

Marsh Grammar School Kindergarten Handbook

Welcome Families!

We are looking forward to working with your children in our kindergarten program at the Marsh Grammar School. We have lots of plans for busy and productive fun and learning. Our goal is to make your child's transition from home to school a successful and happy one. We hope this little HANDBOOK will answer many of your questions. Please keep it handy for easy reference throughout the year.

Saying good-bye can sometimes be difficult the first few days of school. Generally, a reassuring, quick good-bye kiss works well. Some children may need a longer transition time- teachers will work out situations on an individual basis.

KINDERGARTEN AT THE MARSH:

- Children must be five years old by September 1st.
- The Marsh offers a full day kindergarten program- 8:35 AM to 3:00 PM.
- Methuen Grammar Schools follow a five-day schedule. A school calendar will be provided.
- Please bring your child to the Kindergarten Open House in September to meet his/her teacher and see the classroom.
- At the Open House, you will also receive a folder containing important papers to be read and filled out for the first day of school.

DISMISSAL:

- Please know by the Kindergarten Open House date how your child will be going home.
- There are three possible ways: Bus, walker, or parent pick-up.
- The teacher will give your child a dismissal tag to be worn for several weeks- it will state how the child is going home, bus#, bus stop, or pick-up #. PLEASE REMEMBER TO PUT IT BACK ON YOUR CHILD EACH MORNING.
- Please help your child memorize his/her bus # and bus stop or parent pick-up #. It is also a good idea to help them memorize their address.

BUS AND BUS STOPS:

- It is the parents' responsibility to find out the CORRECT bus number and bus stop for their child. This information is on the Methuen Schools website by the end of the summer. The main office may also be able to help you. PLEASE HAVE THE CORRECT INFORMATION FOR THE OPEN HOUSE DATE.

WALKERS:

- Children who walk home will meet their parents at the door near playground. Parents may NOT park their car in the lot and then proceed to the lobby. If you are picking up in a car, you need to use the pick-up line.

DROP- OFF AND PICK-UP ROUTINES:

(AM Drop-offs):

- Students are to be dropped off no earlier than 8:15 AM and no later than 8:35 AM at the cafeteria, where the kindergarten children gather before school. Inside, they are seated according to class.
- Enter the site from the entrance with the MARSH GRAMMAR SCHOOL sign. Proceed through the turn around. **DO NOT GO THROUGH THE BUS AREA.**

(PM Pick-ups):

- Parents queue up in a SINGLE LINE stretching from the lower level playground, around the wood lot, towards the upper school lot. The pick-up area is at the far end of the upper school. This is LIVE PARKING ONLY! Please remain in your car. **DO NOT BLOCK THE BUS LANES.**
- If you plan to regularly pick your child up, you need to get a “**Pick-Up Number**” from the main office. Please display this number on the passenger side of your windshield all year.
- Cars (pick-up numbers) will be called in the order that they arrive.
- Students are not allowed to leave the pick-up area to meet you in the parking lot.
- **If you do not usually pick up, or need someone else to pick up your child, write a NOTE to specify the new plan for the day. Changes in a child’s regular dismissal procedure will be honored only with a NOTE or phone call.**
- If you need to come into the building, you must find an available marked parking place.
- There is no need to arrive much in advance of dismissal time.
- Remember, a child may not take another bus home to a friend’s house.

CHILDREN WILL NEED TO BRING:

- A good- sized back pack- labeled- to transport daily snacks, papers, homework, folder, projects, mittens, etc. The bags that stand up straight and open from the top are easier for the children to manage. Please, no wheels-safety issue.
- A labeled folder to hold papers, notes, homework, money, correspondence, etc. It is expected that the teacher and parent check the folder DAILY.
- Two nutritious snacks and two juice boxes (we generally have an AM and an optional PM snack time) in a labeled lunch box or bag. Please avoid sending glass, candy, gum, carbonated beverages, and snacks that are very messy or hard to manage. Milk is NOT available for purchasing at snack time.
- Change of clothes in a labeled zip-lock bag (in case of accident or spill or illness). Please enclose underwear, socks, long pants, and shirt- this will remain at school all year, so make sure the clothing allows for growth in size-(sweat pants work well).
- Sneakers on gym days.
- Lunch or lunch money.

