

# Pittsburgh Mifflin PreK-8

1290 Mifflin Road | Pittsburgh, PA 15207 | Phone: 412.464.4350 | Fax: 412.464.4355  
Parent Hotline: 412.622.7920 | [www.pps.k12.pa.us](http://www.pps.k12.pa.us)

## Welcome!

The policies and procedures contained in this handbook are the result of a concerted effort on the part of the faculty and administration at Pittsburgh Mifflin PreK-8. This information has been carefully prepared and presented so that it will be of great value in helping you to become an integral part of your child's education and academic growth.

The ultimate purpose of education is to help each student become a productive citizen in our society. Good citizenship is an essential part of what it means to be a productive and successful member of society. It is our goal to provide a safe and orderly school environment so that all children can achieve to their potential.

We hope that parents and students will read this handbook carefully together and that you will put it someplace where you can access it when necessary. We ask for your support in helping us maintain a safe and positive learning environment for our children.

Finally, we ask that parents join us as partners in educating our students. Together we can ensure that Pittsburgh Mifflin is a positive, safe, and enriched learning environment.

Sincerely,

**Mr. Edward Littlehale, Principal**

### OUR MISSION

The Pittsburgh Public Schools will be one of America's premier school districts, student-focused, well-managed, and innovative. We will hold ourselves accountable for preparing all children to achieve academic excellence and strength of character, so that they have the opportunity to succeed in all aspects of life.

### DECLARATION OF BELIEFS

- All children can learn at high levels
- Teachers have a profound impact on student development, and should have ample training, support and resources
- Education begins with a safe and healthy learning environment
- Families are an essential part of the educational process
- A commitment from the entire community is necessary to build a culture that encourages student achievement
- Improvement in education is guided by consistent and effective leadership
- Central office exists to serve students and schools

### SCHOOL PROCEDURES

#### Bell Schedule

Please visit our website at [www.pps.k12.pa.us](http://www.pps.k12.pa.us) or contact our Parent Hotline at 412.622.7920 for the bell schedule for your child's school.

#### ATTENDANCE

Class attendance and participation in classroom activities are the basic underlying components of a student's academic work and are necessary for the accomplishment of curriculum objectives. Therefore, legal absences of more than six days per report period, necessitates the completion of make-up assignments.

A Student or parent/guardian may request an individual review of any determination of excessive absence resulting in denial of academic credit. A request for review must be made in writing to the School Principal or his/her designee. The case shall then be reviewed to determine whether the student should be eligible to receive credit or promotion/

graduation. The Principal or his/her designee, upon receipt of satisfactory evidence of mental, physical or other urgent reasons, may excuse a student for nonattendance and waive the finding of excessive absences to allow the student to receive credit, be promoted or graduate.

For more information on Pittsburgh Public Schools' Attendance policy, please consult the *Code of Student Conduct*.

### **Tardiness**

Students who are tardy to school must be admitted through the main office. A note from home is required for all students who are tardy. Promptness to class is very important. Students are to be in their seats and ready to work when the bell rings.

Tardiness that results in a student missing a class or subject period will be considered an illegal absence when calculating grades. A student who has received a failing grade(s) for one or more report period(s) due to failure to meet the attendance standard and whose absences are legally excused, shall be entitled to receive the yearly or semester final grade for the course which the student otherwise would have received had it not been for the failing report period(s) grade(s), provided that the following requirements are met:

- The student has completed all course requirements and assignments.
- The student, at the direction of the teacher, has made up any missed course work, class periods and/or testing within a reasonable period of time.
- The student passes the final yearly or semester examination, if any.
- The student's final grade would have been a passing grade, if it had not been for the failing report period(s) grade(s) due to the student's failure to meet the attendance standard.
- The student has provided appropriate documentation to verify the reason for the absences, i.e., notes from dentists, doctors, courts, etc.

Students who have more than six illegal absences will receive a failing grade for the report period and will not be permitted to make up assignments. Any student who cuts class will be referred to the Principal's office for possible out-of-school suspension. Tardiness may result in a formal referral.

### **Make-up Work**

It is the student's responsibility to get missed assignments/projects and complete them on time.

In case of a prolonged absence due to illness or excused legal reasons, arrangements must be made with each individual teacher to catch up on the work missed. All missed assignments are due upon student's return to school.

Students missing any class due to other school-related activities must contact the teacher(s) whose class(es) was/were missed to arrange to make up missed work i.e., ski trips, sporting events, instrumental music and chorus.

