

SCHOOL FAMILY HANDBOOK

FOR

STARKWEATHER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

**1050 Wilmington Pike
West Chester, PA 19382**

School Office: (484) 266-2200

Report Absence - Safe Arrival Line: (484) 266-2210

School Nurse: (484) 266-2206

Guidance Counselor: (484) 266-2211

Fax: (484) 266-2299

Web Address: www.wcasd.net

School Mission Statement

The mission of Sarah W. Starkweather Elementary School, a positive, nurturing environment, is to educate our children to be responsible lifelong learners who think critically, communicate effectively and strive to achieve their personal best in an increasingly diverse community through challenging curriculum, flexible instruction and respectful collaboration amongst children, staff and families.

STARKWEATHER STAFF ASSIGNMENTS

2014-15

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Kindergarten | Paige Steinmeyer Kristen Brown Jennifer D'Antonio (EDK) |
| 1st Grade | Beth Nikish Teresa Zobel Nicole Faggiola Dashira Santiago Kelly Brewster |
| 2nd Grade | Sue Atwell Melissa Dailey Susan Jackson Stacy Zelinski |
| 3rd Grade | Kelly Keim Erin Melanson (on leave until Dec. – sub: Lauren Pucci) Amy Robinson Julie Novotny-Smith Christina Caroulis |
| 4th Grade | Tony Ambrosino Alyssa Buckley (on leave until late Nov – sub: Kris Gregg) Jessie Heller Lindsay Keosayian |
| 5 th Grade | Krista Monetti Bevin Sullivan Amy Doran Erika O'Neill (on leave until Dec- sub Julie McNamee) |
| Art | Katie Loveland |
| Librarian | Debbie Burston |
| Cafeteria | Christine Mitchell (Manager) Karen Buckingham |
| Caseworker | Vicky Rice |
| Counselor | Sarah Kadis |
| Custodians | Gerom Gray, Sr. (Head Custodian) Aaron Simpson (day) James Greene (evening) |
| E.L.L. | Ines Amen |
| Gifted Resource | Erin Bushnell |

Learning Support Jessica Johanson
 Anne Svelling

Multiple Disabilities Support Maryann McEvoy

Instructional Coach Susan Cobb

Vocal Music Jim Morrison
Strings Adriana Park
Band Donna Cooper

Nurse Janet Doyle

Physical Education John McConnell
 Rebecca Monte (Mon and Tues- PM)

Principal Nancy Aronson

Psychologist Lisa Pereira

Reading Patricia Iaboni
K-2 Reading Lisa Stoddard
Reading Support Danielle Donoghue (.5)

Secretary Mari Pitt

Speech Mary Condon

Building Sub Maria Cortese

Support Staff:

Donna MacLeod (Office / Library Assistant)
Nichola Sharr (Spec. Ed.)
Liz Zavalis (Spec Ed)
Diane Rineer (Spec Ed)
Samantha Ziegler (Spec Ed)
Pat Thornton (EDK)
Sarah Rosenthal (Technology Associate)
Kimberly Sampey (ELL)

Dear Families:

Your child is beginning a year full of learning experiences at Starkweather Elementary School. As building principal, I hope to assist teachers in making those experiences as meaningful and engaging as possible. The Starkweather staff is hardworking and dedicated to a child-centered focus.

From time to time, children may experience school difficulties. These concerns may be academic, behavioral or social. A building Child Study Team (CST) assists the classroom teacher in supporting students toward school success. The CST is intended to be a collaborative group of trained professionals who work together to develop strategies to help students. For more information about the CST, please contact the school office.

A strong partnership between school and home is crucial to providing the best possible educational program for children. I encourage you to be involved with Starkweather Elementary School by serving on PTO committees or volunteering in a variety of ways as a V.I.P. (Very Important Parent). Teachers, the PTO, and my office staff have more information about how to participate as a volunteer. (Please note that beginning this year, all volunteering is subject to heightened security clearance.) Attending school events is another way to demonstrate to your child that you believe what happens at school is important. Feel free to contact the school with your questions.

I look forward to a year of success for all students!