LUNCH:

There are three options for lunch. Please try to stick to ONE option for the first month of school, until the children get used to the cafeteria routine. The cafeteria provides a menu each month.

1. Cold lunch- bring your own lunch and drink.
2. Cold lunch/ buy milk.

3. Hot lunch (includes a milk)- Reduced and free lunch available with approval.

It is helpful to let your child know each morning what he or she is doing for lunch each day (cold lunch or hot lunch or milk).

A week's worth of lunch money is due on the Thursday prior to the week you want the lunches. If your child is absent during a week which has been prepaid, YOU must deduct the credit (for the lunch or milk) and make note of it on the following week's envelope- the teacher is not responsible for keeping track of this. All lunch money must be submitted in an envelope with child's name, grade, amount, purpose, and ID #. Please put envelope in child's folder.

Breakfast is served daily, twenty minutes prior to starting times. Breakfast must be arranged through the office, as the classroom teacher is not responsible for this.

SAMPLE KINDERGARTEN SCHEDULE:

- Writing- Includes shared or interactive writing lessons, printing lessons, drawing and writing in journals, making books, etc.
- Math- Includes calendar routine focussing on concepts such as counting, graphing, patterning, tallying, estimating, and money. Additional hands on lessons encourage exploration of number, shape, pattern, data collecting, and measurement.
- Snack and/or Recess Break
- Language Arts- Lessons involve reading stories aloud, shared reading of big books or chart poems, discussions, concepts of print, letter recognition and sounds, phonics, story comprehension and retelling, etc.
- Literacy Centers- Children work in various centers around the room on activities that foster the development of reading and writing skills (magnetic letters, letter tiles, listening center, computer, alphabet books, etc). Teachers generally work with small guided reading groups at this time.
- Lunch and Recess.
- Specialists- (gym, art, music, library). Each day for forty minutes the children go to a specialist-sometimes twice a day-not always at the same time each day. The children also go to the computer lab at least once in a six-day cycle with their classroom teacher.
- Theme Lesson and Centers- Children generally study a new science or social studies theme every month (Night, Families, Human Body, Life Cycles,...). Children work in centers around the room that feature activities that extend what they have learned and provide them opportunities to practice language arts and math skills (art projects, dramatic play, blocks, sand, books, puzzles, games, clay, writing, math, computer, puppets,...)
- Clean Up and Wrap Up Time- Children have jobs to do to help with clean-up. Highlights of the day are reviewed.
- Snack and/or Recess and Dismissal.

CLOTHING:

Please send your child to school in comfortable clothing and non-slip shoes. Clothing should be easy for the child to manage on his/her own at bathroom time. Children feel pleasure and success in self-dressing! Remember- we will use paint, markers, glue, and play outdoors regularly. Warm clothing will be needed in the winter. Please teach your child how to use buttons, zippers, and how to tie. Wednesday is school spirit day- a day we like to wear our school sweatshirts and T-shirts! Please no umbrellas- safety issue.

HOMEWORK:

The kindergarten children will start to have homework soon after school begins. Nightly homework assignments should take between 5 and 15 minutes to complete. Assignments may include reading small emergent reader books with a parent, printing practice, reviewing ABC, number, and sight word cards, drawing and writing, take-home games, and other worksheets and activities. Assignments will reinforce concepts, skills, and lessons covered in class. Please provide a quiet, comfortable, well-lit space with various kinds of paper, pencils, crayons, glue, scissors, and stapler. Encourage good work habits and routines such as being neat and careful, putting your first and last name neatly on each assignment, and putting materials away when finished.

BIRTHDAYS:

Many families enjoy celebrating birthdays. Please speak with your teacher before sending in any snack. Due to our district's Wellness Policy, we no longer allow cakes, cupcakes, etc. as a way of celebrating birthdays. We acknowledge summer birthdays in June.