### **Arrivals/Dismissals**

The following are arrival and dismissal locations for regular and inclement days. On good weather days, kindergarten students will gather in the small sponge area and during inclement weather they will gather on the inside steps between rooms 101 and 113. On good weather days, grades 1-5 will meet in the large sponge area and during inclement weather days they will meet in the gym. Grades 6-8 will gather in the courtyard outside of the auditorium and during poor weather they will gather in the auditorium. Staff will supervise arrivals and dismissals to ensure that all students arrive and dismiss in a safe and orderly fashion to their designated areas.

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### **Early Dismissals**

All students requesting early dismissals are to report to the main office with a note from a parent/guardian. All requests are to be made at the end of morning announcements. Office personnel may contact parents, when necessary, to verify early dismissals.

### **Security checks**

During arrival, students may be checked in through the metal detectors. Security checks will be utilized to maintain a safe and orderly learning environment for all students. All school property, such as lockers, desks, etc., assigned to students is the property of the Pittsburgh Public Schools. The student is given a temporary privilege to use the property and this privilege may be revoked at any time. The school administrator may authorize the search of school property temporarily assigned to students. Students shall have no expectation of privacy as to lockers, desks, or other school property temporarily assigned for personal use. School personnel may remove from lockers or desks any articles that are prohibited at school or could be used to interfere with or disrupt the educational process.

### **Illness, Injury and Medications**

Every student is to report to his or her assigned teacher at the beginning of every period. If a student is ill, the student should report to his/her scheduled

teacher, and ask for a corridor pass to the nurse's office on the day the nurse is at Pittsburgh Mifflin. If the nurse is not in attendance at the time, the student is to go to the main office where an attempt will be made to contact a parent or guardian. Parents should provide the office with an emergency telephone number on the emergency care form filed at the school.

### **Health Services**

- A nurse is assigned, on a part-time basis, to Pittsburgh Mifflin to conduct all state-mandated examinations.
- Major tasks include individual health counseling, testing, examinations, exclusions, first aid and re-admissions.
- If it is necessary for a student to take any form of medication at school, a signed form from a parent and physician must be presented to the office. Only the nurse is permitted to administer medications.

Any staff, including the nurse, may not give aspirin and other medications to students unless appropriate documentation is on file in our office.

### **School Dress Code**

We take pride in the appearance of our students. Students' attire reflects the quality of the school. All students are expected to dress in clothes that are suitable for school activities and to groom themselves neatly. Parents should monitor their children's attire.

- Coats and hats should be kept in lockers at all times. They should not be worn or carried to classes. All headgear must be removed upon entry to the building.
- All shirts must have sleeves
- Skirts must be at least fingertip length; slits on sides must be fingertip length
- Shorts must be at least fingertip length
- See-through or cut-off clothing is not permitted
- All pants must be worn above the hips (no sags)
- Chains and large necklaces are not permitted
- Tank tops, tube tops, and shirts with bare midriff are not permitted
- Clothing with alcohol, drugs, sexist or racist messages, or violent graphics are not permitted. Any clothing deemed a risk to safety or order by the Principal will not be permitted.

- Hats, headbands, sweatbands, bandanas or other head gear are not permitted to be worn in the building.
- Bedroom slippers and flip-flop sandals are not permitted. (Open toed shoes must have a back or ankle strap)
- Hooded sweatshirts are permitted. However, if a student is caught wearing the hood while in the building, the student will not be permitted to wear hooded sweatshirts for the remainder of the school year. This will be strictly enforced.

We ask all parents to help us enforce the dress code. Parents will be notified of dress code violations. Students may be sent home if parents are unable to bring an appropriate change of clothes to school. Refusal to comply with the dress code will result in disciplinary action.

### **Obligations**

Students are responsible for all books issued them, including library books. Money will be collected for lost, damaged, or destroyed books. Students must use book covers to protect their textbooks if required by the teacher.

Required books and supplies must be brought to class. This includes folders, homework and pencils. Being unprepared for class may result in a phone call home or a parent conference.

Students should not be carrying around heavy backpacks containing all their books and belongings to every class. Students are given an opportunity to go to their lockers in the morning, before and after lunch, and at the end of the day.

Students are permitted to carry draw string book bags only.

### **Lockers**

- Students will have lockers assigned to them by their homeroom teachers.
- Students are not permitted to use any locker other than the one assigned to them.
- Never leave money or other valuables in unlocked lockers.
- Homeroom teachers will conduct periodic locker checks.
- Teachers or authorized school personnel may request locker searches in cases of emergency or for security reasons. If possible, students will be permitted to be present during the search.
- The school is not responsible for items taken from lockers.

