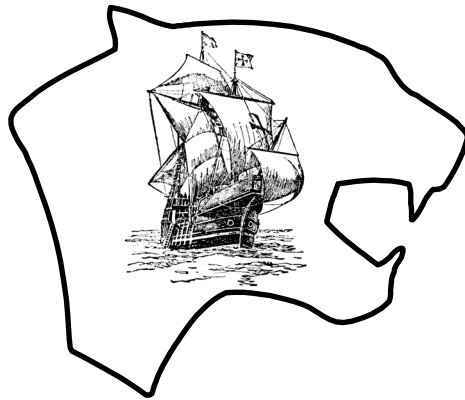


**COLUMBUS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
PARENT HANDBOOK
2009-10**



“WHERE YOUNG MINDS SET SAIL”
HOME OF THE JAGUARS

Columbus School Mission Statement

The faculty, children, parents, and community will work together to provide a safe environment that will contribute to the development of all Columbus students to their fullest potential; enabling them to have the knowledge, skills, and behavior necessary to succeed in a global society and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

Columbus Elementary School

315 N. Kansas

Edwardsville, Illinois 62025

618-656-5167

Vince Schlueter, Principal

August 2009

Dear Columbus Families,

At Columbus School, we believe that each student should be provided a nurturing, safe, and clean environment in which to learn every day. We are committed to providing quality educational programs that will strive to meet your child's educational, social, and emotional needs.

The atmosphere at Columbus School will nurture each child's development of a positive self-concept, a respect for self and others, a self-directed desire to learn, and a sense of physical and emotional balance. We will promote self-discipline and responsibility, while valuing individual differences. Our focus at Columbus School is to cultivate students' abilities to be creative, think critically, act responsibly, and sustain a lifelong desire to learn.

We understand the education of a child must be a collaborative effort of families, staff, and community. This partnership is vital in the educational process, and we invite you to be actively involved in the activities in which your child will participate.

Columbus School is a building steeped in the traditions of academic excellence and personal achievement for young children. We are excited at the opportunities this school year will bring to the children of District 7. On behalf of the faculty and staff at Columbus School, we look forward to working together to assist your child in having a wonderful educational experience, filled with knowledge, excitement, and growth.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vincent Schlueter". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "V".

Vincent Schlueter
Principal

CHILDREN LEARN WHAT THEY LIVE

**If children live with criticism,
they learn to condemn.**

**If children live with hostility,
they learn to fight.**

**If children live with ridicule,
they learn to be shy.**

**If children live with shame,
they learn to feel guilty.**

**If children live with tolerance,
they learn to be patient.**

**If children live with fairness,
they learn justice.**

**If children live with security,
they learn to like themselves.**

**If children live with acceptance and friendship,
they learn to find love in the world.**

Dorothy Law Nolte

EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS HAVE:

1) A Safe and Orderly Environment

A safe and orderly environment is one that is free from physical harm and conducive to teaching and learning. Adults are consistently on duty all the time. The clearer and more explicit the school rules, and the more firmly and fairly they are enforced, the less disorder the school experiences.

2) A Clear and Focused School Mission

The mission is a statement that tells what the school considers to be most important. There are learning objectives and instructional programs which match those objectives, and an assessment that tells whether students are achieving the learning objectives.

3) Instructional Leadership

The instructional leader is the person who communicates the school's mission to the staff, parents, and a student, making sure everyone understands the mission. Applying the principles of instructional effectiveness, the instructional leader manages the instructional program and serves as the facilitator for the faculty and staff.

4) A Climate of High Expectations

The staff of the building believes and demonstrates that all children can learn.

5) Increased Time on Task

In effective schools, students are actively engaged in whole class, group, or teacher directed instruction. It is possible to increase guided practice and engagement rates for students without increasing the school day or year.

6) Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress to Improve Instruction

The most informative test is one that is locally generated, objective referenced and nationally validated. The purpose of the test is to determine which learning objectives are attained by which students for the purpose of instructional improvement.

7) A Home-School Relationship

The homes from which students come are informed as to the school's mission, objectives, and learning activities in which students participate. Individual student learning objectives, expectations, and individual student progress are communicated regularly.

This handbook is provided to students and their families to acquaint them with the rules, guidelines, procedures and other relevant information necessary for the orderly functioning of Columbus School. It has been structured to help promote student progress. Though this handbook provides for the emotional and physical safety of the students through appropriate guidelines and procedures, more extensive information about Columbus and other District 7 buildings can be found in the District 7 Handbook, which is distributed at Elementary Registration.

School Day

The first bell rings at 9:05 a.m. Students should report directly to their classes to prepare for the school day. Students at Columbus School begin classes at **9:15 a.m.** Anyone not ready to learn when the 9:15 a.m. bell rings will be considered tardy. It is important for students to be on time in an effort to maximize each day's learning experiences. School ends at **3:30 p.m.**

Morning Procedures

Adult supervision of students begins at 8:45 a.m. For students' safety, they should not be on the premises before supervision begins.

