

The Ferndale Area School District will not discriminate in its educational programs, activities, or employment practices, based on race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, ancestry, union membership, or any other legally protected classification. Announcement of this policy is in accordance with state and federal laws, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the American with Disabilities Act of 1990. The Ferndale Area School District employees and participants who have an inquiry or complaint of harassment or discrimination or who need information about accommodations for persons with disabilities, should contact John Kowal, Business Manager, Administrative Office, 100 Dartmouth Avenue, Johnstown, PA 15905 (Telephone 814-535-1507)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GENERAL INFORMATION.....	1 – 14
I. Attendance Policy.....	1
Ia. Doctor’s Appointments	2
Ib. Assignments When Absent	2
II. Birthday Parties/Holiday Events	3
III. Cafeteria.....	3
IIIa. Delinquent Lunch Accounts.....	4
IV. Daily Schedule	4
IV a. Picking Students up at the School.....	4
V. Detention.....	5
VI. Discipline.....	5
VII. Emergency Information / Changes.....	6
VIII. Homework.....	6
IX. Elementary Student Assistance Program.....	7
X. Multi-Tiered System of Support.....	7
XI. Guidance Department Mission Statement.....	7
XII. Lost and Found	8
XIII. Medications	8
XIV. School Nurse	9
XV. Parent-Teacher Conferences, School Visits	10
XVI. Personal Property	10
XVII. Report Cards / Retention	11
XVIII. School Delays, Cancellations and Early Dismissals	11
XIX. School Property Vandalism.....	11
XX. Students with Special Needs	12
XXI. Textbooks and Library Books	12
XXII. Title I Math.....	12
XXIII. Title I Reading.....	12
XXIV. Annual Public Notice of Child Find and Special Ed. Services ..	13
XXV. Gaskin Settlement Statement.....	14
GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR STUDENTS.....	15-20
A. Appearance.....	15
B. Bus Assignment	15
C. Bus Behavior.....	16
D. Bus Stops	16
E. Child Abuse.....	16
F. Confidentiality of Student Records	17
G. Drugs/Alcohol/ Controlled Substances	17
H. Gum.....	18
I. Harassment	18
J. Lunchroom	18

K. Lunch Time Recess	18
L. Parent / Family Lunch with Students	19
M. Respect for Others/Anti-Bullying/Cyber-Bullying	19
N. Weapons Policy	19

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES21-22

Assemblies	21
Band	21
Chorus.....	21
Field Trips.....	21
Fitness Club	22
Peer Leader.....	22
Reading Team	22
Star Readers.....	22
Recreational Activities	22

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FERNDALE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT WEBSITE

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Principal's Welcome Letter

It is with great honor and pride that I welcome you to the 2015-16 school year here at Ferndale Area Elementary School. There are several changes coming our way, and the faculty, staff, and administration are looking forward to the many positive effects that will be the result of these changes. Change is never easy; however, the school board, teachers, staff, community and families can look forward to the future of our students and prepare them for careers and jobs in this the 21st century. Things are not slowing down and will continue to move at a quick pace. We here at the elementary school are up to the challenge and promise to do our best in educating and instructing our youth to prepare them for their future.

Our district vision is a solid one: *"We will strive to provide a safe and nurturing community for excellent teaching and learning where students prepare for a life of continual learning, and acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to solve problems, communicate effectively, and be responsible citizens in a constantly changing environment."* I am a firm believer that it "takes a village" and with the help of you, our families and community, we can make this vision a reality. We all want what is best for the adults of tomorrow; good health, safety, a great education and a successful future. Working as a team, we can do our part to make this dream a reality.

And so, again, I welcome you to this new endeavor with new staff, new administration, new curriculum, new approaches and new technology. I look forward to working closely with everyone, especially our students, families and community. Together, we can make big changes and show others just what it means to have PRIDE IN THE HIVE!

Forever a Yellow Jacket,

Rachelle Hrabosky
Elementary Principal

FERNDALE AREA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENT / PARENT HANDBOOK

GENERAL INFORMATION

I. ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Ferndale Area Elementary Teachers, Staff, and Administration cannot stress enough the importance of your child being in school every day, on time, if he/she is to achieve the greatest success in his/her education. Please make every attempt to have your child at school on time. Classes begin at 8:30 A.M. and it is expected that your child be in their classroom before that time. Regular attendance is encouraged and expected of all students. It is impossible to completely make up assignments that are missed. A typical school day is filled with learning that is not limited to books, i.e. group projects, discussions, social interactions, and lab work. Paper work may be made up, but the valuable learning opportunities cannot. In cases when children are sick, they should stay home from school. If your child will be absent or tardy, call the Elementary Office between 8:00 – 9:00 A.M. at 535-6724 and choose **option 1** to speak directly to the attendance clerk.

All absences must be accounted for with a written excuse from the parent/guardian or doctor the day he/she returns to school. After **3 days with no excuse** sent to the attendance clerk, the absence will be deemed **unexcused**. If the student has been seen by a physician, please send the doctor's excuse to the school. Absences with proper documentation will be recorded as **excused** absences. Unexcused absences may result in zero credit for any graded work missed the day of the absence.

Each absence is recorded.