- Students are permitted to go to their lockers:
- During homeroom
- Before/after lunch
- At the end of the day

### **Cafeteria**

Students' behavior in the cafeteria should be based on courtesy and cleanliness. Students will go through the cafeteria line and receive their food. Students are to remain seated in the cafeteria until they have finished eating. Students are required to clean up after themselves. After lunch, students may report to the playground, library, tutoring room or designated study area. Students are not to go into areas where classes are being held during their lunch hour. At no time are students allowed to take food outside of the cafeteria. Parents are encouraged to visit the Mifflin Café.

### **Candy and junk food**

Candy, food, and beverages are prohibited during the school day except at lunchtime, and only in the cafeteria. Wrappers are to be disposed of in trash barrels. Gum is prohibited at all times. Repeated violations of this rule may result in a formal referral. Candy, food, and beverages outside of the cafeteria will be confiscated. Confiscated items must be picked up in the main office by a parent.

### **Hallway**

Students should be in the halls only at the beginning and close of school and while moving from one class to another. Students in the halls during class time must have a hall pass, agenda book, or blue corridor pass. The time and reason for presence in the halls will be noted on the pass.

Courteous behavior in the hall is essential. Slamming locker doors, purposely hitting or bumping others, running and shouting are never permitted. These types of behavior will be brought to the attention of the Principal, or his or her authorized representative, and consequences will be rendered. Inappropriate behavior in the hallways may result in a formal referral. Students will transition as a class and walk through the halls in a straight and orderly line. Failure to comply with transition rules will result in a referral.

### **Fire drills**

A fire drill plan is posted in each room. Students should study the plan and become familiar with how to exit the building for safety reasons.

When the fire alarm sounds, students will leave the room. Before leaving the room, all windows and doors are to be closed and lights are to be turned

off. No one is to pass another or break the line. Running is not permitted. Students are not permitted to talk during a fire drill and are to remain at least 50 feet away from the building until the signal is given to re-enter. No one is to return to the building until the Principal or his or her authorized representative gives the signal.

### **Lost & found**

Lost personal property may be claimed in the main office. Students who find lost articles should take them to the main office. Unclaimed articles will be disposed of after a reasonable time.

Lost books should be returned to the main office where they will be returned to the subject teacher. Students are responsible for all materials that have been assigned to them and will be required to make payments for any lost books or other materials.

### **Field trips**

It is often beneficial for students to be exposed to environments outside the school. Field trips provide cultural, educational enrichment for students in a supervised off-campus setting. Parent permission forms must be completed by the parent and signed and submitted on time to the trip sponsor prior to the trip.

While these trips are educational, they involve risks that are different from the normal school day. Teachers, with the approval of the Principal, or his or her authorized representative, may exclude any student if that student's behavior has been poor or there seems to be an increased safety risk for the group or a given student because of said individual's participation. Students who misbehave on field trips will be returned to school, if possible, and placed in the office for the remainder of the day. Furthermore, they will be issued a referral or an out-of-school suspension for the next day.

Students who are absent on the day of an after-school trip will not be permitted to come to school at the end of the day and participate on that trip. If a student does not attend a field trip, the only monies that will be refunded will be those directly paid by the student. Any monies raised through sales campaigns will not be refunded.

### **Awards**

Numerous awards are presented to students throughout the school year. Awards are given for academics, citizenship, attendance, honor roll, and athletics. A variety of incentive programs are held each month for students who meet the criteria in these areas. A school-wide behavior program called

“Caught Ya Being Good” is on-going throughout the year and reinforces the school-wide rules. Students are rewarded for this weekly using a raffle system.

### **Activities/Athletics**

The following activities and athletics are available to students at Pittsburgh Mifflin. Students are encouraged to participate in one or more organizations or activities.

After-School Reading and Math Program

Instrumental Music

Chorus

Holiday Programs

Citi Parks Partnership

Think-A-Thon

Chess Team

Educational Trips

Yearbook

Student Fundraising Projects

Intramural Sports

Interscholastic Athletics

African American Challenge Bowl

Mifflin Victory Garden

Social Studies Club

### FALL

Volleyball - Girls

Volleyball - Boys

Softball - Girls

Baseball - Boys

### WINTER

Basketball - Girls

Basketball - Boys

### SPRING

Soccer - Girls

Soccer - Boys

### **Student Spectators**

Student Spectators are permitted to watch a sporting event only if the student has a signed permission slip and prior transportation arrangements have been made. Spectators are not permitted to ride the activity buses.

