

J. FRED SPARKE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

**2010/2011
PARENT/STUDENT
HANDBOOK**



EXCELLENCE AND SUCCESS FOR ALL STUDENTS

ADMISSION OF STUDENTS

A child must be five years of age on or before December 1st of the current year and reside in the district before entering school.

Parents/Guardians must present a birth certificate and proof of immunizations for measles, mumps, rubella, chicken pox, hepatitis B, DPT, HIB and poliomyelitis before entrance is allowed.

A screening for each new student is mandated by the state. The results will be used to help us provide a program to meet your child's individual needs.

ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

The school day begins promptly at 9 a.m. In order to ensure proper supervision, children should not arrive before 8:50 a.m.

The bus circle and parking lot will be closed to traffic except buses from 8:40 a.m. until 9 a.m. Parents who drive their children to school are asked to park on Condor Road and walk their child to the entrance of the school.

Kindergarten children who walk to school enter the building through the main entrance doors.

Children who take the bus to school will remain seated on the bus until they are given the signal to disembark. These students will enter the building through the doors at the east wing.

Kindergarten students will line up with their classes in the general purpose room. First graders will line up with their classes in the gym. Only students will be permitted to wait in the building.

The Nassau County Police Department has asked the school to remind parents to observe "No Parking", "No Standing" and "Stop" signs, and to avoid blocking crosswalks. Also, only cars displaying handicap-parking permits may use the handicap parking spaces.

ATTENDANCE

The importance of regular and on-time attendance at school cannot be overemphasized. Good attendance is essential for an ongoing learning process. It is the key to good grades, good work habits and success.

Absences:

Parents are expected to call the nurse before 9:00 a.m. at 520-2129 on the first day their child is absent and every day thereafter. Voice mail is available at this number to

accommodate working parents. Please give your child's name, grade, teacher's name and reason for the absence.

Parents will be called by the school at their home or place of employment, whenever a child is absent and a call has not been received.

Students must bring in an absent note signed by a parent or guardian, when they return to school after an absence (even when the nurse has been called regarding the absence). A doctor's statement may be required for an extended illness.

Students are expected to be in school except in the case of:

- Illness
- Injury
- Family emergencies, such as serious illness or death of a close relative
- Religious observance
- Religious instruction as provided by New York State law
- Court appearance
- Probation appointments
- School bus problems

Unexcused absences include:

- Family vacations
- Trips to foreign countries
- Entertainment events (baseball games, Broadway matinees)
- Care of sibling or other family member
- Waking up late
- Car trouble
- Missed bus
- Events scheduled by other organizations ("Take your child to work day")
- Early departure from school for a trip
- Shopping
- Other non-emergency activities

Tardiness

1. A student will be marked late if the child arrives after 9:00 a.m.
2. Students must report immediately to the nurse's office to obtain a late pass. Students must bring a written note signed by a parent/guardian to explain why they were tardy.

Early Dismissal

Requests by parents to have their child dismissed early are a disruption to the school day and should not be made. Such early departure removes the child from instruction and disrupts the education of all the children in the class. It also diminishes the value of education in the eyes of the child. Except for true emergencies, which can be

documented, it is strongly recommended that you do not have your child dismissed early. Should an emergency require a child to be picked up early, anyone picking up the child will be asked to show I.D. **Arrange appointments and family vacations when school is not in session.**

Attendance Review Committee

An Attendance Review Committee, composed of parents, teachers, school staff and administrators will review the attendance records of students referred by a staff member.

Parents of students with poor patterns of attendance, tardiness and early departure may be asked to attend the Committee Meeting to provide insight into the events contributing to the attendance problem.

BANKING

The Sparke PTA provides a banking program which is available to all students. Accounts are set up as minor accounts with TD Bank. Accounts may be opened for children attending the Sparke School. The PTA can only handle deposits. Withdrawals must be made at the bank. Checks are acceptable and should be made payable to your child or cash. Your child should endorse the back of the check. Minimum deposits of \$1.00 are accepted. Bank days are every other Wednesday. Refer to the district calendar for specific dates.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Parents are asked to notify their child's teacher at least two days in advance if they would like to do something special for their child's birthday. In accordance with the District Wellness Policy, we recommend and appreciate it when parents send in non-food items to share at class parties.

