

# Newell Elementary Parent/Student Handbook

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**The following policies and procedures are in effect for Newell Elementary School:**

## **Newell Elementary School's Vision**

*Our vision for Newell Elementary School is that all children are educated through a collaborative effort among parents, students, and the community. Students are motivated to learn with the help of quality instruction and cutting-edge technology. Our school environment encourages children to build intellectual, moral, civic, and performance character to become leaders of the 21st century without fear of failure.*

**The following policies and procedures are in effect for Newell Elementary School. This list is not exhaustive but provides a general overview of the policies for our families.**

## **Information Required for All Students:**

Registration  
Medical and Immunization Form  
Blue Emergency Card  
A copy of the child's birth certificate  
Court decree to determine custody, if applicable  
Proof of residency  
Safe schools enrollment declaration

## **Immunizations**

In compliance with North Carolina law (General Statute 130A-152-157), parents/guardian must present certification of the required immunizations at the age required by law on or before the first day a student enters school. Any medical exemption must be in writing from a physician and must state the basis for the exemption. Parents/guardians must submit proof of a health assessment for each child who is presented for admission into N.C. public schools for the first time. The health assessment must have been completed within 12 months prior to the date the child would have first been eligible for initial entry into the public schools. Please visit our

school website at <http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/parents/Pages/Immunizations.aspx> for more information regarding required vaccinations. You may also contact our school nurse Jonise Hall at 980-343-6820.

### **Attendance**

It is essential that students attend school every day, except when illness or other justifiable cause prevents this from occurring. If your child is ill please write a note or supply a doctor's note to your child's teacher in order for the absence to be excused. Make-up work is provided for excused absences.

### **Absence Notification**

Parents must phone the school before 8:45 A.M. if a child is going to be absent. If the child has an extended illness, parents only need to call on the first day of absence and give an estimation of the duration of the illness. If the school is not contacted, state law and school board policy require the school to call the parent or guardian to confirm the child's absence. Assignments missed during the absence are the student's responsibility to complete.

### **Arrival**

**Students should not arrive at school earlier than 8:00 a.m. There is no supervision before or after school, except for regularly scheduled clubs or meetings.** If there is a need for childcare, please make necessary arrangements or enroll your child in our before or afterschool school program by emailing Tanya Porter at [tanya.hayes@cms.k12.nc.us](mailto:tanya.hayes@cms.k12.nc.us). Each time a child arrives late or leaves early, the instructional program is interrupted for all students in the class. As we value your child's education, we ask that you limit these interruptions except in the case of an emergency.

### **Tardiness**

A student arriving late to school must first report to the office escorted by their parent, guardian or approved designee. Arrival after 8:30 a.m. is defined as tardy. A child who is tardy must receive a tardy slip from the office before proceeding to class. Please be aware that our Cafeteria does not serve breakfast after 8:30 am.

### **Early Dismissal**

When it is necessary for a child to be dismissed early, the parent is asked to communicate with the child's teacher in writing including the time the child will be picked up. A Parent, guardian, or approved designee showing proper identification must sign a child out in the office before the child is released.

### **Excused Absence**

Examples of excused absences are listed below. Excused absences allow work to be made up; however, teachers cannot be expected to provide make-up tutoring.

Excused absences come under the following categories:

- Illness/Sickness/Accident
- Death of a relative
- Observance of religious holidays

## **CAFETERIA**

The school cafeteria will operate each day that school is in session. Each child will be given a "PIN" number that he/she must key in for each meal. Carbonated drinks and glass bottles are not permitted. Newell is a participant in the Community Eligibility Provision Program and students are able to receive breakfast and lunch each day at no charge. Checks (made payable to Newell Elementary School cafeteria) and cash must be identified with the child's "PIN" number should they wish to purchase extra items.

### **Cafeteria Guests**

Parents/guardians are always welcome to sit with their children during lunch at the designated location. Please make your child's teacher aware as we want to maintain safety at all times. If you bring lunch for your child, please do not share it with other students. Occasionally, younger siblings accompany parents during the lunch period. Parents are asked to keep any younger siblings under close supervision at all times. Parents are asked not to accompany their child to recess or back to their room.