### **Telephones**

The telephones at school are for school business. Students are only permitted to make calls or receive calls from their parents on the office telephone in the

event of an emergency. Students are not permitted to use cell phones during the school day, including the school grounds. Violations of this policy will result in the loss of the privilege to carry the phone while in the school. Violations will also result in the cell phone being confiscated and returned only to a parent/guardian. Cell phone violations will result in a formal referral.

### **Visitors**

No one will be permitted to visit the school unless they are properly identified and have a definite purpose in mind. The office will issue a visitor's pass.

## **ACADEMICS**

### **Homework**

Homework at Pittsburgh Mifflin is part of the educational process. Students are expected to complete all assignments promptly and to the best of their ability. Homework turned in on the due day may earn up to 100 percent credit if the work is accurate and complete. Homework turned in late will be awarded credit at the discretion of the assigning teacher. Parents are encouraged to supervise homework. Students who have legal excuses for absences may make up homework missed when they check with their teachers. Less than 80 percent homework completion will result in a one letter grade deduction.

Students are issued Agenda Books in which students are encouraged to write down their homework assignments. The Agenda Books also serve as a hall pass when students need to leave the classroom with the permission of the teacher.

### **Academic Performance**

Eligibility for curricular and extra-curricular activities

- All teachers will evaluate students.
- Students will receive deficiency notices for missed assignments/projects.
- Students will be declared ineligible for curricular and extra-curricular activities if assignments/projects are not completed and parents have been notified regarding the missed work.

**Academic Dishonesty**

Students involved in cheating will receive a failing grade for the assignment; will receive a referral or suspension; and parents will be contacted. The following are a few examples of what constitutes cheating:

- Copying from another student’s homework, notebook, or exam.
- Submitting as your own work, reports or projects done by current or past students.
- Submitting as your own work any material directly taken from a book, magazine, newspaper, or the internet.
- Using notes written on slips of paper, your arm, your shoe, etc. while taking an exam.

**Grading System**

- The grading system shall be: 90-100%: A; 80-89%: B; 70-79%: C; 60-69%: D; 59% and lower: E.

- Grades earned each report period will be averaged at the end of the year to determine the final grade.
- For promotion, students must pass:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Subject</u>
1.....	Reading & Math
2.....	Reading & Math
3.....	Reading & Math
4.....	Reading & Math AND 2 other academic subjects
5.....	Reading & Math AND 2 other academic subjects

- Middle Level

A student will be retained in his/her present grade if his/her grades fit into any of the following three categories:

1. Fails Reading & Math
2. Fails Reading or Math and 2 other academic courses
3. Fails 3 academic courses

- In order to pass a subject, a student must attain 4 points by the 4th quarter report period.

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Point Value</u>
A.....	4
B.....	3
C.....	2
D.....	1
E.....	0

For example, a student with 3 D’s and 1 E, would fail a given subject for the year.

<u>Report Period</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>Letter Grade</u>	D	D	D	E
<u>Point Value</u>	1	1	1	0

Final Grade: E  
Final Point Value: 3

Another example, a student with 3 C’s and 2 E, would pass a given subject for the year.

<u>Report Period</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>Letter Grade</u>	C	E	C	E
<u>Point Value</u>	2	0	2	0

Final Grade: C  
Final Point Value: 4

- The eighth grade team of professionals makes recommendations for high school placement in Centers for Advanced Studies (CAS), PSP, or regular classes.
- Citizenship grades are given and averaged by each subject teacher. Citizenship grades from homeroom are a reflection of homeroom citizenship behavior and homeroom responsibilities.
- Students who owe money to the office, or owe for lost, damaged, or overdue books will not receive report cards until their accounts are settled. Debts are cumulative for a student’s years at Pittsburgh Mifflin. Students who owe money at the end of the eighth grade will not be given promotion ceremony tickets until debts are settled.

**Guidance and Counseling**

The counselor devotes a major part of his/her time to individual counseling in academic-vocational, personal-social and adjustment areas. Students should view the counselor as a person with whom they can speak confidentially about their personal problems and academic progress. Primarily, the counselor serves as a liaison for all members of the professional staff in dealing with student’s problems and works with the Principal in resolving adjustment/discipline problems. All staff is involved in a positive way in guiding and directing the students.

**PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

**Parents as Partners**

You are our most valuable partner. Please:

- Work with the teacher to ensure success for your child.
- You are your child’s most significant role model. Your attitude toward education will be the most powerful influence on your child.