FAMILY CELEBRATIONS AND TRADITIONS:

We enjoy discussing and participating in cultural celebrations as part of our social studies curriculum. Please feel free to share your customs with us and/or any concerns you have about your child participating in these activities. We embrace and are sensitive to the diversity of our students.

ABSENCES/ TARDINESS/ EARLY DISMISSAL:

Please call the school if your child will be absent or tardy between 4 P.M. the previous day and 8:30 A.M. at 978-722-9079. Please, leave the date, your child's name, his/her teacher's name, and absent or tardy message on the voice mail. A written excuse is required for any absences, tardiness (arriving after 8:45), or early dismissals (before 3:00 PM), even when you have called in. You must check in at the office to sign your child in late or dismiss early. Except for emergency situations, students will not be dismissed after 2:15 PM. Please do not depend on your teacher's voice mail to relay any urgent or last minute messages. In case of an emergency or change in your child's dismissal procedure, please contact the lower office.

MONEY AND NOTES:

Please send all money, notes, forms, etc, in a sealed envelope labeled with child's name, grade, teacher's name, purpose, and amount (and student I.D.# for lunch or milk). Enclose the envelope in your child's folder- each day teachers check the folders, not the entire backpack.

BOOK ORDERS:

Occasionally, book orders will be sent home. These books are usually reasonably priced and make great gifts! Do not feel obligated to make a purchase. Classrooms earn points to trade for classroom books with each order. This increases the size of the classroom library! Book orders should be returned by the date listed on the form. CHECKS should be made out to the BOOK CLUB from which you are ordering, and your name needs to be on the purchase SLIP.

LOST AND FOUND:

Please try to label your child's belongings. Each teacher will have a "lost and found" box in the classroom. There are also general "lost and found" boxes in the cafeteria and gym. Feel free to send a note if you are missing something.

SNOW CANCELLATIONS:

Please listen to the local radio and television stations during inclement weather for any possible cancellations, delays, or early dismissals. Radio station WCCM 1110 AM, as well as Channels 4, 5, and 7 on the television announce all cancellations and delayed openings.

ILLNESS AND MEDICATION:

Please do not send your child to school with any of the following symptoms:

- A very runny nose
- Sore throat
- Fever
- Rash
- Swollen glands
- Diarrhea
- Earache
- Persistent cough
- Inflamed eye
- Nausea

It is helpful to send in tissues for a mild runny nose. Please do not send in cough drops or over the counter medication. Usually, all three daily doses of short-term prescriptions can be given at home. Only the school nurse may administer medication-parents need to contact the nurse's office. It is important to keep the NURSE, TEACHER, and LOWER OFFICE updated of any changes of address, phone numbers, emergency contacts, and medical changes.

COMMUNICATION:

It is very important that teachers and families keep in touch on a regular basis. We provide calendars and newsletters to keep you up to date on classroom and school happenings and curriculum content. Conferences are scheduled in fall and early spring. Progress reports are issued in the winter and late spring. Please do not hesitate to call, e-mail, or drop a note about your child or concerns. It is helpful to know if any changes are happening in your child's life, (divorce, sickness, deaths, births, hospitalizations, moving,

etc.) Each classroom is assigned a guidance counselor. We encourage families to contact their guidance counselor whenever they feel it is necessary. We want to be able to provide a comfortable atmosphere for your child. Consult with your child's teacher about the most convenient way to ensure ongoing communication.

VOLUNTEERS:

We cherish our volunteers! There are many ways to help out, inside and outside of school. CORI checks are required for in-school volunteering. Your child's teacher will provide a list of possible ways to volunteer on a regular basis or help out for special events.

FIELD TRIPS:

The kindergarten generally goes on two field trips per year. Information about these special events will be forwarded prior to the trips.

DONATIONS:

We appreciate donations of the following consumable items throughout the year:

- Tissues
- Paper towels
- Anti-bacterial pump soap
- Anti-bacterial cleaning spray
- Sponges/ scrubbies
- Zip-lock bags- all sizes up to 2 gallon
- Sandwich bags
- Brown paper lunch bags
- Paper plates-small and large- plain white
- Napkins/ plastic eating utensils
- Styrofoam/ paper cups
- Classroom pet supplies