- After 3 days of **unexcused** absences, an unexcused absence warning letter will be mailed
- After 5 days of **total** absences, an absence warning letter will be mailed
- After 10 days of **total** absences, and/or 5 days of **unexcused** absences the following will occur:
 - A medical evidence letter will be mailed to the family
 - A meeting may be convened between the school and the family
 - An Individualized Attendance/Truancy Elimination Plan may be created and implemented
- After 10 days of **unexcused** absences are accumulated, a citation will be issued with the local magistrate
- After 15 days of **total** absences, a School Truancy Referral will be submitted to Cambria County Children and Youth Services (CYS) and/or Cambria County Juvenile Probation for grade 6 students

In the case of 10 days of **accumulated** absences, a **doctor's** excuse will be the only accepted excuse (Parental excuses will not be accepted after the 10th day absent). In such instances of chronic illness, a blanket excuse can be forwarded from the physician that is treating the student. A letter stating such a condition should be sent to the nurse as soon as a diagnosis is specified. Continued absences may result in student failure, substantial fines, and loss of student participation in school activities. See Policy #204 Attendance.

Students Tardy for School – There is an expectation for students to be in school on time every day. In the case of tardiness, please call the Attendance Clerk at 814-535-6724 and choose option 1. **Students** with early morning or late afternoon appointments are expected to be in school for the majority of the day.

- Students will be marked for ½ day absence if arriving to school after 10:00 a.m. or leaving before 1:30 p.m. even with a doctor's excuse for an appointment
- Tardiness for 10 or more days, will require a parent meeting so that a Truancy Elimination Plan may be implemented
- Tardiness for 15 or more days, will require a School Truancy Referral be submitted to Cambria County Children and Youth Services

I a. DOCTOR'S APPOINTMENTS

A note should be sent to the school alerting the teacher and the office that a child is to be dismissed early for a doctor's appointment. **All parents are required to come into the lobby and sign out their child for the appointment and their child will then be called. This holds true for students returning to school following an appointment.** The parent is not to go directly to the child's classroom. Under no circumstances will students be released to anyone other than the parent or legal guardian without written permission from the parent or legal guardian. Because regular school attendance is vital to a student's academic success, every effort should be made to schedule appointments after school hours.

If a student is returning to school following a medical or dental appointment, please submit a doctor's excuse to the office upon returning. The student should attend school prior to and/or following an appointment that is scheduled during the instructional day.

I b. ASSIGNMENTS WHEN ABSENT

All effort will be made by the elementary school to send home any missed work due to student absence. At the time of your call to the school regarding your child's absence, please state who is to take the work home for the student. If parents are going to pick up the missed assignments, please

phone the office by **noon** to allow for time to gather necessary materials. Parents may pick up the work in the office **no sooner than 2:50 p.m.**

II. BIRTHDAY PARTIES/HOLIDAY EVENTS

Due to the USDA's "Smart Snacks in School" regulations that took effect July 1, 2014, and our diligence in creating a healthy atmosphere for our students, the District will no longer allow food, snacks or treats to be brought into the buildings. This is a District wide policy, K4 through grade 12 (See policy #246 Student Wellness). Nutritious and allergy safe alternatives may be purchased at cost for celebrations within the classroom. Contact Mary Storer-Clawson, Food Service Director for more information and prices. **Non-food** options to be used in celebration are welcomed. Please contact your child's homeroom teacher prior to the occasion.

*Invitations to parties **will not be distributed in school, including entire classrooms and grade levels.**

III. CAFETERIA

The Ferndale Area Elementary School offers a breakfast and lunch program for all students. Prices for both are set at the beginning of the school year. Low income families may be eligible for free or reduced cafeteria prices. Applications and additional information on this program are available in the elementary office. See policy #808 Food Services.

The Ferndale Area School District uses a computerized system to monitor the payment of lunch, breakfast, and milk purchases. Parents are asked to calculate the amount needed to **prepay** for the all meals within a given time period and write one check per family to cover all meal purchases. There are envelopes available in each homeroom for payment, or you may use any envelope from home. Please specify the student's name and homeroom teacher for each child in the family and the amount that is to be deposited in each account. When a student makes a purchase, that amount will be deducted from the account. For convenience, we request that meals are purchased for multiple days rather than daily. The meal accounts are set up just like a bank account. Withdrawals for each meal will be deducted at the time of purchase. Students will receive notice when accounts are low or at a zero balance. **All meals are to be paid in advance.** In an emergency situation, if a student forgets his/her lunch or money, credit will be given for the day and the child will be provided with a meal. Parents are asked to reimburse the cafeteria for the meal on the following school day.

Please pay outstanding cafeteria debts promptly. Contact the FAES cafeteria if you have any questions regarding the student's account status.

Students receive a meal menu each month. Please be sure to check the bottom of the menu for additional information concerning early dismissals and activities that may be scheduled during that month.

III a. DELINQUENT LUNCH ACCOUNTS

All students are required to have enough money in their accounts to pay for the meals they eat. Occasionally, student lunch accounts will be overdrawn. When that happens, a letter will be sent home reminding the parent/guardian to send in additional money for the lunch account. If a student's account continues to be overdrawn, significantly more stringent consequences will be enacted, including additional letters sent home, an alternate lunch being served, no extras, principal involvement and contact, and eventual removal from all activities including athletics, other extra-curricular activities, field trips, fun days, assemblies, etc. The services of a collection agency may also be contracted to obtain money due to the district cafeteria.

IV. DAILY SCHEDULE

The normal school day begins at **8:30** a.m. Students that are driven to school by a family member may be dropped off at the elementary lobby **no earlier than 8:00a.m.** Dismissal is at **3:00** p.m. for students in grades kindergarten through six. K4 students' day begins at **8:30** a.m. and ends at **1:50** p.m. If it is necessary to transport a student to or from school on a particular day, please plan for their arrival between 8:15 and 8:20 and for their dismissal between 2:50 and 3:00. A written note from the parent is required if the student will be picked up by the parent. If there is a need to change the daily schedule, there will be a written notice sent home to the parent or announcements will be made via One Call Now. **Please establish a plan so that your child is always supervised in the event of an early dismissal.**

For the safety of your child, please establish a routine of bus stops after school. It can become quite a challenge for all involved to know each and every student's bus stop when they are frequently changed. We do understand that there are circumstances that necessitate a change on occasion (babysitter, daycare, shared custody). Please notify the Elementary Office in such cases to ensure your child's safe arrival to his/her destination.