- Support the school's efforts to maintain a safe and orderly learning environment.
- Emphasize the importance of school.
- Help your child be prepared for school by having materials (pencil, paper, books, etc), being on time for school, and supporting school policies.
- Help your child develop good study habits.
- Show interest in your child's schoolwork and homework.
- Hold your child accountable. Do not make excuses for failure to complete assignments or misbehavior.
- Call your child's teacher or arrange for a conference to discuss your child's progress or obtain ideas about helping your child learn at home
- Respond promptly to progress notices.
- Become an active participant in the activities your child is involved in.
- Pay attention to what your child has to say.
- Feel free to initiate discussions of your child's problems and concerns. Our counselor is always available.
- Please urge your child to seek help when appropriate.
- Take your child to the library for a library card. Librarians are trained to help find the right books for your child. Please show interest and encourage your child's selections of his/her own reading materials. Information regarding reading levels can be obtained from the school. Read books together. Anything positive your child reads will help.
- Provide educational puzzles, games, and positive learning situations in your home. This helps your child to develop good concentration and problem-solving abilities. A child who succeeds enjoys learning.
- Attend parent-teacher organization meetings and parent school community council meetings on a regular basis.
- Call or contact the school for information 412.464.4350.
- Consider becoming a parent volunteer. (All volunteers require clearance.)
- Provide the school with up-to-date phone numbers so that we can contact you in case of illness, emergency, etc.

- Complete and submit the school emergency contact, care and medication forms.

### **Parent Teacher Conferences**

Parents are encouraged to arrange conferences with the teachers and the counselor to review students' records and performance. To arrange an appointment, call the school office to contact the desired staff member. Visitors for conferences should report directly to the main office.

### **Visitation policy**

If you need to speak to an individual teacher, please call the school to arrange for a mutually convenient time. All visitors must report to the office to sign in and obtain a visitor pass. Please report to the office to receive further directions concerning your meeting. Under no circumstances are you to go directly to any classroom without permission of the Principal or the teacher.

### **Transportation**

Bus assignments are created based on the home address of the student's record. Please review the School Bus Rules with your child to help ensure an enjoyable and safe ride to and from school.

### **School Bus Rules**

- The following common sense rules are for the safety of our students. Please take a moment to review the rules with your children.
- Each pupil shall be seated immediately upon entering the bus. Pupils are not to stand or move from place to place while the bus is in motion.
- Windows and doors are to be opened or closed only with the permission of the bus driver. If allowed, windows should only be opened to the indicated safety line.
- Indecent conduct or loud, disruptive or profane language will not be permitted.
- Passengers are not to behave in any manner, which infringes upon the rights of any other passenger. This would include any form or type of bullying.
- No pupil is to enter or leave the bus until it has come to a complete stop. Students may enter or leave the bus only upon bus driver signal.
- Students are not to throw objects of any kind on the school bus or out the windows. All parts of the student's body shall remain inside the bus at all times.

- Absolutely no tobacco, drinks, alcohol, or illegal drugs will be allowed on the bus.
- Before riding a bus other than the assigned bus, students are to have a written note from their parent or guardian stating their destination and must obtain permission from the office. Students are to identify themselves to the driver.
- Students will not be permitted to bring such items as skate boards, radios, jam boxes, balloons, or glass objects onto the bus. Any other object deemed to be unsafe cargo on the bus will be denied. The driver will have authority to deny transportation to a student with such articles in his/her possession. The driver and/or school corporation bears no responsibility for lost, stolen or damaged items brought onto the bus.
- The privilege of riding the school bus may be denied to any student who does not conduct himself/herself in a safe and orderly fashion. School bus drivers and administration will determine what is safe and orderly. The bus driver and the school reserve the right to assign seating for any student(s) that are disruptive in any way.

### **Code of Conduct**

Good citizenship is an important component of every student's education. A structured and disciplined environment helps develop self-control, character, orderliness, and efficiency. Please review and discuss with your child the Code of Student Conduct. All aspects of the code of conduct will be enforced at Pittsburgh Mifflin. We are committed to being a bully, drug, and violence-free school.

Infractions of the code of student conduct may result in the following disciplinary actions:

- Student conference
- Phone call home
- Formal referral
- Parental conferences
- Elimination from activities, programs, trips, etc.
- Restricted Lunch
- Referral to Student Services Room
- Referral to Saturday detention
- Suspension from school
- Referral to alternative education
- Expulsion
- Referral to school police

Consequences for misconduct will be determined by the Principal, or his or her authorized representative, depending on the severity of the offense. Three formal referrals in any given month will result in an automatic Saturday detention (for students in grades 6-8). Failure to attend Saturday detention will result in a one-day, out-of-school suspension.

**For more information, please consult the *Code of Student Conduct*.**