



GET READY FOR KINDERGARTEN

Marie Salle Kim, Ed.D.

Principal

MarieKim@Abington.k12.pa.us

Robert Howe

Assistant Principal / Department Chair of Gifted Education

RobertHowe@Abington.k12.pa.us

Andrew Hudson

Elementary Curriculum Specialist

AndrewHudson@Abington.k12.pa.us

Maria Vaccaro

Supervisor of Special Education

MariaVaccaro@Abington.k12.pa.us

Dear Kindergarten Parents and Guardians,

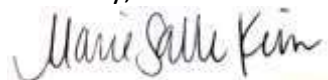
Welcome to McKinley Elementary School! We want to personally welcome your child to Kindergarten. We look forward to being a part of your child's academic, social, emotional, and physical development. The first year in school is a great adventure away from home for children and is the foundation of later achievement in school.

Awaiting you and your child is a year filled with unique learning experiences involving creativity, discovery, and excitement. Our staff's dedication enables our kindergartners to embrace learning with a positive attitude within a nurturing and loving environment. The children are reinforced to use all the colors of their imagination, to believe in themselves, to be curious, to play and be playful, and to love learning.

This booklet has been prepared to assist you in helping your child make the best possible adjustment to Kindergarten and to McKinley. We feel that the information presented in this booklet can help foster the connection between home and school that is so necessary to maximize your child's educational experience and ensure he/she reaches his/her fullest potential. At McKinley, we believe we are BETTER TOGETHER.

We look forward to sharing a wonderful year with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marie Salle Kim". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

Marie Salle Kim, Ed.D.
Principal

KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

Kindergarten children enter school with varied experiences and expectations. Five year olds are discovering the world around them and are anxious to explore it. Our kindergarten environment nurtures the child and encourages exploration and learning. Through a balance of play and academics, the children develop the skills necessary to become constructive members of the school community.

The Kindergarten program is designed to help stimulate a good self-concept, providing each child with many experiences. Kindergarten children will work and create independently, but also learn to cooperate with others in a group. The program will provide opportunities for social and emotional development, inspire language development, and expand physical and mental growth. The kindergarten curriculum provides the building blocks to help young children develop into lifelong learners.

Your child's first year in school is a new experience for parent and child alike. There are many things that a child will learn to do that will be the cornerstone of his/her education.

At McKinley Elementary School, we believe that children entering kindergarten learn best through...

- a positive learning atmosphere in which all children experience success.
- "hands-on" activities which involve the use of manipulatives and real life experiences.
- cooperative learning groups in which children work interdependently to achieve goals and to develop appropriate social skills.
- the use of developmentally appropriate teaching practices.
- an environment that recognizes diversity as a strength, in which children are respected and valued as unique individuals.
- the presentation of a variety of instructional strategies and resources to match the diverse learning styles of the children.
- activities that are designed to enhance self-esteem and life-long learning.

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

McKinley Elementary (215) 663-0430

Office: Option 1

School Psychologist: Option 4

ASD Voicemail System (215) 517-2850

Child Check: Option 2

School Directory: Option 6

Health Suite: Option 3

School Kitchen: Option 7

WEBSITE

<http://www.abington.k12.pa.us/mckinley/>

Use the McKinley website to learn about the school and communicate with the staff. Here you will find up-to-date information about activities at school. You can view the lunch menu, school calendar, staff members' e-mail addresses, and a link to our PTO website. A selection of useful links is updated periodically for parents and students.



<https://www.abington.k12.pa.us/family-resources/>

Use the district Family Resources page to access other important information.

DAILY SCHEDULE

8:00 AM	OFFICE OPENS
8:30 – 8:50 AM	STUDENT ARRIVAL <i>Supervision of Students on Playground or Gym, depending on weather conditions</i>
8:50 AM	SCHOOL DAY BEGINS / MORNING ANNOUNCEMENTS
9:00 AM	FORMAL INSTRUCTION BEGINS
11:15 AM	KINDERGARTEN LUNCH AND RECESS
3:20 PM	DISMISSAL

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- Due to building security, we do **NOT** allow parents to walk their children to their classroom. In addition, teachers are preparing for the instructional day and this morning time is highly valuable to them. If you need to speak to a teacher, either inform the receptionist or send a note to the teacher. You will receive a prompt reply.
- Please determine your child's routine for arrival to and dismissal from school prior to September. It is important to begin that routine on the first day of school. Consistency is vital to the success of a kindergarten child.

