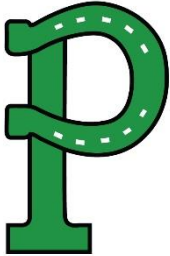


Portage Elementary School

www.portageareasd.org

Staff email address: first initial last name@mustangmail.org

Example: bsmith@mustangmail.org



Telephone (814) 736 - 9636
Fax (814) 736 - 4165



Office Hours: 8:00 - 4:00
Staff Hours: 8:00 - 3:30

Superintendent: Mr. Pete Noel
Principal: Mrs. Jennifer Pisarski
Assistant Principal: Mrs. Kelly Mignogna
Secretaries: Mrs. Jessica Miller & Ms. Tayla Kennedy
Nurse: Mrs. Laura Glass
Special Education Director: Mr. Troy Eppley
Social Worker: Mrs. Ashley Shaffer

Staff Telephone Extensions

Phone Numbers Extensions

Office:

Ms. Tayla Kennedy- 1202

Mrs. Jessica Miller - 1201

Elem. Office - 1200

Fax: 814-736-4165

Nurse: *Mrs. Laura Glass* - 1270

Fax: 814-736-8979

Principal: *Mrs. Jennifer Pisarski* -1204

Asst. Principal: *Mrs. Kelly Mignogna* -
1205

Special Ed. Director: *Mr. Troy Eppley* -
. 1605

Cafeteria - ext. 1280

Kindergarten

J. Chobany 2108

T. Jubina 2109

K. Swires 2110

First Grade

M. Warfield 2111

S. Pesta 2112

W. Kunko 2113

Second Grade

R. Single 2201

M. Long 2202

S. Erzal 2203

K. Jarvie 2107

Third Grade

T. Borlie 2301

H. Washko 2303

J. Thomas 2305

Fourth Grade

A. Donoughe 2401

C. Miko 2402

C. Franey 2403

Fifth Grade

L. Stivers 2501

B. Eckenrod 2502

S. Richardson 2503

Sixth Grade

D. Crain 2601

E. Sossong 2603

K. Trout 2604

Title Services

T. Borlie 2205

C. Garlesky 2204

L. Sinclair 2302

Special Education

B. Brewer 2102

H. Corle 2114

E. Weakland 2504

T. Burkett 2304

K. Cawley 2105

A. Burkett 2602

H. Shaffer 2711

L. Phillips 2404

Special Classes

E. Plouse 2704

M. Harrington 2706

T. Rodgers 2709

F. Rousell 2708

Band/Chorus 2710

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Portage Area School District | 2024-25 School Calendar



AUGUST '24						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

19-21 In-Service
20 ES & HS Meet the Teacher
22 First Student Day

(\$ Days = 7 / T Days = 10.5)

FEBRUARY '25						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

17 Presidents' Day

(\$ Days = 19 / T Days = 19)

SEPTEMBER '24						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

2 Labor Day

(\$ Days = 20 / T Days = 20)

MARCH '25						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

14 Teacher In-Service (Act 80)
21 Student Half Day

(\$ Days = 21 / T Days = 21)

OCTOBER '24						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

14 Columbus Day
25 Student Half Day

(\$ Days = 22 / T Days = 22)

APRIL '25						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

17 Half day for ALL
18 Good Friday
20 Easter Monday

(\$ Days = 20 / T Days = 19.5)

NOVEMBER '24						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

11 Veterans Day
27 Half day for ALL
28 & 29 Thanksgiving Break

(\$ Days = 18 / T Days = 17.5)

MAY '25						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

9 Online PD
26 Memorial's Day
28 Last Day

(\$ Days = 18 / T Days = 19)

DECEMBER '24						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

2 Online PD
3 & 4 P/T Conf. (Act 80)
23 Teacher Half Day
Online PD—No Students
23-Jan. 5 Christmas Break

(\$ Days = 14 / T Days = 15.5)

JUNE '25						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

JANUARY '25						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

1 Christmas Break
17 Student Half Day
20 M.L. King Day

(\$ Days = 21 / T Days = 21)

End of Marking Periods
 1st – Oct. 25
 2nd – Jan. 14
 3rd – Mar. 20
 4th – May 28

*Additional snow days will be added to the end of the year if virtual days are not able to be utilized for unexpected weather.

Board Approved 2/21/2024

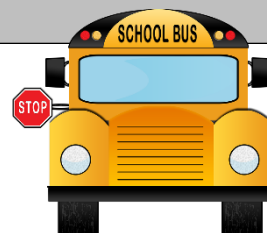
School Security/Safety

The Portage Area School District is taking safety precautions to ensure the safety of all of our students. A security camera is placed outside the school building. In order to enter the building, it is necessary to “buzz” the office and identify yourself and the reason for coming to the school. Visitors or parents are not to be in the classroom area at any time of the day without permission. For the safety and security of all of our students, no one is permitted anywhere in the school building without permission and all visitors must sign in at the office.

In the morning, students riding the school buses will be dropped off at the doors by the auditorium. Parents/guardians who are bringing students to school are to drive around the back of the building and stop at the auditorium entrance. Students should exit the vehicles and walk directly into the crosswalk and then the sidewalk. Parents/guardians are to then continue around the circle to exit the parking lot.

At dismissal, students who are being picked up by a parent/guardian will exit through the gymnasium lobby doors, and students who are riding the buses will be dismissed through the auditorium lobby and art room lobby doors as the buses arrive. If you are providing transportation for your child after school, park in the parking lot, walk to the school and wait outside the building by the gymnasium lobby for your child.

**** BUS CHANGES:** Students riding a bus home from school, other than their assigned bus, **MUST** have a written note from a parent/guardian. The note should include the **bus number** as well as the **bus stop** they are going to. Without this information, the bus drivers do not know where to drop the students off. If an emergency arises and you need to make a bus change, please call the school to make arrangements. **Changes after 2:00 pm will not be accepted.**



Emergency School Closings



Weather-related school closing and delays are announced on the following television stations:

Channel 6 WJAC
Channel 10 WTAJ
Channel 8 WWCP



Portage PBIS - Pride

At Portage Elementary, the school is implementing PBIS through the P.R.I.D.E. program. This program includes all of the evidence-based practices associated with PBIS, including establishing universal expectations, teaching those expectations, acknowledgment students for demonstrating positive behavior, and using data to drive decision-making.

At Portage, P.R.I.D.E. stands for:

- **P**repare
- **R**espect
- **I**nclude
- **D**ecide
- **E**xcel

This acronym provides the guiding principles for the entire P.R.I.D.E. program. This is what we want our students to demonstrate through their behavior.



PORTAGE PRIDE



	Classroom	Cafeteria	Buses	Playground	Hallway/Ramp/Stairway	Restroom	Events	Office/Nurse
Prepare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have all materials ready • Complete homework on time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to all adults • Wait your turn • Talk quietly to others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be ready to exit • Arrive to your stop on time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be ready for the weather 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take materials you will need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask for permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter and exit quietly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take fob • Take agenda to the nurse
Respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow directions • Work quietly • Listen and learn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use good manners • Eat/Touch only your food • Keep cafeteria clean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to the bus driver • Use quiet voice • Stay in your seat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share the equipment • Take turns • Play fairly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use soft voices • Be polite and stay to the right • Keep your locker clean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect privacy of others • Keep the bathroom clean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to the speaker or performer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be kind • Wait quietly
Include	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a good teammate • Be helpful and encourage your classmates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a good friend to others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a good friend to others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a good sport and friend • Encourage others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smile at others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wait your turn patiently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wait your turn patiently
Decide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make good, safe choices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be kind to cafeteria staff and use your manners • Report issues to adult in charge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make safe choices • Keep the bus clean • Report issues to the adult in charge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report issues to adults in charge • Line up when called 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep hands and feet to self • Use good manners • Pay attention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go, flush, wash, leave • Use only the materials you need • Report messes to an adult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow directions • Listen for dismissal procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set a good example • Be prompt
Excel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do your best • Leave area clean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep hands and feet to yourself • Eat your food appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter and exit the bus safely • Keep body parts inside the window • Keep aisles clear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use equipment appropriately • Leave the mulch on the ground 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep a safe distance from others • Walk nicely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use restroom appropriately • Keep feet on the floor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show appreciation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be helpful

Attendance

The Portage Area Board of School Directors believes that daily attendance is an integral part of an effective educational environment. Daily attendance and active participation in each class is a critical part of the learning process. A significant role of today's schools is to help students learn to understand and appreciate the importance of punctuality and regular attendance. Evidence points to the fact that regular school attendance has a positive carry-over to the world of work. Our policies and procedures established at Portage Area School District are designed to help students learn responsibility and increase their potential for success.

Attendance is primarily the responsibility of students and parents. The school best serves the home by establishing clear attendance expectations and providing a timely reporting of students' attendance patterns.

COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE

Every parent, guardian, or other person having responsibility for any child or children of compulsory school age is required to send such child or children to school. The educational program offered by this District is predicated upon the presence of the pupil and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation. Pennsylvania State Board of Education (PSBOE); Public School code 1949, Section 13-1327.

LAWFUL ABSENCES Verified by Written Excuses

Legal excuses must be submitted by parent /guardian within three (3) school days

The following conditions constitute reasonable cause for **lawful absence** from classes/school:

- Illness/Quarantined
- Recovery from accident
- Required court attendance
- Death in the family
- Approved religious holidays
- Approved educational travel
(Not to exceed 5 school days per academic year. Note: Educational travel does count towards the ten day parental excuse limit and may lead to medical evidence requirement)
- Other "urgent reasons" to be considered only if it directly affects the student and is agreed to by the school principal: such as verified medical or dental appointment, or family emergency.

