

**George D Steckel Elementary School  
Policies and Guidelines**

**DEAR PARENTS AND STUDENTS**

Welcome to George D. Steckel Elementary School. We are looking forward to an exciting and successful school year. We have prepared this information so that we may bring about a better understanding between the school, parents and teachers. We ask for your cooperation so that we may provide your child with a rewarding and enriching educational experience. Please take time to read this information thoroughly.

On behalf of the faculty and staff, we would like to extend an invitation to you to visit our school, attend your child's programs and become an active member of the WC-PTO PLUS. We are happy to have you and your child with us at Steckel Elementary School.

Sincerely,  
Steckel Principal

**SCHOOL HOURS**

Regular School Day.....8:50am - 3:15pm

Our doors open at 8:35am and we begin dismissing at 3:15pm.

Classes begin at 8:50am. For those students who ride with parents, we ask that they arrive at school no earlier than 8:35am. Adult supervision begins at 8:35am.

If you transport your child, please remember not to block the bus lane in front of the school. Pull your car into the designated parking areas. Walk your child up to the building by the front entrance if you wish.

**RELEASE OF STUDENTS**

We encourage you to try to schedule your child's doctor and dental appointments around school hours. If this is not possible, you must come to the office to sign out your child. For your child's safety, the school will not release a child to anyone who has not sent written communication to the school. A photo ID is required. Students leaving school early unexcused will be marked unexcused by the minute. Minutes accumulate to days for truancy purposes.

**BUS REGULATIONS/TRANSPORTATION**

Please notify the office in advance if there is to be a change in the transportation of your child. If no notification is received, your child will follow their regular method of getting home. Please make all attempts to establish a healthy routine for your child.

Riding the school bus is a privilege. Improper conduct on the buses or at the bus stop will result in that privilege being denied. Two bus violations may result in the suspension of riding privileges for a week or more. Any serious bus violation (as determined by school administration) may result in immediate suspension of bus privileges. These rules are strictly enforced. When a student is suspended from the bus, it becomes the parent's responsibility to transport their child to and from school.

Parents are responsible for the conduct of their children at the bus stop, from home to the bus stop, and from the bus stop to their home. The school's authority extends within the areas between the bus stop and the student's residence. Therefore, misconduct at the bus stop or within the walking area may also result in the loss of bus riding privileges.

Only regularly scheduled bus students are to ride the school buses. Students are not allowed to ride a bus other than their assigned bus. Requests to change buses for the purpose of visiting, parties, sleepovers and other personal reasons will be denied.

Bus students are required to go directly home upon dismissal from the bus. Mrs. Chris Smith makes all bus assignments and must approve all bus changes. Mrs. Smith may be reached at transportation at **610-437-4780**.

### **CELL PHONE POLICY**

Students are permitted to have cell phones. They must be turned off and placed away in backpacks.

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER-EMERGENCY CLOSINGS**

The Whitehall-Coplay School District is prepared to implement one of three inclement weather plans. (1) The complete closing of all schools for the day. (2) The delayed opening of all schools. (3) The closing of all schools during the day for safety purposes. When the District implements any of these plans you will be notified with a phone call from the school's telephone messaging system as well as broadcasts on local radio and television stations. Please tune into 790 AM, 1320 AM, 1470 AM, 95.1 FM, 99.0 FM, 100.7 FM or channel 69 TV during inclement weather. Do not call your child's school for closing information.

### **LUNCH/BREAKFAST**

The elementary school children eat between the hours of 11:20 a.m. and 1:10 p.m. Each lunch period is thirty minutes in length.

For your child's safety, we ask that no glass containers or knives be used when packing your child's lunch.

Our breakfast door opens at 8:30 a.m. daily.

### **ATTENDANCE**

The Whitehall-Coplay School District is committed to providing a positive learning environment for all students. It is necessary that students be in attendance at school in order to receive all the benefits of daily instruction. Achievement depends upon the presence of the student in the classroom on a regular basis. Regular attendance also maintains continuity of instruction and fosters classroom participation.

All children are expected to be in attendance each day unless they are ill or a family emergency arises. When your child is absent, parents must notify the school by 9:00 a.m. with the reason for absence. For security reasons, our district will make an automated phone call if your child is marked absent by their teacher. This call will be made regardless at around 10am. **A written note signed by a parent/guardian is required upon returning to school within 3 days. This note determines legality of absence. This note can be handed to the classroom teacher, faxed or emailed to our attendance secretary, Laurie Bennicas at (fax) 610-435-4022, (email) [bennicasl@whitehallcoplay.org](mailto:bennicasl@whitehallcoplay.org).**

We realize that there will be instances when your child may be tardy, but please avoid this whenever possible. Tardiness interrupts your child's instructional time. Parents should accompany their child to the office when he/she is tardy.