## **COMMUNICATION PROCESS**

Your child's safety is our first concern. For that reason, we ask that you keep your contact information current with our school at all times. Making sure that we have your correct phone number, address, and name is the best way to help us keep your child as safe as possible.

Parents are encouraged to contact the teacher with any concerns regarding the child's educational program or social, emotional, or physical well-being. Teachers may be contacted by note, by telephone, or by e-mail. If you call during the school day, the secretary will leave the appropriate message for the teacher and your call will be returned at the teacher's earliest convenience (within 24 hours). Newell uses BLOOMZ, a communicative tool for parents and guardians. Your child's teacher will share more information regarding the App.

Visitations to school can be a valuable experience for parents. The purpose for the visit may vary. It may be to observe a child during an academic or social activity. It may be to observe the routines of the child. It may also be to develop an understanding of a grade level curriculum. From time to time, school personnel may request a parent to visit. Parents may initiate a visit as well.

In order to make the visit meaningful for the parent and the least disruptive for the education process, the following guidelines have been established.

1. Contact the teacher to set up a visitation time.
2. Use of recording devices (i.e. tape recorders/video camera/photo cameras) are not permitted in the classroom areas during normal instruction times.
3. Do not bring other siblings/children.
4. A member of the Instructional Leadership Team must accompany to ensure your questions are addressed regarding the academic environment

## **CONFERENCES**

A vital part of any school is the communication between parents and teachers. For this reason, specific dates are set aside for conferences.

1. The school district schedules Fall/Spring conferences. A parent may schedule a conference with a teacher, Principal, or the Assistant Principal at any time by calling the office for an appointment or emailing that person directly. Should you come by the office without an appointment we ask that you complete a communication form which will allow us to research information prior to contacting you should you have a concern. It also allows us to spend valuable time in the classroom, where learning occurs. Remember, no concern is too small to be addressed and resolved.

## FEES

CMS furnishes all textbooks, workbooks, and other consumable items. Parents will need to reimburse the school for lost library books and textbooks.

## HEALTH

### Health Room

The school is equipped with a health room and nurse to take care of first aid situations. Our school nurse is Jonise Hall and she can be contacted at [jonise.hall@mecklenburgcountync.gov](mailto:jonise.hall@mecklenburgcountync.gov). The teacher will send children who are ill or injured to the health room. Health room stays will be limited to 15 minutes unless the child has a fever or vomited.

### Non Prescribed/Prescribed Medication

If your child is on medication, a written permission form signed by both parent and physician is required before medicine can be dispensed at school. **Bring** (parent) the medication to school in the original container, labeled with your child's name and the dosage to be given. **Please do not send medicine to school with your child.**

### Sudden Illness

If a child becomes ill at school, the school will determine if the child's complaint or appearance warrants a call home. Generally, a temperature of 100° or above will require a child to be sent home. Parent contact will be made according to the information on the blue emergency card.

### Serious Injuries or Illness

Serious injuries will be given emergency care and parents will be notified immediately. If necessary, an ambulance will be called to transport the child to the hospital. Parental preference for hospital will be communicated to the ambulance driver; however, it will be his/her decision as to which hospital the patient will be taken.

Parents will be called to take the child home under the following conditions:

- Serious injury
- Abnormal temperature
- Nausea or diarrhea
- Unidentified rash
- Suspected contagious disease
- Suspected head lice
- Other signs or symptoms of illness

A child should be fever free (less than 100° without medication) for 24 hours before returning to school.

A child diagnosed with strep throat must be on medication 24 hours before returning to school.

A child recuperating from chicken pox should remain out of school until all blisters are dry (approximately 7 days from onset).

All cases of communicable diseases must be reported to the school office. Please notify the school nurse if a child develops a chronic illness.

### Health Record

Please keep the school notified of any health problems. All information is held confidential. Contact the nurse to discuss any health concerns.

### **Emergency Cards (Blue Cards)**

Emergency information **must** be returned to school within **one week** after school starts. Updates and changes of phone numbers are necessary for the safety and well-being of your child. Therefore, be sure to keep the school notified of changes in telephone numbers, addresses, work places, and emergency contacts.