Absences from school for reasons other than those listed above are considered **unlawful/unexcused absences** and subject to legal action prescribed by the PA compulsory attendance laws and other actions prescribed by the School District's Attendance Policy.

Unlawful Absence

One in which the student is less than seventeen (17) years of age fails to provide school officials with the proper documentation/excuse regarding his or her absences.

Unexcused Absence

One in which the student is seventeen (17) years of age or older and fails to provide school officials with the proper documentation/excuse regarding his or her absence.

Half-Day Absences

Students arriving after 9:30 am or leaving prior to 2:00pm will be recorded as half (1/2) day absent.

Arrival / Departure	Attendance Recorded
Arrive prior to 9:30 AM	Marked as Tardy
Arrive after 9:30 AM	½ Absent
Departure after 2:00 PM	In Attendance Full Day

Medical Evidence Excuse

Written documentation provided by a licensed medical professional detailing the date the student was under the medical professional’s care and unable to attend school.

Perfect Attendance

Student is in attendance for the entire school day. No tardies and no early dismissals unrelated to school activities. Exception will be made for attendance at funerals.

TRUANCY

Act 29 extensively revises penalties for truancy. The act raises the fine placed on parents for truancy to \$300 and requires parents to pay court costs or be sentenced to complete a parent education program. Under Act 29 both the truant child and the parent must appear at the hearing by the district justice. In addition, Act 29 removes from truant juveniles their vehicle operating privileges for 90 days for a first offence and six months for a second. Juveniles who are unlicensed are prohibited from applying for a learner’s permit for 90 days (first offense) and six months (second offense), commencing with their sixteen birthday.

PA State Law (Section 1333, Act 29) requires every parent, guardian or person in parental relation having control or charge of any child of compulsory school age, who fail to comply with the provisions of compulsory attendance, shall be sentenced to the following penalties:

- a. Parent/Guardian(s) and/or student fined up to \$300 plus court costs.
- a. Parent/Guardian(s) and/or student must perform community service.
- c. Parent/Guardians(s) must take a parenting education class.
- d. Student driver’s license revoked/student prohibited from applying for a learner’s permit for a minimum of 90 days.
- e. Student remanded to an adjudication alternative education program. (pursuant to 42 PA CS sect. 1520)

After ten total absences excused by parent/guardian including parental requests for educational travel, medical evidence provided by a licensed medical professional will be required for all future absences. Failure to provide medical evidence within three days of absences will result in the absence being unlawful/unexcused.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Excuses to Leave School

A student wishing to be excused from school during the school day must present a written excuse to the office before 9:00 a.m. at the Elementary School. The excuse must include the pupil's name, grade, the date, and the specific reason for the request, along with the phone number and signature of the parent and guardian. Requests other than those for medical or dental appointments will be treated as unlawful/unexcused absences. Each student or parent/guardian shall be required to sign out in the main office before leaving the building.

Students and parents should make a reasonable attempt to return the student to school to complete his/her academic obligations.

Educational Travel

District-approved, parent request for educational travel will result in an absence from school on those days and **will count towards the 10 day parental excuse limit** and the 25 day limit established in the District's Attendance Policy. ***No more than a total of five (5) school days*** may be used for the purpose of educational travel during any one school year. Permission must be received from the Principal and Superintendent **BEFORE THE TRAVEL**. Forms may be obtained in the building's main office or the PASD website.

Excuses / Entering School Following Absence

When a student returns to school after an absence, temporary or otherwise, he/she must bring an excuse stating the specific reason for the absence and a parent, guardian, legal custodian, or medical professional must sign that excuse. All excuses must include student's name, grade, reason for, and date of the absence(s). *Students will be given **three (3) school days** to furnish proof of absence by presenting the excuse to the building attendance secretary. If a student fails to provide an excuse within this time frame, the absence will be considered unexcused/unlawful.*

**Please submit absentee excuses within 3 school days –
send to esattendance@mustangmail.org**

It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements to complete assignments missed during all absences. Parents may call the school to request work for their child if absent more than one day. Be sure to indicate whether books are needed when requesting homework. Work requested will be available for pick up at the end of the school day in the main office.

Calling In Absences

While it is not required for a parent to call the school when their child will be absent, it is appreciated so school personnel knows the whereabouts of all students. It is recommended that if a child will be out for several days, the parent/guardians inform the school so the attendance officer does not need to phone the home daily to check.

Portage Area School District 25 Day Policy

Any student who accumulates 25 or more days of absence from school without medical documentation shall be required to repeat the entire school year. An absence supported by an excuse from a licensed medical professional will not count toward the 25 day rule. Appeals to the policy may be made by contacting the building principal and must be supported by medical documentation or extenuating circumstances. Up to five (5) days of educational travel may be requested per academic year. These days **will** count toward the 25 day attendance policy.

Parent/Guardian Notification

Parents/guardians are to be kept informed on a regular basis of their child's attendance record. This will be done by letter, telephone, on-line gradebook, report card and/or conference. This letter of concern will include penalties for violation of compulsory attendance, as well as the name and phone number of the school's attendance contact. section that indicates that upon a total absence of twenty-five (25) days, the student will be retained in his current grade the following school year. (Legal Reference: School Laws of Pennsylvania 1327, 1329, 1338)

The parent/guardians should make contact with the school and provide a written explanation detailing the reasons for the absences.

Attendance Letters to be Sent Home

1st & 2nd Unlawful Absence – Letter sent to parent/caregiver detailing unlawful absence.

3rd Unlawful Absence - Letter sent to parent/guardian informing them that the next unlawful absence will require a meeting involving parent, student and administration to develop a Student Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP).

4th Unlawful Absence Send letter inviting parent and student to an Student Attendance Improvement Conference (SAIC) to develop a Student Attendance Improvement plan (SAIP).

5th Unlawful Absence Send Letter stating that the next unlawful absence will result in a magistrate filing for violation of PA School Truancy laws. Review of SAIP

6th Unlawful Absence Student defined as Habitually Truant - District Magistrate filing for violation of PA School Truancy laws.

5th Total Absence** Letter informing parent/caregiver that their child has reached the halfway point of allowed parental excuses. Once reaching 10 total absences, medical evidence will be required.

10th Total Absence** Letter requiring parental meeting and documentation of medical evidence for each additional absence. All absences beyond 10 will be considered unlawful unless medical evidence is provided by a licensed medical professional.

20th Total Absence** Letter of concern regarding student's total number of absences and the risk of retention. Does not include medically excused absences. The letter will indicate that upon a total absence of twenty-five (25) days, the student will be retained in his current grade the following school year. (Legal Reference: School Laws of Pennsylvania 1327, 1329, 1338) The parent/guardians should make contact with the school and provide a written explanation detailing the reasons for the absences.

25th Day of Absence** On the 25th day of total absence, a letter will be sent from the school to parents/guardians informing them that the student will be retained in his current grade the following school year and that the parents/guardians may request a waiver by petitioning the Board of Education.

***Combination of parentally excused (lawful), educational travel and unlawful absences. Does*

Removal From The School Roll

The following criteria will be used to remove students from the school roll:

Any student who exceeds the compulsory school age (17 or older) and misses ten (10) consecutive days without excuse.

OR

The first absence over twenty-five (25) days, (to include the total of excused and unexcused absences) not substantiated by a physician's excuse within three (3) days of that absence **shall result in the student being removed from the school roll and processed as a withdrawal.** Absences excused by a licensed medical professional do not count towards the twenty-five (25) day limit.

Tardies

A student who arrives to homeroom after the late bell rings (**8:15 am**) will be marked tardy for the day. A tardy student must report to the office to be marked appropriately on the daily bulletin and to obtain a slip for admission to class. Students will be recorded as tardy until 9:30 a.m. Students arriving after that time will be marked as ½ day absence.

Habitual tardiness represents a violation of the Pa. School Code and Compulsory Education Laws.

The following guidelines will be followed concerning tardiness to school:

1. The school must be notified in the same day in writing detailing the reason for tardiness. The following reasons will be the only acceptable reasons:
 - a. Medical appointment
 - b. Illness
 - c. Other "urgent reasons" to be considered only if it directly affects the student and is agreed to by the school principal.
2. After the 5th **unexcused** tardy, the student will receive 1 demerit and be assigned to detention. Additional tardies will be enforced as listed below.

Tardy Enforcement			
	K-2	Grades 3 - 6	
Tardies	Lunch Detention	Demerits	Detentions
5	One (1)	One (1)	One - 1 Hour
8**	One (1)	One (1)	One - 1 Hours
11*	Two (2)	Two (2)	Two - 2 Hours
14**	Three (3)	Three (3)	Three - 3 Hours
15+	Suspension	Three (3)	Suspension

* When a student reaches the 10th tardy day, a medical excuse is required for every tardy thereafter.

** Children and Youth Services will be contacted and a referral to Justice Works will be made.

BEHAVIOR AND THERAPY APPOINTMENTS

STUDENTS ATTENDING A THERAPY OR BEHAVIOR SPECIALIST APPOINTMENT SHOULD COME TO SCHOOL BEFORE OR AFTER THE APPOINTMENT. THOSE APPOINTMENTS DO NOT COUNT AS A FULL DAY EXCUSED.