IV a. PICKING STUDENTS UP AT THE SCHOOL

Please send in a written note if it is necessary for you to pick your child up at the school and he/she will not be riding the bus home. If a child does not have a written note, she/he will be required to ride the bus home at the end of the day. Please notify the office of any change in the regular routine **in writing**. Proper notification eliminates confusion and ensures the safety of your child so please refrain from daily changes unless in the case of an emergency.

Please arrange to pick up your child at the end of the day **at dismissal time**. Teachers are expected to conduct classes until dismissal time. In order to eliminate classroom interruptions, we ask that you sign your child out in our lobby and wait for your child to be called prior to the first call for buses. In light

of the seriousness that we take in ensuring the safety of all of our students, we ask the following of those waiting in the lobby to pick up students:

- Do not hold the outside door for adults coming to our building. The office will oversee their entrance with our intercom and doorbell system.
- Do not enter the interior doors to the office with students. If student has an excuse from a doctor's appointment, he/she can bring it to the office upon **his/her** entrance.
- If an adult needs entrance to the office, the staff will permit entrance.

Because of possible safety risks, we will not send the students into the parking lot or across the street. **You will need to come into the elementary office to pick up a student.**

V. DETENTION

After-school detention is held in the elementary school for the following issues: misbehavior on the bus, incomplete class work and/or homework assignments or other disciplinary purposes. Detention will be assigned by the principal or by an individual teacher. Parents are notified if and when a detention is assigned and arrangements are made. It is the responsibility of the parent to provide transportation from school for any detained student.

VI. DISCIPLINE

It is our shared belief that life and its consequences are all about choice. We, here at the elementary school, believe that one of our goals is to mentor and guide the students to realize decision making and the consequences that come with each choice. We aim to teach each individual to become self-disciplined individuals. However, if a student makes a choice to violate school rules, discipline measures will be taken and penalties will be measured upon the severity or the persistence of the misconduct. **There is no division of authority among the faculty of the Ferndale Area Elementary School.**

Teachers are authorized to reprimand or correct misbehaving students at any time or any place during the school day and at any school function or activity. Students that fail to comply with school rules and/or continue to demonstrate negative behaviors, may lose privileges such as field trips, participation in activities or other appropriate penalties as determined by the principal. A copy of the FASD discipline policy is seen below. The District's Discipline Policy #218 and consequences can also be found on our school website (www.fasdk12.org). Paper copies can also be requested at the Elementary School Office.

The actual sequence of disciplinary action may vary, depending on the individual case. In general, the following sequence is followed:

- a. Teacher and student
- b. Teacher and parent
- c. Teacher, parent and student
- d. Teacher, parent, student and principal or guidance counselor

e. All of the above and other school personnel involved

1. In-School Suspension – Separation from the student body while assigned to the principal's office. The teachers will send academic work to the office and monitor the student's progress.
2. Temporary Suspension – Exclusion from school for an offense for a period of up to three school days, by the principal.
3. Full Suspension – Exclusion from school for a period of up to ten school days. An informal hearing before the principal is offered to the student and student's parents. In all suspension cases, the student has the responsibility to make up exams and work missed.
4. Expulsion – Exclusion from school is for an offense for a period exceeding ten school days, and may result in permanent removal from school rolls.

Our school district's policies on drugs and alcohol, and the policy on harassment are described elsewhere in this handbook. Violations of these policies, as well as violations that show disregard for civil, state, or federal laws will be dealt with severely and may result in detentions, suspensions, or expulsions.

Continued defiance of rules of behavior may result in detention, suspension or expulsion. Students may also lose privileges of field trips, participation in activities or other appropriate penalties determined by the principal.

VII. EMERGENCY INFORMATION / CHANGES

For the safety of all, students are required to have an emergency card on hand in the school office. Parents are asked to complete and return these cards at the beginning of the year. Please be sure to notify all parties that are listed on the card as emergency contacts of their responsibility to your child. In the event of an emergency, it may be necessary to contact one of these parties if the school is unable to contact the parent.

Please notify the school office if there are any changes in this emergency information throughout the school year. It is important to keep information up to date in the event of an emergency.

VIII. HOMEWORK

Assignments that are to be completed at home are to be seen as a method of connecting school and families. It allows parents and guardians to observe what occurs in their child's education and also allows the child to practice what skills were instructed on a given day. Reading homework is vital. Reading with your child and setting time aside for an older child to enjoy a

book “has shown that even 15 minutes a day of independent reading can expose students to more than a million words of text in a year” (www.readfaster.com). Reading aloud to young children is so critical that the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that doctors prescribe reading activities along with other advice given to parents at regular check-ups (<https://www2.ed.gov/pubs/startearly>).

Homework that is not completed and returned to teachers by the due date, will be completed during free times that include: lunch, recess and assemblies. **Three** consecutive incomplete homework assignments will result in after-school detention for students in **grades 3-6**. Alternate arrangements will be made for students in grades K-2. If a student continues in the habit of not completing homework assignments, he/she may be referred to the afterschool homework room.

For your convenience, you can look up your child’s daily homework via each teacher’s homework page. Go to www.fasdk12.org, select elementary school, teacher pages and then choose the teacher. Within that page there is a homework tab.