A trip form must be completed for family trips ten (10) days in advance. Policy allows trips up to 7 days total. These absences must be approved by the school principal and may be denied if the student's current rate of absenteeism is high or the trip is during the standardized testing window. Students are required to make-up all assigned work during their absence.

### **LAWFUL ABSENCES**

Attendance shall be required of all students. A student may be excused for temporary absences when a principal or teacher receives satisfactory evidence of:

1. illness
2. religious holiday
3. medical or dental appointments
4. court appearances
5. quarantine
6. death in the family

### **TRUANCY**

Any student who is absent from school must present to the teacher a written excuse for such absence within three (3) days of the student's absence. Excuses must be written and signed by the student's parent/guardian and must contain the following information:

1. Full name of student
2. Student's grade level and homeroom teacher
3. Date(s) of absence
4. Reason for absence
5. Signature of parent/guardian

Failure to submit an excuse will result in an illegal absence and after three (3) illegal absences from school, a truancy warning letter will be issued to the parent/guardian, the parent/guardian will also be contacted via phone by administration and the Principal will meet with the student to explain the truancy process and allow the student the opportunity to submit attendance excuses for the unexcused days, they will be offered an Attendance Improvement Conference. When a student accumulates a 4th UX school day, school administration will contact the parent/guardian via phone to schedule a Truancy Elimination Plan meeting. A second letter will be sent home with this information. On the 6th illegal absence, parent/guardian will be notified and a citation will be filed with the SRO.

### **EXCESSIVE ABSENCE**

After sixteen (16) days of absence from school in any given school year, a student will be required to present an excuse from a medical professional for future absences from school. Parents/guardians will receive notification (Excessive Absence Letter) by regular mail that such a medical excuse is necessary. If a medical excuse is not provided, the absence will be considered illegal.

### **TARDINESS**

A student arriving to school after 8:50 a.m. and prior to 12:05 p.m. is considered tardy to school unless that student arrives via a school bus. A student who is late must report to the attendance office or the main office. A student who is late for school four (4) times without a written legal excuse will receive an official warning for tardiness.

## HOMEWORK

Parents may request **homework** from the school by calling the office at 610-435-1521 between **8:15-10:30 a.m.** Whenever a student is out more than one day, it is expected that arrangements will be made for missed work to be made up by students. Homework will be available for pick up at the front reception desk from 3:00 – 4:00 p.m.

## SCHOOL-WIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT

All staff has been trained in our school-wide positive behavior support system. This program uses a common language to teach behavioral expectations with positive statements. Our school teaches students about these five expectations in all of our school areas through the acronym, Steckel **S.T.A.R.S**: Students are expected to be **Safe**, **Team** players, high **Achievers**, **Respectful**, and **Self-Disciplined**. The program has a continuum of procedures for encouraging these expectations through a comprehensive multi-tiered acknowledgement system.

Our program also has a plan in place to discourage behaviors and promote consistency. Below is our leveled behavior system and possible consequences to increase positive behaviors.

**Level I/Level II Behaviors** are minor rule violations that will result in an immediate verbal correction with a possible office consequence/referral:

- Inappropriate Language
- Physical Contact
- Defiance
- Disrespect
- Insubordination
- Minor Dress Code Violation
- Misuse of Technology
- Consistent Missing of Homework

Students who engage in **Level I/Level II** behaviors will be asked to identify inappropriate behavior and describe the appropriate replacement behavior. Students may receive a mild consequence delivered by the teacher or staff member designed to discourage the inappropriate behavior from occurring in the future. **Consequences for Level I/Level II Behaviors** may include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal Correction
- Loss of Privileges
- Apology
- Detention

**Level III Behaviors** are major violations that violate the dignity, well-being, and safety of another person. These behaviors will not be tolerated and will result in an office discipline referral. Level III behaviors may result in suspension, but may also be corrected using a variety of possible consequences:

- Inappropriate Language
- Physical Aggression/Fighting
- Disrespect to Staff/Adults
- Forgery
- Bullying
- Vandalism

- Overt Defiance
- Major Dress Code Violation
- Theft
- Technology Violation
- Cheating

Students who engage in **Level III** behaviors will be referred to the principal for immediate corrective action. After consulting with the parents and appropriate school personnel, the principal will issue appropriate **Consequences for Level III Behavior** and facilitate corrective action designed to help the student improve his/her school behavior. These may include:

- Verbal Correction
- Detention
- Suspension
- Behavior Contract
- Loss of Privileges
- Written Apology
- Restitution

### **ILL CHILDREN**

If your child becomes seriously ill at school, we will contact you immediately. If we cannot reach you, we will use the emergency numbers you have provided. Please remember, we cannot keep seriously ill children or children with a fever in school. Students must be fever free for 24 hours without medications before returning to school.