## **HOMEWORK**

### **How Much is Appropriate?**

The National PTA recommendations fall in line with general guidelines suggested by researcher Harris Cooper: 10-20 minutes per night in the first grade, and an additional 10 minutes per grade level thereafter (e.g., 20 minutes for second grade, 120 minutes for twelfth). (Review of Educational Research, 2006).

### **What are the benefits?**

We believe there is a benefit to students engaging in practice, preparation, or extending work from the school day. The purpose of homework usually varies by grade. Individualized assignments that tap into students' existing skills or interest can be motivating. At the elementary school level, homework can help students develop study skills and habits and can keep families informed about their child's learning. (Review of Educational Research, 2006)

### **Newell's Policy**

We aim for teachers to communicate to parents and students their individual homework policies. Policies will address the purposes of homework; amount and frequency; school and teacher responsibilities; student responsibilities; and, the role of parents or others who assist students with homework. Please reach out to your child's teacher to obtain an understanding of his or her policy. You may also reach out to your child's grade level administrator, listed below.

<b>School Principal</b>	Lydia Ferguson
<b>Kindergarten Administrator</b>	Semeika Stewart
<b>First Administrator</b>	Melissa Thiel
<b>Second Administrator</b>	Lydia Ferguson
<b>Third Administrator</b>	Melissa Thiel
<b>Fourth Administrator</b>	Semeika Stewart
<b>Fifth Administrator</b>	Lydia Ferguson

## LOST AND FOUND

Please encourage your child to check for lost articles in the school's designated Lost and Found area. Labeling of clothing and personal articles help in the identification of lost items. Unclaimed articles are donated to charity after each grading period.

## PARTIES

**Home Parties:** If you are planning a birthday or other party for your child, please **do not** send invitations to be distributed at school unless you are planning to invite either the whole class or all the boys or all the girls in the class.

**Birthday Treats:** Parents frequently send in a class treat for a child's birthday. If you wish to send a birthday treat, please include enough for the entire class and inform the teacher in advance. The treat must be purchased **from a store**. It is our preference that the celebration treats are provided during the child's scheduled lunch time.

## PTA

The members of the PTA are dedicated to helping the school provide the richest possible learning environment. This help is provided in two major ways – through fundraising and volunteer programs. Parents are encouraged to participate as volunteers in our school. Please contact the school office, parent coordinator, or a teacher for more information on helping in our school through PTA.

## REPORTING PROCEDURES

### Mid-Quarter Reports

A mid-quarter report identifies areas in which a student needs improvement. A mid-quarter report will be sent home to all parents the fourth week of the quarter.

### Report Cards

All students in grades K-5 receive report cards at the end of each nine-week period, or quarter. Parents are asked to review these reports carefully with their children, sign and return the cards to school. Please visit the CMS website and click on the calendars linked to view report cards distribution dates.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

In the case of severe weather requiring school to be closed, the official announcement will be made over the local radio stations. Local television stations will also carry the announcement. **Please do not call the school.**

**CMS Weather Policy:** <http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/parents/resources/inclementweather/Pages/default.aspx>

## SCHOOL DRESS



Newell is not a uniform school, however clothing choices should in no way interfere with learning. Parents are asked to see that their children are dressed properly for prevailing weather conditions. However, in cases in which the health, safety, and disruption of the education process results from a student's clothing, the school administration reserves the right to require that a student obey the standards that contribute to a safe, orderly school.

**Newell Elementary Behavior Program**  
**Praise All Well-Behaved Students (P.A.W.S.)**  
**Student Recognition Program**

**Program Rationale:** During the beginning weeks of each academic year, all teachers and staff spend valuable time training students on Newell's long established culture of a safe and orderly school environment. P.A.W.S. is a school-wide student recognition program designed to reinforce the high behavior standards our PLC has established for all students. The structure of this program provides an opportunity for the entire staff to monitor and reward students for demonstrating their commitment to norms we have explained and modeled for them.

**Program Outline:**

1. Strategic staff throughout the building will actively observe students in both the class setting and common areas (i.e., hallways, cafeteria). Please see back for a list of staff members who will be observing student behavior.
2. The observer will be looking for compliance with PLC behavior norms we have established for all students at Newell.
3. In cases where the entire class is found to meet or exceed Newell's norms regarding expected behavior, a red or golden PAW will be presented to the classroom teacher.

