

# MAIN DUNSTABLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

## Parent and Student A-Z Handbook



Constructed 1972

Renovated 1993

The Main Dunstable staff stands united in the pursuit of high academic achievement and exemplary citizenship for all students. Positive attitudes, dedication and a love of children are at the heart of our school culture.

Amanda Cirrone  
Principal

**20 Whitford Road  
Nashua, NH 03062  
603-966-2320**

Patti Flynn  
Assistant Principal

The following is a guide to FAQs that families may have about our school. A comprehensive elementary school district handbook is available at ([www.nashua.edu](http://www.nashua.edu)).

## A

**Agendas:** Our PTO provides students in grades 2-5 with agendas that students use to record daily homework assignments, etc. Please check your child's agenda daily.

**Animals:** Any domestic animals (pets) brought to school when school is in session must remain outside the school building and on a leash. Pets may not be handled by the students.

**Arrival/Morning Drop-Off Procedure:** Children should *not* arrive prior to 8:45AM. as there is no supervision before that time.

- The lane furthest from the school will be for CARS. Parents, please do not get out of your cars. Teach your child to exit the side of the vehicle facing the school and staff will take it from there.
- The first 4 cars in the line may disembark. Staff will be there to assist.
- The parking lots are not travel routes in which to drop children off.
- Please refrain from hand-held cell phone use which may prompt driver distractibility.
- Please do not attempt to circumvent the traffic and wait time by dropping children off in a manner alternative to what is noted above as we seek to ensure procedures that prioritize the well-being of our students and staff.

**Afternoon Dismissal/Pick-up Procedure:** Our school's dismissal time is 3:25PM. 3 OPTIONS: *BE SURE TO INFORM YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER AS TO WHICH METHOD YOUR CHILD IS TO BE DISMISSED!*

- OPTION 1: BUS
  - The lane closest to the school will be for BUSES ONLY. Our larger buses drive around the back and board from the playground. Our smaller buses park in the lane closest to the school and students requiring this type of specialized transportation board at this location.
- OPTION 2: CAR PICK UP
  - The lane furthest from the school will be for cars. Please post a sign in the car's window with your STUDENT'S NAME. Our staff reads this sign in order to call for your child to come outside to your car. Again, we request that parents stay IN their vehicles as staff guide children to your cars. Also note that this is not a passing lane so you will always need to wait one behind the other.
- OPTION 3: WALKERS
  - For our students who walk home, parents need only to inform the teacher and those students will be allowed to exit the front door and walk on their own.
- **NO PARKING:** Parents may not park along Whitford Rd and wait for their children. Everyone must use the car pickup lane.
- **Tardy/Early Dismissal:** Vehicles are no longer allowed to park in the two lanes in front of the school at any point during the school day. Parents must park in one of our lots to drop students off tardy, dismiss them early or to conduct any other type of school business. Please ring the bell and someone will come outside to assist you. We request that parents do NOT call the school after 2:30PM to change a student's dismissal procedure and do NOT dismiss their children from the office between 3:00-3:30PM.

**Attendance/Absences:** To report an absence, please call the school and leave a message @ 966-2340. Families who have not called the school by 10:00AM will receive an automated message indicating the child is not in attendance. The school is required by law to address issues of chronic absence and tardiness. Parents will receive written notice if the number of absences/tardies reaches the criteria for concern. The Nashua School District's full attendance policy is available on its website. A student who is absent from school may not participate in after-school activities.

## B

**Badges:** Staff, visitors, volunteers and substitute teachers are to wear a badge while on school property.

**Before/Afterschool program:** Several agencies provide before and after school care; some also provide transportation to and from schools. The Adult Learning Center (882-9080) runs a program out of our building. Parents are encouraged to call each organization for additional information.

**Behavior/Student Conduct:** Students are expected to be respectful of others and not behave in a manner that interferes with the learning process. We encourage observance of our Hawk's Creed:

**H**-help others  
**A**-always do the right thing  
**W**-welcome everyone  
**K**-kindness matters  
**S**-safety first

**Birthdays:** In alignment with district policy and practice, personal communications such as party invitations are not permitted for distribution at school. Please do not send in trinket bags or other gift items. See more under "Food Safe Schools" (page 4).

**Building Security:** For the safety of students and staff, all building doors are locked. For service please ring the bell located on the wall to the right of our main door. For security purposes, once admitted, do not hold the door for others behind you.

**Bus Conduct:** Riding the bus is a privilege and safe passage is the priority. Bus drivers write discipline reports for inappropriate and/or unsafe student behavior which may result in suspension from bus transport.

## C

**Change in Student's Regular Dismissal Procedure:** Students must provide teachers a note if there is going to be any change to his/her ordinary dismissal plans. If not, we will send the student home via regular dismissal procedure.