Nancy A. Aronson
Principal

SCHOOL HOURS

| | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| Office: | 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM |
| Teachers: | 8:20 AM – 3:50 PM |
| Students | 9:10 AM – 3:40 PM |
| (Gr. EDK, 1 – 5) | |
| Kindergarten: | |
| AM | 9:10 AM – 11:45 AM |
| PM | 1:05 PM – 3:40 PM |

ARAMARK MEAL PRICING: Breakfast: \$1.00; Lunch: \$2.10

SCHOOL ABSENCE

Parents are asked to notify the school's "Safe Arrival" voice mail (484-266-2210) early in the day when children will be absent from school. A written excuse form must be returned to the teacher within three (3) days of the absence to avoid "unlawful absence".

WCASD SCHOOL BOARD STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY (6/06 Update)

This policy is accessible for review from the WCASD website or the Discipline and Policy Handbook distributed to every family each year during the Parents' Open House in September. Highlights of the revised policy include the following provisions:

1. Absence from school:

- *Written excuse form required within three (3) days after return from an absence.
- *Parents of all students who miss 10 days shall be notified in writing of the student's absence record.
- *A parent conference shall be requested by the administration when a student has missed a total of 15 days or more.
- *After 20 or more days of absence, an informal review of the student's record including days of absence, discipline and academic shall be made by the administration and recommendations, if any shall be made in writing in the respective director regarding retention in grade.

2. Family Travel Absence Requests:

- *Please be advised that the revised WCASD attendance policy specifies that family vacation requests, **must be pre-approved by the principal, and are limited to a maximum of five (5) days per school year.** The principal will take into account the student's academic standing and the student's attendance record prior to granting or denying permission for the trip. Any vacation/trip days taken beyond the five (5) days will be counted as unlawful absences. After a student has accumulated four unlawful absences the school must file a citation with the local district court.
- *Please be aware that any assignments or tests missed during your child's absence may not be able to be made up. **Please be in touch with your child's teacher for alternative/maintenance work.** The nature of the elementary classroom program is dependent on what happens during each day of instruction. Assignments and homework extend the daily lesson or are in preparation for the next day of classroom instruction. For these **reasons teachers are not expected to create assignments for a student who is not in attendance for the purpose of taking a trip.**

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL TIMES /APPOINTMENTS

- ***Students may enter the building beginning at 8:30 am** and report to the Atrium where a staff member will be available to supervise until classroom report time. If students arrive late, after 9:10 am, parents are asked to accompany them to office for sign-in and late pass.
- ***Students leaving school for an appointment** will meet parents in the office and return with parent to the office for sign-in. To avoid disruption to our educational program, parents are asked to keep early and irregular dismissals to a minimum.
- *Parents transporting students to / from school may use **designated parking** in the front of the building. **We are unable to guarantee accommodation for last minute dismissals from the office after 3:10 pm, the busiest end of the day timeframe.**

***Students riding home in private vehicles:**

To assure student safety and more efficient bus traffic flow, the following procedure is in place for students riding home in private vehicles.

1. Parents are required to provide written notification to school about intent to transport their children home in a private vehicle or to arrange for dismissal outside the hours of the usual school day. Please note: Office staff will be unable to guarantee such arrangements made by phone or drop in late in the day. As always, bus transportation is encouraged.
2. Students being transported home in a private vehicle by parent or other authorized person (written authorization only) will gather in the Library at dismissal time. Staff members will provide Library supervision and will communicate with staff members at the outdoor sign out station (K entrance).
3. Parents are asked to park vehicles in available parking spaces in the parking lot and assemble at the outside Kindergarten Entrance area (Route 202 side) for sign out. Staff members will greet parents at this entrance and manage sign out process. Parents are asked to be prepared to provide photo identification. *The front traffic circle must remain clear for arrival of handicapped buses. The fire lane adjacent to the Kindergarten entrance must also remain clear by order of the fire marshal.*
4. Parents need not enter the building, since students will be dismissed from Atrium to meet parents at the Kindergarten Entrance area.

VOLUNTEERING AT SCHOOL

There are a host of volunteer opportunities for parents and grandparents to help teachers and students. Volunteers tutor students, listen to students read, assist in the library or cafeteria, etc.

- Beginning in the 2014-15 school year, all visitors and parents are subject to heightened security requirements (Raptor Child Abuse office check in with picture ID; FBI, Child Abuse, Criminal History clearances).

For more information please contact the PTO, the classroom teacher, or office secretary: Mrs. Mari Pitt 484-266-2202.

Thanks for your support with keeping our students safe.

