Cafeteria Behavior Guidelines

Our cafeteria has ten behavior guidelines. These are:

1. Stay in your seat and raise your hand if you need help.
2. Use good table manners, and keep your hands and feet to yourself.
3. Make good choices when talking and eating.
4. Be kind to others, helping out whenever you can.
5. Remember, there is a class coming in after you; check the table and floor for garbage.
6. Wait in line quietly and respect others.
7. Always use inside voices.
8. When the lights are turned off, stop talking immediately.
9. Most important: Enjoy good food and good friends.

In the event a child is displaying inappropriate behavior, he/she will be spoken to by one of the two cafeteria monitors. If inappropriate behavior continues, a student may be asked to sit at a separate table. If additional action if warranted, the principal will also talk with the student.

The daily lunch is thirty minutes. Students should wash their hands and use the bathroom prior to arriving at the cafeteria. In the event of an emergency, students may request to use the lavatory.

Parent Lunch Guests

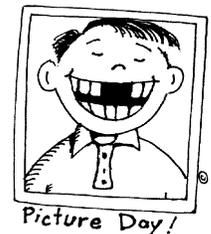
Parents may join their children for lunch for a special occasion at the tables provided outside of the cafeteria. Upon arrival, parents should sign in at the main office. You may not invite other children to join you. **Kindergarten parents cannot come to lunch until January.** Please keep in mind that lunch is an important socialization time for the children. We ask that you limit your visits to special occasions or to a few times per year.

Forgotten Lunches/Lunch Charges

If a child forgets his/her lunch, a school lunch may be ordered. The student will receive a lunch slip indicating how much he/she owes. Students may charge lunches when necessary. Snacks, however, may **not** be charged. Lunch charges should be paid the following day. A student may not charge his/her lunch and then use their lunch money to purchase snacks.

Pictures

School pictures are taken in the fall and spring of each year. Picture Day is scheduled so that pictures are available for holiday gifts. A flyer is sent home explaining packages available and yearbook availability. Parents are under no obligation to purchase packages. All students will have their pictures taken to be in the yearbook. If needed, retakes may be taken. Retakes are also available by holidays. Yearbooks are distributed at the end of the school year.



PTO Executive Board and Membership

Each PTO council member must be a Como Park parent, and each member serves a one-year term. PTO meetings are generally held once a month. The PTO holds two primary fundraisers a year: fall and spring. These fundraisers provide funding for special events, field trips, field trip transportation, and Field Day.

Becoming a member of the PTO is very simple. When school opens, the PTO holds a membership drive. Membership dues are \$5.00. This money also funds school activities. A membership is not a time commitment. Parent participation in special events is on a volunteer basis.

Each year the PTO sponsors many family-oriented events such as Welcome Back Family Night, Monster Mash, Holiday Hallways, Book Fairs, and more.



School Closing Information

Due to severe storms or other emergencies, the Superintendent of Schools may find it necessary to close the school. This decision is usually made by 6:30 a.m. Once the decision to close the school has been made, you should receive an automated phone call.

School Day Schedule

- 8:50 a.m. Students may enter the classrooms
- 9:00 a.m. School day begins
- 11:00 a.m. - 1:45 p.m. School lunches served
- 3:25 p.m. YMCA Program, walkers, after-school day care, students being picked up by parent/relative are dismissed.
- 3:30 p.m. Students are called to buses

No children should be dropped off before 8:45 a.m. Supervision is not provided for students dropped off before 8:45.

Phone calls to the office should be made before 3:00 p.m. each day.

Visitors

The following rules apply to visitors to the schools:

- 1.) Anyone who is not a regular District staff member or student of the school will be considered a visitor.
- 2.) All visitors to the school must report to the main office upon arrival at the school and state the purpose of their visit. Visitors will be required to sign the visitors register and take a visitors badge. Visitors are to immediately report to the area of their stated business and promptly leave the building when their business is completed.
- 3.) Visitors attending school functions that are open to the public, such as parent-teacher organization meetings or public gatherings, are not required to register.

- 4.) Visitors are expected to refrain from taking class time to discuss individual matters with teachers
- 5.) Visitations will occur in a way that avoids or minimizes distraction to the normal learning process and the ordinary classroom routine. The building administrator may accompany visitors during the visit when appropriate. Visitors are expected to maintain confidentiality regarding information acquired during the course of the visit.
- 6.) Any unauthorized person on school property will be reported to the Principal or his or her designee. Unauthorized persons will be asked to leave. The police may be called if the situation warrants.
- 7.) Before a child may be released from the building with a visitor, they must be approved by the building principal or designee as one having the legal right to take the child. The visitor will wait in the main office for the child to come from the classroom.
- 8.) All visitors are expected to abide by the rules for public conduct on school property contained in the LCSD Code of Conduct.

Birthday Treats

Specific classroom birthday routines will be shared in individual teacher newsletters and communications. The classroom teacher will also notify parents if there are any allergy concerns to be aware of. Birthday treats should be left in the school office with the child's name and teacher name on it. The Office Staff will make sure that the treats get to the classroom. Please send in everything that is needed for the treats - napkins, plates, forks, etc. Handheld treats are easiest (cupcakes, cookies, etc.) Please limit the number of treats to the students in your child's class. They will not be able to pass them through the school.

Volunteers - Parents

Parents may participate in school as volunteers in many ways. At the beginning of each year, the PTO sends out a special events listing. Parents may choose to volunteer for any of the events. A PTO Executive Board member will be coordinating each event and contacting volunteers.

Every volunteer in our building is requested to complete a Volunteer Application, which is available from the main office. If you have filled one out in previous years, it is not necessary to fill out another one.