HELPFUL HINTS FOR THE FIRST WEEK OF SCHOOL AND BEYOND

Starting school is an exciting event for children. School will also mean some big changes in your child's life. For example: separation from home and family; steps to independence; new feelings; new friends; new experiences. It is natural for children to be somewhat fearful about school. Discuss any fears about the first day; be positive, loving, and reassuring. Be cheerful, confident, and matter-of-fact about this new step. If you have a positive attitude and look forward to your child beginning school, your child will probably do the same.

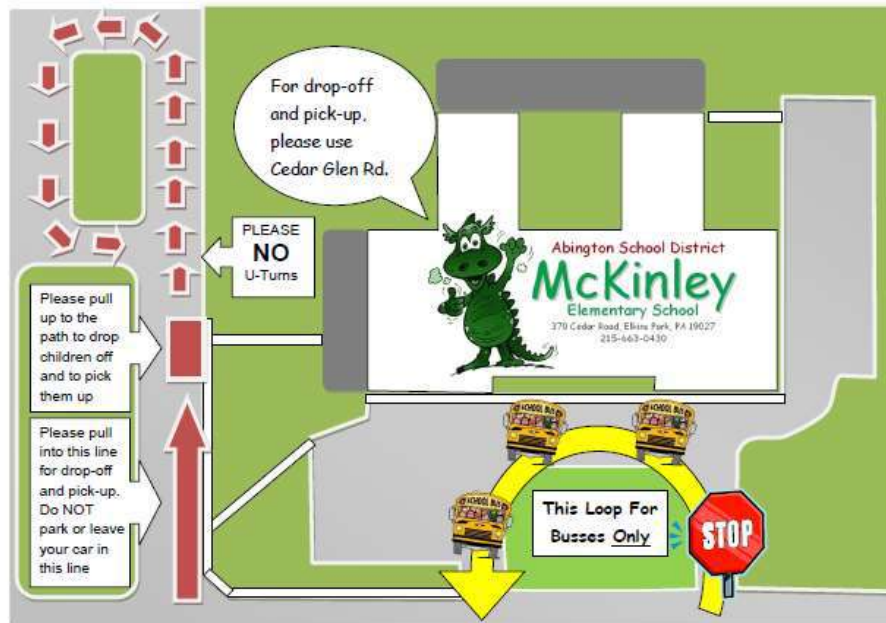
Getting off to a good start takes a joint effort. Our teachers, administrators and specialists are trained to help your child during this important time, but we need your help, too.

- Teach your child to be safe. Teach your child to know their first and last name, telephone number, bus stop and parent names. Children should wear a name tag with this information during the first two weeks of school. It is also a good idea to have all emergency information (names and phone numbers) written on an index card and placed in your child's backpack.
- Familiarize your child with the school environment. Visit the school and bus stop, and walk the route. Have your child learn his/her teacher's name.
- Encourage responsibility. Assign children household tasks (feed dog, organize their toys). Your child should be able to fasten buckles, button or zip clothes without help. Teach your child to tie his/her own shoes.
- Reinforce good manners. Teach your child to ask permission, use a tissue properly, and say "please" and "thank you".
- Share activities with your child to show that learning is fun
- Following directions is a necessity at school. Help develop good listening skills by verbally instructing your child to complete several steps of a task or to re-tell a story in proper sequence.

In addition, the following are suggestions to prepare your child for the first day of school:

- Please provide your child with a **schoolbag** clearly labeled with his/her name. Items will be sent home each day, and your child will need a bag to ensure that these items arrive home safely.
 - Label all outdoor clothing and items (schoolbag, lunchbag, etc.) with your child's full name.
- Your child will receive a **Homework Folder** on the first day of school. Please check and empty this folder each day. Homework will be assigned four nights a week and will be found in this folder.
- Please send a **snack and drink** with your child daily, beginning on the first day of school. Lunch may be purchased at school or you may wish to pack your child's lunch. School menus are posted on the district website: <https://www.abington.k12.pa.us/about-asd/school-lunch-program/>
- You will receive a **bus tag** in the mail prior to the first day of school. Please review the information on the tag, especially the bus stop, and make any necessary corrections before ensuring that it is properly secured on your child the first day of school. Please inform the office if any changes were made.
 - If your child will have any alternate transportation other than the given bus stop, please notify us in writing. Also, as the year goes on, please send a note for any temporary change in routine dismissal.
- The **Emergency Card** which you completed at kindergarten registration is on file in the Health Room. It is important to keep this information updated to reflect any change in the information you originally provided. Keep this information in your child's backpack, too.
- Adhere to a schedule before school begins. Going to bed early can contribute to good physical and mental health. School hours are **8:50 a.m. – 3:20 p.m.** We expect children to be on time. Students may be dropped off at school at 8:30 a.m., when supervision begins. Please do not drop off your child before this time. Children who are late are to be signed in at the office. Parents are not to escort their child to the classroom.

