

# **Pine Grove Area Elementary School PreK-4<sup>th</sup>**



## **Student/Parent Handbook**

### **Code of Conduct**

**\*Administration has the ability to enforce, as needed, the guidelines set forth in the Pine Grove Area School District Health and Safety Plan.**

**2024-2025**

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# Pine Grove Area School District

**Promoting, Growth, Achievement, Success, and Direction  
for ALL children!**

## **Mission Statement**

*It is the mission of the Pine Grove Area School District Board, faculty, and staff to Promote Growth, Achievement, Success, and Direction for all children. PGASD for all children!*

**SUPERINTENDENT:** Mr. Heath Renninger  
Mrs. Joanne Brindle, Administrative Assistant/Board Secretary

## **PINE GROVE AREA BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS**

**President:** Mr. David Lukasewicz  
**Vice-President:** Mr. Donald E. Brown Jr.  
**Treasurer:** Mr. David Frew  
**Member:** Mr. J.T. Herber III, Esq.  
**Member:** Mrs. Andrea Primeau  
**Member:** Mr. Walter R. Stump  
**Member:** Miss Genavieve Moyer  
**Member:** Mrs. Amanda Daubert  
**Member:** Mrs. Lauren Potter

## **ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**

Mrs. Sandra Burns, Elementary Principal  
Mr. Nolan Hatfield, Grounds Supervisor  
Mr. Henry Snyder, Buildings and Maintenance Supervisor  
Mr. Sean Lyons, Social Worker  
Mr. Todd Lenge, Director of Technology  
Mrs. Stephanie Ziegmont, Director of Curriculum  
Mr. Bill Kimber, Special Education Director  
Mr. Bernie Kelly, Food Service Director

## *Message from the Principal...*



**Hello and welcome to the opening of what promises to be a wonderful school year at Pine Grove Area Elementary School. At this time of year, there is great anticipation of what is to come. I am just as excited as our dedicated faculty, our creative and energetic students, and our supportive parents, to see what opportunities this school year will bring. Throughout the year every decision I make will be in each student's best interest to continue to promote growth, achievement, success and direction for all our children. The teachers and staff in our school are committed to working collaboratively with you and with one another to provide instruction that focuses on the success of every Pine Grove Area student.**

**It is my goal, as principal, to support Pine Grove Area School District's long tradition of striving for excellence while providing a safe and nurturing environment. I have an open door policy and I welcome the opportunity to get to know all of you. It is my belief that the best way to educate your child is for everyone to join together in this effort. Nothing motivates a child more than when learning is valued by schools, families, and community in partnership. We know that in partnership we will achieve incredible success. We are counting on each and every parent to partner with us as we continue to raise the challenge bar and close the achievement gap.**

**It is my pleasure, and an honor to serve the district, the community and our most valuable assets, the children.**

**Respectfully,**

*Sandra Burns*

**Sandra Burns  
Pine Grove Area Elementary School Principal  
[sburns@pgasd.com](mailto:sburns@pgasd.com)**

# *Pine Grove Area Elementary School Staff*

<b><u>PINE GROVE AREA ELEMENTARY</u></b>						
<b>OFFICE</b>						
<b>Title</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Room</b>	<b>Ext.</b>	<b><u>Email address</u></b>
Mrs.	Sandra	Burns	Principal	A116	441	<a href="mailto:sburns@pgasd.com">sburns@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	Kelly	Jochems	Nurse	A122	446	<a href="mailto:kjochems@pgasd.com">kjochems@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	Christine	Demcher	Principal's Secretary	A114	440	<a href="mailto:cdemcher@pgasd.com">cdemcher@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	April	Reinbold	Transportation, Child Accounting & PIMS Secretary	A112	320	<a href="mailto:areinbold@pgasd.com">areinbold@pgasd.com</a>
<b>Pre-K Counts</b>						
Mrs.	Mary	Debus	Pre-K	A103	432	<a href="mailto:mdebus@pgasd.com">mdebus@pgasd.com</a>
<b>KINDERGARTEN</b>						
Mrs.	Shandra	Allar	Kindergarten	E117	451	<a href="mailto:sallar@pgasd.com">sallar@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	Susan	Halcovich	Kindergarten	E114	454	<a href="mailto:shalcovich@pgasd.com">shalcovich@pgasd.com</a>
Miss	Erica	Lis	Kindergarten	E126	439	<a href="mailto:elis@pgasd.com">elis@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	Donna	Mederios	Kindergarten	E123	409	<a href="mailto:dmederios@pgasd.com">dmederios@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	Lorna	Shollenberger	Kindergarten	E120	455	<a href="mailto:lshollenberger@pgasd.com">lshollenberger@pgasd.com</a>
Miss	Hannah	Werley	Kindergarten	E111	402	<a href="mailto:hwerley@pgasd.com">hwerley@pgasd.com</a>
<b>GRADE 1</b>						
Mrs.	Joelle	Bretz	First Grade	A143	408	<a href="mailto:jbretz@pgasd.com">jbretz@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	Mary	Pontician	First Grade	B123	449	<a href="mailto:mpontician@pgasd.com">mpontician@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	Elizabeth	Quinn	First Grade	B120	404	<a href="mailto:equinn@pgasd.com">equinn@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	Dawn	Reiter	First Grade	B122	431	<a href="mailto:dreiter@pgasd.com">dreiter@pgasd.com</a>
Miss	Jolene	Schneck	First Grade	A144	426	<a href="mailto:jschneck@pgasd.com">jschneck@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	Christine	VanTries	First Grade	B121	429	<a href="mailto:cvantries@pgasd.com">cvantries@pgasd.com</a>
<b>GRADE 2</b>						
Mrs.	Nikkole	Brown	Second Grade	A212	452	<a href="mailto:nbrown@pgasd.com">nbrown@pgasd.com</a>
Mr.	Joshua	Hewes	Second Grade	A209	411	<a href="mailto:jhewes@pgasd.com">jhewes@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	Amber	Holland	Second Grade	A210	426	<a href="mailto:aholland@pgasd.com">aholland@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	Melissa	Masser	Second Grade	A213	435	<a href="mailto:mmasser@pgasd.com">mmasser@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	Cindy	Moyer	Second Grade	A214	433	<a href="mailto:cmoyer@pgasd.com">cmoyer@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	Susan	Skripko	Second Grade	A211	405	<a href="mailto:sskripko@pgasd.com">sskripko@pgasd.com</a>
<b>GRADE 3</b>						
Miss	Angela	Brand	Third Grade	A220	436	<a href="mailto:abrand@pgasd.com">abrand@pgasd.com</a>
Miss	Amy Jo	Brixius	Third Grade	A201	406	<a href="mailto:abrixius@pgasd.com">abrixius@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	Jena	Kramer	Third Grade	A203	437	<a href="mailto:jkramer@pgasd.com">jkramer@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	Patricia	Whalen Reimer	Third Grade	A219	417	<a href="mailto:preimer@pgasd.com">preimer@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	Megan	Schwartz	Third Grade	A202	410	<a href="mailto:mschwartz@pgasd.com">mschwartz@pgasd.com</a>
<b>GRADE 4</b>						
Ms.	Jennifer	Cleary	Fourth Grade	E215	427	<a href="mailto:jcleary@pgasd.com">jcleary@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	Melissa	Luckenbach	Fourth Grade	E212	428	<a href="mailto:mluckenbach@pgasd.com">mluckenbach@pgasd.com</a>

Mrs.	Tiffany	Renninger	Fourth Grade	E210	407	<a href="mailto:trenninger@pgasd.com">trenninger@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	Selena	Slackus	Fourth Grade	E208	422	<a href="mailto:sslackus@pgasd.com">sslackus@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	Elizabeth	White	Fourth Grade	E211	406	<a href="mailto:ereadinger@pgasd.com">ereadinger@pgasd.com</a>

