

East Palestine Elementary School

www.myepschools.org

Student Handbook 2015-2016

The administration and staff wish to welcome our students and parents to the 2015-2016 school year. We look forward to working together with you as EPES continues to be a place where students learn, grow, and become better citizens each day. Many of our policies and much helpful information is contained in this handbook. Please contact us for any information that you may need, which is not contained herein.

Mission Statement

We are here to learn while being responsible, cooperative, respectful, safe, and kind.

Appearance Code (Dress Code)

Styles constantly change. Every possible situation regarding dress and appearance cannot be predicted or determined. Generally, the concepts of modesty, cleanliness, appropriateness, safety, and distraction are the foundation of these general guidelines. Interpretations and adjustments will be handled by the administration.

1. Shoes and socks must be worn. Prohibited are, "flip-flops", high heels, cleats, spiked shoes, open backed sandals, roller-type shoes. Students are encouraged to wear tennis shoes.
2. The entire torso must be covered. This includes the stomach and back. Mesh or see-through material is not permitted on shirts. Tank tops (shoulder straps less than 2 inches wide) are not permitted. Writing or illustrations on shirts and coats must not be obscene, vulgar, comment on drugs or alcohol, or be sexually suggestive, or racially/culturally offensive.
3. Proper undergarments must be worn.
4. Bathing suits, pajamas, or clothing designed for purposes other than school are not permitted.
5. Torn or unclean clothing will not be permitted. This includes clothing that is marketed and sold when torn.
6. Headwear of any kind is not permitted inside the building. Headwear that is worn outdoors during any school function must comply with item number 2 above.
7. Coats are not to be worn in class.
8. Undergarments may not be worn as exterior garments. Undergarments must also be covered at all times.
9. Insignias or emblems representing non-approved or non-school organizations are not permitted in class.
10. Shorts may be worn, if loose fitting, and extend at least to mid-thigh. Cutoffs are not to be worn. Skirt length must be longer than the fingertips when arms are extended. Pants and shorts are to be worn at waist level.
11. Sunglasses are not permitted to be worn in the building.
12. Extreme hair styles and hair colors are not acceptable.
13. The administration will make the final determination regarding violations to the appearance code.

Arrival and Dismissal

No students should arrive at the school before 8:30 AM. We do not provide supervision before 8:30 AM. Breakfast is served from 8:20-8:40 AM. Students eating breakfast should arrive no later than 8:30 AM. Walkers will be dismissed at 3:15 PM. Bus students will be dismissed at 3:20 PM.

Attendance Policies

The Missing Child Act requires that the school notify the home every day that a child is absent from school, unless the parent notifies the school of the absence. Parents should call to report student absences between 8:00 AM and 8:45 AM. If no call is received, the school is required to telephone the parent. When no contact is made, or the absence is not verified, by law, the student is considered truant. The Ohio Revised Code states that excusable absences are:

1. Personal illness - a written physician's statement verifying the illness may be required
2. Death in the family - limited to three (3) days unless there is a justifiable reason for a longer absence
3. Religious holidays - consistent with child's creed or religious beliefs
4. Quarantine - limited to the length of the quarantine as fixed by the proper health official
5. Other - such good cause as may be acceptable to the Superintendent

A note stating the date and reason for the absence should be sent to school with your child when s/he returns to school.

East Palestine Board of Education Policy states that the students of school age shall attend their assigned school during school hours in accordance with Ohio Law. Regular school attendance is an important part of the educational process, and classroom instruction is an essential part of the learning process. Simply put, we cannot teach children who are not in school. Prolonged or repeated absence disrupts not only the education of the individual, but also the continuity of the process for the entire class. An attendance letter may be sent at 5, 10, and 15 days of absence. Following the 15th absence, a doctor's excuse will be required for any and all absences. Failure to follow guidelines may result in charges filed in Juvenile Court. Excessive absence may also be cause for poor grades and grade retention.

Parents of students who have five (5) or more unexcused absences will be required to meet with the School Resource Officer and the City Police Diversion Officer. Parents of students who have seven (7) or more absences may be required to meet with the Elementary School Solutions Team.