- If your child is absent due to illness, please call our **child check number (215) 663-0430, option 2**. If we do not receive a message, you will receive an automated call to inquire about your child's absence. A written note explaining your child's absence is required when your child returns to school. Please keep in mind that regular attendance in kindergarten is essential to learning.



- At **dismissal** time, please be prompt if you are picking up your child at 3:20 PM. The teacher will dismiss walkers to parents/caregivers at the kindergarten playground area. Park along Cedar Glen Road beyond the drop-off area.
 - Teachers will escort children to the playground area for parent pick-up. As teachers dismiss children, please step forward and indicate to the teacher that you are there to receive your child so we may be assured that no child is dismissed without adult supervision. If a friend or older child has been authorized by you to receive your child, please write a note to the teacher.
 - **Early dismissal** requires a note stating the reason, time, and the name of the person who will be picking up your child. All visitors must sign in at the office.
 - There is always the possibility of a change or disruption of the regular dismissal procedure. This may be due to a school emergency which necessitates an early dismissal. In this situation, your child can become upset and worried easily when his/her routine is altered. To preclude problems, please develop an **Emergency Plan** with your child. Discuss in advance what your child should do if you are not at home when he/she returns from school.
- Your child will have the opportunity to visit the **library** and to select books to bring home. Books may be kept out for two weeks. Plan to read the books with your child and take an active role in developing his/her reading readiness.
- Two Parent-Teacher Conferences are planned during the school year in the months of November and March. The purpose is to share students' progress with parents and to discuss any questions/concerns that you may have about the instructional program. Additional **teacher contact** may be arranged by calling the office or contacting the teacher.
- Take an active part in school life: review papers and projects with your child, listen to what your child tells you about your school, join the PTO, attend school programs.

Kindergarten Readiness Checklist

We often have parents/guardians inquire about how to best prepare for such an exciting and special time. We have created a checklist of skills in a check-off format to help you to determine just how “ready” your child is for kindergarten. Please note that some of the listed skills are developmental, and with practice, are mastered over time. We do not by any means expect ALL of these skills to be mastered by the beginning of kindergarten. We do however encourage our families to promote independent self-help skills at home. We also encourage a basic understanding and at the very least, exposure to the academic/cognitive skills contained in the checklist.



Remember, every little one is different. In kindergarten we have a wide range of ages, skills and ability levels. There is a lot of developmental change between these ages. We encourage parents not to compare their children with others, as developmental differences can be quite significant. Please feel free to reference the checklist below to gain some insight regarding expectations in kindergarten.

Recommended Academic Skills

- Identify and write name
- Exposure to letters and alphabet
- ID or recognize rhyming words
- Understand basic concepts of print (directionality, title, word vs sentence, how to hold a book)
- Hear the first sound in a word
- Speak in complete sentences
- Ask and answer simple who, what, where, when questions
- Listen to a story and answer comprehension questions
- Identify shapes and colors
- Recognize simple patterns
- Sort items into groups
- Count to 10 or higher
- Count concrete objects accurately to 5 or higher
- Exposure to basic math vocabulary (more, less, longer, shorter, top, middle, how many)

Self Help Skills

- Use bathroom independently including washing hands with soap and water
- Dress self (button, zipper, snap, work on tying shoes, put on coat)
- Cover coughs and sneezes appropriately. Using a tissue and blowing your nose.
- Open juice boxes, water bottles, snack bags independently
- Clean up materials and snack when finished
- Begin to practice and learn to tie shoes
- Tell an adult when something is wrong or if help is needed
- Know your teacher’s name
- Know your first and last name
- Using language and words to express needs and wants

Behavioral

- Accepts appropriate consequences for inappropriate behaviors without tantrums or defiance
- Tolerate changes and new situations consistently
- Follow two step directions independently
- Stay on "teacher directed" task for 10 minutes
- Practice polite language with peers and adults
- Separate from parents/siblings and appear comfortable and secure
- Share with others
- Participate in group activities with control
- Show respect for adults and peers
- Demonstrate self-control
- Wait patiently for turn and take turns
- Keep hands/body to self

Emotional Skills

- Handle setbacks or disappointment in a developmentally appropriate way
- Regulate emotions
- Demonstrate empathy
- Indicate and identify feelings
- Demonstrate positive outlook about self

Fine and Gross Motor Skills

- Proper pencil grip
- Draw a simple/basic picture (stick people, sun, flower etc.)
- Cut with scissors
- Use a glue stick
- Trace basic shapes
- Assemble a simple puzzle
- Drink from an open cup
- Use utensils correctly
- Hop, walk in a straight line, jump, run, catch and bounce a ball

Overall Interest/Attitude Towards Learning

- Does your child look at books, magazines, newspapers at home?
- Does your child like/want to go to school?
- Does your child pretend to read?
- Does your child ask when he/she will be able to attend school?
- Does your child listen to you read stories?
- Is your child curious about his/her environment?
- Do you convey an attitude that "school is fun and exciting" so your child looks forward to rather than fearing school?