ARTS/SCIENCES						
Mrs.	Susan	Fenstermaker	Instrumental Music	B115	413	<a href="mailto:sfenstermaker@pgasd.com">sfenstermaker@pgasd.com</a>
Mr.	Robert	Frankford	Vocal Music	B114	423	<a href="mailto:rfrankford@pgasd.com">rfrankford@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	Darla	Rodriguez	Art	A205	450	<a href="mailto:drodriguez@pgasd.com">drodriguez@pgasd.com</a>
Ms.	Susan	Seavey	STEAM	E132	430	<a href="mailto:sseavey@pgasd.com">sseavey@pgasd.com</a>
Miss	Megan	Sonday	Library	A135	448	<a href="mailto:msonday@pgasd.com">msonday@pgasd.com</a>
Mr.	Joshua	Zelinsky	Physical Education	B111	493	<a href="mailto:jzelinsky@pgasd.com">jzelinsky@pgasd.com</a>
RESOURCES						
Mr.	Noah	Allegretta	School Counselor	E209	466	<a href="mailto:nallegretta@pgasd.com">nallegretta@pgasd.com</a>
Miss	Michelle	Brand	School Counselor	A147	447	<a href="mailto:mbrand@pgasd.com">mbrand@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	Myranda	Aponte	Autistic Support	A148	456	<a href="mailto:maponte@pgasd.com">maponte@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	Mary	Chappell	Learning Support Kindergarten & 1st	B118	414	<a href="mailto:mchappell@pgasd.com">mchappell@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	Jennifer	Hall	Learning Support 3rd	A221	434	<a href="mailto:jhall@pgasd.com">jhall@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	Corrine	Stricker	Title 1 Reading	A216	308	<a href="mailto:cstricker@pgasd.com">cstricker@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	Karen	Raugh	Title 1 Reading	E132	458	<a href="mailto:kraugh@pgasd.com">kraugh@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	Jamie	Hitz	Gifted Program		408	<a href="mailto:ahitz@pgasd.com">ahitz@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	Justine	Hosler	Learning Support 4th	E214	424	<a href="mailto:jhosler@pgasd.com">jhosler@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	Susan	Kuchinsky	Interventionist	B119	418	<a href="mailto:skuchinsky@pgasd.com">skuchinsky@pgasd.com</a>
Miss	Tiffany	Kohr	Life Skills	A109	442	<a href="mailto:tkohr@pgasd.com">tkohr@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	Kelly	Weiss	Learning Support 2nd	A204	469	<a href="mailto:kweiss@pgasd.com">kweiss@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	Katie	Wolfgang	Speech Pathologist	A142A	.401	<a href="mailto:kwolfgang@pgasd.com">kwolfgang@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	Lynne	Dimnicki	Speech Pathologist		402	<a href="mailto:ldimnicki@pgasd.com">ldimnicki@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	Suzanne	Dubbs	Occupational Therapist	A215	463	<a href="mailto:sdubbs@pgasd.com">sdubbs@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	Kristin	MacCready	School Psychologist	E203	403	<a href="mailto:ktaylor@pgasd.com">ktaylor@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	Mary	Pleva	Emotional Support	A140	442	<a href="mailto:mpleva@pgasd.com">mpleva@pgasd.com</a>
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Mrs.	Michele	Brown	Instructional Aide			<a href="mailto:mbrown@pgasd.com">mbrown@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	Phyliss	D'Ambrosio-Kull	Instructional Aide			<a href="mailto:pdambrosio@pgasd.com">pdambrosio@pgasd.com</a>
Miss	Alexis	Guidas	Instructional Aide			<a href="mailto:alguidas@pgasd.com">alguidas@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	Tina	Joseph	Instructional Aide			<a href="mailto:tjoseph@pgasd.com">tjoseph@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	Janine	Mehta	Instructional Aide			<a href="mailto:jmehta@pgasd.com">jmehta@pgasd.com</a>
Miss	Faith	Myers	Instructional Aide			<a href="mailto:fmyers@pgasd.com">fmyers@pgasd.com</a>
Mrs.	Tina	Niemi	Instructional Aide			<a href="mailto:tniemi@pgasd.com">tniemi@pgasd.com</a>



## **ACCEPTABLE USE OF THE COMPUTERS, NETWORKS, INTERNET, ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS AND INFORMATION (CIS SYSTEMS)**

Pine Grove Area School District ("school district") provides employees, students and guests ("users") with access to the school district's electronic communication systems and network, which includes Internet access, whether wired or wireless, or by any other means. Computers, network, Internet, electronic communications and information systems (collectively "CIS systems") provide vast, diverse and unique resources. The Board will provide access to the school district's CIS systems in order to access information, research, to facilitate learning and teaching, and to foster the educational purpose and mission of the school district.

For users, the school district's CIS systems must be used primarily for educational-related purposes and performance of school district job duties. Incidental personal use of school computers is permitted for employees so long as such use does not interfere with the employee's job duties and performance, with system operations or with other system users. Personal use must comply with this policy and all other applicable school district policies, procedures and rules contained in this policy, as well as Internet Service Provider ("ISP") terms, local, state and

federal laws and must not damage the school district's CIS systems.

Students may only use the CIS systems for educational purposes. At the same time, employees' and students' personal technology devices brought onto the school district's property or suspected to contain school district information may be legally accessed to ensure compliance with this policy and other school district policies to protect the school district's resources, and to comply with the law. Users may not use their personal computers to access the school district's intranet, Internet or any other CIS systems unless approved by the Technology Coordinator, Network Specialist, and/or their designee.

The school district intends to strictly protect its CIS systems against numerous outside and internal risks and vulnerabilities. Users are important and critical players in protecting these school district assets and in lessening the risks that can destroy these important and critical assets. Consequently, employees and students are required to fully comply with this policy, and to immediately report any violations or suspicious activities to the building principals, the Superintendent, or the district's Technology Coordinator. Conduct otherwise will result in actions further described in Consequences for Inappropriate, Unauthorized and Illegal Use, found as the last section of this policy, and provided in relevant school district policies.

It is often necessary to access user accounts in order to perform routine maintenance and security tasks; system administrators have the right to access by interception, and the stored communication of user accounts for any reason in order to uphold this policy and to maintain the system. Users have no privacy expectation in the contents of their personal files or any of their use of the school district's CIS systems. The school district reserves the right to monitor, track, log and access CIS systems use and to monitor and allocate fileserver space. The school district reserves the right to restrict access to any Internet sites or functions it may deem



inappropriate through software blocking or general policy. Specifically, the school district operates and enforces technology protection measure(s) that block or filter online activities of minors on its computers used and accessible to adults and students so as to filter or block inappropriate matter on the Internet. **Inappropriate matter** includes, but is not limited to, visual, graphic, text and any other form of obscene, sexually explicit, child pornographic or other material that is harmful to minors, hateful, illegal, defamatory, lewd, vulgar, profane, rude, inflammatory, threatening, harassing, discriminatory (as it pertains to race, color, religion, national origin, gender, marital status, age, sexual orientation, political beliefs, receipt of financial aid or disability), violent, bullying, terroristic and advocates the destruction of property. Measures designed to restrict adults' and minors' access to material harmful to minors may be disabled to enable an adult to access bona fide research or for another lawful purpose.

The school district has the right, but not the duty, to monitor, track, log, access and report all aspects of its computer information technology and related systems of all users and of any employee's, student's and guest's personal computers, network, Internet, electronic communication systems and media brought onto school district premises or at school district events, connected to the school district network, containing school district programs or school district or student data (including images, files and other information) to ensure compliance with this policy and other school district policies, to protect the school district's resources and to comply with the law.

It is often necessary to access user accounts in order to perform routine maintenance and security tasks; system administrators have the right to access by interception, and the stored communication of user accounts for any reason in order to uphold this policy and to maintain the system. Users have no privacy expectation in the contents of their personal files or any of their use of the school

district's CIS systems. The school district reserves the right to monitor, track, log and access CIS systems use and to monitor and allocate fileserver space.

**Please read the complete policy with your child (No. 815), located at the end of this "Student/Parent Handbook," as all parents and students will be expected to sign-off as having read, understanding, and accepting this policy. A separate form will be provided to you for this purpose.**

## **ACCIDENT INSURANCE**



Since the district is not liable for injuries incurred during the normal school day, the need for the parent/guardian to assume costs in the event of an accident should be considered in the decision concerning the purchase of school insurance. Students who participate in district sponsored athletics; JROTC, band, clubs, field trips and physical education K-12 are covered by a policy purchased by the district. This policy, however, has specific coverage and limitations.

Additionally, there is an option for low cost health insurance to qualified families through CHIPS (Children's Health Insurance Plan). Interested persons can learn more about this option by visiting:

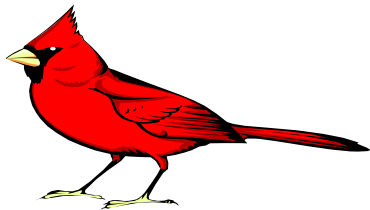
<https://www.insurance.pa.gov/Pages/default.aspx> on the web. You can also contact our school nurse for more information or our school website at [www.pgasd.com](http://www.pgasd.com) for more information about health insurance.

## **ADDRESS/PHONE NUMBER CHANGES**

When a child's and/or parent/guardian's addresses or phone number changes during the school year, please contact the school immediately. Also notify the school if any changes are made in the emergency contact information. There are times it is necessary



to contact parents/guardians and the correct address and phone number is needed.



## **ADMISSION OF BEGINNER**

A child is eligible for admission to kindergarten if she/he has attained the age of five (5) years before the first day of September. The district policy that addresses the age of an incoming kindergarten student is a part of this document, no exceptions. Please refer to Pine Grove Area School District's Policy No. 201.