If you opt to send in food items, they must be prepackaged with ingredient labels so that ingredients (such as nuts) can be identified. We cannot serve items that may contain nuts/nut products or that may have been processed in a facility containing nuts/nut products. Drinks, candy, party bags and balloons will not be accepted. Our goal is to create a healthy school environment.

Students celebrating birthdays will have their name announced over the PA system during morning announcements. Their name will also be displayed on the electronic sign outside the gym. Summer birthdays will be celebrated throughout the last month of the school year.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

Bus transportation is provided for those students who meet the mileage

requirements set forth by the district. Children must ride on the assigned bus and board at the assigned stop. **Children may not change buses to ride home with a friend, etc., except in extenuating circumstances. Those students who are not entitled to bus transportation may not board the bus for any reason.**

If you wish to pick your child up from school, arrange to have someone else pick them up from school or have them walk home rather than take the bus, **written permission** must be given to the classroom teacher. Except in an emergency, please **do not** call the main office to make these arrangements.

Children riding the bus are to follow bus safety procedures. Horseplay, yelling and shouting, standing while the bus is in motion, putting arms and heads out of the window and vandalizing the bus in any way are prohibited. Drivers have been instructed to report any students who disregard any of the safety rules. Parents are requested to review proper safety and behavior procedures with their children. **At the discretion of the principal, a child may be given an assigned seat or may be suspended from the bus for poor behavior.**

New York State law prohibits any person from boarding a school bus without permission from the school district or the bus driver. Such persons may be charged with loitering.

CAFETERIA

There is no place students reveal their manners or reflect the training they have received at home more conspicuously than in the lunchroom. We urge all students to use the cafeteria as a place for pleasant relaxation, conversation, and leisurely eating.

Please remind children of the importance of good hygiene (not sharing food or drink, washing hands), of behaving courteously and of observing safety rules both in the lunchroom and on the playground. Children should be instructed to eat all their lunch before eating snacks.

Nutritionally sound and balanced meals may be purchased, or children may bring their own lunch. A lunch menu will be given to each child at the beginning of each month. In the elementary school, lunch costs \$1.40. Milk is available for \$.35 per carton. Snacks cost \$.50 to \$1.00.

Children may also purchase prepaid lunch cards. A 20-meal lunch card will be available for \$28 in elementary schools. The Island Trees Lunch Program also offers a discounted yearly lunch card for \$215 in the elementary schools.

The lunch cards can be purchased from the cafeteria any day of the week. A check made payable to the **ISLAND TREES CAFETERIA FUND** should be sent to your child's teacher in an envelope marked "**CAFETERIA CARD**". Please write your child's name, teacher's name and the grade level on the outside of the envelope.

Children who bring lunch in a lunch bag should have their names and room

numbers taped or written on the outside of the bag for easy identification. Hard plastic lunch boxes are not recommended. **A soft-sided lunch bag is more durable and is strongly recommended.**

CAFETERIA RULES

To offer a pleasant and orderly environment, the children will be asked to follow these rules:

1. Be respectful to servers, monitors and classmates.
2. Enter the cafeteria in a line with their class.
3. Sit at their assigned table, with their legs under the table and feet on the floor.
4. Immediately recognize and follow signals for quiet.
5. Raise their hand to be excused from the cafeteria.
6. Talk in a soft voice.
7. Walk, when moving from place to place.
8. Listen carefully and follow instructions.
9. Leave the table area clean and orderly.
10. Line up quietly to go outside. Put lunch bags in the crates provided.
11. Finish all food and beverages before leaving the cafeteria.

Parents who wish to take their child out of school during the child's regularly scheduled 45 minute lunch period may do so. Children must be signed out in the main office by a parent or guardian. Upon returning to school at the end of the lunch period, parents must return to the office to sign in their child.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR TELEPHONE NUMBER

Correct addresses, telephone numbers and cell phone numbers are very important, especially in cases of emergencies. Please notify the school office immediately of any changes.