IX. Elementary Student Assistance Program (ESAP)

The Elementary Student Assistance Program (ESAP) team is comprised of the academic and behavioral (ABS) coordinator, principal, guidance counselor, nurse, school psychologist, and teacher representatives. The team’s purpose is to support and assist teachers and families with students who are experiencing social, emotional, academic, and attendance problems. A plan is created by the team and implemented for the success of the student. Referrals can be made by any teacher or by the parent/guardian. Information pertaining to parental referrals can be obtained in the elementary school office or by contacting Mrs. Kopusko, ABS coordinator.

X. Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)

The MTSS team is a core team comprised of the principal, guidance counselor, school psychologist, reading specialist, academic and behavioral coordinator, academic and behavioral co-chair, and speech therapist. The purpose of this team is to review and determine if there is a need for intervention for individual students, grades K-6. A team of trained interventionists will work with the students based upon analyzed data to strengthen a child’s education and instruction. Interventions will be implemented using a two-tiered system of supports.

XI. GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT

Ferndale Area Elementary School’s guidance program believes that the foundation of successful learning includes education regarding the development of positive character traits. These traits will enable students to experience life with integrity by making positive life decisions towards themselves, others and their community. Implementation of character

development skills are delivered to students via four essential program components: guidance curriculum, responsive services, individual planning system support. Mrs. Eileen Zankey is the Elementary Guidance Counselor.

XII. LOST AND FOUND

Every year there are numerous unclaimed items lost by students. There is a lost and found area in the cafeteria. Please have your child check for items that she/he may have lost. Please put the student's name on all items of removable clothing or belongings that they carry. Hats, gloves, sweaters, scarves, etc. could easily be returned if marked with the child's name. Any items not claimed by the end of the school year will be donated to a local charity.

XIII. MEDICATIONS

The school district will cooperate with parents and their medical practitioners in distributing prescribed medications when it must be taken during school hours. Ideally, all medication should be given at home. It is also recognized that at the present time many students are able to attend regular school because of the effectiveness of medication in the treatment of chronic disabilities and illnesses. However, any student who is required to take medication during the regular school day, must comply with school regulations. See Policy # 210 Use of Medicine. These regulations include the following; prescription medication will be administered by the school nurse or other authorized personnel under the following conditions:

1. Upon written request from the physician and parent/guardian to the school officials that medication must be administered to the student during school hours.
2. Included in the request must be the name of the student, name of medication, dosage, frequency and route of administration, and physician's signature is mandatory.
3. All medication must be in the original protective container and properly labeled by the physician or pharmacy.

The administration of non-prescription medication is discouraged and can usually be avoided by adjusting the time schedule around school hours. If it is absolutely necessary for a child to receive non-prescription medication during school hours, it will be administered by the school nurse or other authorized personnel under the following conditions:

1. Receipt of written request or authorization from parent or guardian and a physician's signature.

2. Included within the request must be the name of the student, name of medication, dosage, frequency of administration, and route of administration.
3. All medication must be in its original unopened container that is properly labeled.

All medications (prescription and non-prescription) MUST be transported to and from school by a parent or guardian for the safety of all students. No student will be permitted to carry any medication at any time.

A student may carry inhalers **only after** written consent by a physician is obtained to verify student knowledge of the use and administration of the medication.

Neither the school nurse nor authorized staff will dispense medications of any kind without written permission from the parent/guardian and a physician.

Any medications not picked up by a parent at the end of the school year will be discarded.

XIV. SCHOOL NURSE

The responsibilities of a school nurse are so much more than providing first aid during school hours. She is responsible for maintaining health records for all students, including immunizations; physical & dental examinations; vision, height, weight & body mass index measurements on all students; hearing screenings on K4-3rd, 7th & 11th grade students and scoliosis checks on 6th & 7th graders. On occasion, she assists in health related instruction and disease management assistance with some of our students. The school nurse does not perform duties that are the responsibility of a physician.

The PA School Code mandates that all children upon entry, 6th grade and 11th grade have a physical assessment from a licensed professional. It also requires that all students upon entry, 3rd grade and 7th grade have a dental screening by a licensed professional. **All physicals and dentals done by your family doctor must be turned into the school no later than October 30, 2015. It may be dated up to 1 year prior. Any student who does not turn in a mandated physical or dental will be scheduled to be seen by the school physician and/or the school dentist.** See policy #209 Health Exams/Screenings.

Students are not permitted to use the nursing station to rest unless authorized by the school nurse or administrative staff.

There are certain instances when the nurse is mandated by the PA Department of Health to exclude students from school. An example is when there is a question of a communicable disease (pink eye, lice/nits, etc.). If excluded, the student will have to be seen and released by a physician prior

to returning to school. Written notification is required before returning to school. See policy # 203 Communicable Diseases and Immunization

Ferndale Area School District has a no nit policy pertaining to Lice.

See policy #209.1 Head Lice.

XV. PARENT - TEACHER CONFERENCES, SCHOOL VISITS

A scheduled conference day near the beginning of the school year, provides opportunities for parents to meet with teachers. However, a parent need not wait for an invitation to a conference. A parent may request a conference at any time. Parents may contact teachers to establish a meeting date and time.

These conferences are a valuable time for reporting student progress to parents and also for parents to provide teachers with information that could help them better understand each child. Parent-Teacher **conferences must be scheduled in advance. All visitors are expected to have scheduled appointments. Appointments may be scheduled before or after school, or at a mutually convenient time. Exceptions may be made in the case of emergencies. Parent-Teacher Organization meetings and building-wide programs with open invitations from building administration are considered scheduled appointments.** If you request a conference with a teacher and for some reason you do not receive a reply, please contact the principal.

Messages for individual teachers may be left before and after school hours using the district's voice-mail system. To leave such a message, dial the elementary office (535-6724) and follow the directions as prompted.