SCHOOL VISITS

The classroom visitation policy is accessible for review from the WCASD website. All school visits must be arranged in advance by contacting the school. The intent of the school district's visitation policy is to minimize disruption to the educational program. During American Education Week, teachers welcome parents into classrooms by invitation. At other times, parents may arrange classroom visits with the teacher.

PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)

The PTO meets several times a year and publishes a monthly newsletter, now available through email. The PTO meeting schedule, published in the district calendar and on the school website and alternates morning and evening meeting times throughout the year to make attendance feasible for all parents. The PTO funds all assemblies and other special events during the school day, provides special classroom materials for students and teachers and sponsors several family social events. An annual fundraiser is the major PTO funding source. A PTO information link is available from the school website.

CURRICULUM

The Pennsylvania Academic Standards form the basis for district curriculum. Balanced literacy and balanced mathematics programs include daily writing with targeted language arts instruction and both fact fluency/rote learning with constructivist, problem-based mathematics instruction. Science instruction is inquiry-based, encourages multiple ways of understanding, and maximizes student involvement.

TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

The district technology plan emphasizes integration of technology throughout the curriculum. Laptop carts (each with 15 laptop computers), iPads, and wireless capability make this happen. Throughout the day, teachers arrange to bring laptops into the classroom as a useful tool to enhance instruction and engage students under careful teacher supervision.

An Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) signed by each student and his parent and returned to school must be submitted prior to student use of computer equipment.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS/IMPORTANT MESSAGING

If school closes early, automated emergency phone calling systems have arranged for parent notification by the district and PTO. It is essential that parents keep contact phone numbers updated. Although every effort will be made to contact home contact numbers, parents are urged to arrange an emergency closing plan in advance with children who need to know where to report if parents are not at home.

School closings or delayed openings due to inclement weather will be announced via automated SCHOOL MESSENGER phone system. Please be sure your contact phone numbers on file are updated.

SCHOOL DRESS GUIDELINES

This revised policy is accessible for review from the WCASD website. Highlights of the revised policy pertain to the following issues:

To preserve a productive learning environment, while attending to safety and comfort the following guidelines form the basis for school attire:

Acceptable clothing:

1. provides full coverage for the midriff (no tank tops or short shirts)
2. does not include pants that drag below the heel, posing a hazard when walking/running
3. does not include shoes with roller skate attachment, open toe shoes, sandals or platform or high heel shoes that are unsafe recess and physical education attire
4. includes shorts, skirts and dresses that fall at fingertip length or longer when standing.
5. includes tee shirts and other attire displaying only positive messages

Please note that parents will be notified if their child arrives at school wearing inappropriate clothing.

CHILD STUDY TEAM

The building's child study team (CST) meets regularly to assist teachers in planning and implementing strategies that are designed to produce success for students having difficulty. Parent input is always welcome.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

CCRC and Conflict Managers:

Children's Creative Response to Conflict is a program with a broad base of activities designed to teach children appropriate alternatives to violence. Team building and problem solving are key skill components. This program is designed for integration into the regular academic curriculum. Fourth and fifth graders, under the supervision of CCRC staff coordinators, have an opportunity to serve as trained Conflict Managers during assigned recess periods.

Bully Proofing Program:

Bullying is recurrent, power-related behavior directed against an individual. Bullying can involve physical contact, emotional pressure, and/or verbal abuse. The guidance counselor presents bully awareness and bully prevention lessons to each classroom. The counselor is accessible to each student. Every report of bullying is taken seriously and thoroughly investigated by the school administrator and guidance counselor.

- During the 2014-15 School Year, guidance counselors will implement the *Second Step* Program for helping students learn pro social behaviors and develop resiliency.

Gifted Resource Support:

A building based gifted support program is in place for eligible students in grades 2-5. Teachers in grades K and 1 utilize observational checklists and performance assessments (Challenge Centers) to determine which students demonstrate a potential for giftedness. For students who show gifted potential through their classroom performance and behaviors, K-1 teachers collaborate with the gifted resource teacher to supply learning experiences that meet the needs of the

individual child (Challenge Plan). Once a child meets the criteria for gifted candidate consideration, the classroom teacher gathers a collection of student work, classroom/curricular assessments and observational checklists into an Ability Profile that is submitted to the building Child Study Team for possible referral to formal gifted identification.