## **Arrival & Dismissal Procedure**

### **Morning Arrival (8:20 – 8:45)**

- Our doors open at 8:20 and classes begin promptly at 8:45. We strongly encourage students to be settled in their homerooms by 8:45. Arriving late is a disruption to the flow of education.
- Tardy times are 8:46 a.m. to 9:45 a.m.
- Students who arrive after 9:45 a.m. will be issued a ½ day absence.
- Students who leave prior to 2:25 will be issued a ½ day absence.
- Students must be dropped off at the rear of the elementary building

(kindergarten entrance) during regular arrival times.

- If a student is late in arriving to school, a parent must accompany the child into the front office of the elementary building and “sign-in.”
- Students should NOT be dropped off or picked up in the inner-circle entrances or by double-parking on School Street.
- Please do not park in “reserved” spaces. (any numbered space)
- Visitors should NEVER park in the inner-circle entrances.

### **P.M. Dismissal (3:25)**

If you choose to pick up your child at the end of the school day, please remember that the elementary school day ends at 3:25 p.m. The amount of time a child spends in school directly impacts his/her academic success.

The procedure for picking up children at the end of the school day is as follows:

- All children going home by car will report to the elementary GYM for dismissal, immediately at 3:25 p.m.
- The Parent/Guardian will park on School Street or on the lower lot, near the tennis courts, go to the GYM door, where he/she will need to “sign-out” his/her child. You will need to show your driver's license. This procedure is strictly for the welfare and safety of your child.
- Parents are not permitted in the building during dismissal.
- Children who ride a bus will be dismissed beginning at 3:25 p.m.
- Please drive slowly and cautiously while leaving the parking areas; many pedestrians will be using this thoroughfare.

- If your child rides a school bus and is in kindergarten, an adult, (18 years or older), must be present at the stop at drop off time. If an adult is not present to pick up a kindergarten student, the student will be taken to the Bus Barn located at 1000 Rock Road, Pine Grove PA. 17963 and will need to be picked up by an adult showing proof of identification. This is to ensure the safety of all students.

## **ATTENDANCE**



There will be times when your child is too sick to attend school. When this occurs, please send a note preferably using the standard elementary form available on our website. Please include the following information: student's first and last name, date of absence, brief description for absence, and signature of parent/guardian. **Excuse notes are due in the office the day the student returns to school. After three days, the absence become unlawful. Please note that after 10 days of accumulated absences (without a doctor's note), a letter will be sent home and the student will be required to bring a medical note for every absence after the letter is received.** To ensure the safety of each and every one of our students at the elementary school, please call our office at 570-345-2731 ext. 440 or email [cdemcher@pgasd.com](mailto:cdemcher@pgasd.com) before 8:30 when your child is going to be absent. This will assure all students are accounted for.

### **Administrative Rule for the Processing of Truancy Citations & Referrals to Juvenile Court**

Revised 5/2017

Procedures when a student is **truant**: The law defines "truant" as a student subject to compulsory attendance who

has three or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year.

- Within 10 days of the student's third unexcused absence, the school will provide written notification that the student has been truant to the person in parental relation to the student. The school may offer an attendance improvement conference.
- If the student continues to accumulate unexcused absences after the written notice is provided, the school will convene a school attendance improvement conference. The school will invite the child, the person in parental relation to the child, other individuals identified by the person in parental relation who may be a resource, appropriate school personnel, and recommended service providers. The school will provide the parent with advance written notice of the meeting. The conference may occur if the parent declines to participate or fails to attend the scheduled conference after advanced written notice and attempts to communicate via telephone. The school will complete a written school attendance improvement plan to document the outcome of the conference.

Procedures when a student is **habitually truant**: The law defines "habitually truant" as six or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a child subject to compulsory school attendance.

- When a child is habitually truant and under fifteen years of age at the time of the referral: The school will refer the child to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program or to Schuylkill County Children and Youth Services for services or for possible disposition as a dependent child. The school may file a citation in the office of the appropriate magisterial district judge against the person in parental relation of the student.
- When a child is habitually truant and fifteen years of age or older at the time of the referral: The school will refer the student to a school or community –based attendance improvement program or file a citation with a magisterial district judge. If the student continues to incur additional unexcused absences after being referred to a school attendance improvement program as recommended through the school attendance improvement conference, the school may refer the child to Schuylkill County Children and Youth Services.
- A school attendance improvement conference has not occurred.
- A proceeding is already pending for violating compulsory school attendance.
- A referral has been made to Schuylkill County Children and Youth Services and the case is active with the Agency.
- A petition has been filed alleging the child is dependent due to being habitually truant and the case remains under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court.

**Schuylkill County Truancy Handbook for  
Parents and Youth  
Revised May 2017**

The following is information that every family should be aware of regarding truancy and how truant situations will be handled:

Initially it is important to know that by definition compulsory school attendance is from ages 8-17. However, if a student under the age of 8 is enrolled and attending school, they are also bound to follow the truancy policy once they begin school.

A) Procedures when a student is **truant**: The law defines “truant” as a student subject to compulsory attendance who has three or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year.

- Within 10 days of the student’s third unexcused absence, the school will

Upon receiving a truancy referral, Children and Youth will review the student’s attendance record and determine if an investigation is warranted based on the frequency of absences and the length of time over which the absences occurred. If Children and Youth determines the student’s absences do not warrant an investigation, the agency will notify the district of their decision.

Citations may not be filed if:

provide written notification that the student has been truant to the person in parental relation to the student. The school may offer an attendance improvement conference.

- If the student continues to accumulate unexcused absences after the written notice is provided, the school will convene a school attendance improvement conference. The school will invite the child, the person in parental relation to the child, other individuals identified by the person in parental relation who may be a resource, appropriate school personnel, and recommended service providers. The school will provide the parent with advance written notice of the meeting. The conference may occur if the parent declines to participate or fails to attend the scheduled conference after advanced written notice and attempts to communicate via telephone. The school will complete a written school attendance improvement plan to document the outcome of the conference.

B) Procedures when a student is **habitually truant**: The law defines “habitually truant” as six or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a child subject to compulsory school attendance.

- When a child is habitually truant and under fifteen years of age at the time of the referral: The school will refer the child to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program or to Schuylkill County Children and Youth Services for services or for possible disposition as a dependent child. The school may file a citation in the office of the appropriate magisterial district judge against the person in parental relation of the student.
- When a child is habitually truant and fifteen years of age or older at the time

of the referral: The school will refer the student to a school or community-based attendance improvement program or file a citation with a magisterial district judge. If the student continues to incur additional unexcused absences after being referred to a school attendance improvement program as recommended through the school attendance improvement conference, the school may refer the child to Schuylkill County Children and Youth Services.

C) Upon receiving a truancy referral, Children and Youth will review the student’s attendance record and determine if an investigation is warranted based on the frequency of absences and the length of the time over which the absences occurred. If Children and Youth determines the student’s absences do not warrant an investigation, the agency will notify the district of their decision.

D) Citations may not be filed if

- A school attendance improvement conference has not occurred.
- A proceeding is already pending for violating compulsory school attendance.
- A referral has been made to Schuylkill County Children and Youth Services and the case is active with the Agency.
- A petition has been filed alleging the child is dependent due to being habitually truant and the case remains under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court.

**Additional services that can/will be offered and utilized in an attempt improve school attendance:**

Children and Youth programs:

- Family Group Decision Making (FGDM): FGDM is a conference bringing family members, friends, and social supports together in order to

develop a working plan to improve school attendance

- Family Support Unit/Signature Family Services/JusticeWorks: These in-home services provide parenting education and supportive counseling to assist families in resolving the concerns that lead to truancy.
- Access Services, Inc.: The Access Rebound Program provides mentoring, life skills counseling, and advocacy to help students enhance their educational experiences. Access also offers a nine-week school attendance improvement group to teach participants how to overcome risk factors that lead to poor school attendance.

#### District programs

- Student Assistance Program (SAP): Each school district has a SAP team comprised of school personnel and community providers that can offer assistance to a youth in the school setting and refer to community resources.

#### **Penalties for Violation of Compulsory School Attendance:**

- Citations through the Magisterial District Justice Office can be issued to both the student and the parent. A person convicted of violating compulsory school attendance requirements may be sentenced to pay a fine not exceeding \$300, together with court costs, for an initial offense, not to exceed \$500, together with court costs, for a second offense and not to exceed \$750, together with court costs, for a third or subsequent offense. In addition, if the parents are issued a fine and they fail to pay the fine, the Magistrate can impose a jail sentence, not to exceed three days.

- Community Service can be ordered by the District Magistrate for both the parent and the truant youth.
- Student may be required to complete a school attendance improvement program.
- At their discretion, district judges may send the Department of Transportation a certified record of a student's conviction for license suspension. Upon a first conviction the child's operating privilege for operating an automobile will be suspended for 90 days. Upon a second or subsequent conviction, the child's operating privileges will be suspended for six months. Children who do not yet have a driver's license will be ineligible to apply for a license for the time periods of 90 days for the first conviction and six months for the second and any subsequent conviction.
- If a student is adjudicated dependent and continues to incur unexcused absences, the agency can recommend to the Court a weekend placement program. This program can be utilized for one weekend or as many as needed in order to encourage the student to attend school regularly. Students who are court ordered into a weekend placement program will be required to complete assignments provided by the school. In addition, the youth will complete chores and any physical requirements of the program.