CLOSING OF SCHOOLS DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER AND OTHER EMERGENCIES

The schools may be closed because of inclement weather, contagious diseases, or other emergencies. The Superintendent is authorized to make this decision for the health, welfare, and safety of the pupils.

The following radio and television stations may announce the closing: 740, 1010, 1100, 1240, 1290, and channel 12. The school web site www.islandtrees.org will also have the information, and you will receive a Connect Ed message from the district if you have provided us with current, accurate contact information. Announcements will be made for the Island Trees School District. Please do not confuse this with announcements for the Levittown District.

In the event that students are released prior to normal dismissal, please be certain your child knows the procedures to follow when he/she returns home.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

It is sometimes necessary to exclude students with contagious and infectious diseases from attendance in school. Students will be excluded during periods of contagion for chicken pox, pediculosis, conjunctivitis, impetigo, scabies, ringworm, hepatitis, meningitis, tuberculosis, lice and other infectious or contagious disease.

CONDUCT

Part of the function of an elementary school is to teach students the proper ways to solve their own problems.

Self-discipline is a growth function that a child learns and develops from infancy through adult life. Should your child experience any problems with other students, it is important that he/she bring it to the attention of his or her teacher or any teacher or adult who may be supervising an activity.

If parents have a concern regarding something their child may tell them or something they may have heard, contact the school for clarification of the situation.

Please be assured that the school will contact you if we are continually experiencing any discipline problems with your child.

Many times a child will relate something with a great deal of zeal and flourish. We must always be careful to investigate any problems before we pass judgement or form opinions.

The J. Fred Sparke Elementary School has an excellent staff and program. We ask you, as parents, to share in its growth with us, realizing that our students, your children, will benefit from our cooperative efforts.

COUNSELING SERVICES

Counseling services are available to foster the growth and development of all students. These services may include help with home, school and/or social concerns, or any questions or problems that a student may wish to discuss with the counselor.

DISMISSAL

Students who take the bus will line up in the gym. They will be escorted to the buses by a teacher. They will exit the building via the east doors.

Students who walk to school will exit the building through the main doors at 3:20 p.m. Teachers will escort students across the crosswalk and to the fence of the school, where they will be dismissed.

To reduce congestion in front of the building and to decrease the likelihood of accidents and confusion, **please keep walkways clear and wait for your child outside the gate to the school. For safety reasons, do not stand in the road or sit at the curb. We ask that you stand back, in grade level order, leaving the sidewalk clear for the classes to use as they walk to the dismissal area.**

Please do NOT take your child off the class line or wait for your child by the main entrance. This area is reserved for students attending after school activities.

Cross only at the crosswalks or near the crossing guard. Park only in a designated spot. Please respect the handicapped parking and nurse's parking signs. Use caution when pulling out of parking spaces.

DRESS

All students are expected to give proper attention to personal cleanliness, and to dress appropriately for school and school functions. Students and their parents have the primary responsibility for acceptable student dress and appearance. The vast majority of our students are exceptionally well dressed and we encourage all students to follow their example. No open-toed sandals or flip flops, bare midriffs, short shorts, or roller skate sneakers will be permitted. Shirts with inappropriate slogans or handwriting are not permitted. Baseball caps are to be removed as students enter the building.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

The school holds regular drills to teach pupils to respond calmly in the event of an emergency. These drills include fire, lockdown and evacuation drills.

Students are expected to move quickly, silently, and in an orderly fashion under the direction of school personnel. Exit directions are posted in each classroom.

In the event of an evacuation, Sparke students will go to the Stokes School.