HOMEWORK WHEN ABSENT

It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements to complete assignments missed during all absences. Parents may call the school to request work for their child if absent more than one day. Be sure to indicate whether books are needed when requesting homework. Work requested will be available for pick up at the end of the school day in the office. Students will be given 1 day for each day absent to make up work. At the teacher's discretion, he/she may work with the student to extend deadlines based on individual circumstances such as extended absences.

*Education Only Helps
those in Attendance*

Homework Policy

The homework process involves three groups of people: the teacher, the parent and the student. During the day, teachers structure most of the students' activities. The majority of class time is used for instruction. Students may be given time to begin their homework as a way for the teacher to monitor the students' ability to complete their assignment independently.

If a student is absent, parents should call the office to make arrangements for homework to be sent home.

- A. To understand and accept the need for homework
- B. To strive for neatness, accuracy and improvement
- C. To accept responsibility for promptness
- D. To seek additional teacher help if necessary

HOMework RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARENTS:

- A. To show a positive interest in ALL school activities
- B. To provide children with a suitable place and adequate time for homework
- C. To provide opportunities for children that will extend their learning experiences

A note will be sent home to the parents asking them to contact the school if their child continually has a problem completing the homework within the suggested time limit. This will help monitor as well as identify any learning problems that the student may have in a particular subject.

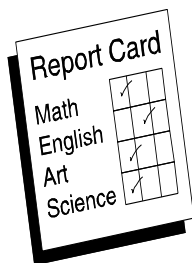
MAKE-UP WORK

A student who is absent from school is responsible for work missed. Parents who wish to get make-up work are requested to call the school AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE. Make-up work may then be picked up in the office at the end of the day. Students will be given one day for each day absent to make up work.

Grading Policy

Grades 1 through 6 use the following scales.
The basic curriculum:

- 90 - 100% = A
- 80 - 89% = B
- 70 - 79% = C
- 60 - 69% = D
- 59% and below = F



Some subjects are not part of the basic core curriculum and student effort is evaluated as follows:

- P = Passed
- F = Failed

REPORT CARDS/EVALUATION PROCEDURES

Report cards are distributed four times a school year. Parents should examine their child's report card to evaluate their child's progress.

DEFICIENCY AND PROGRESS REPORTS

Mid nine-week progress/deficiency reports are sent home to allow for continuous parental advisement of the student's academic progress.

CONFERENCES

Individual conferences may be requested by the teacher or the parent at any time during the year to discuss student progress. If you wish to request a conference, call the school and the secretary will have your child's teacher return your call.

PROMOTION

A student in Grades 1-6 will be retained in grade level if he/she earns a failing grade in Reading OR Math OR in two other minor academic subjects. Promotion in Danger notices are mailed to parents in mid-year.

Kindergarten students will be retained if they do not meet mastery level on at least 60% of their academic skills. Progress reports are sent home in January and end of year in kindergarten. Retention notices will be sent home in March.

Student Services

SERVICES FOR SCHOOL AGE EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS

The Portage Area School District provides a free, appropriate, public education to exceptional students. To qualify as an exceptional student, the child must be of school age, in need of specially- designed instruction and meet eligibility criteria for mentally gifted and/or one of the following physical or mental disabilities, as set forth in Pennsylvania State standards: specific learning disability, seriously emotionally disturbed, autism/persuasive development disorder, blindness/ visual impairment, deafness/ hearing impairment, mental retardation, multi-handicap, neurological impairment, other health impairment, physical disability, and speech/ language impairment.

The district engages in identification procedures to ensure that eligible students receive an appropriate education program consisting of special education and related services, individualized to meet student needs. At no cost to the parents these services are provided in compliance with state and federal law and are reasonably calculated to yield meaningful educational benefit and student progress. To identify students who may be eligible for special education, various screening activities are conducted on an ongoing basis. These screening activities include: review of group-based data (cumulative records, enrollment records, health records, report card, ability and achievement test scores); hearing vision, physical and speech/ language screening. When screening results suggest that the student may be exceptional, the District seeks parental consent to conduct a multidisciplinary evaluation. Parents who suspect their child is exceptional may request a multidisciplinary evaluation at any time through a written request to the Director of Special Education. Services designed to meet the needs of exceptional students include the annual development of an Individualized Education Program (IEP), bi-annual multidisciplinary re-evaluation, supportive intervention in the regular class, supplemental intervention in the regular school or placement in a full- time special education class in a location other than the regular school. The extent of special education services and the location for the delivery of such services are determined by the IEP team and are based on the student's identified needs and abilities, chronological age and the level of intervention. The District also provides related services, such as transportation, physical therapy and occupational therapy, required for the student to benefit from the special education program. Parents may obtain additional information regarding special education services and programs, and parental due process rights by contacting the child's school principal or the Director of Special Education at (814) 736 – 9636 ext. 1605.

LUNCH ACCOUNTS

Grades Pre-K - 6 receive free lunch and breakfast, therefore no money is required to be sent in with the students. If a student wants to buy a double lunch or something extra to eat or drink, he/she will need to have money in their student lunch account. No charging of meals will be allowed.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE TEAM

The Student Assistance Program (SAP) is designed to identify high- risk adolescents who are experiencing school-related problems. The problem may be academic, social and/or behavioral. The SAP Team consists of several teachers, administrators, the school nurse, Dean of Students, and county liaisons. Confidential referrals may be made by a variety of individuals including any staff member, student, parents/guardians, and members of the community, such as law enforcement agencies.

Once a referral is generated, the parent/guardians are notified; and the team convenes to discuss the student's situation and offers suggestions for possible interventions to help the student initiate changes. For the student's benefit, it is important for the team and parent/guardians to work together to insure a positive outcome. Our goal at Portage Area Schools is to provide a pleasant and productive educational environment. Your cooperation toward that end will be greatly appreciated.

SAP referrals are available on our school website.

FOR CONCERNS REGARDING THE SAP PROCESS, PLEASE CONTACT MRS. MIGNOGNA – (814)736-9636 EXT. 1205.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

School initiated parent/teacher conferences are typically scheduled after Thanksgiving. Parents will be contacted by the student's teacher to make a specific appointment, regardless of the progress of each of their children. Your child's success in school is dependent upon parent involvement and participation in their education.

LIBRARY

The library has books, magazines, materials, etc. for assigned and recreational reading. All students have assigned library class time. Library materials may be signed out for a 2- week period. Reference material cannot be signed out. The school can and will hold a report card at the end of the school year if a student has overdue books. This includes making restitution for lost or damaged materials. If a student loses library material, parents should notify the librarian immediately to make the necessary arrangements.

P.T.O.

The Parent-Teacher Organization is an integral part of our school. Throughout the school year this organization holds fundraisers, sponsors educational field trips, provides educational materials to classrooms for the student use, and sponsors educational programs to enhance the school's curriculum. The committee consists of dedicated parents and teachers who meet monthly during the school year to organize the various fund raisers and to provide the various educational opportunities to the students. All interested parents are encouraged to get involved in the organization to better serve the educational needs of the students.

TELEPHONE

The office telephone is intended for school business ONLY. Students are not permitted to use the office telephone except in cases of emergencies. The office staff will be the sole judge of what constitutes an emergency. It is important to instill a sense of personal responsibility in our students; therefore forgotten lunches, gym clothes, or musical instruments will not be considered emergencies. Experiencing the inconvenience caused by forgetting this item is a way for the school and the home to work together to help promote student responsibility. Parents are asked to help the school enforce this policy.

CELL PHONE USAGE

Cell phones are permitted at Portage Area Elementary School but are subject to the following rules and regulations. Violation of the Cell Phone Usage is a Level I offense as per the discipline policy. Administration reserves the right to restrict or revoke use of cell phones.

- Cell phones may be used before and after school (on the school sidewalks) as long as they do not create a distraction or disruption.
- Use of cell phones during the school day is strictly prohibited and cell phones should be kept off and out of sight.
- Cell phone usage while riding the bus to and from school is prohibited.
- Cell phone photos, videos, text messages and games are prohibited.

PASD is not responsible or liable for cell phones that are lost, stolen, or damaged during the school day, on school property or at school sponsored events. Students violating this policy will:

1st time: Lose their phone until the end of the day and demerit(s)

2nd time: Parents must pick it up and demerit(s)

3rd time: Parents must pick it up and demerit(s)

ACCIDENT INSURANCE

School Time Accidents/Injuries Coverage reimburses up to the first \$100 of out-of-pocket expenses. After which, any coverage the student is enrolled in (through parent's, CHIP, ACCESS, etc.) will be the primary coverage. Parents/Guardians can submit any expenses not covered by the primary for reimbursement through the Student Accident Policy.

It is the parents/guardians responsibility to seek reimbursement for any expenses. Student Accident claim forms can be obtained by contacting the school nurse at (814) 736-9636. Failure to complete and submit the claim form within 90 days may result in non-payment.

In addition, voluntary student accident coverage (or a twenty-four hour basis) on an individual student basis is available for all students. Applications are distributed to each child during the first week of school and should be returned with payment promptly, if you wish to have this coverage.

