

Peter Cooper School

Student – Parent Handbook

Revised in September 2008

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School Operations

Important Phone Numbers

Peter Cooper School	973-835-5844
Cooper Absence Line	973-835-0986
Superintendent's Office	973-962-7028
Business Administrator's Office	973-962-7029
Transportation Office	973-962-7500
Office of Special Services	973-962-7027

Schedules – regular school day, early closing, delayed opening

Regular school day

8:17 buses start to unload, children wait in lower hallway

8:20 students sent to classrooms

8:45 start of the school day

11:40 first lunch period

12:25 second lunch period

2:45 dismissal of children being picked up

2:50 bus dismissal

Early closing day

- 8:17 buses start to unload, children wait in lower hallway
- 8:20 students sent to classrooms
- 8:45 start of the school day
no lunch served on these days
- 12:45 dismissal of children being picked up
- 12:50 bus dismissal

Delayed opening day (usually due to inclement weather)

- 9:47 buses start to unload, children wait in lower hallway
- 9:50 students sent to classrooms
- 10:15 start of the school day
- 12:20 first lunch period
- 12:55 second lunch period
- 2:45 dismissal of children being picked up
- 2:50 bus dismissal

Procedure for Emergency School Closing and Early Closing:

- In the event of an emergency school closing, the PTO will be contacted and they will activate the classroom telephone chain.
- If you are unable to be reached through the telephone chain, the persons listed on your Emergency Form will be contacted. (It is imperative that your forms have the names and current phone numbers of two LOCAL residents to ensure the safety of your child in all emergency situations.)
- Many times during an emergency school closing the transportation department will announce that Emergency Bus Stops will be in effect. A list of emergency stops will be distributed to the routes and stops affected. Please review this list and discuss the alternate location of the emergency stop with your child(ren).
- There are several occasions a year when a scheduled early closing will be announced (Parent/Teacher Conference Days, the day before Thanksgiving Recess, the December Holidays, and the last day or two of school in June.) On these days the school day will start at the regular time of 8:45, but will end at 12:50.
- There will be NO LUNCHES SERVED on regularly scheduled Early Closing Days

Procedure for Delayed Opening of School:

- When poor weather conditions such as snow or ice occur, a decision will be made prior to 6:30 AM as to the opening of schools.
- In the event of a 90-minute delayed opening, or a school closing the decision will be broadcast on Ringwood's local cable station (Channel 77), Channel 12; AM

- radio station: WGHT 1500; on the district website: www.ringwoodschools.org as well as the Board of Education's Inclement Weather Hot Line at 973-962-0331.
- A siren will sound at 6:30 AM indicating a 90-minute Delayed Opening or possible school closing. If a delayed opening is called and conditions do not improve, a second siren will sound at 8:00 AM indicating the closing of the school day.
 - LUNCHES WILL BE SERVED on delayed opening days.

School Calendar

The school calendar will be sent home in June with final report cards. It lists the days that the school is not in session in the upcoming school year. Kindergarten parents will receive a mailing over the summer that includes a bus card, calendar, class assignment, and other information. Parents who register their children during the school year will receive a school calendar at the time of registration. Parents wishing a copy of the calendar will find it on the district's website homepage, www.ringwoodschools.org.

Attendance Procedures

Regular attendance is expected unless valid reasons preclude a child from being in school. Personal illness, quarantine and religious holidays are VALID reasons. If your child is absent, it is very important that you call the school's Attendance Line at (973) 835-0986 before 9:00 AM. Please give your child's name teacher's name and reason for absence. When your child returns to school, it is requested that you send a note so that the school Nurse can be kept properly informed. (See the Ringwood Board of Education Attendance Policy – file code **5113**). For homework please see the following procedures.

Promotion/Retention Plan (as it pertains to attendance issues)

"It is the desire of the Ringwood Public School District that students attend classes on a regular basis and acquire the academic proficiencies necessary to meet the expectations of each successive grade level. Ideally, year-to-year promotion of students to succeeding grade levels will take place.

The Ringwood Public School District will consider retention of students on their current grade level for an upcoming academic year for the following reason: If the student's attendance record in the current school year demonstrates unacceptable standards of attendance necessary to maintain proper academic progress. It is the belief of the Ringwood Public Schools that there is often an inverse correlation between the number of absences a student accumulates and the academic preparedness of that student, therefore, if a student accumulates more than 20 absences during a single school year, retention proceedings shall be initiated as per Ringwood School District policy (file code 5113 and file code 5113.1).