The student is considered tardy if arrival occurs after 8:40 AM. Students who are tardy need to be signed in at the office by the person bringing the child to school. A note should be given to the office staff stating the reason for the tardiness. If the student was tardy due to a doctor/dentist appointment, a note from the doctor/dentist should be given the office staff. A student is considered absent half day arriving after 9:45 AM or leaving before 2:15 PM.

Care of Property

Students are not permitted to bring toys, gaming devices or other personal items to school unless given permission by their teacher to do so. Students are responsible for the care of their own personal property. Valuables should not be brought to school. This would include such items as: collections, extra money, jewelry, and items of sentimental value. **The school will not be responsible for personal items.**

Cellular Devices

Students may bring cellular phones to school at their own risk. The school is not liable for stolen, lost or broken phones. Cell phones must not be visible and remain off at all times unless they are used at the teacher's discretion. Students are not permitted to use electronic devices to record/store/send/transmit the spoken word or visual image of any person, including other students or staff members or educational instruments/documents. Students are also prohibited to use electronic devices in any way that might reasonably create in the mind of another person an impression of being threatened, humiliated, harassed, embarrassed or intimidated. The school will assume no responsibility for theft, loss, damage or vandalism to electronic devices brought onto its property, or unauthorized use of such devices.

Code of Conduct

The EPES school community has adopted a Positive Behavior Support Program to ensure and enhance the safe, educationally sound, pleasant environment of the school. It is based on five guiding principles:

Be Responsible
Be Respectful

Be Safe

Be Kind
Be Cooperative

More specifically, the school operates and conducts student behavior expectations built upon seven guidelines:

1. Clear expectations for student behavior
2. Clear and consistent strategies for teaching appropriate behavior
3. Clear and consistent strategies for encouraging appropriate behavior
4. Clear and consistent consequences that discourage inappropriate behavior
5. A support system and individual behavioral programs for students with unique needs
6. Clearly designed methods for evaluating and revising the positive behavior approach
7. Clear plans and strategies for communicating the characteristics and philosophies of the behavior plan to students and parents

Students will be rewarded for following the school rules and disciplined for not following the school rules.

Drug Free Schools

In accordance with Federal Law, the Board of Education prohibits the use, possession, concealment, or distribution of drugs, or look-alikes on school grounds, in school or school approved vehicles, or at any school related event. Drugs include any alcoholic beverage, anabolic steroid, dangerous controlled substances as defined by state statute or substance that could be considered a "look-alike" controlled substance. Noncompliance with this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, in accordance with due process and as specified in the student handbook, up to and including expulsion from school. When required by state law, the District will also notify law enforcement officials.

The District is concerned about any student who is a victim of alcohol or drug abuse and will facilitate the process by which he/she receives help through programs available in the community. Students or parents should contact the school principal or guidance counselor whenever such concerns may arise.

Early Pick Up of Students

No students will be dismissed after 3:00 PM without a doctor's excuse, as this would interfere with bus dismissal.

Early Release

At predetermined times (such as the last day of each grading period) students will be released from school earlier than usual. The dismissal time for early release will be 1:55 PM.

Emergency Medical Forms

It is absolutely necessary that these forms be filled out and returned to the school. These forms must remain current. We can only contact those people who are listed on the emergency form in the event a child gets sick or injured at school.

Change of Address/Phone Number

Parents are responsible for notifying the school office in writing of any change of address or phone number. Proof of residency is required for all address changes. The school cannot be held responsible for failure to communicate if it is not informed of such changes. It is very important that the school has current phone numbers in the event of an emergency. Please notify the office immediately if there is any change.

Emergency School Cancellation or Delayed Start

Unexpected crises, such as severe weather may at times necessitate cancellation of school within the district, or a two (2) hour delayed start. If practical, the announcement will be made before 6:00 AM. Parents are encouraged to have prior arrangements made with friends, relative, or neighbors to care for the children. All school activities for the day will be cancelled when school is not held.