#### **Pre K Attendance**

Attendance in the Pre K program is extremely important. By signing your child up for the program you have made a commitment to your child's education. This commitment should be taken seriously. Your child will gain the most benefit for the program if

they are present every day. If a child has been absent for 3 consecutive days without hearing from you, staff must contact you and determine if they need to initiate the appropriate family support – including home visits or direct contact with other supports/agencies to help overcome barriers influencing attendee programs. All efforts must be documented. If a child has ten or more consecutive unexcused absences or more than 15% unexcused absences over the course of the school year, (more than 27 days) and have not responded to program supports, the child may be withdrawn from the Pre K counts program. Withdrawals or dismissals from the program will be utilized as a last resort, and only after all attempts have been made to improve the child's attendance

## **ATTIRE**

The Pine Grove Area School District requires students to follow its policy on dress and grooming. To view the complete policy, please go the end of this handbook to view the policy in its entirety (No. 221). **If a student dresses in a manner that does not comply with the board's policy, his/her parent will be called to bring a change of clothing to school. Repeat violations will result in more severe consequences.**

**Following are a few items that are deemed inappropriate and may not be worn in school:**

- 1) Clothing that is too short, small/tight**
- 2) Clothes that are so large, walking is impeded or undergarments show**
- 3) Flip flops, open-back sandals, high heels, or platform shoes**



**\* WEATHER APPROPRIATE ATTIRE MUST BE WORN**

## **BULLYING**

The Elementary School has been state recognized for our PBIS program which stresses how bullying will not be tolerated in our school. The Board is committed to providing a safe, positive learning environment for district students. The Board recognizes that bullying creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, detracts from the safe environment necessary for student learning, and may lead to more serious violence. Therefore, the Board prohibits bullying by district students. Please view the entire policy (No. 249) on line at [www.pgasd.com](http://www.pgasd.com).

**Bullying** means an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in a school setting or outside a school setting, that is severe, persistent or pervasive and has the effect of doing any of the following:

1. Substantial interference with a student's education.
2. Creation of a threatening environment.
3. Substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school.

**Bullying**, as defined in this policy, includes cyberbullying.

**A School setting** means in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop or at any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school.

- The Board prohibits all forms of bullying by district students.
- The Board encourages students who have been bullied to promptly report such incidents to the building principal or designee.
- The Board directs that complaints of bullying shall be investigated promptly, and corrective action shall be taken when allegations are verified.

- Confidentiality of all parties shall be maintained, consistent with the district's legal and investigative obligations.
- No reprisals or retaliation shall occur as a result of good faith reports of bullying.

## **BUS TRANSPORTATION**

As students ride the bus, they are under the authority of the school principal, his/her designee, and the bus driver. Students are expected to exhibit proper behavior and follow bus safety guidelines while riding the bus. In case of misconduct, bus drivers will complete a misconduct report and give it to the principal. The principal shall decide upon an action accordingly. Consequences will be appropriate to each infraction and will range from a warning, to suspension of riding privileges, or suspension from school. Please note that in the instance of a suspension of riding privileges, parents/guardians are responsible to provide transportation to and from school during the period of suspension.

The following is a list of conduct expectations while riding the buses. Our expectation is that parents/guardians will review these rules with their children prior to riding the school bus.

- Be on time for the bus. Be at stop at least 5 minutes before scheduled time.**
- Remain seated through the entire trip**
- Eating, smoking and drinking beverages are prohibited while riding the bus**
- Keep head, arms and hands inside the window**
- Keep all objects in your back pack. Toys, CELL Phones, electronic games, audio/video equipment and/or any items that could cause an annoyance or disturbance will not be permitted under any circumstances on school buses or vans.**
- Be courteous**
- Respect others and their property**

- Follow the driver's instructions**
- When crossing the street at your stop, please cross in front of the bus**
- Assigned seating is mandatory on all school buses. The seating will be assigned by the bus driver at his/her discretion. Students must sit in their assigned seats at all times.**
- Follow our PBIS & bus safety expectations.**
- Please review our current health & safety plan regarding any safety updates that must be followed.**

### ***A few important reminders.....***

- **All kindergarten students are to be picked up at their designated bus stop by an ADULT (18 Years or Older). Students will not be permitted to leave the bus if an adult is not present. Kindergarten students will then be taken to the Bus Barn, (1000 Rock Road, Pine Grove PA 17963) and an adult with identification must pick them up.**
- **Please remember that any changes to transportation, other than a valid emergency, requires a minimum of three (3) days notice to the elementary office or transportation department.**
- **Work schedules in the form of a calendar are to be turned in promptly for alternate transportation within the guidelines of the board policy for transportation.**
- **Vehicles that provide student transportation in the Pine Grove Area School District are equipped with audio and video surveillance equipment. Students are to be reminded that their behavior will be recorded and any disciplinary**



**decisions may be based on the surveillance review.**

- **Daily and/or weekly changes in bus transportation will not be permitted. The less changes made, the less confusing it will be for your child.**
- If a parent plans to pick-up his/her child, instead of utilizing an assigned bus, a note must be sent to the elementary office prior to pick-up.
- If you need to permanently change your child's bus schedule, please complete the appropriate forms located in the office. Upon completion of this form, it will be sent to the transportation department for approval.

#### **Transportation Department Summary of School Board District Policy No. 810**

Requests for a change in transportation must be received no later than the second Friday of July. Changes submitted to alter the transportation requested on the survey form after this date may not be guaranteed for the first two weeks of school.

Transportation may be provided, upon approval, to one alternate location such as daycare or babysitter. However, no "on occasion" requests will be approved. Alternate location changes shall be for one location only, AM and/or PM on an established route. Primary and alternate assignments must remain the same week to week unless a schedule is provided in advance. An exception may be made for pre-planned vacations providing there is room on the bus.

Parents/guardians are responsible for making their own arrangements for periodic babysitting or visits to family or friends. Students will not be dropped off at any location other than their assigned bus stop due to the limited seating on the busses and to ensure the safety of the children. **Daily changes in transportation will not be accepted for any reason except extreme, unforeseen emergency.** Any permanent changes to transportation require a three (3) day notification to the transportation department.

#### **Transportation Policy**

**All students requiring bus transportation have been scheduled to ride a specific bus to and from school. Daily and/or weekly changes in bus transportation will not be permitted.** If a parent plans to pick-up his/her child, instead of utilizing an assigned bus, a note must be sent at least three days in advance to the elementary office.

In the case of joint custody and/or alternating work schedules, one alternate bus assignment/stop is permitted. **The entire month's schedule must be submitted, in advance, to the elementary office for approval on a calendar.** Blank calendars are available in the elementary office for your convenience.

This policy has been implemented for the safety and welfare of our students.

#### ***Temporary Changes to Bus Schedule***

All students requesting bus transportation have been scheduled to ride a specific bus to and from school. Please understand that **a written signed note, three days in advance, is required to place a student on a different bus or stop. Forms are available in the elementary office for this purpose.** We will not honor a student's or a parent's verbal request to ride an alternate bus.

Please include the following information on a note requesting alternate transportation plans, three days in advance of the change:

1. **Child's first and last name**
2. **School and grade level**
3. **Classroom teacher**
4. **Bus number the child is to ride home**
5. **Address, street name or bus stop (if known)**
6. **A daytime phone number where you can be reached to answer any questions**
7. **Please remember to sign the note. We will contact parents about any notes without a signature to confirm the authenticity of the note.**

**Just a reminder.....to make a bus change you must send a note to the elementary office at least three days in advance of the requested change.**

#### ***Permanent Alterations to Bus Schedule***

If you need to permanently change your child's bus schedule, please call the district office to arrange for a new bus assignment with Mrs. April Reinbold, Transportation Secretary at 570-345-2731 ext. 320.

### **SCHOOL BUS SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS**

Vehicles that provide student transportation in the Pine Grove Area School District are equipped with video and audio surveillance equipment. Students are to be reminded that their behavior will be recorded and any disciplinary decisions may be based on the surveillance review.

### **Pre K Transportation**

When transported to and from school. According to Pennsylvania law, all children must be properly restrained in car seats. Safety is our primary concern when transporting our children.

Everyone is expected to follow the district's bus safety rules and if the rules are not followed it could result in suspension or termination of transportation services.

Children will only be dropped off at their assigned stops. If there is not an authorized person at the stop for the child, we will not release your child. The school will be notified and we will attempt to reach the parent. In no authorized person is available after one hour has passed the expected drop off time, and not contact has been made by you, the local police departments and Children and Youth Services will be notified.