As per Ringwood School District policy (file code 6146.2), each consideration

of the retention of a student is taken on a case-by-case basis. The guidelines outlined above can, if warranted by unusual circumstances, be over-looked if it is deemed to be in the best interest of the student.”

Tardiness and Half-Day Absences

If a child is late in arriving (tardy), after the 8:45 tardy bell, it is imperative that you escort your child into the office and sign them in before he/she goes to class. Each five tardies your child accumulates will equate to one day of absence. Please make every effort to assure your child arrives to school on time. Children who continue to accumulate an excessive number of tardies are subject to disciplinary action. This action may take the form of lunch/recess detentions, after-school detentions, or temporary exclusion from special programs and activities.

If your child arrives at school up to 10:30 AM, or is picked up and leaves the school at 1:30 PM, this constitutes a HALF-DAY absence.

Homework

The Ringwood Board of Education believes that homework relevant to material presented in class provides an opportunity to broaden, deepen or reinforce the pupil's knowledge. Homework shall not be used for punitive reasons. Pupils absent for any reason must make up assignments, class work and tests within a reasonable length of time. In most cases, a reasonable length of time shall be the same number of school days as the days missed.

Parents calling in a child's absence are asked to leave a message with the school secretary or attendance officer asking for homework and telling them who you would like the homework sent home with or that the parent will be picking it up themselves. Requests for homework must be made early in the morning so that the teacher has enough time to prepare the assignment and materials for the afternoon dismissal.

Vacation homework requests – this work will consist of review and reinforcement activities. It can include daily journaling and book reports. It may not include material that is new to the child or has not yet been introduced.

Driving Your Child to School

Although the district provides bus transportation, there may be times that it is necessary to drive your child to school. Should this occur, please pull into the parent parking area, have your child exit the vehicle and walk to the path in front of the car and proceed to the bus door where they will enter the building. *Do not discharge children in the bus drop-off area or leave your vehicle in front of the school to escort the children into school, as our buses will be waiting behind you to unload.*

Please do not drop off children before 8:17 AM, as there is no supervision.

Pickup of Children

In all instances when an authorized adult will be picking up students it is important that *a note* be sent to the classroom teacher in the morning. Teachers will post this information on the classroom chalkboard before forwarding your note to the office. The authorized adult must sign his/her child out on the sign-out sheet. Students being picked up will be called to the hallway outside the All Purpose Room prior to bus dismissal.

At dismissal there is one office staff whose job is to answer phones, call the buses and check on students who will be picked up that day; while the other is monitoring the pick-up area to make sure that students and their parents make the proper connections. Problems arise when parents call at the last minute or show up at school because they have forgotten to write a note. **If there is no note for a pick up the principal must send the child home on their regularly scheduled bus.** Should an emergency situation arise the office must be contacted by 2 P.M. Our children's safety is too important not to be taken seriously.

Interruption of Classroom Instruction

Parents can help to eliminate interruption of classroom instruction by cooperating with following procedures, and by adopting an attitude of respect for the teacher's need for continuity in lessons:

- Request permission for a child to be dismissed early by writing a note, and having permission granted in the morning.
- Be sure that your child is prepared with daily needs such as lunch, lunch money, sneakers, homework, etc.
- Parents and visitors will be permitted to go to a specific room only if a teacher or staff member has previously scheduled an appointment or the principal has extended permission due to a special circumstance.

Physical Education Program

The Physical Education Program offers a wide variety of skill building activities for children at all grade levels. Gym is offered twice weekly for a period of forty (40) minutes. Children are expected to come to class fully prepared. It is recommended that children wear laced-tied sneakers and clothes that allow freedom of movement. Dresses are considered inappropriate. Since jewelry must be removed prior to participation, pieces are sometimes misplaced or forgotten. It is therefore recommended that jewelry not be worn at all on "gym days".

Please note: one forty (40) minute session of gym is offered to Kindergarten students each week.

Lunch and Milk Program

Lunch including milk, or milk only may be purchased in any of the following manners for students' grades 1-3:

- On a daily basis.
- By obtaining a ten-meal lunch ticket. These tickets may be purchased any day through the cafeteria. Checks should be made payable to "Ringwood Board of Education" or to "Cash."
- Cash may also be sent in a sealed envelope with the child's name, grade, teacher and amount enclosed clearly indicated. Lunches need not be taken on consecutive days.
- By obtaining milk ticket good for the purchase of 23 cartons of milk.

Menus are sent home monthly indicating the meals available for grades 1-3. Menus can also be found on the district website www.ringwoodschoools.org.

For our Kindergarteners we offer a milk program where parents can purchase milk (homogenized, 2%, 1%, and chocolate) for their child's A.M. or P.M. snack time.