Health Services

HEALTH SERVICES

Our school nurse, Mrs. Laura Glass, is assigned to the elementary school every day, Monday through Friday, from 7:30 A.M. until 3:00 P.M. The school nurse compiles the health forms and keeps them in the students' files. She also administers hearing and vision screenings in various grade levels throughout the year. The school physician is Dr. Mark Ratchford and the school dentist is Dr. Nicole Oravec. Physicals are mandated by the School Code upon original entry, in sixth grade and eleventh grade. Dental exams are also mandated upon original entry, again in third grade and in seventh grade. A private health and/or dental examination conducted at the parent/ guardian request and expense will be accepted in lieu of the school examination. These must be completed within the school year, and May 1st of the enrolling year is the cut off for completion. Forms for this purpose are available from the school nurse and on the school website. Usually, most parents elect to have the exams done in the summer before the start of the school year which helps prevent problems with compliance and follow up later.

EMERGENCY CARDS

A yellow Emergency Card will be sent home at the beginning of the school year or is included in the registration packet. When completing the card, please provide at least one alternate number for the school nurse or designee to reach you in the event you are not able to be contacted at your residence or work number. Parents are always contacted first and then the alternate numbers are attempted in the order listed on the card. Please ensure those listed want to be on the Emergency Card. It is imperative that the school nurse be made aware of any residence or phone changes as they occur.

MEDICATIONS

ANY medications, prescription or over the counter products including Tylenol, Motrin, Advil, Tums, cough drops, or any cold medications must follow the school district's Medications Policy. Board policy permits students to possess asthma inhalers and Epi-pens and to self-administer the prescribed medication in accordance with state law (please see the school nurse for details of this policy).

All prescription medications **MUST** be turned in to the school nurse and accompanied by the physician's/parent's statement in the school office or written prescription order and the parent or guardian's signed consent. Over the counter products must also be supplied to the school personnel **unopened and accompanied by signed parental consent**. **NO** medications will be accepted in baggies, envelopes or the like. A copy of the Medication Policy has been provided at registration and is available from the school nurse. Please call or contact the school nurse anytime with any questions or concerns about the policy.

Parents and/or guardians are reminded that students are not permitted to bring any medication to the school. Students are not to carry medications on their person, on the bus or to any event. This is noted in the drug and alcohol policy adopted by the district. Safety and prevention are keys to keeping all students safe from accidental ingestion and or harm. Please be mindful of this and be prudent in **NOT** sending students to school with any medications. Parents and/or guardians should be the responsible party bringing these items to the attention of the school nurse.

MEDICAL/DENTAL APPOINTMENTS

If it becomes necessary to arrange for an appointment with a doctor or dentist during school hours, parents should send a written note the day of the appointment stating the time of the appointment and when the child needs to be excused. **Only in cases of an emergency will a full day be considered for an appointment.** Parents are reminded that they must come to the office to pick up and sign the child out.

** Please note that therapy or behavioral appointments do not count as a full day excused.

Appropriate Behavior

SCHOOL BUS POLICY

The courts have held that the right of a student to transportation is a qualified right dependent upon good behavior. In cases where students seriously or continuously break the rules, parents will be notified that a recurrence of the misbehavior will result in the suspension of the student's right to ride.

In keeping with this philosophy, the Portage Area School District has adopted the following bus policy:

- 1st Offense:** Warning and parent notified
- 2nd Offense:** Meeting with the parent
- 3rd Offense:** Student loses bus privileges for three (3) days
- 4th Offense:** Student loses bus privileges for ten (10) days
- 5th Offense:** Student loses bus privileges for the remainder of the year

All students who ride a bus to or from school and/or extracurricular activities are subject to regulations established by the District. Students will be cited for the following kinds of misbehavior: Refusing to obey the driver; Fighting; Throwing objects; Profanity; Vandalism; or Use of Tobacco and controlled substances.

Bus students are reminded that the first line of authority starts with the bus driver. He or she will control the behavior of the students on the bus to ensure maximum safety.

Bus drivers may assign specific seats to students and may deny riding privileges to students who violate the rules. Rules are posted at the front of each bus.

The rules listed below are posted at the front of each bus.

1. Observe the same conduct as in the classroom.
2. Be courteous, use no profane language.
3. Do not eat or drink in the bus.
4. Keep the bus clean.
5. Cooperate with the driver.
6. No smoking.
7. Do not be destructive.
8. Stay in your seat.
9. Keep head, hands, and feet inside the bus.
10. Bus driver is authorized to assign seats.



SCHOOL CAFETERIA

The school cafeteria is maintained as a vital part of the health program of the school. To encourage good nutrition a well-balanced lunch is offered for free for the students each day. Alternative menu items are available. Breakfast is also available every day in the cafeteria from 7:40 to 8:20 am. Please see the monthly menu on the school website.

Students will be responsible for maintaining a clean cafeteria at all times. When requested to lend a hand, cooperation is expected in order to maintain a clean and inviting dining hall. Students who violate cafeteria rules and regulations will be given demerits by the supervising teacher.

Cafeteria Rules

- Students who are eating a lunch must get in line upon arriving to the cafeteria.
- Students are to remain orderly and use their "inside voice".
- Students requesting to use the restroom must sign out with the supervising teacher.
- Students are not permitted to leave the cafeteria at any time without a pass and permission.
- If a student is needed in a teacher's classroom, he/she must have a signed pass from that teacher.
- All students occupying an assigned table are responsible for the cleanliness of the table and the area surrounding the table. This is a group responsibility and everyone sitting at the table **shares** total responsibility.
- Outside privileges will be determined by the supervising teachers and will be based on weather conditions and student behavior.
- When students are not going outside, they must bring something quiet to do.
- Students are not to share or give food away from their tray or lunch box.
- Students are not to give anyone money brought from home.
- Students are not to touch anyone's tray or lunch box.

Student Responsibilities

Student responsibilities include regular school attendance, conscientious effort in classroom work, and conformance to school rules and regulations. Most of all, students share with the administration and faculty, a responsibility to develop a climate within the school that is conducive to wholesome learning and living.

No student has the right to interfere with the education of his/her fellow students. It is the responsibility of each student to respect the rights of teachers, students, administrators and all others who are involved in the educational process. Students should express their ideas and opinions in a respectful manner.

IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT TO CONFORM WITH THE FOLLOWING:

- a. Be aware of all rules and regulations for student behavior and conduct themselves in accord with them. Students should assume that, until a rule is waived, altered, or repealed in writing, it is in effect.
- b. Volunteer information in matters relating to the health, safety, and welfare of the school community and the protection of school property.
- c. Dress and groom so as to meet fair standards of safety and health, and not to cause substantial disruption to the educational processes.
- d. Assist the school staff in operating a safe school for all students enrolled therein.
- e. Comply with Commonwealth and local laws.
- f. Exercise proper care when using public facilities and equipment.
- g. Attend school daily and be on time at all classes and other school functions.
- h. Make up work when absent from school.
- i. Pursue and attempt to complete satisfactorily the courses of study prescribed by Commonwealth and local school authorities.



CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

Students are responsible for the proper care of all books, supplies and furniture supplied by the school. They are also expected to respect the property of others. Students who deface, break, or damage any school or personal property or equipment will be required to pay the cost of repairing or replacing the item. Also, discipline action will be taken, as applicable, according to the school's discipline policy.

PERSONAL PROPERTY PROHIBITED IN SCHOOL

Such items as toy guns, water pistols, bean shooters, slingshots, fireworks, etc. are considered safety hazards and interfere with the normal operation of the school.

Collectibles such as football and baseball cards & Pokemon cards are also forbidden. Video games, cell phones, hand held video games, MP3 players, and other electronic devices are only permitted in school with WRITTEN PERMISSION from the teacher in whose classroom these will be used.

The school will not be responsible for any personal item brought into the school and reported as missing or damaged.



Student Dress Code

STUDENT DRESS CODE

1. Students are expected to dress in keeping with good taste and propriety.
2. Extreme styles, including abnormally short dresses and shorts or noticeably tight clothing are not acceptable.
3. Articles of clothing displaying indecent writing, pictures, slogans, tobacco, drugs or alcohol are not to be worn.
4. Appropriate footwear must be worn at all times.
5. Handbags used as backpacks are not permitted.
6. Shorts may be worn in August, September October, April, May and June.

The following items and any additional items that are obscene or that pose a health hazard are not to be worn.

- Halter, Tank or Tube tops
- Crop/Midriff tops
- Strapless/Spaghetti strap clothing
- Low cut revealing tops
- Muscle shirts
- Shirts with offensive language or images or implied inappropriate messages
- Exposed undergarments
- Shorts that are immodest or abnormally short (*Acceptable length is determined by a student placing his/her arms straight down at his/her sides. The skirt or shorts should not be shorter than the student's middle finger*)
- Pajamas
- Mini-skirts
- Torn jeans
- Bandanas, hats
- Shirts with offensive language
- Excessive body or facial piercing (Piercings around the mouth and eyes are excessive and must be removed for health and safety reasons)
- Chains around or hanging from waist, pockets and/or neck
- Studded or spiked wrist/ankle bands, spiked rings, wallet chains, boots or other apparel
- Coats or jackets during the school day (subject to teacher discretion/classroom environment)
- Heels more than 1 inch in height

Students who come to school dressed inappropriately will be removed from all classes until the unacceptable clothing is changed or covered. Parents will be notified.

Discipline Policy/Demerits 3-6

The Discipline Committee consists of record keepers, support teacher(s), interested faculty, and the principal.

1st Step/1st Demerit: The demerit form is completed and submitted to the grade level record keeper and student will be assigned One (1) mandatory After-school Detention session.

2nd Step/2nd Demerit: The demerit form is completed and submitted to the grade level record keeper and student will be assigned One (1) mandatory After-school Detention session.