### **CAFETERIA**

The PGAES continues to serve both breakfast and lunch. Breakfast will be free this year for all students and is served from 8:20 – 8:40 a.m. The cost of an elementary student's lunch is \$2.55. (Adult - \$4.00)

The cafeteria debit system allows parents/guardians to deposit money into their child's lunch account. Prepayments of any dollar amount may be deposited into your child's account at any time. We accept checks payable to "PGASD Cafeteria Fund". Prepayments can also be made online using a major credit or debit card at:

**myschoolbucks.com**. There is also an app available. The website has all the information. Myschoolbucks.com also provides parents the ability to view their child's account balance and to print out a copy of their child's eating history report. This history report will show you all dates and times that your child has purchased a breakfast and or lunch within the past thirty days. If you have any questions on the debit system or to request a statement, please contact Bernie Kelly at ext.357.

\*Due to servicing 600 students, the cafeteria staff, PGASD teachers and aides do not have

the ability to heat up lunches brought from home.

### **~Nutrition, Food Allergies, and Classroom Treats~**

**The Pine Grove Area School District is committed to helping our children grow strong and healthy. Nutritious snacks are welcome for the purpose of celebrating birthdays and other special occasions. Please Contact your child's teacher to inquire about any food allergies within the your child's classmates, please notify the teacher at least two days ahead of time.**

### **CALENDAR (DISTRICT)**

The school calendar will be available on the district website. Please refer to the district website for any changes that may occur. [www.pgasd.com](http://www.pgasd.com)

### **CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY**

The PGASD Board of Directors believes students should learn to respect property and develop feelings of pride in community institutions.

The PGASD Board of Directors charges each student in the buildings of this district with responsibility for the proper care of school property and the school supplies and equipment entrusted to his/her use.

Students who willfully cause damage to school property shall be subject to disciplinary measures. Students and others who damage or deface school property may be prosecuted and punished under the law. Parents/guardians of students shall be held accountable for student's actions.

The PGASD Board of Directors may report to the appropriate juvenile authorities any student whose damage of school property has been serious or chronic in nature.

## **CONFERENCES**

PGAES offers school wide parent & teacher conferences scheduled for November 7<sup>th</sup> and, November 8<sup>th</sup>. You will receive information from your child's teacher regarding a specific conference time. We encourage all parents/guardians to participate in this day. This is another excellent opportunity for parental involvement in your child's educational process.

Throughout the year you are encouraged to maintain contact with your child's teacher and school. Please feel free to request a conference anytime you feel the need to discuss your child's progress or address any issue that impacts your child's education. Please refer to the faculty directory for specific contact information.

### **COVID-19**

Our District Health & Safety Plan will be updated as any Covid-19 regulations are in place.

### **DELAYS/CLOSINGS/EARLY DISMISSALS**

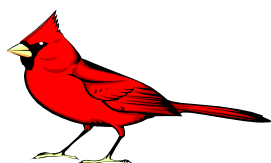
Due to inclement weather the hour's school is in session sometimes vary. All changes in the regularly scheduled day will be posted on our district website at [www.pgasd.com](http://www.pgasd.com), Facebook and announced on television stations. The television stations are WNEP-TV, WGAL-TV and WBRE. School days cancelled due to inclement weather will be made up throughout the school year or if excessive school cancellations occur, additional days may have to be added at the end of the school year according to the school calendar adopted by the PGASD Board of Directors.

### **Pre – K Closings Due to Weather**

Your child's Pre K counts program will follow the schedule of the Pine Grove Area School district for closing and delays.

## **DRILLS – SAFETY**

All students practice a safety drill at least once a month. These safety drills include fire drills, intruder drills, bomb scare drills, and weather emergency drills. The principal and teachers supervise students to ensure the evacuation from the building is performed safely and efficiently.



## **EDUCATIONAL FIELD TRIPS**

Parents who are planning to take their child on an educational trip during the time that school is in session may request an excused absence for the student. A district form is available for this purpose. Trips must be limited to five days in any given academic year (*at the discretion of the administrator*). Please refer to Policy number 204.1.

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

The Board prohibits **use of personal** electronic devices by students during the school day in district buildings, on district property, and while students are attending school-sponsored activities, unless under the direct supervision of a school district employee.

In the event a student needs to call home, the student is to inform the teacher of the purpose of the call and it will be determined by the teacher if

the classroom phone may be used. Student's cell phones are not to be taken out of their backpacks during the school day. Cell phones are not permitted and will be confiscated if a student has their device out. Parents will be notified and must pick up the device at their convenience. In addition, the Board prohibits **use** by students of any device that provides for wireless, unfiltered connection to the Internet.

**The district shall not be liable for the loss, damage or misuse of any electronic device brought to school by a student.** Please read this policy (No. 237) in its entirety at the end of this handbook.

The term **Electronic Devices** as used in this policy shall include, but is not limited to the following:

- Cellular Phones.
- I pods.
- MP-3s.
- Radios.
- Personal Stereos.
- Two-way Radios.
- Laser Pointers.
- PDAs.
- Personal Communication Devices.
- Personal Gaming Systems.
- Non-district issued laptops or computer systems.
- Any electronic device that can
- access the district network system.
- Fit Bit
- Tablets

## **EQUAL RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITY POLICY**

Pine Grove Area School District is an equal opportunity education institution and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex and handicap in its activities, programs or employment practices

as required by Title VI, Title IX and section 504.

For information regarding civil rights or grievance procedures, contact the Office of the Superintendent at Pine Grove Area School District, 103 School Street, Pine Grove, PA 17963.

## **GIFTED PROGRAM**

The PGASD provides a gifted support program in compliance with Chapter 16 of the School Code as well as district policy. Students who display exceptional cognitive ability can be referred for psychological testing to determine eligibility. Questions concerning the gifted program should be directed to the elementary principal.

## **GUIDANCE PROGRAM**

The mission of the guidance program at PGAES is to provide support to students in order to meet their personal/social, career and academic needs enabling students to maximize potential for success within our educational community. The process used to meet these goals includes classes, small group instruction, individual student interviews, career awareness, and crisis counseling. In addition, guidance counselors also assist in the management of the referral process for special education and gifted programs. When you have any questions or need assistance, please contact Miss Brand at 570-345-2731, extension 447 or Noah Allegretta at 570-345-2731, extension 466.

## **HEALTH SERVICES**

### **SCHOOL NURSE**

Please contact the school nurse, Mrs. Kelly Jochems, at 570-345-2731, extension 446 to

discuss any health issues or concerns regarding your child.

### **HEALTH SERVICES**

In accordance with the Pennsylvania School Health Act, medical examinations are required for all new school students. This applies to all new kindergarten students and any other new student who does not have a record of a physical examination.

Dental examinations are performed on all first grade and third grade students in school. However, these exams may be done by the family's personal physician and dentist on forms provided by the school. Private examinations are encouraged for the best continuity of care, but the reports must be submitted prior to the scheduled school exams.

All students will be weighed and measured and will be given a vision screening test each year. Students in grades PreK-3 will also be given a hearing screening test each year. Fourth grade students with a known hearing loss will also be tested.

If a child is injured or becomes ill while at school, she/he will receive first-aid only. Parents/guardians will be called to take the child home, if necessary. If you can not be reached, the person listed as an emergency contact on the student update sheet will be contacted. Parents/guardians are responsible for providing current phone numbers where they can be contacted. Transportation is the responsibility of parents.

Medication will not be given in the elementary school unless ordered by a doctor. Fluoride will not be distributed to students. Forms for doctor prescribed medications are available from the nurse's office. If you do not have a form along when you go to the doctor, ask the doctor to write a note for the school nurse.

The number of days that your child must take the medication must be included. Only the amount of medication needed for the school day should be sent to school. An exception is

made for students who are on long term medication. Medication that is brought to school by the child must be given to the school nurse.

Local school district policy and policy guidelines from the State Department of Health will be followed with regard to the exclusion and re-admission of students with communicable diseases such as chicken pox, pink eye, strep throat, impetigo, scabies and head lice. **With regard to head lice, children may return to school the day following the treatment provided all the egg cases have been removed.**

**\*Please refer to the Daily COVID-19 Screening Checklist.**

**\*Please refer to the Return to School Protocols for COVID-19.**

## **HOME/ SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS**

At the heart of the mission of PGASD is communication. We constantly strive to facilitate this aspect of our mission. Therefore, parents/guardians must be aware of the many options available for communications between home, school, and community. Communication channels are established in the form of electronic media, print, and verbally.

The PGASD maintains a web site and can be located at [www.pgasd.com](http://www.pgasd.com). At this site, visitors can find information about the general school functions and information specific to each individual building. All contact information is listed including phone numbers and e-mail addresses.

The phone system allows parents to contact teachers directly. **Please note that classroom phones may not be answered during instructional hours**, however, callers can access voice mail and staff members will return calls in a timely manner. All staff members have access to email and this form

of communication is always an option for parents/guardians for any purpose.

PGAES always has an open door policy for parents/guardians. Please understand that our teacher's primary responsibility is classroom instruction, therefore, they may not be available on demand. However, we will make every effort to address your concerns as quickly and efficiently as possible.