Lost and Found

The school maintains a lost and found box, which is located on the stage in the All Purpose Room. To ensure the return of lost articles, please label coats, backpacks, and all valuables with the name of your child.

Bus Transportation Procedures

Children will be transported to a single destination each and every day on the trip from school. Parents have the opportunity to select either an “on-route” after school care facility or other caretaker, or the “home” bus stop as the designated “from school” destination.

We seek your cooperation with regard to “backpacks on wheels.” The Office of Transportation of the N. J. State Department of Education has reminded us that all books, book bags, etc., must be placed on the lap of the student, not on the floor, and of course, never in the aisle. For this reason, we cannot allow mobile backpacks.

Bus Passes

Bus assignments, which include route numbers, bus stop location, and bus pass, are usually sent home by the middle of August. This information should be kept in a safe place for future reference. Children should have their bus pass prominently displayed when boarding the school bus in September.

Bus Safety Drills

To help ensure the safety and well being of students, bus safety drills are conducted twice each year for all students. The children are instructed by the driver as to the procedures they are to follow in the event of an emergency. Included in these drills is the evacuation of the buses by the students using alternate exits.

Emergency Bus Stops

In the event of early dismissal due to inclement snow weather, the following Emergency Bus Stop provisions should be followed:

- ❖ Parents of children whose bus stops change in an emergency situation will be provided with a letter indicating their emergency bus stops location. Parents who do not receive a copy of the emergency bus stops may presume that their child’s stop remains unchanged.
- ❖ In any situation where the school will be closed as a result of inclement snow weather the emergency bus stop is in effect.
- ❖ Plans regarding supervision of your child in the case of snow emergency early dismissal remain the responsibility of the parent. We are unable to keep children at school beyond a reasonable time.
- ❖ It also the responsibility of the parent to provide supervision of their child when they are discharged at the emergency bus stop. Children will not be discharged at an emergency bus stop if an adult is not present.

Security Procedures

Emergency Procedures

Fire Drills

Fire drills are conducted twice monthly as required. We place a major emphasis on our student and staff's safety by proper evacuation of the building. Exits and alternate exits area assigned for each of the room in the school. To ensure proper emergency evacuation procedures, we occasionally block assigned exits.

The Skyline Lakes Volunteer Fire Department visits the school and conducts a yearly drill during **Fire Prevention Week** in mid-October.

Hazardous Weather and Lockdown Procedures

Drills for Hazardous Weather and Lock-Downs will be held periodically throughout the year. When a drill is announced the teachers and students will take the appropriate steps necessary to insure their safety and well-being.

Visitors

To ensure the safety of all our children it is imperative that all visitors report immediately to the school office upon entering the building. All visitors must sign the Visitor's log and wear an identification badge, which is to be returned to the office prior to leaving the building.

Academics

Interim Reports

An interim report may be sent home with a child during the middle of a marking period. Not all children receive interim reports, since their use is reserved for the following two purposes only:

1. To notify parents/guardians that their child is not performing well in one or more of the academic areas and/or,
2. To indicate an excellent achievement by the student.

Report Cards

Report cards are issued four times a school year. The report card will be sent home with the children in an envelope that will have places for parents to sign and then return the envelope to school. The report card is designed to keep the parents/guardians aware of the skills being taught during the marking period and the proficiency level of the child in understanding these skills. If you have any questions regarding this means of evaluation please call the classroom teacher to discuss the report card. Further explanation may also be obtained at a specially requested parent/teacher conference.

Health

Medical Considerations

Communication with the School nurse is essential on all matters regarding the health of your child. Listed below are some common medical considerations for Peter Cooper students and their families:

Bee Stings and allergies If your child is allergic to bee stings or has another allergy please be certain that the School nurse is informed. In extreme cases, immediate action might be required. We must have this information in order to help your child.

Emergency forms. Emergency forms are sent home at the beginning of the school year. It is vital that these be completed and returned to the school. There are times when we must call you and in emergencies, a physician may have to be called. The information provided by you determines the course of action we will take in an emergency.

Immunization records immunization records are required by the State of New Jersey. All required immunizations must be complete. We are required to exclude from school any child whose records are not in order. If an item is in questions, the Nurse will contact parents on an individual basis as needed.

Prescription Medication Any prescription medication to be administered during school hours must be kept at the clinic. Medications, accompanied by a written statement from the physician that identifies the drug, the dosage, and the purpose of the medication, must be brought to school by the parent. The only person authorized to dispense medication to a student is the School Nurse. The School Nurse should be advised of any long-term prescription medications your child is taking.