3rd Step/3 or more Demerits: The Discipline Committee will review and evaluate the student situation.

- a. The demerit form is completed and submitted to the grade level record keeper.
- b. **Mandatory One (1) hour Saturday Detention** session (from 8 am – 9 am). A Detention form will be completed by the grade level record keeper and sent home with the demerit form.
- c. Failure to comply with this procedure will result in further penalties to be determined by the Discipline Committee.

4th Step: The Discipline Committee will review and evaluate the student situation.

- a. The demerit form is completed and submitted to the grade level record keeper.
- Mandatory Two (2) hour Saturday Detention** session (from 8 am – 10 am) and a **Parent Conference**. A Detention form and parent conference form will be completed by the grade level record keeper and sent with the demerit form.
- c. Failure to comply with this procedure will result in further penalties to be determined by the Discipline Committee.
- d. The grade level record keeper will assign the student a **Teacher-Advisor** who volunteers to monitor the **Behavior Folder** and advise the student on ways of improving behavior. **Students on Behavior Folders will eat lunch in a designated area outside of the cafeteria.**
- e. All extracurricular activities, in-school activities, and school-sponsored trips are limited or denied, pending review
- f. Students on a folder will lose a demerit after 7 “good” days as noted on the behavior sheet.

Extracurricular activities include all school-sponsored extracurricular and after-school activities including dances and team sports. Activity sponsored, coaches, etc. will be notified of the student's ineligibility and will also be informed should the student become eligible at a later date.

In-school activities include school-sponsored activities held during, but not limited to, the normal school day. These include activity period clubs, assembly programs, field trips, chorus, and class trips.

Procedure for all discipline forms:

The white copy should be signed by the parent and returned by the student to the grade level record keeper within **three (3) school days**. The yellow copy is for the parents and can be kept at home.

DEMERIT SLIP

Student: _____ Date: _____
Grade: _____ Demerit Code: _____ Amount of Demerits: _____
Student Signature: _____ Time: _____
Teacher Signature: _____ Location: _____

DEMERIT CODE

Level I Offenses
One (1) Demerit:

1. Violation of classroom and/or school rules or procedures. (Describe below)
2. Chewing gum anywhere in the school building.
3. Violation of the pass/locker/telephone/cell phone procedure.
4. Tardiness to class or to school.
5. Cheating on homework/assignments. (Will result in a failing grade)
6. Running, shoving, or pushing in any school area.
7. Throwing objects in any school area.
8. Improper behavior during lunchtime, assemblies, or any outside-the-classroom activities or areas.

Two (2) Demerits:

9. Skipping or cutting any class period, including Homeroom period.
10. Verbal abuse/discourteous behavior towards any adult who is employed by the PASD.
11. Lying.
12. Forgery of notes, grades, or signatures.
13. Defacing or abusing school property. (Will repair or replace property)
14. Showing disrespect towards another student or their property.

Student's Comment(s):

Level II Offenses
Three (3) Demerits:

15. Truancy.
16. Bullying.
17. Vulgar/offensive language or gesture.
18. Fighting or threatening other students.
19. Theft of personal property within the classroom, school building or grounds.
20. Unauthorized student walkout from the building or classroom.
21. Conduct unworthy of a PASD student in school or at any school-related function. (Describe below)
22. Cheating on quizzes/tests. (Will result in a failing grade)
23. Direct verbal refusal to obey a reasonable request or discipline made by any adult who is employed by the PASD.
24. Having in one's possession, using, selling, or distributing materials of any kind that explicitly promote the use of tobacco, drugs, or alcohol.
25. Having in one's possession, using, selling, or distributing pomographic materials.
26. Violation of the Technology Acceptable Use Policy.

Level III Offenses
*** See agenda**

Teacher Comment(s):

Parent Signature:

Student must return the white copy within three (3) school days.

Revised 10-11

**** Skipping an After School or Saturday Detention will result in an additional demerit and an additional hour of detention.**

5th Step: The Discipline Committee will review and evaluate the student situation.

- a. The demerit form is completed and submitted to the grade level record keeper.
- b. **Mandatory Three (3) hour Saturday Detention** session (from 8 am – 11 am). A Detention notice will be completed by the grade level record keeper and sent home with the demerit form. Follow the 1st Demerit procedure.
- c. Failure to comply with this procedure will result in further penalties to be determined by the Discipline Committee.

6th Step: The Discipline Committee will review and evaluate the student situation.

- a. The demerit form is completed and submitted to the grade level record keeper.
- b. **Three (3) days of In-School/Out of School Independent Study.** The Independent Study form will be completed by the grade level record keeper and sent home with the demerit form. Follow the 1st Demerit procedure. The Principal will notify the parents. Teachers of students who are assigned In-School/Out of School Independent Study will be notified in writing.
- c. Assignments, class work, and appropriate review material will be sent to the office each day as applicable. The student will complete all work. Tests and quizzes will be completed within three (3) days upon return to school.
- d. **Superintendent's Meeting.** Parents will be notified by letter.
- e. Failure to comply with this procedure will result in further penalties to be determined by the Discipline Committee.

7th Step: The Discipline Committee will review and evaluate the student situation.

- a. The demerit form is completed and submitted to the grade level record keeper.
- b. **Five (5) days of In-School/Out of School Independent Study.** An Independent Work Study form will be completed by the grade level record keeper and sent with the demerit form. Follow the 1st Demerit procedure. The Principal will notify the parents. Teachers of students who are assigned Independent Study will be notified in writing.
- c. Assignments, class work, and appropriate review material will be sent to the office each day as applicable. The student will complete all work. Tests and quizzes will be completed within three (3) days upon return to school.
- d. **Superintendent's Meeting.** Parents will be notified by certified letter.
- e. Failure to comply with this procedure

will result in further penalties to be determined by the Discipline Committee.

8th Step: The Discipline Committee will review and evaluate the student situation.

- a. **School Board Meeting** with the student, parent(s) or legal guardian, administration and Discipline Committee members. All parties will be notified by certified letter.
- b. Disciplinary action will include, but is not limited to, a **seven (7) day Out-of-School Independent Study.** Teachers of students who are assigned Independent Study will be notified in writing.
- c. Assignments, class work, and appropriate review material will be sent to the office each day as applicable. The student will complete all work. Tests and quizzes will be completed within three (3) days upon return to school.

9th Step: The Discipline Committee will review and evaluate the student situation.

- a. **A full Due Process Hearing will be held before the School Board including the student, his (her) parent(s) or legal guardian(s), administration, and members of the**

Discipline Committee. This may include a recommendation for expulsion.

CONSEQUENCES FOR LEVEL III OFFENSE

Disciplinary action for Level III offenses will include but is not limited to a minimum of three (3) demerits and three (3) days out-of-school independent study.

All professional staff are responsible for taking action when they observe a Level III offense.

This is the appropriate procedure to follow:

- a. Report the incident to the building principal immediately.
- b. The principal verifies the offense, confers with the staff member(s) involved, the Discipline Committee, and meets with the student(s).
- c. The Discipline Committee will review and evaluate the student situation.
- d. Parents are notified.
- c. The student may be immediately removed from the school environment.
- f. Law enforcement officials may be contacted.
- g. A complete and accurate record is submitted to the Superintendent for School Board action.
- h. The student is given a full due process hearing before the School Board.
- i. Disciplinary action may include but is not limited to law enforcement involvement and/or referral to the juvenile authorities.

LEVEL III OFFENSES

- Assault and battery
- Theft of PASD property
- Vandalism of a serious nature
- Having in one's possession, selling, or distributing any unauthorized substance, stolen goods, etc.(See D & A Policy)
- Possession or use of drugs or alcohol at school or school functions (See D & A Policy)
- Repeated possession or use of tobacco in any school area
- Carrying weapons onto school property (See Weapons Policy)
- Wearing or carrying any article or item that may be construed as a weapon (See Weapons Policy)
- Making terroristic threats, misuse of 911, emergency or fire alarm systems
- Threatening of a serious nature
- Bomb Threat
- Arson
- Extortion

REDUCING DEMERIT PROCEDURES

Grade 3-6 students will lose one (1) demerit ten (10) ***school*** days from the date the demerit was issued.

However, if another demerit is issued within those ten (10) school days, that demerit will take an additional ten (10) ***school*** days to be removed starting from the date the previous demerit was worked off.

RETURN OF PRIVILEGES

Return of extracurricular activities, in-school activities, and lunch period with classmates will be determined by the Discipline Committee, pending review of the student Behavior Folder (when demerits are reduced to three (3)). Parents and student will be notified.

INCENTIVE ELIGIBILITY

An accumulation of three (3) or more demerits within the 9 weeks marking period, causes ineligibility for the Discipline Incentive for that marking period. Students on a behavior folder are automatically ineligible.

**A suspension makes you ineligible for the incentive that
Marking Period.**

Weapons Policy

The Portage Area School District, in accordance with Act 26 of 1995 of the Pennsylvania School Code, Section 1317.2, adopted this weapons policy and is now in effect. It is an attempt to provide for a more safe educational environment.

Possession of a weapon and/or any destructive device is strictly prohibited on any school property which would include all buildings, facilities, grounds, school busses, and other conveyances providing transportation to and from school-related functions or activities, school parking area, and any facility used for school functions or activities.

1. A *weapon* will include, but is not limited to, any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nunchaku, firearm, shotgun, rifle, and any other tool, instrument, or implement capable of inflicting bodily harm.
2. A *destructive device* will include, but is not limited to, any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas bomb, grenade, rocket, missile, mine, or device similar to any of the devices described in this definition.