In the event of a two (2) hour delay, buses will run very near to exactly two (2) hours later than usual. No breakfast will be served on these days. Lunch will be at the normal times. Walkers should not arrive before 10:30 AM.

Information will be obtained by listening / watching Channels 21, 27, 33 (Youngstown), radio K105, Y103, Hot 101. If East Palestine is not announced, school is open on time, as usual.

Grades

Kindergarten students will be evaluated with a check list:

M "Mastered" **P** "Progressing" **I** "Improvement Needed" – "Not Evaluated at this Time"

Grades 1 – 4 will receive letter grades based on:

93% - 100%	=	A
86% - 92%	=	B
78% - 85%	=	C
70% - 77%	=	D
0% - 69%	=	F

Grades in art, music, and physical education will be Pass / Fail.

Holiday Parties

Only parents who are an active member of the EPCSD PTO and have also signed up with the classroom teacher may attend the Holiday Parties. Under no circumstance are middle school or high school students permitted to attend. Please do not bring preschoolers to the parties.

Harassment / Intimidation / Bullying

A student shall not, by use of violence, fear, hazing, force, coercion, extortion, threat, or other related behavior intimidate or harass any other persons regardless of race, national origin, ancestry, religion, citizenship status, sex, economic status, age, disability, any class, team or organization or other human difference.

Harassment, intimidation or bullying by any student in the East Palestine School District is strictly prohibited and such conduct may result in disciplinary action including suspension and/or expulsion from school. No student shall engage in harassment, intimidation or bullying behaviors defined as any intentional written, verbal, graphic or physical act including electronically transmitted acts (i.e., internet, cell phone, personal digital assistant or wireless hand-held device), either overt or covert by a student or group of students toward other students, including violence within dating relationships, with the intent to harass, intimidate, injure, threaten, ridicule, or humiliate. Such behaviors are prohibited on or immediately adjacent to school property, at any school-sponsored activity, on school provided transportation, or any other official bus stop that a reasonable person under the circumstances should know will have the effect of:

- Causing mental or physical harm to the other students including placing an individual in reasonable fear of physical harm and/or damaging of a student's personal property; and
- Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment for the other students; and that
- Cyber bullying involves the use of information and communication technologies such as e-mail, cell phone, and pager/text messages, instant messaging, defamatory personal web sites, and defamatory on-line personal polling web sites to support deliberate, repeated, hostile behavior by an individual or group that is intended to harm others.

It is understood that any individual experiencing these issues will make aware the building principal, guidance office personnel or other administrator/personnel designated by the principal. Reports of such acts can also be made via a district web site link to

Bully/Safety Tip Line (330-965-2869). All reports regarding bullying, harassment, intimidation may be investigated and victim and parents may be notified of actions taken. Staff may be notified of potential bullying, harassment and/or intimidation.

Head Lice

A common occurrence in schools throughout Ohio is the observance of head lice within the school population. Head lice are transmitted through close personal contact with an infested individual. Lice do not jump, fly, or stay alive for long periods of time away from the human head.

Frequent bathing will neither prevent nor eliminate infestation once it has become established. It is absolutely necessary to treat the infested individual. There are numerous shampoos available for treatment. Additionally, all clothing and bedding must be cleaned. Should head lice be found on an individual in the school, the following steps will be taken:

1. The person will be removed from the classroom and the parent notified.
2. The other children in the class will be checked as well as siblings in the district.
3. A letter will be sent home with all of the students in the classroom.
4. Parents must bring the student to school after the treatment so that s/he will be examined by the school nurse or administrator before returning to classes.

Head checks and exclusion from school will be done in a manner so as to protect the dignity and self-esteem of the student as much as is practical and feasible within the protection of the health and safety of others.

Homework and Make-up Work

The Success for All "Read and Respond" homework is due four (4) days a week. Students are expected to read orally for twenty (20) minutes and write a sentence about what they have read. Students are required to have **ONE** "Read and Respond" completed when returning from an absence. Also, students are expected to read on calamity days. When in doubt, read! Four (4) nights of Simple Solutions Math will be required from all students in grades 1-4.