**Class Placement:** Class lists are created considering a variety of factors such as ability, needs, social dynamics, and gender. Parent requests for specific teachers are not accepted.

**Clubs:** Parent volunteers graciously facilitate several clubs/activities throughout the year. These are volunteer not staff-based, and occur outside of the school day. Information regarding clubs/activities is sent through the PTO.

**Conferences:** Parent/Teacher conferences are held in November and throughout the year as needed. Please reach out to your child's teacher at any time if you feel you would like an additional meeting.

**Contact Information:** Be sure contact information is updated if a change occurs in your phone number, email address, or persons authorized for pick-up.

**Curriculum:** The Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need to be college and career ready. <http://www.corestandards.org/>. Please consult the curriculum tab on the district website for additional information.

## D

**Delayed Opening/Snow Days:** Due to weather conditions, the Superintendent may call a delayed opening or snow day. You will be notified via our Parent Alert System, local television and the district website. Should a delayed opening occur, students should not arrive at school before 10:45AM as there will be no adult supervision. Bus pick-up times will be two hours later than your normal pick-up time.

**Donors Choose:** [www.donorschoose.org](http://www.donorschoose.org) is an opportunity whereby anyone can support teachers' requests for wanted items.

**Dress Code:** Clothing should not be distractible to the education of others and should not make others feel uncomfortable. Clothing should be neat and clean. Sneakers are required for PE class.

## E

**English Language Learners (ELL):** Students for whom English is not their primary or singular language are administered an ACCESS assessment yearly. Qualifying students receive ELL support from a teacher certified in that area.

**Emergency Preparedness:** The school district will make every effort to notify parents immediately of emergencies via our Parent Alert System. Every school has a safety plan that would be activated for potential or actual threats, natural disasters, building emergencies, etc. It is unlikely we would release students prior to normal dismissal time, as our primary concern is always with young children being left home without supervision. In the event we would ever need to be evacuated to another building, parents would be informed through a variety of means including television and Parent Alert System. Emergency drills will be practiced as part of our regular safety routines. Parents should always have their contact information in the office up to date, including home, work, cell, and emergency numbers (permission for your child to leave with several identified neighbors, for example), email, etc. We will never dismiss a child without proper authorization from a parent and/or legal guardian. In the case of an actual emergency, please do not call the school. The lines must be open for essential communication. Please do not come to the school. Allow the school staff to supervise emergency procedures efficiently and work with emergency personnel in the city. Click [Emergency Preparedness Brochure for Parents.pdf \(nashua.edu\)](#) for more information.

**ENews:** eNews publishes district news and upcoming events. Click [www.nashua.edu/events/EnewsReq](http://www.nashua.edu/events/EnewsReq) to sign up to receive eNews.

## F

**Family Trips/Vacations:** The Nashua School District encourages parents to make every attempt to schedule family vacations/trips on non-school days. This is not always possible. Please be aware that after 15 days of absenteeism, students will be removed from enrollment. Upon return, students may be reenrolled. School administrators will not be able to guarantee that children will be reassigned to the same classroom teacher nor will classroom teachers provide students with work prior to their absence.

**Food Safe School:** Guidelines of the National School Lunch and Breakfast program went into effect in recent years requiring schools to serve more nutritious meals. This entails providing children with more vegetables, fruits, whole grains and low-fat dairy products. It also limits the amount of carbs and proteins offered. Any food provided to students in our schools must meet or exceed the standards set forth in this policy. For this reason as well as for the **safety** of our students and staff with significant food allergies, families are asked NOT to send in food for distribution in the classroom. Please save birthday treats, etc. for home celebrations.

## H

**Health:** Children who feel ill should remain home. One should be fever-, diarrhea-, and vomit-free for at least 24 hours before returning to school. A nurse is available to handle any issues that arise during the day. She may administer prescribed medications only after the doctor signs a prescription giving permission. All medications to be administered by the health office must be in their original, labeled container and be brought directly to the nurse's office along with the doctor's orders for administration. Children may not have any medication in their possession.