All visitors must report to the Elementary Office directly upon entering school property to register and secure permission to conduct a visitation and receive a visitor's pass. At no time should a parent/visitor go directly to a classroom, cafeteria, etc. without first reporting to the office. This procedure is required to assure the safety of students, faculty, and staff. See policy #907 School Visitors.

XVI. PERSONAL PROPERTY

Students are expected to respect the personal property of others. Students are not to use or take items that belong to others without the permission of the owner. It is best to keep your hands off of things that do not belong to you. **Damage or theft of personal property will result in disciplinary action by the principal.**

Unless items are needed for a class or school activity, they may not be brought to school. Items prohibited include, but are not limited to, personal electronics and/or equipment (iPods, iPads, tablets, etc.), electronic games, and cellular phones.

The school district is not responsible for any prohibited items brought to school. **Any prohibited items that are confiscated will be placed in the principal's office until parents or guardians retrieve them.** Items will not be returned to students.

XVII. REPORT CARDS / RETENTION

Report cards and mid-term reports in grades one through six are issued four times throughout the school year. Kindergarten students receive three report cards yearly. K4 students will receive a progress report twice yearly. Ferndale Area Elementary is transitioning to a standards based report card. Academic grades/reports are for parental information based on predetermined PA Common Core Standards/Competencies. Grades are not a reward or a punishment; rather, they are a reflection of your child's academic performance. **Any questions regarding grades should be addressed with your child's teacher.**

When a student has a pattern of poor or failing grades, it may be necessary for the student to be retained for their academic success in future years. Prior to retention, parents will be consulted. A determination will be made that is acceptable to both the parent and the school district. Remember, the overall benefit to the child will be the determining factor for any retention or promotion. Students with poor or failing grades may also be referred to the Elementary Student Assistance Program.

XVIII. SCHOOL DELAYS, CANCELLATIONS AND EARLY DISMISSALS

If it becomes necessary to announce the cancellation of school, a delay in the start of the day or an early dismissal, this information will be relayed via the One Call Now system. **Every effort will be made to give you as much notice as possible.** With many parents working, it may be a good idea to form a network with relatives, neighbors and friends to look after each other's children in the event that one of you is not home and did not hear the news of the early dismissal. **The parent/guardian is responsible for formulating an emergency plan with each child. Be sure that the student knows what to do and where to go in case of early dismissal.**

Two hour early dismissals are scheduled the day before Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter. Throughout the year, there will be additional 2 hour early dismissals for clerical work for teachers and teacher in-services. Families will be reminded of these on the school calendar (hard copy and school website), cafeteria menu, the school newsletter, and an additional memo.

XIX. SCHOOL PROPERTY/VANDALISM

We take pride in our building and property. To maintain its appearance, we need the cooperation of **all** to maintain its appearance. Abuse or vandalism of school property will not be tolerated. Offenses of this nature will be punished as per the Ferndale Area School District's discipline policy.

XX. STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The Ferndale Area Elementary School provides services for exceptional students. If you have a child that is exceptional, or thought to be exceptional, **and** is in need of special services or programs, please contact the school. We will take the steps necessary to begin the evaluation process and provide services to your child. Further information on exceptionalities can be provided by the building principal.

XXI. TEXTBOOKS AND LIBRARY BOOKS

The textbooks given to students for the year are numbered in order to maintain a record of inventory. We are also proud of the vast amount of books that we have to offer from our school library. Students are expected to take care of the books and return library books at their next library class and textbooks at the end of the year in good condition. **Parents will be required to pay for lost or destroyed books.** A letter will be sent informing of the book lost or destroyed and the amount owed. If the child destroys or loses a consumable workbook, it will be necessary for the parent to pay for a replacement workbook.

XXII. TITLE I MATH

The Ferndale Area Elementary School provides Title I math services via a school wide model. Currently, Ferndale Area Elementary is using "Everyday Math" in grades K4 through grade 5 and Prentice Hall/Connected Math in grade 6. These programs provide a balance of instruction in computation and problem solving. Teachers and staff have been trained in this educational model and information pertaining to the program will be shared with parents throughout the year. As a parent, it is vital that you support your child's education in the home. Helping with homework, asking about their day, or discussion of a certain topic are easy ways for you to help educate your child. Only with cooperation between school and home can we meet the educational needs of your child.

XXIII. TITLE I READING

The Ferndale Area Elementary School provides Title I reading services via a school wide model. Among the various resources used in our instruction, Macmillan/McGraw-Hill *Treasures* reading program is our basal series. *Treasures* is research-based and scientifically tested. Guided reading is also a part of our reading program in grades K-3. Teachers and staff use Guided

Reading libraries from Pearson Learning. Our K4 and Kindergarten programs also use Ready Readers. Grades 4-6 incorporate the use of popular literature pieces as well. Through the use of many types of text and literature, we can match individual abilities and build reading confidence. Students will not only be learning to read, but reading to learn. ***But key to your child's education is gaining a love of reading, and with your help and support, our program can be successful.***

XXIV. ANNUAL PUBLIC NOTICE OF CHILD FIND AND SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

School districts are required by the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA 2004) to provide a free appropriate public education to children with disabilities who need special education and related services. (Note: the duty to identify, locate, evaluate and provide special education services to school-age individuals incarcerated in local correction institutions rests with the school district within whose boundaries such an institution is located.) School-age children who need special education and related services are identified as children with disabilities. These students have been identified as being in need of specially designed instruction and have one or more of the following physical or mental disabilities:

- *Autism
- *Emotional disturbance
- *Deafness
- *Hearing impairment
- *Specific learning disability
- *Mental retardation
- *Multiple Disabilities
- *Orthopedic Impairment due to chronic or acute health problems
- *Speech and language impairment
- *Visual impairment including blindness
- *Deaf-blindness
- *Traumatic Brain Injury
- *Developmental Delay
- *Other health impairment

Intermediate Unit 8 and each school district in Bedford, Blair, Cambria and Somerset counties has established and implemented procedures to locate, identify, and evaluate students and young children suspected of being exceptional. These procedures include screening activities which include but are not limited to: review of group-based data (cumulative records, enrollment records, health records, and report cards); hearing screening (at a minimum of kindergarten, special ungraded classes, first, second, third, seventh, and eleventh grades); vision screening (every grade level); motor screening; and speech and language screening. When screening indicates that a student may be a child with a disability, the school district will seek parental consent to conduct an evaluation. Parents who think their child is exceptional may also request that the school district conduct an evaluation.