SUMMER ACTIVITIES

School will be out for the summer soon, but learning should never end. Over the past few years many parents have inquired as to what they can do over the summer to help their children build on the skills and concepts learned in preschool. Here are a few ideas:



READ: Research has shown over and over that reading is the most important thing you can do with your child to enhance his or her literacy development. Visit the library. Make reading time enjoyable. When children see adults value and enjoy reading, they too are likely to learn to enjoy and value reading.

WRITE: Write every day if possible. Write about vacations, summer camp, picnics, or any of a million summer activities. Let the children illustrate those stories by drawing, painting, or labeling photographs, then compile those words and pictures into book form. Remember, scribbling is the first step towards “real writing.” The next time you make a shopping list or write a letter to a friend or relative, ask your child to help by writing his or her own list or letter. All of these examples give purpose to writing. Children get the most out of writing when it is purposeful and appreciated by others.

COUNT: Count everything—at home, at the park, in the car. Use the calendar as a teaching tool.

PLAY: Active play, whether it is baseball, pretending with dolls, building sand castles, or playing with blocks, forces children to problem solve. It allows them to create, to use their imaginations, to resolve conflicts on their own, and to exercise their bodies as well as their minds. Playing games with words, numbers and colors at home and in the car also helps build basic language and number skills.

COLLECT THINGS: Make collections and sets of things that can be found in nature such as shells, leaves, or stones. Sort them in different ways and discuss similarities and differences.

GIVE CHILDREN RESPONSIBILITY: Ask your child to get the mail, put away groceries, water the plants, help set the table, clean up, etc. If for example, your child gets the mail, he or she can record the number of letters that come each day or sort the mail by name.

LET THE CHILDREN COOK: Cooking is a fantastic way for children to practice measuring, counting, temperature, time, reading, working with their hands and following directions. Not only is cooking fun, but it gives children a real sense of accomplishment.

READ ENVIRONMENT PRINT: See how many times you can find the words T-shirt or pizza while walking on the boardwalk. While shopping, let them help find food items in the grocery store by identifying labels.

ENCOURAGE CURIOSITY: Children are naturally curious about the world around them. For the child who wonders where sand comes from, what causes waves, or why some birds like to sit in water, a walk along the beach can be a great learning experience. Similarly, a walk through a park can reveal many things about the world.

SPEAK: Talk to your child about everything. Children need a lot of verbal stimulation from infancy. Your children pick up most of their vocabulary from you.

SPECIAL RESOURCES

Core Team – A team of school personnel that includes the principal, assistant principal, reading specialist, curriculum specialist, and psychologist. They work collaboratively with teachers and parents to meet individual needs and help children succeed in school.

Curriculum Specialist – Provides teachers and students support in enhancing or remediating students' skills in mathematics. Additionally, a **Mathematics Aide** meets with students in small groups or individually to help improve their skills in math.

Reading Specialist – Provides teachers and students support in enhancing or remediating students' skills in reading.

Librarian – Helps students love reading through storytelling, special activities (i.e., visit by an author) and selecting books from the library.

Enrichment/Remediation Instruction – Within the classroom, enrichment and remediation needs of students are addressed by the classroom teacher via small, flexible groups.

Speech and Language Therapist – Meets with students who may need support in language and articulation.

School Psychologist – Consults with teachers to improve students' behavior and achievement.

Health Services – A nurse and/or health assistant is on duty daily.

MATERIALS AND PROGRAMS

Subject Area	Primary Resource	Supplemental Materials
Communication Arts	Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Journeys	Leveled Readers, Big Books, Read Aloud Books, Wordless Books, Read Alone Books, Reader's Notebook Letter/Word/Picture Cards, Song Tapes, Magnetic Letters, Writing Handbook
Mathematics	Kindergarten Everyday Mathematics	Calculator, attribute blocks, play money, Judy clocks, dominoes, pan balances, songs, tangrams, pattern blocks, counters, measuring tapes, rulers, templates
Social Studies	MacMillan-McGraw Hill Time-Links Hello, World!	Art projects of famous people and families, holiday activities, songs, plays, storybooks, DVDs, experience stories, diversity projects and leveled readers
Science	Foss Kits: Trees, Wood, & Paper	Weather, Briar Bush, the environment
Health and Safety	Second Step	Character Education, social and emotional well-being
Technology	Abington School District	Wireless computer lab using Chromebooks

VISITING THE SCHOOL

Parents/guardians are invited to visit McKinley during Open House, American Education Week, for Parent/Teacher Conferences, special events, and informally throughout the school year.