**Homework:** Homework reinforces knowledge and skills acquired in the classroom and is a means of establishing good study habits. Below is a homework guideline:

\*Gr. K-2: Not to exceed, on average, 20 minutes

\*Gr. 3-4: Not to exceed, on average, 40 minutes

\*Gr. 5: Not to exceed, on average, 60 minutes

**Hours:** The school hours are 9:00am-3:25pm. Drop off begins at 8:45am.

## I

**Insurance Program:** For information on pupil insurance plan visit [Professional Insurance Administrator | Insurance Specialists, Inc. \(isi1959.com\)](#)

## L

**Lunch/Breakfast:** Each grade level has a designated lunch time followed by recess. Students have options within our school lunch program. Milk is available for purchase for those students who choose to bring their lunch from home. The kitchen staff serves an entrée for the day as well as sandwich or yogurt offerings. A monthly lunch menu is sent home to families at the end of each month. Parents may purchase any number of meals by adding money to an account. For families with financial needs, applications for free and reduced lunch are sent home at the beginning of the year and are available at any time throughout the year. This information is also available at <http://www.nashua.edu/about-us/departments/food-services> located on the district website. Breakfast is served from 8:45-9:00AM for those seeking this option. Please call the kitchen directly at 966-2330 with any questions about the food service program.

## M

**Mascot:** Our school's mascot is the Blue Hawk.

**Music Program:** General music instruction occurs in Grades K-5. Chorus and Instrumental Lesson are available for students in Grades 4 and 5. Strings lessons are available for students in Grades 3, 4, and 5. Contact our music teacher, Mrs. Stone [stoneh@nashua.edu](mailto:stoneh@nashua.edu) for information.

## O

**Open House:** Open House is held each Fall. The goal of Open House is to familiarize parents with curriculum, expectations and procedures in each classroom and grade level. This night is for *parents only* and is not a conference night.

## P

**Parent Alert System:** We utilize the telephone/email system to communicate with parents regarding district and school messages.

**Parking:** When conducting school business (i.e. dismissing early, checking in tardy students) please park in one of our lots.

**Photographs:** School pictures are taken in the fall and spring by an outside photographer contracted by the District. Purchase of these photos is optional. *A separate but important note: during school functions/events, parents may only photograph their own children. For example, if chaperoning a field trip, one may only take pictures of his/her own child.*

**PTO:** The PTO meets monthly and welcomes all parents/guardians. The PTO sponsors school clubs and monthly spirit events...complete with popcorn! They also hold fundraisers in support of field trips, classroom needs, recess equipment, children's programming, technology initiatives, etc. Visit the [www.mdespto.com](http://www.mdespto.com) site run by the PTO for information. Their email is [mdesptoinfo@gmail.com](mailto:mdesptoinfo@gmail.com).

## R

**Recess:** Outdoor recess is held unless the temperature falls below 15 degrees (factoring windchill) or the weather is inclement. Students are required to go outside unless the nurse has a doctor's note on file indicating it is not advisable.

**Report Cards/Progress Reports:** Your child is evaluated based on his/her individual progress toward meeting end-of-year grade level standards. Report cards are presented to all students on a trimester calendar. Progress reports will be given to all students in the first trimester. Progress reports are presented at the teacher's discretion in Trimester 2 and Trimester 3 if there has been a significant change from the previous report card.

## S

**Snack:** Each classroom has a designated snack time when students are able to eat a small snack brought from home. Due to the high number of children and adults with food allergies we request that students not share snacks. Main Dunstable does not have a free snack program so please be sure to send your child with a snack each day. If this is a hardship, please let your child's teacher know.

**Supplies:** Welcome letters and supply lists will be e-mailed to families in mid- to late August.

## T

**Tardy/Early Dismissal:** Vehicles are no longer allowed to park in the two lanes in front of the school at any point during the school day. Parents must park in one of our lots to drop students off tardy, dismiss them early or to conduct any other type of school business. Please ring the bell and someone will come outside to assist you. We request that parents do NOT call the school after 2:30PM to change a student's dismissal procedure.

**Telephone:** Students should not use the school telephone unless there is an emergency (forgotten homework, instruments, sneakers, etc, are not emergencies). Also, teachers may not be interrupted while teaching. Teachers will return messages upon their earliest availability.

**Twitter:** Follow us @maindunstable.

#### V

**Volunteers / Visitors:** Your children love to see you involved and so do we! The PTO runs our robust volunteer program. Information regarding the program is available through an orientation at the beginning of the year. All volunteers must complete a Volunteer Assurance Form, sign in and out of the building, wear proper identification, and remain in the area(s) of the building necessary to perform assigned duties. Designated volunteers are those who work independently, without direct supervision of staff, to assist students. These volunteers must complete an additional form available in the MDES office, and be fingerprinted at District office (free of charge).

#### W

**Withdrawals:** Parents are required to inform the school should there be a change of address so that any proper forms may be promptly processed.

#### Y

**Yearbook:** Each year a school yearbook is published. Forms for purchase are sent through the PTO.

*Thank you for taking the time to familiarize yourself with some of the routines and practices of Main Dunstable Elementary School. We look forward to working with your child and family throughout the school year. Should you have any additional questions that cannot be answered through the resources provided here, please contact the school office (966-2320).*