Evaluation is defined as procedures used in the determination of whether a child has a disability and the nature and extent of the special education and related services that the child needs. This evaluation is conducted by a multidisciplinary team (MDT) that includes the parent and a group of qualified professionals.

An IEP team develops a written Individualized Education Plan (IEP) based on the evaluation results. An IEP describes a student's current educational levels, goals, objectives (when required), and the individualized programs and services that the student will receive. IEP's are reviewed on an annual basis. For more information regarding the special education process, please contact Mrs. Jessica Maxwell, Coordinator of Special Education Services at 539-6160 or jmaxwell@fasdk12.org.

XXV. GASKIN SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

The Gaskin Settlement Agreement is a formal resolution between the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) and a group of families and advocacy organizations who filed a class-action lawsuit against PDE on behalf of a group of children with disabilities in 1994. The goal of the settlement is to ensure that Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams determine whether the goals in a student's IEP can be implemented in the general education classroom with supplementary aids and services before considering a more restrictive placement. The activities agreed to in the Settlement Agreement are designed to increase the capacity of school districts to provide appropriate specially designed instruction, related services, supplementary aids and services, and support to students with disabilities placed in general education classrooms. The agreement does not change an individual student's program, placement, or IEP. Only the IEP team can make such modifications.

In the Settlement Agreement, PDE agreed to make systemic changes pursuant to its general supervisory role over special education, including the following:

- Developing display materials for all public schools showing all children are welcome.
- Providing increased professional development for teachers and other school personnel.
- Expanding information and training that supports parents of children with disabilities.
- Ensuring that IEP teams determine the appropriateness of implementing IEP goals in general education classrooms with supplementary aids and services.
- Providing a single IEP for a student with a disability who also qualifies for gifted support.
- Modifying portions of the IEP or annotated IEP to provide more information related to students participating in general education.
- Clarifying complaint resolution and investigation procedures.
- Monitoring of Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) requirements to ensure that districts comply with federal and state laws related to student placement.
- Establishing a Least Restrictive Environment advisory panel of parents, advocates, and educators to review system-wide progress in

the delivery of instruction to students with disabilities in general education classrooms.

View the entire Settlement Agreement on the District website: www.fasdk12.org under the special education link.

GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS **FOR STUDENTS**

A. APPEARANCE / DRESS

Students should take pride in their appearance and develop good habits of personal hygiene. Students are not expected to dress "in their Sunday best" for school, however the clothing should be neat, clean and appropriate for school.

Clothing meant for strictly recreational purposes (short shorts, halters, midriff tops, tanktops, shirts with spaghetti straps, camisoles, spandex clothing etc.) is prohibited and not appropriate to wear to school. **To avoid any confusion, only shirts with a sleeve are permissible to wear in the elementary school.** Long dresses, high heels, flip-flops or sandals with no backs, and other types of clothing that could cause a child to fall are prohibited. Any clothing or hairstyle that is so bizarre as to be a distraction to the other students is also prohibited. Students are not permitted to wear clothing that depicts obscene language, drugs, alcohol, inappropriate messages or vulgarity. Student will NOT be permitted to wear shorts **between November 1st and March 31st**. Students are permitted to wear shorts that are NO SHORTER than the length of the **FINGERTIPS** when arms are held at their sides. If a student wears inappropriate clothing or shoes to school, the parent will be called to bring an appropriate outfit for the student to wear. Please help us in the effort to avoid calls home by being observant of your child's attire.

A child who habitually attends school unwashed and in dirty clothes or with clothes that are not suitable for the season, is considered to be neglected. The elementary guidance counselor or school nurse will contact parents when the situation arises. We are required by law to report such incidents to the appropriate authorities. School personnel have an affirmative obligation to report to the appropriate authorities on the basis of their professional training or other experience that a child has been abused or neglected.

B. BUS ASSIGNMENT

Students are to ride the assigned bus that passes nearest to their home or provides for the safest route to walk to and from the bus stop. They are to sit in their assigned seat and board and get off of the bus at this same stop **every day**. In the case of an emergency, students will be permitted to ride a different bus with permission from the principal. In this circumstance, parents should provide a written or verbal request to the principal justifying the need for this change. If you move during the year and the bus number or stop changes, please notify the office so our bus lists can be updated and new seat assignments can be made. The school district is required to maintain a daily roster for each bus. Students who ride a bus other than the one to

which they are assigned are violating school policy and may lose riding privileges.

***Parents must establish **one** consistent morning and afternoon bus number and bus stop, which **cannot be changed on a daily basis nor be changed via the telephone.** **Frequent changes and telephone requests create an unsafe situation, are difficult to monitor, and will not be permitted. Students must ride their assigned bus home or be picked up by the parent.** For the safety of all students, the school must know where the students are being transported at the end of the day.