Each fall, the District will dismiss early for a Go Home Drill. The date of this drill is on the school calendar. Please provide your child with procedures to follow for an early dismissal.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

At the start of each school year, parents are asked to update emergency information with the child's name, address and telephone number; father's name and phone number; mother's name and phone number; and the name, address and phone number of a relative or friend who can be contacted and who will accept responsibility for the child in the parent's absence. **Please be sure that the person to be contacted in case of an emergency lives locally.**

If the emergency contact information changes during the year, please notify the office immediately.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are considered to be an extension of the regular program and can greatly add to the education of the students. Parental permission forms will be sent home in advance of the trip. No student will be permitted to go on a trip without parental/guardian consent. Except for illness, students who do not attend a field trip are expected to attend school on that day.

If a walking trip is scheduled and the weather is inclement, students will take a school bus if one is available.

HEALTH SERVICES

The school shall work closely with the student's home to provide detection and preventative health services. In accordance with the law, the school will provide vision, hearing and color perception screening. Problems will be referred to the parents, who will be encouraged to have their family physician provide appropriate care.

A nurse is available during school hours. If a child has a temperature or is experiencing continued discomfort or pain, the family will be notified.

All medications will be administered by the school nurse or by the student under the direct supervision of the nurse. Medication will include all medicines prescribed by a physician and all over-the-counter drugs.

The nurse may not give medication without written permission of the parent and physician. If a student needs medication during the school day, please call the nurse to obtain the necessary forms. All medication not picked up within five days after the prescribed period will be discarded.

HOMEWORK

Written and study homework assignments are an extension of the learning that takes place in school. It can provide practice that reinforces classroom learning and can provide opportunities for independent study, research and creative thinking.

If your child is absent, please request your child's work when you call in your child's absence to the nurse in the morning. This will allow the teacher ample time to prepare the necessary work. If you plan to pick up the work, it will be available at dismissal time in the main office. **If a child is absent due to vacation, work that is missed will need to be made up when the child returns.**

Although children are encouraged to work independently, the parents' responsibility is to supervise and guide their children. This can be achieved by providing a quiet place with adequate materials, so that homework is completed in a neat and acceptable manner and to the best of a child's ability. Teachers have the responsibility to evaluate the product, but only the parents can supervise the performance.

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT TEAM

The Instructional Support Team (IST) provides prevention and support services for students in the general education classroom. The IST meets regularly to offer teachers and staff the opportunity to share ideas and strategies to meet individual student's needs and to improve student performance. The team consists of the building principal, regular classroom teachers, Special Education teachers and Academic Intervention teachers. Team members may also include the school psychologist, speech and language pathologist, school nurse, and the guidance counselor.

LIBRARY SERVICES

All students are encouraged to use the library as much as possible for research, internet access and to exchange library books. Time has been set aside each week for students to exchange library books that they have finished reading. As soon as your child finishes his/her book, encourage your child to return the book to the school library and select a new book. This is in addition to their regularly scheduled library class, which meets once a week. It is not necessary for a child to wait for their weekly library class to exchange books.

LOST AND FOUND

A lost and found box is maintained in the nurse's office. If your child has lost any books or articles of clothing, please have him/her check the lost and found box. **Please label your child's clothing, lunch bags and school supplies so that found articles may be returned.**

MOVING

All books and materials belonging to the Island Trees District must be returned prior to moving. The Main Office must be notified of the child's new address, the name and address of the new school, and the child's last day of attendance.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled for November and February. Teachers will contact parents to schedule an appointment. Please make every effort to attend. If you wish to meet with a teacher at another time, please call the office to arrange for an appointment that will coincide with the teacher's schedule.

Parents are asked not to confer with teachers during periods of instruction, when students are preparing to start the school day, or at dismissal.

PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION

The Parent Teacher Association sponsors numerous projects, activities and educational programs designed to bring the family and school closer together. Parents are encouraged to join and participate in these activities. Meetings are usually held on the first Wednesday of the month. The dates and times are published in the district calendar.

Island Trees also has a Special Education PTA (SEPTA) which encourages and promotes an understanding of the needs of the disabled and gifted students. Refer to the district calendar for specific meeting dates.

PARTIES

The Island Trees District has developed guidelines for the promotion of student wellness through nutrition education, physical activity and the selection of nourishing foods and beverages. **As part of these guidelines, parents and teachers are encouraged to celebrate birthdays, seasons and holidays with special privileges, songs, games, etc., rather than with the distribution of snacks.** Any snacks that are sent in should conform to the District Wellness Policy and the nut awareness measures described below.

