

Newton Public Schools



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How many elementary schools are in Newton?

There are 15 elementary schools in Newton and approximately 5800 students attend kindergarten through grade 5 during the 2016-2017 school year. The elementary schools feed to four middle schools and two high schools. School feeder patterns are assigned according to address.

How is my child assigned to a school?

Newton Public Schools is a neighborhood school district. Each address in Newton is assigned to a school. Students are required to attend their neighborhood school unless approved to attend another school through Out-of-Assigned District or specific program placement.

What is a buffer zone?

A buffer zone is a defined area for which individual addresses may be assigned to one of two elementary schools. Parents/guardians of students residing in a buffer zone must request either one of the two designated elementary schools in the zone. The requests will be granted based on space availability. Students in these zones do not have a designated home school until such time as they are assigned a school. More information on buffer zones can be found on our webpage at www.newton.k12.ma.us/Page/1066.

Can I choose a school other than the one assigned to my address?

Each year, the Newton Public Schools considers applications for students to transfer to a school outside of their home (assigned) district. Out-of-Assigned district placements are limited and made on a space available basis. For more information on the Out-of-Assigned District Policy, please visit our webpage at www.newton.k12.ma.us/Page/1067.

Is there an age requirement for kindergarten?

Yes, the Newton Public Schools has a policy on school entrance age which requires students be five-years-old by August 31 in order to attend kindergarten.

Is my child ready for kindergarten?

Children come to kindergarten from a wide variety of experiences and settings and we do not expect all kindergarteners to know the same things on the first day of school. We welcome the opportunity to partner with you in determining how best to meet the needs of your child. If you have questions about your child's readiness, please let the staff at your neighborhood school know the day of the kindergarten registration/screening.

Can a parent decide to defer kindergarten registration even though their child is age-eligible?

Kindergarten entry in the Newton Public Schools is for all students who turn five-years-old by August 31. Children enter kindergarten with varied learning abilities and experiences. The Newton Public Schools encourages registration in kindergarten for all children who are age-eligible to attend. Massachusetts State Law requires a child must attend school in September of the calendar year in which they turn six-years-old.

What if my child/family speaks a language in addition to or other than English?

Massachusetts State Law requires that all students entering the public schools system whose home language includes a language other than English must be assessed for English proficiency. Please visit the English Language Learning webpage at <http://www.newton.k12.ma.us/Page/139> for more information.

How long is the kindergarten day?

All grades - kindergarten through grade 5 – school doors open at 8:20 a.m. Parents may drop their kids off at the door at 8:20 a.m. or may escort their child to the classroom. All children must be in their classrooms by 8:30 a.m. when the late bell rings. If your child arrives after 8:30 a.m., he/she must check in with the callback/safe arrival volunteer in the front lobby.

Kindergarten dismissal is structured in two segments. For the month of September, kindergarten ends at 12:30 p.m. daily. Beginning at the end of September/beginning of October, our two-long day, three-short day schedule begins. Each kindergarten classroom is divided into two groups – A and B. The A group stays until 3:00 p.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays and the B group is dismissed at 12:30 p.m. On Thursdays and Fridays, the B group stays until 3:00 p.m. and the A group ends the school day at 12:30 p.m. Tuesday is a 12:30 p.m. dismissal for all grades, Kindergarten through grade 5.

What is the A & B group assignment in kindergarten classrooms?

Each kindergarten classroom is divided into two groups – A and B. The A group stays until 3:00 p.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays and the B group is dismissed at 12:30 p.m. On Thursdays and Fridays, the B group stays until 3:00 p.m. and the A group ends the school day at 12:30 p.m.

Can I request my child be in A or B group?

Parents can state their preference to have their child placed in a specific group for kindergarten. However, preferences are reviewed during the placement process and may not be possible to grant.

Can I request my child be in a class with a friend or a specific teacher?

Our primary goal is to create classes with a range in children's learning styles, interests and social maturity. A heterogeneous mix of students, who can flourish and learn together, is our most important consideration. Unfortunately, we cannot accommodate requests for specific teachers either named or described.

How do teachers communicate with parents/guardians?

Home/school communication is an important part of school attendance. Each classroom teacher and/or school will determine the best way to communicate between home and school regarding student learning. Parents are encouraged to contact classroom teachers with any information that they feel is important concerning their child.

What will my child learn in kindergarten?

Newton has a standards-based curriculum which is developmentally appropriate with strong focus on student learning. Curriculum is aligned to state and national standards and you can access the kindergarten curriculum overview document on our webpage at <http://www.newton.k12.ma.us/Page/772>

Can I tour the school?

Group tours are scheduled on a school-by-school basis during the orientation process. Individual school tours are not available.

Will my child ride the bus to school?

Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 71 Section 68, states that students in grades K-6 who reside more than 2.0 miles walking distance to their neighborhood school are entitled to free transportation. Please visit the Newton Transportation webpage at www.newton.k12.ma.us/Page/214 for more information.

Does my child eat lunch at school?

Kindergarten students do not begin their lunch program until around the first week in October and only eat lunch on the two days that they stay until 3:00 p.m. Students have the option of bringing lunch from home or signing up for the school lunch program. More information on the school lunch program can be found on our webpage at newton.sodexomyway.com/

Are there after-school programs?

Each elementary school has an after-school program for the enrichment and enjoyment of children in kindergarten through grade 5. The program is fee-based and separate from the Newton Public School System. These programs, along with some community-based after-school programs, are part of the Newton After-School Association (NASA), which was initiated by school-aged child care directors to create a support network among peers. Families should call the after-school program located at their particular school for registration fees, hours and space availability. Contact information for after-school programs can be found on our webpage at <http://www.newton.k12.ma.us/Page/1165>.

Is there an option for early drop-off?

Newton Public Schools offers an Early Morning Program for students in Grades K through 5 in each of the elementary schools. The program is fee-based and designed to provide a needed service by giving parents the opportunity to bring their children to school prior to the beginning of the regularly scheduled school day. Within the program, each elementary school will offer supervised before school care from 7:30 a.m. until 8:20 a.m. when students are admitted to their classrooms. Registration forms and other important information is located on our webpage at <http://www.newton.k12.ma.us/Page/106>.

Why does my child have a kindergarten screening?

At registration, a screening, required by Massachusetts Chapter 766 State Law, is given to each child who will be entering kindergarten. This screening is not used to determine readiness for kindergarten. It is used only as a tool to provide local schools with information concerning any special learning needs a child might have before entering school.

What is the Blue Zone?

The City of Newton has created designated drop-off and pick-up areas at many schools in the city. These school drop off and pick up zones are commonly referred to as "Blue-Zones". "Blue Zones" are designed to allow for improved traffic flow and safer drop-off and pick-up of students. "Blue Zones" are in effect Monday through

Friday when school is in session. Information on the Blue Zone procedures for each school will be provided by the principal of the building.

What is the immunization requirement for school attendance?

Information on Massachusetts immunization requirement and school health can be found on the City of Newton's website at

http://www.newtonma.gov/gov/health/school_health/default.asp

How do schools handle a child with food allergies?

Newton has a Life Threatening Food Allergy Policy. Parents whose children have a food allergy will meet with the school nurse and develop a Medical Emergency Plan. The School Committee Guidelines can found on our website at

<http://www.newton.k12.ma.us/Page/2902>. Additional information on Medical Emergency Plans is on the Newton Health Department webpage - http://www.newtonma.gov/gov/health/school_health/default.asp