C. BUS BEHAVIOR

Proper student discipline is necessary to ensure the efficient and safe operation of the school bus system. To assist us in creating a safe atmosphere while your child is being transported, video cameras are being installed on every bus. **Failure to show regard for bus safety rules will result in the suspension of riding privileges.** Students whose bus privileges are suspended are still required to attend school. **It is the parents' responsibility to provide transportation for the duration of the suspension.**

D. BUS STOPS

The vast majority of complaints about student behavior originate from incidents that take place either before students get on the bus or after they get off the bus. **K4 and Kindergarten students must have an approved adult at the stops before and after school.** If there is no adult present at the stop after school, the child will not be permitted off of the bus and may be brought back to the building until such time that a parent is contacted to come and pick up the student. Older students are often without adult supervision at these times. The safety of the students at the bus stops is of utmost importance and students must behave in a safe manner to avoid injury. **Students are subject to the school discipline policy while at the bus stop.**

Students are to wait in a safe place, stay off of the streets and stay off of private property when waiting for the bus. Parents can help by accompanying their child to and from the bus stop daily.

E. CHILD ABUSE

Under the Child Protective Service Act of 1975, all school district personnel (administrators, teachers, nurses, etc.) are **MANDATED BY LAW** to report suspected child abuse. Reports of suspected abuse will be made immediately by telephone and a written report will follow within 48 hours.

Concerned citizens may also make a report of suspected child abuse if he/she has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is an abused child by

calling Childline at 1-800-932-0313. All reports made are strictly confidential and you may remain anonymous. Parents may use the line directly without notifying the school. See policy #806 Child Abuse.

F. CONFIDENTIALITY OF STUDENT RECORDS

A permanent record file containing grades, biographical data, health records and standardized test scores is kept in the elementary office for each student. These records are considered confidential information and will not be released to any agency outside the school, with the exception of another public school district, without **written** permission from the student or his/her parents (if the student is under the age of 18).

If a parent or guardian wishes to examine their child's records at any time, they may do so by contacting the elementary office. Convenient arrangements will be made for the parent or guardian to meet with the principal to explain the contents of the individual file.

The parent, or eligible student, has the right to refuse to permit the release of directory-type information to newspapers and outside agencies which is personally identifiable. If the parent or eligible student wishes to exercise this right, the school administration shall be informed in writing by September 10, 2015. See policy #216 Student Records.

G. DRUGS AND ALCOHOL/CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

The use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs adversely affects a student's ability to achieve academic success. Because of the physical and emotional harm, and the serious social and legal consequences, the school district has adopted policies to keep district schools free of these substances. Instructional programs will be provided which help students obtain and use current and accurate information, develop and maintain a positive self-concept, and use appropriate social and personal skills to resist involvement with alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

The district prohibits students from using, possessing, distributing, and being under the influence of any controlled substances during school hours, at any time while on school property, at any school-sponsored activity, and during the time spent traveling to and from school and school-sponsored activities. (District Policy #227)

If based on the student's behavior, medical symptoms, vital signs or other observable factors, the building principal has reasonable suspicion that the student is under the influence of a controlled substance and the student denies such, the student **will** be required to submit to drug or alcohol testing, as a condition to not having disciplinary action imposed. The testing may include but is not limited to the analysis of blood, urine, saliva, or the administration of a Breathalyzer test.

H. GUM

The use of gum on any school property, including buses, classrooms, hallways, restrooms, cafeteria and playground is prohibited.

I. HARASSMENT

The district strives to provide a safe, positive learning climate for students in the schools. Therefore, it shall be the policy of the district to maintain an educational environment in which harassment in any form is not tolerated. (District Policy #248)

The District prohibits all forms of unlawful harassment of students and third parties by all district students and staff members, contracted individuals, vendors, volunteers, and third parties in the schools. The district encourages students and third parties who have been harassed to promptly report such incidents.

Complaints of harassment shall be investigated promptly and corrective action taken when allegations are substantiated. Confidentiality of all parties shall be maintained, consistent with the district's legal and investigative obligations.

J. LUNCHROOM

Proper manners and talking in a reasonable tone of voice are expected of all students while in the lunchroom. Poor manners or loud, disruptive behaviors are not permitted. Food should be kept off the floor because it is not only unsightly but could cause someone serious injury. Students are to remain in their seats and follow the direction of the cafeteria supervisor. Those who display inappropriate behavior and violate lunchroom rules, will be removed from the cafeteria and may receive further disciplinary action.

K. LUNCH TIME RECESS

Most students enjoy going outside when the weather is suitable. Students must follow safety rules to avoid injuries. Dangerous or unsafe behaviors are not permitted. Jump ropes, balls and other materials are provided so that you can enjoy the outdoors in safety. Play equipment is to be used for its intended purposes. Students should not go into the alley, between the cars, into the bushes or on the street. Parents are asked to not use the alley parking lot entrance during school hours.

It is imperative for each student's safety that all students follow the guidelines for playground safety. All parents and students are required at the beginning of each school year to sign and return the playground safety consent form

after reviewing the safety guidelines. After the first two weeks of school, any child without signed consent will not be permitted on the playground facility.

L. PARENT / FAMILY LUNCH WITH STUDENTS

Parents are invited to eat lunch with their child. It is **required** that any parent, or family member has a reservation to eat lunch in the cafeteria. **Custodial parent(s)/guardian(s)** need to call the school office one day prior to make a reservation for whomever is coming for lunch. Family members are asked to sign in with the elementary office upon arrival and to wear their visitor tag throughout the stay. **Reminder: Family members are asked to not stay for recess and under no circumstances are they to go to the child's classroom, or on the playground area.**

M. RESPECT FOR OTHERS, ANTI-BULLYING, CYBER BULLYING

Respect for others is a very important part of life. Students in the Ferndale Area Elementary School are expected to treat all of the people in the building, as they would like to be treated. Your teachers, other school personnel and students should be treated with respect and courtesy at all times. Bullying in any form will not be tolerated as outlined in the Anti-bullying Procedure sent home on the first day of school. Parents and students will be asked to sign a form confirming their awareness of the elementary procedure. (District Policy # 249)

The district is committed to providing a safe, positive learning environment for district students. The district 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 district prohibits bullying by district students. Bullying, as defined in this policy, includes cyber bullying.