PEANUT AND TREE NUT ALLERGY AWARENESS

Some of the children in our school live with peanut, tree nut and other food allergies. The major difference between nut allergies and other allergies is that nut allergies may be life threatening. In some cases, a child possessing these allergies can

go into shock just from coming in contact with a peanut, tree nut, or any nut product. Accidental ingestion can be fatal. We would like to make our schools as safe as possible for these children. The following procedures and actions will be implemented:

- We are attempting to raise awareness about the risks of nuts in the classroom. Therefore, we ask that you refrain from sending in snacks containing nuts. We realize that this may be difficult, since ingredients in snacks may not be easily identifiable and since a student's individual dietary needs may require him/her to consume a snack containing nuts. If that is not the case, please make every effort to send in snacks that are nut-free. Families with children who have nut allergies are asked to send in alternative snacks for parties.
- In accordance with the District Wellness Policy, **we recommend and appreciate it when parents send in non-food items to share** at class parties. If you opt to send in food items, they must be prepackaged with ingredient labels so that ingredients may be identified. We cannot serve food items that may contain nuts or that may have been processed in a facility containing nuts/nut products.
- We will not serve peanut butter and jelly sandwiches in our cafeterias. Instead, sun butter and jelly sandwiches are served. (Sun butter is made from sunflower seeds.) We do understand that occasionally there are children who will eat nothing else but peanut butter. We are asking that you talk with your children and attempt to try a few alternatives to PB & J, such as cream cheese and jelly. We recognize that, as parents, you must do what is right for your child and your child might eat only peanut butter and jelly. While your child may bring in a peanut butter and jelly sandwich for lunch, we are asking that this be the exception and not the rule.
- We will have designated nut free areas in the cafeteria. The nut free areas will be where children who purchase lunch will sit. Children with nut allergies will also sit at these tables with friends to eat lunch. These tables will be cleaned with separate cloths and detergents.

This school community has always tried to do what is right for children, and we have no doubt that we will do the same with this issue

PERSONAL PROPERTY

To help us to return lost articles of clothing and personal articles, name labels should be put into wallets, boots, hats, sweaters, jackets, etc. Always put the pupil's name on his/her lunch bag and thermos.

Money sent to the school should be placed in an envelope with the student's name, teacher's name, grade, amount and purpose.

The only time students should bring toys, games, etc. to school is when their teacher instructs them to do so. Items specifically NOT permitted in school include electronic games, trading cards, valuable jewelry, radios, cameras and other equipment. Sports equipment should also be left at home. Such belongings can be lost or broken. The school cannot be responsible for the loss or damage to any items brought to school. We would appreciate your help in keeping toys and equipment at home.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Students are required to participate in physical education. Students who have a medical reason to be excused from gym or recess must submit a statement from a doctor to the school nurse. The school nurse will then issue a release from this activity. The nurse must also receive a doctor's note before a student may return to gym or recess activities. All students must wear sneakers for physical education classes.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION OF STUDENTS

Each child entering grades K, 2, 4, 7, 10, and each new entrant is required by state law to have a health examination. The examining physician must submit a report of that examination to the school.

PLAYGROUND

On most days, the children will be having recess outdoors. **Children should dress appropriately for outdoor play.** Fall and spring weather on our playground can be chilly. Sweaters would be helpful. During the winter, boots, gloves or mittens, hats, scarves and a heavy coat are essential. Students will be going outside for recess except on days when it is raining or the temperature (with the wind chill factor) dips below 32° F.

Only children with medical excuses from a doctor will be allowed to remain in the building during outdoor recess.

Children are encouraged to play organized games. Sports equipment will be provided by the school. Personal equipment should be left at home.

All children must follow the rules of the playground. They are expected to show respect for the playground monitors, to pay close attention to their directions and to stay in their sight. All problems or concerns are to be reported to the principal.