Students may be assigned homework and are expected to complete all assignments. The student will be expected to complete and submit the work when due. If a student is absent, they have from the day of return, one day, per every day absent to complete and submit the work. It is advised that parents arrange for work to be sent home during periods of illness. Students will not be provided with make-up work prior to absences.

Please request make-up work when calling off your child by 9:00 AM so the teacher will have time to prepare the work. Make-up work will be available at dismissal time only. If all work is not completed before the end of the grading period, the student may receive a zero, or a grade of "incomplete." It is the student's responsibility to complete the missing assigned work. In the case of an extended illness, a doctor's excuse may be requested. When a child continues to miss homework assignments, in general, interventions and/or discipline will take place. Please refer to the building Positive Behavior Plan for our methods of action.

Invitations to Out of School Parties

In order to avoid negative social situations, embarrassment, or ill feelings, EPES does not permit students to issue invitations for personal parties or social gatherings while at school. An exception would be if the invitation is extended to all students in the class, or all girls, or all boys in the class as may be appropriate.

Lockers and Textbooks

The State of Ohio deems it a proper function of school authorities to periodically inspect student lockers. Maintenance and care of textbooks and lockers are the individual responsibility of the students to which they are assigned. Damage and/or loss shall require restitution. Students at EPES are not to place a lock on any locker. To prolong the life of our textbooks, they should be covered at all times. Please do not use adhesive (stick-on) book covers.

Lunch and Breakfast

Lunch and breakfast are available to all EPES students. Free or reduced lunches and breakfasts are available to families that qualify. Please contact the school office for applications or information. Food is to be consumed in the cafeteria. Food may not be taken out of the cafeteria.

Medical Concerns

The medication policy of the Board of Education severely restricts the administration of non-authorized prescription and over-the-counter drugs to students during school hours. If, during the school year, your child may need to be medicated or take a treatment at school, please contact the office and complete the enclosed form. Parents need to bring the medicine to and from the office. When medically possible, dosages should be scheduled so that medicines are taken before and/or after school hours. Please try to avoid the need to use medication at school.

1. Students are not allowed to carry medicine (prescription or non-prescription).
2. Students are not allowed to self-medicate. A designated school staff member should administer all medication taken at school.
3. Children who do not have evidence of proper immunization will be excluded from school after twenty (20) days.
4. Parents are responsible for informing the school of the child's allergies and other medical problems.
5. No students with symptoms of illness or infestation will be permitted to remain in school.
6. No student excluded from school with signs of any infectious disease or infestation will be readmitted to his/her classroom until he/she has been examined by the nurse or approved by the administrator. In some instances, the signed statement of recovery from a physician will be necessary.

Methods of Corrective Action

The following examples of corrective action are not intended to be all inclusive. The administration will determine consequences of violations based upon circumstances of the misbehavior involved. Corrective action / consequences will be administered according to the seriousness of the specific situation and / or the number of repeated offenses or violations involving the student.

1. Conference with administrator or school counselor
2. Detention during lunch and/or recess
3. Before school and/or after school detention
4. Before school and/or after school Homework Assistance
5. Saturday school
6. Emergency removal from class or from school
7. In school suspension
8. Out of school suspension
9. Expulsion

Parent / Teacher Conferences

Parent / Teacher conferences are held twice each year (see the school calendar). Special conferences may be arranged by calling the school or by sending a note to the teacher ahead of time. Teachers will be available for conferences before or after hours of student attendance. Conferences **MUST** be scheduled via telephone call or a note to the teacher. Conferences may not be held when the teacher is responsible for class supervision. We encourage all parents to take advantage of the conference times.

Promotion, Placement, and Retention

Optimal school achievement is obtained when the students experience success in their daily activities and build upon successful experiences as they encounter new learning situations. All aspects of the student must be considered as grade placements are made.

An Intervention Team is appointed by the principal each year to consider situations in which it is possible that students may not be promoted to the next grade. Such a team includes: classroom teachers, counselor, and the building principal.

Promotion occurs when a student is doing the caliber of work, at grade level that indicates the student has met the criteria established in Board Policy 5410.