Safety Patrol

Open to fifth graders at the beginning of the school year, this assignment affords students an opportunity for leadership and service. Safeties assist with smooth transitions during arrival and dismissal under the supervision of the staff member Coordinator.

\$25 ACTIVITY FEE: The following activities (After school sports, Band, and Orchestra) require a one time payment of a \$25 Activity Fee to the District. Parents are encouraged to make payment online, or arrange to pay by check at Spellman Administration Building- 829 Paoli Pike. Participation will be authorized following payment of the activity fee.

After School Sports

Open to intermediate level students (grades 3, 4, 5) at various times during the year, students may choose to practice skills learned in physical education in a structured, competitive setting. A schedule is prepared and distributed by teaching staff.

Instrumental Music

Instruction is offered on string instruments and band instruments (grades 3-5). Information about how to participate is provided by the music staff at the beginning of each school year. Lessons are arranged during the day and orchestra and band rehearsals are scheduled once weekly before school. Two concerts are offered during the year for both band and orchestra.

Chorus

Fourth and fifth graders may participate in this group that rehearses once weekly before school and presents two concerts annually. Honors Chorus is a district-wide group offered by audition to fifth graders.

Starkweather Reading Olympics team is made up of 4th and 5th grade students who have a desire to read and discuss great books! Contact one of the building reading specialists for more information.

The book list for the 2011 school year can be found at. <http://readingolympics.cciu.org/booklists.html>.

LEARNING SUPPORT : Starkweather houses two (2) learning support classes (primary and intermediate) and a Multiple Disabilities Support Classroom to facilitate the learning process for students found eligible for special education services. Students are identified through the Child Study process.

GUIDANCE, SPEECH AND LANGUAGE SERVICES, OCCUPATIONAL AND PHYSICAL THERAPY AND SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST SERVICES

These services are available to students in need, as determined by the Child Study Team/Pre Referral process.

HOMEWORK GUIDELINES

Homework guidelines generally recommend a measure of 10 minutes times the grade level per day (First Grade = 10-15 minutes; Second Grade = 20 minutes and so on). Nightly independent reading for approximately 15 minutes in addition to content assignments is particularly beneficial to developing reading and writing skills.

Homework Pick up for Absentees: Please call the school office before 10:30 AM to arrange for homework to be ready by dismissal time.

CAFETERIA

Each grade level is allotted a thirty (30) minute lunch period with a thirty (30) minute recess period. Current lunch prices are provided to parents at the beginning of the school year. Menus are updated monthly and posted in classrooms. ARAMARK, the food service provider for the district, has implemented a cashless, debit system that allows parents to establish an online account for students. Students may also purchase on a day to day basis. Please consult the district website for information about student accounts.

RECESS

Since fresh air is an important component of the educational program, students will go outside each day, weather permitting. Parents are asked to send clothing that suits weather conditions. Proper footwear and warm clothing allows students a fresh air break that helps boost afternoon learning. The school nurse is available to discuss special health related exceptions.

The decision to go outdoors depends upon the following factors: wind chill, weather conditions, playground surface conditions.

HEALTH ROOM SERVICES

*The school nurse is the on site health expert whose focus is to maximize student participation in the classroom educational program and assure compliance with legal mandates. If your child requires consultation about an existing medical condition or sports injury that happens outside the regular school program, please contact your private health care provider. Please keep the nurse informed about medical issues that might impact your child's educational program.

*Any child with a fever over 100 degrees or a condition requiring medical attention will be sent home. If your child is feeling ill before school or if he has a contagious condition, please do not send him to school. Please contact the nurse before returning him to school.

MEDICATION POLICY

*Effective September 2009, WCASD School Nurses will no longer give over the counter medicine unless there is a doctor's written order giving the direction to do so. There are only four exceptions: acetaminophen (Tylenol), ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil), diphenhydramine hcl (Benadryl), and antacids (Tums). All other medications coming to school will require a doctor's order, as well as a parent note.

*Your doctor may write one note for your child per school year.

*For additional information, check the WCASD website homepage

FIRE DRILLS / SAFETY DRILLS

Monthly fire drills and periodic security drills are required. At such times, all students, staff and visitors are expected to exit the building as quickly and safely as possible or seek shelter as directed. Students and teachers review specific regulations and guidelines during the year.

- Schools in the WCASD work in conjunction with the local police departments to plan and practice periodic security drills.