In addition to formal communication, teachers often communicate in less formal methods which include notes, communication tablets/notebooks, letters, etc.

Please ask your children about information they may have from their classroom teacher and please check backpacks etc., of young students for important notices and assessment information.

## **HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION**

There are times in students' lives when accidents or illnesses occur and students are well enough to learn but unable to attend school. At such a time, homebound instruction is possible.

In order to qualify for homebound instruction, parents/guardians must request this special instruction for their child by providing a doctor's certificate stating the nature of the illness or disability and the length of time the student will be confined at home. The request for homebound instruction should be given to office of the elementary principal where it will be reviewed and forwarded to the superintendent for approval.

## **HOMEWORK AND HOMEWORK REQUESTS**

The purpose of homework is to reinforce learned material. Each teacher provides homework at his/her discretion. Assisting your child with homework is another method of becoming involved in your child's education. Therefore, the staff at PGAES

makes every effort to accommodate the parents/guardians need to be informed about homework assignments and to facilitate attaining homework materials when children are absent from school.

**If your child is absent for three or more days, you may call the main office to request missed assignments and/or textbooks. Requests for homework must be made no later than 11:00 a.m. in order to provide the classroom teacher with enough time to prepare work and send it to the office.**

## **IMMUNIZATIONS**

In order to attend school, the state requires students to have four doses for polio, four dose for diphtheria, tetanus, and acellular pertussis, two doses of MMR (mumps, measles and rubella), two doses of varicella or chickenpox vaccine, and three doses of Hepatitis B. Proof of proper immunizations is a note from your physician or signed doctor plan. **If the immunizations are not completed within the prescribed time (1<sup>st</sup> day of school), students will not be allowed to continue attending school.**

### ***McKinney Vento Homeless Student Resources***

The Pine Grove Area School District believes that homeless youth should have access to free and appropriate public education and wishes to remove the barriers that homeless children may face. Our goal is to have the educational process continue as uninterrupted as possible while children are in homeless situations.

Homeless students are defined as individuals lacking a fixed, regular and nighttime residence, which include students living under the following conditions:

1. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship.

2. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to lack of adequate alternative accommodations.
3. Living in emergency, transitional or domestic violence shelters.
4. Abandoned in hospitals.
5. Awaiting foster care placement.
6. Living in public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings.
7. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations or similar settings.
8. Living as migratory children in conditions described in previous examples.
9. Living as run-away children.
10. Being abandoned or forced out of homes by parents/guardians or caretakers.
11. Living as school age unwed mothers in houses for unwed mothers if they have no other living accommodations.

Please visit this link for more information <https://www.pgasd.com/domain/62> Should you have any questions, please contact the PGASD Homeless Liaison, Mr. Sean Lyons at [slyons@pgasd.com](mailto:slyons@pgasd.com) or 570-345-2731 ext. 445.

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT**

Children whose parents/guardians are involved in the educational process enjoy the greatest chance of academic success. Therefore, PGAES vigorously encourages parents/guardians to become involved in the educational process. Many opportunities exist for involvement. Those opportunities range from simply helping your children with homework to volunteering time by serving on committees, as tutors, PTO members, etc. If



you are looking for an opportunity to become involved, please feel free to contact your child's teacher.

**Parent Right to Know Information as Required by The Elementary and Secondary Education Assistance (ESEA) [Section 1112(e) (1)(A)] and the Every Student Succeeds Act [Section 1112(e)(1)(A)]**

Your child attends Pine Grove Area Elementary which receives Federal Title I funds to assist students in meeting state achievement standards. This letter lets you know about your right to request information about the qualifications of the classroom staff working with your child.

At **Pine Grove Area Elementary**, we are very proud of our teachers and feel they are ready for the coming school year and are prepared to give your child a high-quality education. As a Title I school, we must meet federal regulations related to teacher qualifications as defined in ESEA. These regulations allow you to learn more about your child's teachers' training and credentials. We are happy to provide this information to you. At any time, you may ask:

- Whether the teacher met state qualifications and certification requirements for the grade level and subject he/she is teaching,
- Whether the teacher received an emergency or conditional certificate through which state qualifications were waived, and
- What undergraduate or graduate degrees the teacher holds, including graduate certificates and additional degrees, and major(s) or area(s) of concentration.

You may also ask whether your child receives help from a paraprofessional. If your child receives this assistance, we can provide you with information about the paraprofessional's qualifications.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) which was signed into law in December 2015 and reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1956 (ESEA) includes

additionally right to know requests. At any time, parents and family members can request:

- Information on policies regarding student participation in assessments and procedures for opting out, and
- Information on required assessments that include
  - subject matter tested,
  - purpose of the test,
  - source of the requirement (if applicable),
  - amount of time it takes students to complete the test, and
  - time and format of disseminating results.

Our staff is committed to helping your child develop the academic knowledge and critical thinking he/she needs to succeed in school and beyond. That commitment includes making sure that all of our teachers and paraprofessionals meet applicable Pennsylvania state requirements.

If you have any questions, please contact Mrs. Stephanie Ziegmont at the **Pine Grove Area School District** at (570) 345-2731 ext. 358 or email me at [sziegmont@pgasd.com](mailto:sziegmont@pgasd.com).

Mrs. Stephanie Ziegmont, ***Director of Curriculum and Instruction***

**PARENT/VOLUNTEER SOCIAL MEDIA CONDUCT**

Pine Grove Area Elementary School understands and appreciates the benefits of social media. There are many positives of using social media; however, if misused, the school community can be negatively affected and our school's reputation can be damaged. As educators we do our very best to create a safe, accepting, and nurturing environment. Throughout our classrooms we promote daily what it looks like to give respect. In order to

set the best example possible for our students at Pine Grove Area Elementary School, we would like to invite our parents and volunteers to do the same.

The school will not tolerate parents or volunteers sending abusive messages to teachers or staff, or using social media to damage our school's reputation.

If a concern should arise please do not hesitate to speak to the appropriate person involved first and try to resolve the concern with mutual respect and clear communication. Please do not hesitate to make an appointment with the relevant person. If for some reason this is not possible, please make an appointment to meet with Mrs. Burns. Your comments and suggestions are always appreciated when done so in a respectful manner.

Keep in mind, the biggest winners are our students! When walking into Pine Grove Area Elementary School and experiencing parents and teachers working together in a respectful manner, it's a sure sign that relationships have been established to ensure the success of our children's educational journey.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Comfortable clothing and sneakers should be worn for all physical education classes. If your child has any medical or physical limitations, please notify the physical education teacher. A note from the parent/guardian must be sent to the physical education teacher stating their child may again participate in physical education class. Our school is pleased to hold "Adapted PE" for any students with physical limitations.

## **PLAYGROUND**

Students are provided with recess each day. When weather is inclement or the temperature drops below 32 degrees, recess occurs indoors. Recess provides many benefits including increased creative and critical thinking through "free play".

Playground rules are established to help insure the safety of all students. Our staff will review the playground safety rules with all students. Our expectation is that all students will follow the safety rules and enjoy their recess sessions. However, students who choose not to follow the safety rules will be subject to our discipline procedures. Please dress your child appropriately for cold weather.

## **Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS)**

The main idea of our school wide behavior plan is that everyone in our building focuses on the positives more than the negatives. With this being said, our school environment is predictable. Our expectations are specifically taught and there is a common language used in our school. We teach this through lessons which include behavior in the hallways, busses, cafeteria, recess, restrooms, and during dismissal. With this common vision in place, and daily practice, all of our students have a common experience and everyone knows our school expectations. Students only experience elementary school once in a lifetime and we want them to thrive on the positivity of our school. We love recognizing our awesome students! Our **PBIS** program does this by giving morning shout outs to students, classroom behavior charts, earning behavior tickets, ½ day reward days and monthly earned activities! Students experience success based off their behavior and positive behavior becomes contagious! As behavior issues may occur, consequences are in place for the specific behaviors and dealt with accordingly. **PBIS** is supported by our PGA data with office referrals dropping more than 300 student referrals over one school year. Our **PBIS** program also addresses bullying which is not tolerated.

The PGAES staff takes a team approach to developing solutions to behavior problems. **PBIS** is a whole school approach to discipline that includes systemic and individualized strategies for achieving social and learning outcomes while preventing problem behaviors with ALL students. **PBIS** promotes and encourages positive social behavior and climate school wide, applies function-based problem solving to address the needs of students engaging in repeated behavior problems, and engages staff in routine reflection and data-based decision making to guide intervention planning decisions.

The goal of **PBIS** is to approach behavior in a positive manner. Students are rewarded for making positive choices and face consequences for poor choices, as opposed to solely being punished for wrong doing. Students are explicitly taught expected behaviors so that they are aware of what is expected of them and can be held accountable for their actions. Because **PBIS** is a multi-tiered behavior system, students who do not reach their behavioral goals may receive higher levels of support and interventions to help them do so.