Authoritative Responsibility

The Portage Area School District shall expel, for a period of not less than one year, any student who is determined to have brought and/or is in possession of a weapon or destructive device on any school property, at any school-sponsored activity, or on any public conveyance providing transportation to school or any school-sponsored activity.

Expulsion will be conducted in accordance with all applicable regulations.

The superintendent or other designated administrator may recommend discipline short of expulsion on a case-by-case basis. In the case of an exceptional student the superintendent or other designated administrator shall take all steps necessary to comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Act (Public Law 91-230, 20 U.S. Code seq.)

Look-alike Weapons

Although objects that resemble weapons would not be construed as harmful, dangerous, and capable of inflicting injury, any look-alike weapon will be illegal to have in a student's possession as it may cause a severe disruption to the educational process. Involvement by the legal authorities and all ensuing consequences will be merited by a violation of this policy. (Amended July, 1997)

Exclusions

The provisions of this policy will not include the following:

- A weapon being used as part of a program approved by a district administrator.

Procedures

The school district shall report all incidents involving weapons possession or destructive devices prohibited in this policy as follows:

1. The designated district administrator shall report the discovery of any weapon or destructive device prohibited in this section to local law enforcement officials.
2. The superintendent shall report to the Department of Education all incidents relating to expulsion for possession of a weapon on school property, at any school-sponsored activity, or any public conveyance providing transportation to school or any sponsored activity. The report shall include all information as required under Section 1302-A.

Search Policy

The Portage Area School District continues to strive to make its schools the safest educational environment in which your son or daughter can learn. It is our intention to keep parents abreast of all policies and procedures. As a part of the overall educational process the following procedures have been adopted related to sniff searches of lockers, backpacks, book bags and cars which are located on school district property.

LOCKERS

Lockers are the sole and exclusive property of the Portage Area School District. Their use by students is a privilege granted by the district. No student should ever construe this privilege as a place for their private belongings and will be kept private from the school district. Any possession of objects or material that are prohibited by law, school district policy, or may constitute a threat to the health, safety, or welfare of the

occupants of the school building or the building itself is a direct violation of the locker policy and will be removed by school personnel or legal authorities with all consequences for such possession enforced.

Lockers will be opened, inspected and searched on whatever occasions or whatever frequency as determined by school or legal authorities. The random use of the drug canine corps or other detection devices, through the cooperative efforts of county agencies, will occur at random intervals without prior notice given to students, parents, or teaching personnel.

In most cases students will be advised prior to a search and may be present at that time. When an occasion arises that involves an illegal and/or dangerous substance or object and there is reasonable cause for a locker search the student may not be notified.

BOOK BAGS

Students who choose to carry book bags, backpacks, binders, etc. must understand that carrying a backpack or such to school is a privilege given to a student, and the School District has the right to sniff search and seize any or all items that are deemed suspicious

or may prove to be a threat to the welfare of students or other individuals.

PARKING LOT

The student parking lot is an extension of the Portage Area School District. Students who are granted the privilege of parking in the parking lot must understand that, on occasion, their vehicles may be subject to a canine sniff search.

Completing and signing the Portage Area Permission to Drive Form, in essence, will grant the School District the right to randomly conduct sniff searches in identified vehicles.

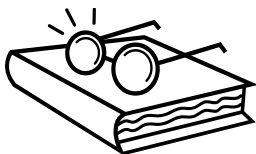
Students and parents must understand that these identified vehicles will be subject to search by school administrators and legal authorities, to include but not limited to the police.

Federal Programs

The Division of Federal Programs administers federal programs and funding to over 570 school districts, nonpublic and charter schools. The Federal Programs receive funds based on federal formulas and allocation amounts. The Portage Area School District receives federal funds in conjunction with Title I and Title II Programs.

Title I is a federally funded supplemental education program that provides financial assistance to local educational agencies (LEA) to improve educational opportunities for educationally deprived children. Title I programs are designed to help children meet the state content and performance standards in reading, language arts and mathematics. Buildings with 40% or more poverty qualify as a Schoolwide Program. Portage Area School District qualifies for this program due to the level of poverty as indicated by the free and reduced lunch program. Our Schoolwide Program provides supplemental services to students in Kindergarten through Grade 3 in Reading and Grade One through Grade Three in Math. The LEA must also provide equitable services to eligible students who live within district boundaries but opt to attend non-public schools. These services are to meet the educational needs and supplement services of those students in the private school. An LEA may receive Title I funds only if it implements programs, activities and procedures for the involvement of parents. Parents of students in the Portage Area School District are provided the opportunity to plan, design and implement Title I and II programs through meetings of the Parent Advisory Council, annual spring meeting and conferences on student progress.

Title II is also a federally funded supplemental educational program that provides financial assistance to schools. The Class-Size Reduction program is part of Title II. It is used to help maintain smaller class sizes to improve student achievement. Funds from this program assist the Portage Area School District in retaining a teacher in kindergarten.



Student Harassment Policy

Unlawful Harassment Policy

It is the policy of the Portage Area School District to maintain a safe learning and working environment which is free from sexual and other forms of unlawful harassment. All forms of unlawful harassment are hereby prohibited. Any student in the District who engages in conduct, which constitutes unlawful harassment, shall be subjected to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion. Any student in the District who is subjected to unlawful harassment by other students, district employees, non-district employees (vendors, contractors, volunteers, etc.) in the course of his or her attendance at school, shall have the right to file a complaint under Section IV, as described below, as well as the right to have that complaint promptly, thoroughly, and confidentially investigated.

Definition of Unlawful Harassment: Unlawful harassment is a form of discrimination prohibited by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act, 43 P.S. Sections 951-963; the Code of Conduct for Educators, 22PA Code Section 12.4. The following behaviors represent, but are not all inclusive of what constitutes unlawful harassment for the purpose of this policy:

1. The term unlawful harassment includes, but is not limited to: slurs, jokes, or other verbal, graphic, or physical conduct relating to an individual's race, color, religion, ancestry, sex national origin, or disability.
2. Special attention is called to the prohibition of sexual harassment. Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:
 - a) Submission to such conduct is explicitly or implicitly required of the recipient; or
 - b) Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis of school or work related decisions affecting the recipient; or
 - c) Such conduct has the purpose or effect or unreasonably interfering with the recipient's school performance or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment

Specific examples of sexual harassment includes but is not limited to:

- 1) Sexual flirtations, advances, touching, or propositions;
- 2) Verbal abuse of a sexual nature;
- 3) Graphic or suggestive comments about an individual's dress or body;
- 4) Sexually degrading words to describe an individual; and/or
- 5) Jokes, pinups, calendars, objects, graffiti, vulgar statements, abusive language, innuendoes, references to sexual activities, overt sexual conduct, or any conduct that has the effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's ability to work or learn or which creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive learning or working environment.

Ethnic Intimidation

1. No student(s) shall with malicious intent toward the race, color, religious or national origin of another individual or group of individuals, commit offenses involving danger, coercion, threats, harassment, intimidation, fear, or harm to such person(s).
2. No students shall, with malicious intent toward the race, color, religious or national origin of another individual or group of individuals, commit offenses.
3. Referral to Civil Authorities for charges under the Ethnic Intimidation Act of 1982 shall be made when deemed necessary by school authorities.

Consequences of Violation

Any student in the Portage Area School District who is found to have engaged in conduct constituting sexual or other forms of unlawful harassment may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion. In addition, any student found to have violated this policy may be required to participate in educational activities and/or counseling services related to sexual or other forms of unlawful harassment as part of any discipline imposed. Determination of the appropriate disciplinary sanctions or educational requirements shall be based upon the circumstances of the individual case, considering the following factors among others:

- a. Severity of the misconduct
- b. Pervasiveness or persistence of the misconduct
- c. Effect on the victim or victims
- d. Intent of the perpetrator

Complaint Procedure

a. The building principal shall be the person to receive sexual and other forms of unlawful harassment complaints from staff and students in that building and shall be referred to as the “designated” individual.”

Students shall also be informed that they may lodge sexual and other forms of unlawful harassment complaints with other appropriate individuals in the building or district, including teachers, counselors, nurses, or administrators. Each school year, students shall be notified of the identity of the “designated” individual as well as the other individuals with whom they can lodge a complaint, and shall be informed that these individuals are available to receive sexual and other forms of unlawful harassment complaints, answer questions concerning sexual and other forms of unlawful harassment, and assist the principal in resolving problems within the building.

b. Complaints involving student-to-student unlawful harassment which are lodged at the classroom or building level may be resolved informally. If an informal resolution is satisfactory to the complainant and/or complainants’ parents, no further investigation or action by the District is required. If the problem cannot be informally resolved, it will be referred to the building principal for investigation as described under Section 5.

c. Sexual and other forms of unlawful harassment complaints filed by students against District employees shall be investigated promptly, thoroughly and confidentially.

d. Complaints, which are referred to the building principal, shall be investigated immediately under the general supervision of the Portage Area School District Solicitor. The investigation shall include, but not be limited to the following:

1) Interview of complaint

2) Interview of accused

3) Interview of any persons with personal knowledge of the allegations of the complainant.

e. Sexual and other forms of unlawful harassment complaints filed by students against non-district employees (vendors, contractors, volunteers, etc.), shall be referred to the building principal for legal disposition. Any students or employees involved in such an investigation shall be required to maintain strict confidentiality. The privacy of the persons involved in the complaint will be kept as confidential

as possible, consistent with the District’s legal obligations and the necessity to investigate allegations and to take disciplinary actions where the unlawful harassment has occurred. All sexual and other forms of unlawful harassment complaints shall be promptly, thoroughly, and confidentially investigated.