LOST AND FOUND

Please mark your child's name on all belongings. Lost and found articles will be stored in the cafeteria hanging cupboard. Any articles not claimed by the end of each month will be donated to a local charity.

FOOD IN CLASSROOMS AND SCHOOL PARTIES

The classroom teacher and homeroom parent(s) co-plan three parties for each classroom. The school nurse will provide guidance regarding resources for healthful snack options. Parents are notified in advance and in writing regarding planned snacks for classroom celebrations.

- According to district requirements implemented for the 2014-15 school year, the three parties are the only time when food is permitted for classroom celebrations.
- Food may not be used for birthday celebrations, Star of the Week, or other individual student recognition.
- Teachers, at their discretion, will plan rewards for classroom achievements, seasonal celebrations, or at the conclusion of major class events.

SCHOOL WIDE RULES

Behavior guidelines, developed by the Starkweather Elementary School Strategic Planning Committee and posted in each classroom and in locations around the building, are taught and reinforced throughout the year:

1. Respect everyone and everything, everywhere.
2. Walk quietly, safely and single file.
3. Play and work safely.
4. Looking + Listening + Thinking = Learning

HOME SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

A secure, **web-based system** allows parents to view their child's information, including class performance (gradebook). Grades are updated every two weeks. Parents' User IDs and Passwords are distributed early in the year and are available by contacting the school office.

***Teacher Voicemail**: Parents may leave phone messages on a teacher's voicemail during the day. A listing of voicemail extensions is available on the district website (www.wcasd.net). Please be aware that teachers only check voicemail twice daily and are not available for phone calls during instructional time.

***Email**: Teachers may also be reached by email.

Although teachers are not available to answer email during instructional time, parents are assured that they will receive a response within 24 hours of an email or voicemail message.

***Parent Teacher Conferences (20 minute appointments)** are scheduled for Fall and Spring. However, teachers are available to meet and discuss student progress at any time.

***Standards-Based Report Card for K-5** will report both students' progress toward achieving year end grade level expectations toward PA Academic Standards and learning related behaviors. Students in grades 3, 4, and 5 also receive a letter grade.

TRANSPORTATION AND DISCIPLINE POLICY

Revised policies for both elements are accessible for review from the WCASD website. Students bring home an updated Discipline and Records Policy Handbook in the first day packet prepared by the PTO for distribution to each student on the first day of school.

General Safety: The safety of children on school buses and at bus stops is of primary importance to our staff. **Please** review safety rules with your child so that he knows what is acceptable behavior on the school bus and at the bus stop.

Safety at Bus Stops:

1. Be on time, but no earlier than ten (10 minutes) before scheduled bus time.
2. Wait off the highway and out of traffic.
3. To avoid running into traffic, do not play games or chase others.
4. Be sure the road is clear and wait for the bus driver's signal before crossing the road to board or get off the bus.
5. Enter the bus promptly and in an orderly manner and be seated.
6. When getting off the bus, step away from the bus immediately.
7. Go directly home from the bus stop at the end of the day.

Safety on the Bus:

1. Pupils must be seated before the bus can move and remain seated while the bus is in motion.
2. Do not extend any part of the body out of the bus window.
3. Do not eat or drink on the bus.
4. Remain in assigned seat.
5. Be courteous to the driver and obey the driver at all times.

6. Do not talk loudly or distract driver by behaving in a disorderly manner.
7. Ride only the assigned bus and get off only at the assigned bus stop.

General Bus Rules:

Since most buses are assigned the maximum capacity of students who can safely and legally ride a bus, **students are not permitted to change buses without prior permission from the school administrator and the Office of Transportation.**

Bus drivers have been trained to handle the bus in a safe manner. Reports from a bus driver about student misconduct will be addressed by the principal. Parents will be contacted and the district's discipline policy and guidelines will be enforced.

PERSONAL CELLPHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The WCASD does not permit staff or students to use cellphones during school hours. Since personal electronic devices may be lost or damaged in transit to/from school or in the classroom, students are strongly discouraged from bringing such items to school. Students will be asked to keep such items in closed backpacks during school hours.

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE

Before and after school care is offered on site by A Children's Place, a division of Tot Time Development Centers (610-272-8085).

SCHOOL NEWSLETTER "Going Green":

A periodic school newsletter is emailed to parents. Parents who opt out of email communication and prefer to receive a paper copy may contact the school office (484-266-2202).