All students are taught and expected to adhere to the three school wide rules. All student behaviors can be reflected in these three rules, known as the **PGA Rules**:

***Promote Safety***  
***Give Respect***  
***Accept Responsibility***

At the end of the day, the students will color their calendar or total their points according to their behavior for that day.

Each month the teachers from each grade will use the calendar/point system to set a behavior goal for the students. If a student achieves the goal, they will participate in a reward activity. Most activities will be created and run by the grade level teachers and last 1 ½ hours. Near the end of each marking period, a full day school wide reward will be held. Students who do not meet the behavior goal will participate in an alternate learning activity for 1 ½ hours on reward days. These alternative activities will center on social skills and behavioral topics.

## **Pre K- 4 Discipline**

Consequences and discipline will be enforced when deemed appropriate. It is up to the discretion of the administration to determine if an in school suspension or out of school suspension should be in place due to a child's behavior.

## **PROGRESS REPORTS**

In addition to report cards, progress reports are utilized in grades 1-4. Progress reports are issued for all students to inform parents of their child's progress. PGAES strongly encourages parents/guardians to contact their child's teacher to discuss the progress report for clarification and/or strategies that will facilitate the child's success. Feel free at any time to call and set up a meeting with your child's teacher to discuss any academic concerns you may have.

### **PTO**



PTO meetings are held monthly. Please refer to the elementary newsletters for dates and times of meetings. The P.T.O. Officers for 2024-2025 are as follows:

**Co-President - Annmarie Wildermuth & Kim Stewart**

**Co-Vice President - Mary Debus & Samantha Moyer**

**Secretary – Lynette Lemke**

**Treasurer – Felicia Wylezik**

**Co-Communications Coordinator-Kim Suda, Brittany**

**Teacher Representative-Megan Sunday**  
Checkout the website at [elpto@pgasd.com](mailto:elpto@pgasd.com)

## **REPORT CARDS/GRADING SYSTEM**

Student growth will be reported using the Achievement Levels (percentage grades defined here.

### **Achievement Levels**

#### **A (90-100)**

- A. Consistently produces exceptional work
- B. Has an excellent understanding of concepts and skills
- C. Consistently applies learned skills
- D. Frequently initiates extensions related to concepts

#### **B (80-89)**

- A. Produces good work
- B. Has a solid understanding of the concepts and skills
- C. Usually applies learned skills

#### **C (70-79)**

- A. Produces satisfactory work
- B. Has a general understanding of concepts and skills
- C. Occasionally applies learned skills

#### **D (60-69)**

- 1. Sometimes produces satisfactory work
- 2. Has a minimal understanding of concepts and skills
- 3. Seldom applies learned skills

#### **F (0-59)**

- 8. Produces unsatisfactory work
- 9. Has an unacceptable level of understanding
- 10. Does not apply taught skills

Retention in a grade will occur when a student meets at least one of the following criteria:

- 1. **The student has a final average of “F” in any two major subject areas.**
- 2. **The student has not demonstrated adequate growth in his/her reading level.**
- 3. **The established educational team has determined that retention is the very best decision for a particular student.**
- 4. **Please see attendance policy for other criteria on student retention.**

## **RTii**

PGAES provides the services of a response to intervention team. Members of this team include the interventionist (Mrs. Kuchinsky), regular education teacher, school psychologist, guidance counselor, principal, Title 1, gifted teacher and parent/guardian. This team is designed to serve as a safety net for students that may be struggling in the classroom with issues ranging from academic difficulties to behavioral issues.

Parents/guardians or any professional staff member may initiate involvement in this process. As previously established, strong parental involvement at the classroom level is encouraged. Once the tiered intervention process is initiated, the team will develop an action plan which includes strategies that seek solutions to identified issues. Expectations are that all team members will be involved in the development of a solution.



## **SCHOOL DAY**

The school day for students in the PGAES begins 8:45 a.m. and ends at 3:25 p.m. The teacher's day at the elementary begins at 8:15 a.m. and ends at 3:45 p.m.



## **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

### ***Special Education Services***

Students and parents are assured that the Pine Grove Area School District is an equal opportunity education institution and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color,

national origin, sex or handicap in its activities, programs or employment practices as required by various federal and state statutes. The Pine Grove Area School District, in conjunction with Intermediate Unit #29, provides a variety of special education services. Information regarding services, activities and facilities that are accessible to and available for individuals with special needs can be obtained by contacting Mr. Bill Kimber at 570-345- 2731 x 325.

### ***Does Your Child Need Special Education?***

Your child may be eligible if:

1. Has a physical, sensory, mental or emotional disability and
2. Needs specially designed instruction to make academic progress

Children must meet both qualifications in order to qualify as an eligible student. All exceptional children have the right to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). Special education services are provided in accordance with **The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** and the Pennsylvania School Code Chapter 14.

### ***If your child has a disability but does not qualify:***

Students who have disabilities which substantially limit their participation in or access to school programs, but do not qualify for special education, may qualify for reasonable accommodations in the regular classroom under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or Chapter 15 of the PA School Code. The rules, which apply to their education, are different from those for special education students who qualify as eligible students by meeting the two-part criteria listed above.

### ***Special Education Evaluation:***

A Multidisciplinary Evaluation is completed by the Multidisciplinary team (MDT) to gather information to determine if a student qualifies for special education services. Students may be referred for an evaluation by the school or by parents through the guidance counselor.

The school may not proceed with an evaluation without written parental permission unless approval is granted by an impartial hearing officer. The evaluation is conducted at no cost to the parents. The school psychologist evaluates a student and collects input from parents, the school and any other sources such as doctors or specialists if health problems or related services such as speech, occupational, or physical therapy will be considered. An Evaluation Report (ER) is completed and is utilized in developing an IEP should a student qualify. Once a student qualifies for special education services a reevaluation occurs at least every two years for students with mental retardation and every three years for students with other disabilities. The IEP team may waive, however, the mandated reevaluation if no additional information is needed. This option is not applicable for students with mental retardation.

### ***Parental and Student Rights:***

A Procedural Safeguards Notice is provided to parents once a year except for initial evaluations, due process hearings or upon parent request. This notice describes the rights and procedures that safeguard students under state and federal law. A copy may be obtained upon request and questions and/or clarifications can be addressed by contacting Mr. Bill Kimber at 570-345-2731 ext.325.

### ***Special Education Programming:***

Special education programs for eligible students are provided by the Pine Grove Area School District to meet the needs of exceptional students in the district. Those needs may be met through a variety of programs available:

- Learning Support
- Emotional Support
- Life Skills Support
- Speech/Language Support
- Physical Support
- Autistic Support
- Multi-handicapped Support
- Sensory Support

**Additional Information:**

Anyone with questions regarding programs and/or services for eligible students with special needs or students who are thought to be exceptional may contact: Bill Kimber, Director of Special Education at the Pine Grove Area School District at 570-345-2731 ext. 325.

## **STANDARDIZED ASSESSMENTS**

### **State Mandated Assessments**

In 1999, Pennsylvania adopted academic standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening and Mathematics. These standards identify what a student should know and be able to do at varying grade levels. School districts possess the freedom to design curriculum and instruction to ensure that students meet or exceed the standards' expectations.

The state mandated assessment is a standard-based criterion-referenced assessment used to measure a student's attainment of the academic standards while also determining the degree to which school programs enable students to attain proficiency of the standards. Every Pennsylvania student in grades 3 through 8 and grade 11 is assessed in reading and math. Every Pennsylvania student in grades 5, 8 and 11 is assessed in writing.

Individual student scores, provided only to their respective schools, can be used to assist teachers in identifying students who may be in need of additional educational opportunities, and school scores provide information to schools and districts for curriculum and instruction improvement discussions and planning.

In compliance with §4.51(b)(4) of the PA School Code the State Board of Education

approved, "specific criteria for advanced, proficient, basic and below basic levels of performance."

### **Pennsylvania's General Performance Level Descriptors**

**Advanced**

The Advanced Level reflects superior academic performance. Advanced work indicates an in-depth understanding and exemplary display of the skills included in the Pennsylvania Academic Content Standards.

**Proficient**

The Proficient Level reflects satisfactory academic performance. Proficient work indicates a solid understanding and adequate display of the skills included in the Pennsylvania Academic Content Standards.

**Basic**

The Basic Level reflects marginal academic performance. Basic work indicates a partial understanding and limited display of the skills included in the Pennsylvania Academic Content Standards. This work is approaching satisfactory performance, but has not been reached. There is a need for additional instructional opportunities and/or increased student academic commitment to achieve the Proficient Level.

**Below Basic**

The Below Basic Level reflects inadequate academic performance. Below Basic work indicates little understanding and minimal display of the skills included in the Pennsylvania Academic Content Standards. There is a major need for additional instructional opportunities and/or increased student academic commitment to achieve the Proficient Level.