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, 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.

The district follows the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. Our FAES Bullying Prevention Program is called "Nice Matters" and is coordinated by Mrs. Nicole Babik, physical education teacher.

N. WEAPONS POLICY

For the safety of all, the federal and state governments have enacted laws and the Ferndale Area School Board has adopted a policy that bans weapons

of any kind in the school or on school property. **Failure to comply with this policy will result in suspension and may result in expulsion from school regardless of age.**

It is very important for parents to be aware of and carefully monitor the items (toys and weapon replicas) that children possess and pack in their book bags and pockets. **The only way to prevent a serious incident is to prohibit dangerous objects and weapons on school property.** Parents/guardians and students will be asked to sign a form confirming their awareness of the Ferndale Area School District policy and consequences regarding weapons on school property. Your cooperation is extremely important in this matter. (District Policy #218.1)

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

ASSEMBLIES

A variety of entertaining and educational programs have been planned for this year. Some programs are for specific grade levels and others are for the entire school. Please remember when attending an assembly that you represent our school. The presenters and guests are to be treated with respect. Students who do not complete their assigned work, behave in an unacceptable manner or have outstanding debt may not be permitted to attend the special assemblies.

BAND

Group lessons are available to those children in grades 4-6 who want to learn to play band instruments. If you are interested, contact your music teacher for details. In some instances, it may be necessary for the parent to provide transportation prior to or after school.

When you join a group such as the band, you are making a commitment to your school and your fellow members. Once you join you should remain for the entire year. This is only fair to those others who work so hard to form a group that we all can be proud to call the Ferndale Area Elementary Band.

CHORUS

Membership to the elementary school chorus is open to students in grades 5 and 6. Again, commitment to the group is important and if you intend on joining the chorus, you should make it a yearlong commitment.

FIELD TRIPS

From time to time individual classrooms or entire grades will go on educational field trips. When on such a trip, our students represent the school in the public eye. In all cases parental permission will be required. **Students who demonstrate an inability to behave properly and do not follow school rules and regulations will not be permitted on field trips. Attendance on a field trip will be at the principal's and teacher's discretion.** (District Policy #231)

FUNDRAISERS

While we do attempt to find programs that do not have a cost, these are quite difficult to find. We ask you, the families and communities, to help us in these endeavors. Throughout the year, there will be fundraisers to aide us in raising money to help make memories for our students with field trips, assemblies and special events. Please do your part, in whatever way that you can. Even the smallest donation is more than nothing at all.

At no time do we want the children going door to door for sales. We do not believe that this is a safe practice and would never encourage these sales. Donations from family members, close friends and neighbors are acceptable.

You will be notified in a timely fashion of upcoming fundraisers and how you can contribute. We appreciate your support in this project.

FITNESS CLUB

A club of grade 4-6 students meet after school to gain confidence in their physical abilities and social skills. Appropriate behavior is required to participate.

PEER LEADERS

The Peer Leader program at the elementary school is designed to offer any elementary grade student in need of extra assistance in academics the opportunity to work with a peer leader. Sixth grade students that are nominated by their classroom teachers, guidance counselor and principal can become a peer leader. Characteristics of a peer leader include exemplary academic ability, excellent attendance, good self-control, judgement, and character. This program is not taken lightly and it is an honor to be chosen for this program. All peer leaders receive training and are monitored at all times by a teacher. In the event of poor choices made by a peer leader, he/she will be asked to step down from this position.

Recipients of a peer leader's assistance are referred by a teacher, parent or through the Elementary Student Assistance Program.

READING TEAM

Students in grades 5 and 6 may participate in the elementary reading team. Teams compete twice per school year against schools within the region. Those who enjoy reading and answering questions based upon the books are encouraged to join.

STAR READER PROGRAM

Students in grades 4 and 5 can volunteer to become a Star Reader. These students are paired with kindergarten and first grade students to promote good reading habits and an enjoyment in reading. Early literacy skills are worked upon during this interaction time as well.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The Ferndale Area family is always striving to offer our students opportunities in sports and activities. Although these are not district sponsored programs, students of our boroughs have the opportunity to participate in elementary aged basketball, cheerleading, football and wrestling. Information is distributed at school to the students for your review and sign-ups.

POLICIES

The following full text policies are available on the District tab of the school website, www.fasdk12.org. If you are unable to access the website, please request paper copies of the policies from the Elementary School Office.

Attendance (Policy 204)
Bullying/Cyber Bullying (Policy 249)
Care of School Property (Policy 224)
Child Abuse (Policy 806)
Communicable Diseases and Immunization (Policy 203)
Confidentiality (Policy 207)
Controlled Substances (Policy 227)
Dress Code (Policy 221)
Food Services (Policy 808)
Harassment (Policy 248)
Head Lice (Policy 209.1)
Health Exams/Screenings (Policy 209)
Homeless Students (Policy 251)
Medication (Policy 210)
Possession/Use of Inhalers (Policy 210.1)
School Visitor Policy (Policy 907)
Searches (Policy 226)
Social Events and Class Trips (Policy 231)
Student Assistance Program (Policy 236)
Student Discipline (Policy 218)
Student Wellness (Policy 246)
Tobacco (Policy 222)
Weapons (Policy 218.1)