<b>Red PAW</b> 	<i><b>Equals 1 point</b></i>	<b>Presented when your entire class 'meets' the observer's expectation</b>
<b>Golden PAW</b> 	<i><b>Equals 5 points</b></i>	<b>Presented when your entire class 'exceeds' the observer's expectation</b>

4. Each class will have a standing goal to earn **35 P.A.W.S. per quarter**. Once a class reaches their goal they will be rewarded with a party and presented with certificates. Our hope is that each class will strive to achieve this goal each quarter. Classroom teachers should e-mail Mr. Portlock once they have accumulated 35 P.A.W.S. and would like to arrange their class recognition party.
5. Each quarter, the class with the greatest accumulation of P.A.W.S. among the entire school, will earn the distinction of being named **school-wide winner of the P.A.W.S. student recognition program**. The quarterly winner will be announced on the morning news broadcast. Individual students in the winning class will receive a small prize. In addition, a certificate will be signed and presented to the class by Ms. Evans during a special lunch held in the open area of the office. The class certificate will be displayed on the bulletin board located near the lobby entrance for the remainder of the quarter.

**Special Note:** At the conclusion of each quarter all P.A.W.S. will be collected. Please make sure your students understand that all class-specific goals and school-wide tallies will restart each quarter. Students who have met the communicated criteria, will receive positive praise and acknowledgement, in the form of, but not limited to; parties, dances, participation in school activities, appearance on the school news, ice cream truck, clothing themes. Students are encouraged to contribute to ideas regarding incentives they would like to have. Our school counselors are happy to hear from our students.

## CELL PHONES

Cell Phone Policy for Students in CMS. A student may possess a cell phone on school property, at after-school activities and at school-related functions, provided that during school hours and on a school bus, the cell phone remains off and put away. Possession of a cell phone by a student is a privilege which will be revoked for violations of this policy. Violations may result in the confiscation of the cell phone (to be returned only to a parent) and/or other disciplinary actions. The district is not responsible for theft, loss or damage to cell phones or other electronic devices brought onto its property.

## TRANSPORTATION

***No transportation changes will be accepted over the phone; any changes should be sent in writing or made in person with the office staff before 2:00 p.m. Early dismissals are not allowed after 2:15 p.m. as this impacts our ability to safely dismiss school.***

### Bus Riders

For legal reasons and the safety of our students, any and all changes in routine dismissal procedures can only be done with the written consent of the parent or guardian. The address of the student must be current in PowerSchool in order for a student to ride a bus. No student is permitted to continue to ride a bus if they have moved and not updated the address with our transportation department. Students may not ride the bus unless they are assigned to that particular bus, i.e. they may not ride the bus home with a friend or family member unless they are in fact a student assigned to that bus.

### Picking up students

ALL cars must be registered in the front office and a number will be provided to you to place in the front window of your car or on the dashboard. This process must be completed before you may pick your child up from the carpool line. Parents, guardians or designees that do not provide a number in the carpool line must park their car, enter the building and sign the child out. Current ID will be required.

**Again, if someone other than yourself is picking up your child, written permission and identification must be provided to the office staff.** Non-custodial parents are required to have permission of custodial (residential) parents before the child can be released to them.

## VISITORS

Parents and visitors are always welcome at Newell Elementary School. We appreciate parental involvement at Newell and encourage you to visit often. All visitors, parents, and volunteers are required to check in with the school secretary and sign the Lobby Guard to receive a visitor's badge. **State law requires that all parents, visitors, and staff volunteers report to the office. Parents are not to go to the classrooms without the permission of the office staff, even for a scheduled appointment with the teacher.**

## VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers share their time, talent, and skills and work under the direction of the teachers or the principal. Any parent interested in doing volunteer work should contact PTA or the office. Background checks must be completed through CMS prior to volunteering. Volunteers are required to sign in upon their arrival and receive a volunteer badge from registering in the Lobby Guard. This process applies to parents attending field trips as well. Please be sure to update your volunteer eligibility status each year.