Disposition of Complaint

a. In all cases investigated by the building principal, a report of the investigation shall be made in writing to the Superintendent.

b. If the building principal finds evidence that unlawful harassment may have occurred, the Superintendent, Building Principal and School District Solicitor shall determine what, if any, unlawful harassment has occurred, the suitable remediation and/or discipline. Any disciplinary action shall be subject to limitations of the Student Code of Conduct, School Code, State Board regulations and other applicable law, and any applicable collective bargaining agreement. All records of such findings will be subject to the provisions of District policies pertaining to maintenance and dissemination of student information.

c. If the building principal does not find evidence that unlawful harassment has occurred, the Superintendent shall be notified. Under no circumstances shall any record of a complaint which is found to be without basis be placed in an accused student’s record or released to any person other than the Superintendent, without consent of the accused, or unless required by law.

d. If the investigation is inconclusive, the building principal shall so state in its report. The Superintendent, and/or building principal may, at their discretion, require non-disciplinary educational activities as a result of an inconclusive investigation. Under no circumstances shall the accused or the complainant be disciplined based upon an inconclusive investigation.

e. If it is concluded that the accused is not guilty of unlawful harassment, and that the complaint was lodged in bad faith, the Superintendent, may impose suitable discipline on the complainant, subject to the limitations of the Student Code of Conduct and other applicable laws. In addition, if the building principal finds evidence that the accused retaliated against the complainant in any way because of the complaint, then the Superintendent, and/or building principal may impose disciplinary action on the accused with the same limitations described above.

The term unlawful harassment includes, but is not limited to: slurs, jokes or other verbal, graphic or physical conduct relating to an individual’s race, color, religion, ancestry, sex, national origin or disability.

Technology Acceptable Use Policy

If a Portage Area Elementary School user violates any of these provisions, his or her access will be terminated and future access could possibly be denied.

Network access is available to the students and teachers in the Portage Area School District to provide vast, diverse, and unique resources and information for utilizing the District's network. Our goal in providing this service is to promote educational excellence in schools by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication.

The Internet is an electronic highway connecting thousands of computers all over the world and millions of individual subscribers. With access to computer networks all over the world through the Internet comes the availability of material that may not be considered to be of educational value in the context of the school setting. Portage Area School District has taken precautions to restrict access to controversial materials. However, on a global network it is impossible to control all materials and an industrious user may discover controversial information.

Portage Area School District firmly believes that the valuable information and interaction available on the worldwide network far outweighs the possibility that users may access material that is not consistent with the educational goals of the District.

The smooth operation of the network relies upon the proper conduct of the end users who must adhere to strict guidelines. These guidelines are provided here so that you are aware of the responsibilities you are about to acquire. In general, this requires efficient, ethical, and legal utilization of the network resources. If a Portage Area user violates any of these provisions, his or her account will be terminated and future access could possibly be denied. The signature(s) at the end of this document is (are) legally binding and indicates the third party (parties) who signed has (have) read the terms and conditions carefully and understand (s) their significance.

ACCEPTABLE USE

The use of your account and/or computer privileges must be in support of the educational objectives of the Portage Area School District. The district uses an internet filtering system to block access to material deemed inappropriate or distracting for students. Students are not allowed to use any devices – including computers, smartphones music players, digital tablets and personal wireless access points – that can bypass the school's filter to access the internet. Use of other organization's networks or computing resources must comply with the rules appropriate for that network. Transmission of any material in violation of any U.S. or state regulation is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to: copyright material, threatening, or obscene material, or material protected by trade secret.

PRIVILEGES

The use of the network and any other type of computer equipment and/or software is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in a cancellation of those privileges.

Administrators will deem what is inappropriate use and their decision is final. Also, the system administrators may close an account at any time as required. The administration, faculty, and staff of Portage Area School District may request the system administrator to deny, revoke, or suspend specific user accounts and/or privileges.

Security on any computer system is a high priority, especially when the system involves many users. If you feel you can identify a security problem on the network, you must notify a school administrator or the technology coordinator. Do not demonstrate the problem to other users. Do not use another individual's account. Attempts to log on to the network, as system administrator will result in cancellation of user privileges. Any user identified as a security risk or having a history of problems with other computer systems may be denied access.

VANDALISM

Vandalism will result in the cancellation or suspension of privileges and possible restitution for damages. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm, destroy, or alter data, equipment, or services.

EXCEPTION TO TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Portage Area School District makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the service it is providing. Portage Area School District will not be responsible for any damages you suffer. This includes loss of data resulting for delays, non-deliveries, incorrect deliveries or service interruptions caused by its own negligence or your errors or omissions. Use of any information obtained via the Internet is at your own risk. Portage Area School District specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its services.

All terms and conditions as stated in this document are applicable to the Portage Area School District. These terms and conditions reflect the entire agreement of the parties and will supersede all prior oral or written agreements and understandings of the parties. These terms and conditions shall be governed and interpreted in accordance with the laws of the State of Pennsylvania and the United States of America. I understand that any violation of the regulations above is unethical and may constitute a criminal offense. Should I commit any violation, my access privileges may be revoked, school disciplinary action, and/or appropriate legal action may be taken.

NETWORK ETIQUETTE

You are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. These include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Be polite. Do not get abusive in your messages to others.
- Use appropriate language. Do not swear, use vulgarities, or any other inappropriate language.
- Illegal activities are strictly forbidden.
- Do not reveal your personal address or phone numbers or those of other students or colleagues.
- Note that electronic mail (e-mail) is not guaranteed to be private. Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities may be reported to the authorities.
- Do not use the network in such a way that you would disrupt the use of the network by other users.
- All communications and information accessible via the network should be assumed to be public property of the Portage Area School District.

Notification of Rights under FERPA for Elementary and Secondary Schools

Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students should submit to the School principal [or appropriate school official] a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent of eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.

Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the School to amend a record should write the School principal [or appropriate school official], clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the School has contract as its agent to provide a service instead of using its own employees or officials (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the School discloses education records without consent to officials of another

school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. [NOTE: FERPA requires a school district to make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent or student of the records request unless it states in its annual notification that it intends to forward records on request.]

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by Portage Area School District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-5920

[Note: In addition, a school may want to include its directory information public notice, as required by § 99.37 of the regulations, with its annual notification of rights under FERPA.]

Notification of Rights Under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

PPRA affords parents certain rights regarding our conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

- Consent before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected area ("protected information survey") if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED)
 1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent;
 2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
 3. Sex behaviors or attitudes;
 4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior
 5. Critical appraisal of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
 6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
 7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the students or parents; or
 8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.
- Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of -
 1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
 2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and

3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.

- Inspect, upon request and before administration or use-
 1. Protected information surveys of students;
 2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
 3. Instrumental material used as part of the education curriculum.

These rights transfer to from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law.

Portage Area School District will/has developed and adopted policies, in consultation with parents, regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. Portage Area School District will directly notify parents of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. Portage Area School District will also directly notify, such as through US Mail or email, parents of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt his or her child out of participation of the specific activity or survey. Portage Area School District will make notification to parents at the beginning of the school year if the District has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year start. Parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and are provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys. Parents will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys. Following is a list of the specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales or other distribution.
- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by ED.
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-5920

Notice of Special Education Services and Programs

Child Find

Child find refers to activities undertaken by public education agencies to identify, locate, and evaluate children residing in the State, including children attending private schools, who are suspected of having disabilities, regardless of the severity of their disability, and determine the child's need for special education and related services. The purpose is to locate these children so that a free appropriate public education (FAPE) can be made available. The types of disabilities that, if found, causes a child to need services are: Autism, emotional disturbance, deafness, hearing impairment, specific learning disability, mental retardation, multiple disabilities, other health impairment, orthopedic impairment, speech and language impairment, visual impairment including blindness, traumatic brain injury and In the case of a child that is of preschool age, developmental delay.

Developmental Delay

Child development refers to the process in which children go through changes in skill development during predictable time periods, called developmental milestones. For instance, one developmental milestone is learning to walk. Most children learn this skill or developmental milestone between the ages of 9 and 15 months. Because children usually acquire developmental milestones or skills during a specific time frame or "window", we can predict when most children will learn different skills. Developmental delay occurs when children have not reached these milestones by the expected time period.

Early Intervention

The IDEA '04 requires the provision of a free appropriate public education to children with disabilities between 3 years of age and the school district's age of beginners. In Pennsylvania, a child between 3 years of age and the school district's age of beginners who has a developmental delay or one or more of the physical or mental disabilities listed above may be identified as an "eligible young child."

Eligible young children are afforded the rights of school age children with disabilities, including screening, evaluation, individualized education program planning, and provision of appropriate programs and services. The Pennsylvania Department of Education is responsible for providing programs and services to eligible young children under Act 212 of 1990, the Early Intervention Services System Act. The Intermediate Unit 8 provides programs and services to eligible young children on behalf of the Pennsylvania Department of Education. For more information and a complete list of developmental delays, contact the IU8 Preschool Office at (800)228-7900.