Over the Counter Medications. The school nurse requires a written order from a licensed physician to administer any over-the-counter medications including Tylenol and cough syrup.

Strep Throat a sore throat that is caused by the streptococcal bacteria can be a serious disease, not because of the infection in the throat, which is self-limiting, but because of possible conditions such as rheumatic fever or glomerulonephritis (kidney disease) which could occur if the strep infection is not properly treated.

Any student who has sore throat symptoms, accompanied by fever, headache, abdominal pain or earaches, should be seen by a physician to have a throat culture taken. If the test is positive for strep, the child should be treated with the appropriate antibiotic prescribed by the child's physician.

Ringwood School District policy states that children with a documented streptococcal sore throat may not return to school until they have been on antibiotic therapy for 48 hours.

As of September 2002, any student transferring into a school district must have had a physical examination no more than 365 days prior to entry and that exam report must state what, if any, modifications are required for full participation in the school program.

Discipline

Basic Rules

Respect: other students/Teachers/Aides
school property/Other students property
show respect and appreciation in assemblies

Keep hands to yourself

Keep food on tables

Quiet and orderly in hallways and stairways

Behave properly during Fire/Lock-downs/Hazardous Weather drills

Conduct yourself properly in the lavatory

Basic Consequences

1st Offense - loss of recess/playground time.

2nd Offense - loss of additional recess/playground time or after-school detention

3rd Offense - meeting between principal and parents to discuss alternate solutions

Positive Rewards

Praise and Positive verbal interaction with individual student/classes.

Daily Sticker Charts

Awards extra recess time

Severe Clause

If a student chooses to fight; to destroy school or personal property; to show disrespect to a teacher or to consistently violate the rules, the child will be sent to the Principal.

School-Wide Discipline Guide

The faculty, staff and administration are making every effort to guarantee your child, and every child, the opportunity to attend school in the excellent teaching/learning climate they deserve. We all believe that each child can behave appropriately in school.

Behavior that creates a disruption in the educational process will not be tolerated. In order to continue in the implementation of this process and establish the consistency it requires, this guide is published for parents and students.

Classroom

Teachers have established classroom rules that meet the needs of the class. The rules have been reviewed with the children and consequences for failing to comply are understood. The administration of the school supports the teachers in their

implementation of discipline and helps them enforce their plan. If a pupil is sent to the office for a classroom offense, it is considered willful disregard of classroom rules, defiance of the authority of the teacher, or disrespect for staff and/or fellow pupils.

Lunchroom/Playground

All general school rules are in effect and need to be followed. Students eat at assigned tables, unless the classroom teachers and/or lunchroom aides have made other arrangements. Children need to demonstrate proper table manners and be considerate of others at all times. All children are requested to use the bathrooms during the lunch period and prior to their going outside. The recess period is an opportunity for children to relax and enjoy a break from the academic school day. There are, however, guidelines that need to be followed for everyone's safety. There is to be no pushing or shoving of other students. Fighting of any kind is not permissible. Inappropriate physical contact is also not permitted. Once children have gone outside for recess, they must have an aides' permission to leave the playground to visit the nurse or use the bathroom.

Dress Code

We expect all students to dress in a manner that is proper for a public school. The Ringwood Board of Education has developed a dress code policy that states that clothing should be neat and clean, consistent with standards of health and safety, and not disruptive to learning in the classroom. Clothing with inappropriate messages, torn or cutoff clothing, shoes without backs, hats, sunglasses, etc. are not allowed in the school. Students may be asked to change their clothes or make arrangements for other clothing. This action could require them to evacuate to a central safe area or leave the building. This process will be done with speed and as little noise/talking as possible.

Electronic Equipment

Walkman, Gameboys, Cell Phones, Beepers and CD players are not allowed in school. This electronic equipment should be left at home so that they are not damaged or stolen while at school. When children are found possessing Walkman, Gameboys and CD's will be held in the office until the end of the day and returned to the child to take and keep home. Cell phones and Beepers will result in confiscation and the item will be returned to the parent.

Parent Information

Back-to-School Night

Back to School Night is a special evening for parents to visit our school. This year it will be held on Wednesday, September 17, 2008 from 7:00 to 8:30 P.M. Back-to-School Night is an excellent opportunity for parents to visit the classroom, meet the teacher, and learn more about their child's program for the upcoming year. This program is set-aside for PARENTS/GUARDIANS ONLY. We encourage all Parents to attend.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent/Teacher Conferences will be held on Monday and Tuesday, November 19 and 20, 2007. The Kindergarten classes will have an additional day for conferences that the teachers will notify their parents about for the exact date and time. If you have additional concerns regarding your child's progress at any other time during the year, you may call his/her teacher to schedule another conference. You may also request conferences with special area teachers.