### **MEDICATION/NURSE**

Medication cannot be administered by the school without a Medication Dispensing Form. The medication must be sent in the original container labeled with the child's name along with the Medication Dispensing Form. The Medication Dispensing Form must be signed by both the doctor and the parent for both prescription and over-the-counter medications. No medication will be administered in school without a completed form. Children who become ill during the day will be sent to the nurse. The nurse will provide immediate care and first aid, and will contact parents as necessary. Please do not send your child to school if they have a fever. The school may not diagnose or treat any illness. The nurse will make a determination as to whether the child may remain in school or will need to go home or have further treatment by a physician.

### **CARE OF PROPERTY**

1. Clothing identification - Please label all clothing with your child's first and last name.
2. Money - Please discourage your child from bringing more money to school than what they need to spend at school each day.

3. School books and materials - There will be no charge for student textbooks and related items. All parents should understand however, that their children are responsible for the care and safekeeping of all provided materials. Students will be required to pay for lost and/or damaged items issued by the school.

### **DRESS GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL**

As we pick out our clothes for the school day, please keep the following dress guidelines in mind. They have been established to be sure that all students dress appropriately for school, as well as avoid any type of attire that may be unsafe...such as when playing outside, walking up and down stairs, or running. If you have any questions about these guidelines, please do not hesitate to contact the school principal.

It is requested that parents follow the guidelines below:

- ★ Clothing should cover the body modestly.
- ★ Tank tops and camisole tops are not permitted, “shirts should act like a t-shirt”.
- ★ Shorts and skirts should be of a modest length.
- ★ Flip-flops are not permitted for safety reasons.
- ★ A back strap is strongly recommended and toes covered for footwear.
- ★ Clothing graphics and print must be appropriate for a school setting
- ★ Sneakers are required for gym days

Thank you for your continued support. We are all part of the same team - one that strives to meet the needs for success of all students!

### **PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Communication is an essential part of the educational program. We feel it is very important for parents to keep in close contact with their child’s teacher concerning their school progress.

Parents are to call for an appointment with the teacher when needed. When parents use class time, it is not fair to the rest of the class. Parents and all visitors are to report to the office when visiting the school.

All parents are invited to a parent-teacher conference at the end of the first marking period in November.

### **STANDARDIZED TESTING**

As part of the district program to assess the progress of all students on a planned schedule, the school administers standardized tests.

Students in grade three are given the PSSA test. The results of all tests are shared with parents.

### **ACCEPTABLE USE OF THE ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM AND NETWORK**

The acceptable use of the electronic communications systems and network policy is available for review on the district website at [www.whitehallcoplay.org](http://www.whitehallcoplay.org). Click on the “Technology Policy” link. Any/all updates to the policy shall be posted at the above mentioned web site. Persons who cannot access the policy online can request a paper copy in the school office. It is the responsibility of the student and parent/guardian to read the policy. This policy and any/all updates and/or additions shall remain in force through the student’s school career with the Whitehall-Coplay School District. Students are required to follow the policy and any supplements that may be added hereto as amendments or additions.

**DISTRIBUTION OF INVITATIONS**

Invitations may only be handed out in class if ALL students in the classroom will be receiving an invitation. In other cases, parents are asked to use the regular mail to send invitations.

**WITHDRAWAL OF STUDENT/ADDRESS CHANGES**

If you are moving and are withdrawing your child from school, please call a few days prior to the withdrawal date. This will give ample time to complete the necessary paperwork. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Parents of students who move within the school district during the year need to notify the district registrar Michelle Khouri at 610-437-4780 ext 1014. Proof of residency is required and must be submitted to Mrs. Khouri within 1 week.

**Policies and Guidelines Compliance Statement**

With my signature below, I affirm that I have read and understand the Steckel Elementary Policies and Guidelines. I agree to comply with the above Policies and Guidelines and will cooperate in their implementation.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_