Screening

The Portage Area School District routinely conducts visual acuity screening for all students at each grade level. A hearing acuity screening is conducted in kindergarten, grades 1, 2, 3, 7, 11, and upon referral or when there is a known hearing loss. Speech and language skills are screened for all students in first grade, for all newly enrolled students, as well as on a referral basis. A pre-referral process facilitates screening activities for students who demonstrate at-risk academic and/or behavioral concerns. Classroom teachers continuously assess gross motor, fine motor, academic skills, and social/emotional development. Results from the screening are recorded in the child's official file. Screening information may be used by the Portage Area pre-referral team to plan, implement, and monitor appropriate interventions and to assist the student's progress in the general curriculum.

Contact Information

If you wish to learn more, have questions, or believe your child may need to be identified, please contact the building principal, Director of Special Education, or guidance counselor.

Policies

To access the following policies in their entirety go to PASD website then click special education and then click on policies.

Behavior Support (133-2)

Students with disabilities shall be educated in the least restrictive environment and shall only be placed in settings other than the regular education class when the nature or severity of the student's disability is such that education in the regular education class with the use of appropriate supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. The IEP team for a student with a disability shall develop a positive behavior support plan if the student requires specific intervention to address behavior that interferes with learning. The identification, evaluation, and plan or program shall be conducted and implemented in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations.

The Board directs that the district's behavior support programs shall be based on positive rather than negative behavior techniques to ensure that students shall be free from demeaning treatment and unreasonable use of restraints or other

aversive techniques. The use of restraints shall be considered a measure of last resort and shall only be used after other

less restrictive measures, including de-escalation techniques. Behavior support programs and plans shall be based on a functional assessment of behavior and shall include a variety of research-based techniques to develop and maintain skills that will enhance students' opportunity for learning and self-fulfillment.

Confidentiality (207)

The Board recognizes that certain written and oral communications between students and school personnel must be confidentiality.

The Board directs school personnel to comply with all federal and state laws, regulations and Board policy concerning confidential communications of students.

Public School Enrollment (200)

The Board shall enroll school age students eligible to attend district schools, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, Board policy and administrative regulations.

School age shall be defined as the period from the earliest admission age for the district's kindergarten program until graduation from high school or the end of the school term in which a student reaches the age of twenty-one (21) years, whichever comes first.

District of residence shall be defined as the school district in which a student's parents/guardians reside.

Suicide Awareness, Prevention and Response (819)

The Board is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its students and school community. This policy supports federal, state and local efforts to provide education on youth suicide awareness and prevention; establish methods of prevention, intervention, and response to suicide or suicide attempt; and to promote access to suicide awareness and prevention resources.



Homeless Education

The McKinney–Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act guarantees a free and appropriate public education for all homeless children and youth. B.E.C. 42 U.S.C. 11431 outlines procedures for deciding school placement, enrolling students, and determining responsibility.

What is the definition of a “homeless youth” under McKinney-Vento?

“Homeless” is defined as “anyone lacking a fixed, adequate, regular nighttime residence.”

What situations fit this definition?

- Staying in the home of other people due to unavailable housing, financial hardship, or similar circumstances
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks (in some instances – examples: leaking roof, no heat, etc.), public places, or campgrounds due to unavailable suitable housing option
- Living in an emergency shelter or transitional housing
- Unaccompanied (not living in direct care of legal parent or guardian) or runaway youth
- Refugee and migrant youth

How does McKinney-Vento help these students?

The law makes sure that these students receive a free and suitable public education by removing barriers to school enrollment and full, basic, daily participation in school activities. This includes:

- Immediate enrollment
- Free and Reduced School Lunch
- Help from school with any necessary enrollment documents
- Help from school setting up transportation service (if the student qualifies)
- Help from school with getting basic uniform clothing
- Help from school with basic school supplies
- Help from school with any basic clothing needs

Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program

The main purpose of the Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program is to make sure homeless youth have access to free and appropriate public education while removing barriers that homeless children face. Its goal is to have the educational process continue as uninterrupted as possible while the children are in homeless situations.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001

On July 22, 1987, the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act became public law. This was the first comprehensive federal law dealing with the problems of homelessness in America. The law was included in the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act, it is now called the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001. McKinney-Vento is included in the ESSA Guidelines to support children and youth experiencing homelessness

Examples of Homelessness

- Students staying with friends or family because they lost housing
- Students living in a shelter, including transitional programs
- Students staying in motels because their family cannot get their own home
- Students living on the streets, in a car, van, tent or other nonpermanent structure

Summary of Educational Rights for Homeless Students

- Choice to attend school of origin, school of current residence (Best Interest Determination)
- Immediate enrollment
- Assistance from school district in obtaining required documentation; ie: immunization records
- Prompt access to appropriate education services
- Transportation 41
- Free breakfast and lunch

How can you refer a student who you suspect may be homeless?

Contact the student’s School Social Worker. Include the information you know that leads you to suspect the student may be homeless.

Contact: Ashley Shaffer, LSW, Social Worker, 814-736-9636 ext. 1620

Bullying

Bullying in the school makes students fearful. When students feel unsafe in school, they are not available for learning and can suffer both physical and emotional consequences.

A person is being bullied when he or she is exposed **repeatedly**, and **over time**, to negative actions on the part of one or more persons.

Bullying – An intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act or series of acts:

- 1) Directed at another student or students:
- 2) Which occurs in a school setting
- 3) That is severe, persistent, or pervasive; and
- 4) That has the effect of doing any of the following:
 - i) Substantially interfering with a student's education
 - ii) Creating a threatening environment; or
 - iii) Substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school; and "school setting" shall mean in the school, on the school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop or at any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school

*A school entity is not prohibited from defining bullying in such a way as to encompass acts that occur outside a school setting if those acts are directed at another student or students, are severe, persistent and pervasive or have the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education, creating a threatening environment or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Incident Types

Saying Hurtful/Unpleasant Things/Name Calling
Hitting/Kicking/Pushing/Tripping
Taking or destroying property
Cyberbullying/Inappropriate Use of School Computer
Gossiping/Spreading Rumors
Ostracizing/Excluding
Discrimination/Harassment
Insulting Gestures
Teasing/Taunting/making Faces
Restraining
Spitting
Threat/Intimidation

It is expected that students do not bully others. If students are bystanders they should never encourage the bully or join in the bullying. Observed or suspected bullying should never be ignored and all members of the school community have the responsibility for reporting bullying behavior and/or sharing information. Adult intervention is the primary strategy to resolve bully/victim conflict.

Issues of bullying will be addressed in the Portage Area School District at the building level. The Student Discipline Referral form will be used to document bullying and the actions taken to resolve the situation.

Bullying is a Level II Offense (3 demerits) on the Demerit Slip. The completed slip is submitted to the building principal.

The following actions may be taken when an incident of bullying is reported:

1. Counseling within the school
2. Parental conference
3. Loss of school privileges
4. Compensatory damages
5. Transfer to another educational facility, classroom or mode of transportation
6. Exclusion for school sponsored activities
7. Demerits/Detention
8. Demerits/Suspension
9. Expulsion
10. Counseling/Therapy outside of school
11. Referral to law enforcement officials

Portage Area Elementary School-Parent Compact 2024-2025

The School Parent Compact outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share in the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and the parents will build and develop partnerships to help children achieve the State's high standards (ESSA, Section 1116(d)).

Portage Area Elementary:

The school understands the importance of the school experience to every student and their role as educators and models. Therefore, the school agrees to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of their ability:

- Provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables the children served under this part to meet the challenging State academic standards (required)
- Address the importance of communication between teachers and parents on an ongoing basis through, at a minimum—
 - parent-teacher conferences in elementary schools, at least annually, during which the compact shall be discussed as the compact relates to the individual child's achievement
 - frequent reports to parents on their children's progress;
 - reasonable access to staff; and
 - ensuring regular two-way, meaningful communication between family members and school staff and, to the extent practicable, in a language that family members can understand via email, Remind App, All Call, notes in the student's agendas, and Microsoft TEAMS. (required) (ESSA, Section 1116(d)(1-2))
- Treat each child with dignity and respect
- Strive to address the individual needs of the student
- Acknowledge that parents are vital to the success of child and school
- Provide a safe, positive and healthy learning environment
- Assure every student access to quality learning experiences
- Assure that the school staff communicates clear expectations for performance to both students and parents via progress reports, report cards, and benchmark assessment results

Student:

The student realizes education is important. He/she is the one responsible for his/her own success. Therefore, he/she agrees to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of his/her ability:

1. Get to school on time every day.
2. Be responsible for completing homework on time.
3. Do daily work that is neat and reflects the student's best effort.
4. Be cooperative by carrying out the teacher's instructions and ask for help when needed.
5. Be respectful to all school members and to school property.

Parent/ Family Member:

The parent/ family member realizes that their child's school years are very important. The parent/ family member understands that his/her participation in his/her child's education will help their academic achievement and attitude. Therefore, the parent/ family member agrees to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of his/her ability:

1. Look at, sign, and return any necessary papers brought home from school including the Student Agenda.
2. Create a quiet place for their child to study.
3. Support their child's learning.
4. Help their child with his/her homework, as needed.
5. Make sure their child gets enough sleep each night.
6. Ensure that their child gets to school on time each day.
7. Make sure their child attends school every day unless ill.
8. Attend parent/teacher conferences and or visitations to the school whenever possible.
9. Send the student to school well-fed and well-rested on a regular basis.
10. Encourage their child to show respect for all members of the school community and school property.
11. Review all school communications and respond promptly.