Visitors to McKinley are invited to park in any of the designated parking lots if space is available. Cars are not permitted in the bus loop in front of the building except for quick drop-offs or pick-ups. Please do not park in the designated handicapped parking spaces unless your car has an official handicapped designation.

Students, friends, and visitors who use wheelchairs can access the building near the office. There is a curb cut-out permitting handicapped access. Ramps in the courtyard make it possible to access any classroom via a wheelchair. Please contact the office before your arrival for assistance or if you have questions.

For the protection of our children all visitors must use the front main entrance to enter/exit the building and follow these procedures:

- ◆ Visitors must bring photo ID or prominently wear their Abington volunteer badge. As you approach the main entrance, please hold your photo ID or volunteer badge to the window. Then, use the intercom and explain the purpose of your visit. Wait to be buzzed inside.
- ◆ Report immediately to the Receptionist's Desk after entering. Be sure that anyone who may have entered with you reports to the Receptionist's Desk as well.
- ◆ Sign in and receive a numbered Visitor's Sticker to go into any permissible area of the building.
- ◆ Always wear the Visitor's Sticker and be sure it is visible.
- ◆ Go only to the areas where permission is granted.
- ◆ Sign out at the Receptionist's Desk, and discard the Visitor Sticker when leaving the building.

Unnecessary interruptions disturb the learning process for all of the children. Therefore, forgotten items should be brought to the office. Please do not ask office personnel to interrupt the teacher to indicate that a forgotten item has been delivered to school. These items will be taken to the child at a time when it does not disturb the class. In the event that a parent-teacher conference is desired, the office personnel will assist in arranging a mutually convenient time for both teacher and parent.

PTO

Every parent and teacher at McKinley Elementary is automatically a member of the PTO. Meetings are held throughout the school year, which is when all business is conducted, all committee reports are presented, and information is given about programs and events. The PTO works throughout the year to raise funds to support many of our special programs at McKinley. Each classroom teacher receives a special fund to purchase classroom materials and supplies every year.

There are many opportunities for people with a variety of talents to get involved. Some get involved during school hours, and many others get things done behind the scenes. Please visit their website for more information: <https://www.mckinleyppto.org/>

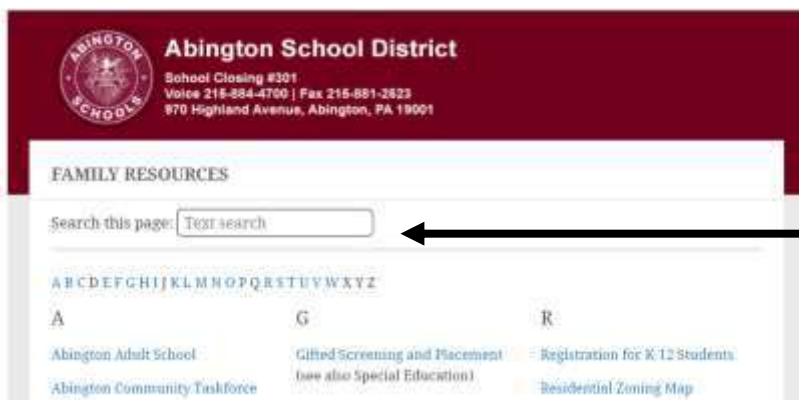
Room Parents	Build a Scarecrow Night
Library Volunteers	Race for Education
School Garden	Spring Fair
Fundraising	Clubs and Activities Sponsor
School Store	McKingo
Book Fairs	School Musical
Assemblies	Talent Show
Back to School Event	Holiday Shoppe
HEART Committee	Yearbook



VOLUNTEERING

Parents/guardians are encouraged to volunteer in our garden, library, extracurricular activities, special events, as Room Parents for their child's classroom and/or PTO. Under Act 151 and 153, volunteers are required to obtain the following certifications: Criminal History Record, Child Abuse Clearance, Federal Criminal History Record. Please refer to the [Superintendent's Administrative Procedure on Volunteers](#) for requirements. Additionally, more information about the volunteer opportunities at McKinley can be found in the district's Volunteer Handbook (found in the Family Resources page, as described below).

MORE INFORMATION



Use the [Abington School District Family Resources](#) page to learn about district initiatives and access links to useful information. A **search engine** is included for your convenience.