Placement occurs when a student is not doing the caliber of work that indicates the student should be promoted to the next grade. However, the Team and building administrator determine that it is in the student's best interest to move to the next grade level.

Retention occurs when a student is not doing the caliber of work that indicates the student should be promoted to the next grade. Based on the recommendation of the Team, with the concurrence of the building administrator, the student will repeat the grade.

The final decision regarding promotion, placement, or retention rests with the building principal.

Records

1. Student records are confidential and are protected by FERPA. Only the school staff and the child's parents or legal guardians have access to the records.
2. Directory information on the child is not protected by the Privacy Act. Directory Information includes name, address, phone number, age, etc. Parents may request in writing that the school not release this information.
3. Parents have the right to receive copies of their child's records.
4. A divorce or a change in custody does not change the rights of a natural parent to their child's records. A non-custodial parent may request and receive a copy of the child's report card and the permanent record. They may also request and hold a teacher conference. Only the custodial parent has the right to make educational decisions regarding school matters.

Safety

Practice fire drills, tornado, code red, and emergency evacuation drills are held throughout the year. Students should never leave school property during the school day. Walkers should cross streets at crosswalks. Students are not permitted to ride bicycles or scooters to school. The area around the school campus is considered a "Safe School Zone" and all school rules are enforced. All exterior doors are locked during the day and security cameras are located both inside and outside of the building.

The staff at East Palestine Elementary School is very concerned about student safety. There are many grade level programs to help students deal with problems of our society. However, there are times when students cannot be monitored. Community members are encouraged to call the elementary school immediately when they see activity that may put students in jeopardy. This could include any unusual behavior at bus stops, strange cars or adults in the area, or drivers passing school buses illegally.

Student Accident Insurance

Optional student insurance is available at a nominal fee. This coverage should be purchased if your child is not covered by other medical insurance. The school district does not assume liability for accidents and injuries that occur during the normal course of a school day.

Vacation Policy

The vacation policy, as specified by the Board of Education, states that a child may accompany parents or guardians on a trip not to exceed ten (10) school days, and the school should be notified, in writing, at least three days in advance so that work can be compiled and sent with the child. The student is responsible for making up all missed work by the time the child returns to school. Students, who have excessive absences, may not be excused for vacations.

Vandalism

Damage and / or defacing school or private property including building, grounds, equipment, motor vehicles, or materials shall result in full restitution and possible suspension / expulsion from school. Parents may be legally liable for vandalism or damage to school property done by their children. The circumstances of each case shall determine disciplinary consequences.

Visitors Must Sign In at the Office

All visitors to East Palestine Elementary School **MUST** go directly to the office desk upon entering the building, and officially register as a guest. Anyone entering the building for any reason is considered to be a visitor (other than school district employees). You will receive and wear a visitor's sticker during this visit. Visitors are not permitted to go directly to classrooms or other areas of the school. Direction and/or permission will be issued by the office staff. Parents are expected to respect the teacher's duty to provide instruction from 8:30 AM-3:15 PM. All classroom visits are to be pre-arranged by a teacher or administrator.

Weapons and Dangerous Objects

Possessing, handling, transferring, or concealing any weapon or instrument capable of harming another person shall result in:

1. Immediate confiscation of the weapon / dangerous object;
2. Immediate emergency removal from the classroom and/or school premises;
3. Suspension from school;
4. Expulsion may be recommended to the Superintendent of Schools.

Weapons and dangerous objects are considered to be more than traditionally known items such as firearms, knives, etc. It is important to note that anything that may be used to physically harm or injure another person will be considered a weapon.

Students who accidentally bring a weapon or dangerous weapon to school should not show the item to others and should immediately turn over the item to the building principal.

SUMMARY STATEMENT

The building principal retains the right to issue consequences, penalties, corrective actions for acts of misbehavior not specifically stated herein, and to alter any penalties as considered necessary. Furthermore, the principal reserves the right to amend any provision of this Handbook which may be deemed to be in the best interest of the educational process and the operations of the school.