Parent Visitation Day

Parent Visitation Day occurs on Monday, December 3, 2007 this year. This is an excellent opportunity for our parents to come visit the classroom to see their child's class in session. There are morning and afternoon time slots to accommodate the schedules of both parents at home and those working outside of Ringwood. The children will follow their regularly daily schedule that may include a special area classroom (art, music, phys. ed., or library).

We do request that pre-school children stay at home. This request is to ensure the least disruption to the classroom environment for the students and teachers.

Exhibit Night

Exhibit Night is scheduled for Wednesday, March 12, 2008. This is a wonderful opportunity for parents and their children to visit the school to view many of the curriculum projects and work, which the children have completed during the course of the school year. Parents will receive written notification of the date and time prior to the event.

Special Adult Day

Special Adult Day will occur on Monday, April 14, 2008. This day is designed for those individuals (grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc.) who have a special relationship with our children and enjoy coming into school to visit their classroom. The elementary schools have an early morning time slot; the intermediate school has a late morning slot, and the middle school noontime and early afternoon time slot. Again, we request that pre-school children stay at home.

Volunteer Aide Program

This program provides an opportunity for parents to help by becoming directly involved in the day-to-day operations of the school. Aides can assist in one of several ways: classroom aides, PTO copy aides, Library/Media Center aides, laminating/binding aides, and at-home aides. Volunteers must sign-up at the beginning of the school year, or contact the office during the year, by filling out an application. The application will be forwarded to the Board of Education for approval. Parents will be assigned to classrooms on an as-needed basis, and this may not be at your child's grade level. Volunteer aides will confer with their assigned teacher to setup a mutually convenient schedule. Some

parents choose to become an at-home aide that allows them to continue caring for their younger children while helping still helping the classroom teacher.

PETER COOPER PTO

The Cooper PTO understands the importance of adult involvement in our children's school life. We advocate the four following objectives:

1. To promote the welfare of children in the home, school and community
2. To support laws for the care and protection of all children
3. To promote closer relationship between home and school
4. Develop united efforts between educators and the general public to secure the highest advantages in education for all children.

Sponsored Events include Fall and Spring Book Fairs, Halloween Hoopla, Reading Olympics, Holiday Bazaar, Girl's Square Dance, Big Guy/Little Guy Event, Teacher's Fund, School Directory, Market Day, Talent Show, and Teacher's Appreciation Luncheon.

Class Parents provide an important link between the school and other parents. Each class should have three and hopefully four class parents. PTO Class Parent Committee Chairpersons are guaranteed placement as a class parent. Parents with a child in Peter Cooper who are interested in becoming a class parent should complete and return the appropriate form within the first few days of school year.

Please Note: In fairness to all, parents who were not class parents during the previous year will be given first consideration for these positions.

Class parent responsibilities include:

- * Calling parents in the event of early dismissal due to inclement weather or snow.
- * Contacting parents for any school wide situation or events.
- * Chaperoning class trips
- * Working with the teacher in planning classroom parties, which include Halloween, Winter Recess, Valentine's Day, and End-of-the-Year. They provide refreshments for class children with monies collected at the start of the year for this purpose.

ERSKINE COOPER HEWITT ORGANIZATION

(ECHO)

The Erskine Cooper Hewitt Organization of Ringwood Public Schools District Inc. is made up of over 600 families with children who attend the Ringwood Public Schools. ECHO relies upon the hard work and dedication of parent volunteers who are committed

to enriching the educational experience of the nearly 1500 children in our member schools. This goal is achieved by raising the funds to fully sponsor the Cultural Arts Program and the Field Trip program in each of the buildings.

CULTURE ARTS PROGRAM has been developed to enhance and enrich the education of all students across the curriculum. During the course of each year, assemblies, author visits, and workshop programs help to reinforce concepts learned in Reading, Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, Mathematics, Language, Music, and Art. In addition, some of the programming is designed to deal with self-esteem issues, cultural awareness, problem solving, and other skills that are vital to healthy childhood development. Cultural Arts Programs are paid for entirely by funds raised through the ECHO fundraiser and membership drives. The programming for Peter Cooper and Robert Erskine schools is identical to keep equity and consistency within the district.

The ECHO executive board is comprised of four parent positions, including a President and Vice-President (or two Co-Presidents), a Treasurer, and a Secretary.