## **STAR READING AND MATH**

Our STAR reading and math program allows us to give a quick assessment in less than 20 minutes. This takes the place of CDT testing that was done over the last few years that took hours for the students to complete. STAR allows students to take a quick reading



and math assessment in their classroom, on their chromebook, surrounded by their classmates. The assessment is given a minimum of four times a year and the data from these assessments helps our teachers form our WIN groups. We highlight the areas that student have made growth in, celebrate their successes, and also analyze any areas they them are struggling with. Our STAR reports are then discussed with parents during conferences and meetings so that we can work together as a team to be sure that we are meeting the needs of each and every one of our students.

STAR Reading is an assessment of reading comprehension and skills for independent readers through grade 12. STAR Reading tracks development in five domains: Word Knowledge and Skills, Comprehension Strategies and Constructing Meaning, Analyzing Literary Text, Understanding Author's Craft and Analyzing Argument and Evaluating Text. The data from our STAR assessments along with teacher input will help us better arrange WIN intervention groups based off of our students' needs.

STAR Math™ is an assessment of math achievement for students in grades K–12. STAR Math tracks development in four domains: Numbers and Operations, Algebra, Geometry and Measurement, Data Analysis, Statistics and Probability.

## **Student Expectations for Flexible Instructional Days (FID)**

### **Pine Grove Area Elementary**

Pine Grove Area School District has been approved to utilize up to five Flexible Instruction Days in the event of inclement weather during this school year. This means that we would utilize synchronous (live) virtual instruction if inclement weather did not allow for in-person instruction. This document will provide you with

expectations for students on those days. Students will utilize their assigned Chromebook to connect with their teacher(s) for synchronous instruction,

### **Access**

- Every Elementary student has been provided with a Chromebook, Prek-4.
- Families are able to request a mobile hotspot for students who do not have access to the internet at home. To request a hotspot, families can complete this form [Jotform Link](https://tinyurl.com/PGAhotspt) <https://tinyurl.com/PGAhotspt>. Mobile hot spots are limited.
- Students will utilize Google Classroom as the main learning platform for accessing content, synchronous Zoom links, and the submission of assignments.

### **Attendance**

- In order to be marked present for the day, each student will access a Daily Attendance Assignment Google form in their learning Google Classroom each day between 6AM and 8PM.
- If a student cannot attend virtual instruction due to an illness or doctor's appointment, please contact Chris Demcher at [cdemcher@pgasd.com](mailto:cdemcher@pgasd.com).

### **Student Online Expectations**

- Students must begin to connect at least 3 minutes before the class is scheduled to begin.
- The camera must be turned on so teachers can monitor active engagement in the lesson.



- Students should appropriately use the Zoom tools available to raise their hand and interact with the teacher.
- Students are not permitted to record any portion of a live-streamed lesson.
- Students must adhere to Board Policy #815: Acceptable Use of Communications and Information Systems (CIS).
- Students will be placed in a waiting room upon joining a meeting. Please wait patiently until the teacher admits you to the room.
- If a student's behavior is inappropriate, the teacher may place the student back into the waiting room or remove them from the classroom. If permitted to re-enter, the student is expected to follow the school rules.
- Any comments placed in the chat box are viewable by the entire class. All comments must be school appropriate and on topic for the lesson. The teacher will be able to save a copy of all chat activity.
- The link or access information that is provided by the teacher is intended for members of the class only. Do not share the link with others.

#### Pre-K FID

Our Pre-K students will log into their Chromebooks (teacher will place username and password on their Chromebooks for easy accessibility). Once logged into the Chromebook, students will go to their Google classroom page where a Foundations lesson, a Heggerty lesson, and a Zoom link to meet with the teacher for Story Time and class discussion. The Story Time

(synchronous) will last no longer than 30 minutes while the other two lessons (asynchronous) can be completed by the student when convenient for the families.

The district uses a Google Attendance form for all grade levels. The link to this attendance form will also be in the class Google drive for easy access. Families will only need to fill in student first and last name and hit submit. This is tracked districtwide for attendance. Teacher will also take attendance during the Story Time lesson. Students have a “turn it in” button in the class Google drive to show they completed the asynchronous lessons. The teacher will assess learning throughout the Story Time lesson. If for some reason a student does not have Wifi access on any particular remote/virtual day, in their take home folder, are prepared pages for letter practice, word practice, writing practice, number practice, and story writing. These will be used only if a student has lost internet capability. If power is out throughout the district, the district will call a normal snow day, and this day will be made up via the school calendar.

### **STUDENT RECORDS POLICY**

The Student Records Policy contains provisions from the regulations of the State Board of Education on pupil records and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. Included in this policy are administrative responsibilities for student records, definitions, collection of data, classification, destruction, and maintenance of data. Parents or eligible students (eighteen years of age or older) have the right to inspect the student's educational records, to receive copies of the records within a reasonable time period, and to have a school official explain the records, if requested. A complete

copy of this policy is available in each of the district's buildings and in the District Office.

### **TEACHER REQUESTS**

Preparing classroom rosters is a collaborative effort amongst all staff members and administration. This process begins in the early spring and can go well into the summer. Please understand in our elementary school we are preparing our students to be able to adapt to multiple teachers with different personalities. This is what they will see in the middle school and is excellent for the social development of each child. While we are always excited to hear your views about your child's education, we also will not honor teacher requests for the upcoming school year. We take into consideration characteristics that your child exhibits and which settings are best appropriate. We always value parent input, but it is simply impossible to honor 600 parent requests. Our outstanding, nurturing, elementary teachers go above and beyond to meet the needs of every student. If you have concerns, please feel free to reach out to your child's teacher and begin the year off with open communication. Thank you for your support. We are positive that it is going to be another great year!

### **TEXTBOOKS - LOST OR STOLEN**

Lost, stolen or damaged textbooks or library books will be paid by the student (or the family of said student) to whom the book is assigned at full replacement value. The school has the right to withhold a student's report card until payment is received.

### **TITLE I**

PGAES offers remedial instruction in reading through Title I services. The program focuses on students in grades K-4. The goal is to assist students who struggle with learning to read to become successful readers as quickly as possible in the educational process.

The program is a team process that involves remedial instruction within the classroom learning environment by reading specialists. The program is data driven. Student progress is reported frequently using data derived from STAR and teacher input. This program is designed to supplement, not supplant classroom instruction.

### **VISITORS**

In the interest of safety, we require all visitors in our building to register in the elementary school office, with their license, upon entering the building. We require all persons to wear a printed identification badge at all times while in the PGAES. They will be returned when you exit the main office.

You will note that all entrances are locked and the only entrance available for the public is the main entrance on School Street. Please ring the bell and our office staff will greet and provide you with entrance to the building. For your convenience, virtual meetings are always an option for parents.

### **VOLUNTEERS**

All volunteers must fill out an Elementary Volunteer Packet, and include copies of their Criminal Background Check and Child Abuse Clearance. If you have not resided in PA. for the last ten years, you will also need the FBI Fingerprint Clearance. Upon completion of the above process, you will also need to be board approved before volunteering. Board meetings are the third Thursday of every month, so please plan ahead if you would like to volunteer.

### **WEAPONS (POLICY 218.1)**

The Board recognizes the importance of a safe school environment to the educational process. Possession of weapons in the school environment is a threat to the safety of students and staff and is prohibited by law. **Weapon** - the term shall include but not be limited to any knife, cutting instrument, cutting

tool, nunchaku stick, brass or metal knuckles, firearm, shotgun, rifle, bb or pellet gun, look-alike gun, chemical agent, explosive device, and/or any other tool, instrument or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury.

**Possession** - a student is in possession of a weapon when the weapon is found on the person of the student; in the student's locker; under the student's control while s/he is on school property, on property being used by the school, at any school function or activity, at any school event held away from the school; or while the student is on his/her way to or from school.

The Board prohibits possession of weapons and replicas of weapons in any school district building, on school property, at any school sponsored activity, and in any public

conveyance providing transportation to school or a school sponsored activity.

The school district shall expel for a period of not less than one (1) year any student who violates this weapons policy. Such expulsion shall be given in conformance with formal due process proceedings required by law. The Superintendent may recommend discipline short of expulsion on a case-by-case basis.

In the case of an exceptional student, the Superintendent shall take all necessary steps to comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

The Superintendent shall report the discovery of any weapon prohibited by this policy to the student's parents and to local law enforcement office.

**A complete layout of all School Board Policies can be accessed at [www.pgasd.com](http://www.pgasd.com)**

- ✚ Acceptable Use of Computers, Networks, Internet, Electronic Communication Systems and Information (No. 815)
- ✚ Admission of Beginners (No. 201)
- ✚ Bullying/Cyber Bullying (No. 249)
- ✚ Dress And Grooming (No. 221)
- ✚ Electronic Devices (No. 237)
- ✚ Family Educational Trips (No. 204.1)
- ✚ Health Examinations/Screenings (No. 209)
- ✚ Promotion And Retention (No. 215 )
- ✚ Use of Medications (No, 210)
- ✚ Weapons (No. 218.1)