REPORT CARDS

A committee of parents, teachers and administrators developed the elementary report card. The report card indicates accomplishments, as well as areas in need of improvement based on the New York State standards. Grades are determined by the student's mastery of the standards, consistent daily preparations, promptness in completing assignments and the quality of completed work. Report cards are issued three times each year, in December, March and June.

Teachers are encouraged to telephone, or otherwise communicate with parents, when concerns first arise. In the same manner, we encourage parents to contact the school or make an appointment to come in and see the appropriate person whenever they have a concern.

Children are promoted on a yearly basis after completion of that grade's requirements. If retention is necessary, it will be handled as a cooperative venture between the home and school.

REWARDS AND INCENTIVES

In accordance with the District's Wellness Policy, food will not be used in the school as a reward or incentive for instructional purposes with the exception of activities associated with cultural education activities.

SCHOOL STORE

The Sparke School Store, which is run by the PTA, provides students with the opportunity to purchase school supplies. The school store is open approximately once each month during the students' lunch periods. Flyers will be sent home notifying parents of the dates.

SHARED DECISION-MAKING

A Shared Decision-Making Team can vastly improve the educational quality of our schools. It promotes an atmosphere of trust and respect among educators, parents, students and members of the community. The team brings people together in productive ways, making them more knowledgeable and giving them the tools to accomplish mutual goals.

Sparke School has a shared decision-making team composed of the principal, teachers and representative parents selected by the PTA. The team meets regularly to establish common goals and to determine the best approaches to achieve these goals.

STUDENT RELEASE PRECAUTIONS

Parents who are placing children in the temporary care of relatives or other adults must provide a written statement to the principal setting forth the persons who are to be responsible for the child, and the beginning and ending date of such temporary care.

Certified copies of any divorce orders or divorce decrees, which restrict a parent's ability to seek the release of their child, must be provided to the building principal by the custodial parent.

TELEPHONE USE

The school telephone is for business calls only. Necessary plans should be made with children before they leave home in the morning. **Except in an emergency, parents are requested not to ask secretaries to relay telephone messages to their children.**

If you wish to speak to a teacher, leave your number and your call will be returned as soon as possible.

Children will not be permitted to call home for books, assignments, and other forgotten items. We appreciate your cooperation in helping your child to remember all belongings before leaving for school each day.

TEXTBOOKS/MATERIALS

Textbooks and materials are loaned to students. Textbooks must be covered, and worn or damaged covers must be replaced. Lost or damaged materials become the financial obligation of the students' families.

VISITORS

Parents and other district citizens are encouraged to visit the district's schools and classrooms to observe the work of students, teachers and other staff. Since schools are a place of work and learning, however, certain limits must be set for such visits. For these reasons, the following rules apply to visitors to the schools:

- Anyone who is not a regular staff member or student of the school will be considered a visitor.
- All visitors to the school must report to the Main Office upon arrival at the school. There they will be required to sign the visitor's register and will be issued a visitor's identification badge, which must be worn at all times while in the school or on school grounds. They will also be asked to show a photo ID.
- Visitors are expected to refrain from "popping in on" other classes, as this practice disrupts instruction.
- Parents or citizens who wish to observe a classroom while school is in session are required to arrange such visits in advance with the principal, so that class disruption is kept to a minimum.

- Teachers are not permitted to take class time to discuss individual matters with visitors.
- Any unauthorized person on school property will be reported to the principal or security. Unauthorized persons will be asked to leave. The police may be called, if the situation warrants.
- Visitors are reminded that there is NO SMOKING in school buildings or on school grounds.

WALKERS

Children walking to and from school are responsible for their own safety and the safety of other walkers. They are expected to respect our neighbor's property and walk carefully to ensure a safe arrival.

Where crossing guards are stationed, children are to follow the guard's instructions. At other intersections, children should cross only at the corners and not in the middle of a block.

Walkers are to arrive no earlier than 8:50 a.m. All walkers are to enter the building through the main entrance.

WEB SITE

Additional and current information is available on the Island Trees District website at www.islandtrees.org. Please visit the website regularly.