1. Breakfast is served in the cafeteria at 8:45 a.m. The cost is \$.95. When the first bell rings, the cafeteria will close to begin preparation for lunch.
2. Students should report directly to the playground upon arrival to school unless they are eating breakfast. In case of inclement weather, students should report directly to the gym. Bus riders will unload on Kansas St. Students will walk down Kansas St. to College St., and continue walking to the playground. Parents may drop off/pick up students in the circle drive on the College St. side of the school.
3. Students must have permission to be in the halls. All students must have a pass to go to the office or clinic, a classroom or restroom.
4. Band/Orchestra students should enter the building from College St., and place instruments in the Band/Orchestra Room. Students should then move to the appropriate assigned area.
5. Once the school day begins, students should go directly to class, store belongings, and prepare for class as outlined in each teacher's classroom procedures.
6. Each school day begins with the Pledge of Allegiance, attendance, and lunch count.

Absences, Tardiness, and Truancy

Office hours at Columbus School are from 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Academic achievement is greatly improved with punctual, regular school attendance. Arriving at school no later than 9:05 a.m. will allow students to be adequately prepared to begin the school day. Students not in the classroom at 9:15 a.m. will be counted tardy unless they have permission from their teacher or the office. When a student is tardy, he/she impedes opportunities for learning. Because being in class is vital to learning, a student who receives more than four tardies a quarter may be assigned an after school detention. Additional consequences may be assigned if the student continues to be tardy.

When a student must be absent from school, parents must call the school before 10 a.m. at 656-5167. A student must bring a written note to the office, signed by a parent or guardian, if a phone call has not been made to report an absence.

In addition, parents and students must adhere to the following attendance guidelines:

1. All students who leave school for a doctor's appointment must provide written documentation from their health care provider as evidence of attending the appointment for the absence to be considered an excused absence.
2. All students who are absent for five or more consecutive days must provide written documentation from a health care provider for the absences to be considered excused absences.
3. Any student who has been absent for 10% or more of the days of student attendance in a semester must provide written documentation from their health care provider stating the cause of the absence for each subsequent day of non-attendance for the absence to be considered an excused absence.
4. Students who suffer from documented chronic or severe acute health issues may seek a waiver of these requirements from the building principal.

Parents should make an assignment request for planned absences. This will allow students to get their assignments before the absence. Completed work should be turned in to the teacher upon returning to school.

According to state requirements, any student who signs in after 9:50 a.m. or leaves school before 2:55 p.m. will be counted as one-half day absent.

Transportation arrangements for students should be made prior to their arrival at school whenever possible. It is always in the best interest of the students to keep to as much of a regular routine as possible.

When homework is requested due to illness, requests must be made before 10:00 a.m. to allow adequate preparation by the classroom teacher. It may be picked up from 3:30 - 6:00 p.m. on the Homework Table in the lobby outside the office.

Bicycles

Students may ride bikes to school if they follow these procedures:

1. Walk bike on and off school grounds.
2. No bikes are allowed in the areas where buses are loading and unloading.
3. Bicycles are to be parked and locked in racks located on the College St. side of the building or the High St. side of the playground. No one should be near the bicycles from 8:30 a.m.- 3:30 p.m.
4. Bike riders must follow safety rules set by the school and enforced by the crossing guards.
5. Students may not have scooters, skateboards, and/or roller blades on school premises.

Bus Conduct

Students must behave while riding the bus to school and home, for the safety of all students, as well as members of the community. The students will:

1. Follow all bus safety rules.
2. Keep hands, feet, and objects to themselves.
3. Speak using appropriate language and volume.
4. Follow directions given by bus driver or other school personnel.

Bus drivers are entrusted with the safety of all our students. Student misbehavior makes the driver's job much more difficult. The expectation for all students is that they will conduct themselves in a

manner that will not be disruptive to the bus driver or other students. Any inappropriate conduct occurring on the bus will be immediately reported to Mr. Schlueter. After investigating the incident, a determination will be made. If the incident warrants disciplinary action, parents will be notified. Depending on the severity of the situation, consequences may include: an after-school detention, a parent conference with Mr. Schlueter, and/or a bus suspension. Students may be suspended from the bus for a period of 3-5 days if they receive more than two bus conducts during a semester.

Building Expectations for Behavior

Columbus School sets high expectations for its students. Mr. Schlueter, the teachers, and the staff believe that children will have quality learning experiences if the guidelines for all students are clear and consistent. We also believe that school-to-home communication is a vital component of the educational process.

Because of the tradition of academic excellence at Columbus School, students are expected to behave appropriately at all times. **All children will respect themselves and others; keep their hands, feet, and objects to themselves; and follow the directions of all building and district personnel.** Classroom teachers may have additional classroom expectations for students.

Children who display good behavior at school will:

1. Receive verbal praise.
2. Earn certificates of merit and/or notes home from their teacher and/or Mr. Schlueter.
3. Secure special privileges.
4. Learn in an environment which strives to meet the needs of all children.

If children choose not to meet Columbus School expectations, the consequences may include:

1. Student conferences with teacher and/or Mr. Schlueter.
2. Loss of privileges.
3. Conferences with school personnel.
4. After-school detention.
5. In-school detention.
6. Out-of-school suspension.

When school rules and regulations are not followed, it is the responsibility of involved teachers and the principal to work with the student, his/her parents, and other support personnel to help the student correct his/her behavior. All disciplinary actions shall be directed toward protecting the welfare of the school community as well as helping the student develop self-discipline. Disciplinary responses may include but are not limited to the actions described in this handbook.

There are specific guidelines that each teacher has for his/her classroom. They will be discussed the first week of school and will be displayed in the class as a visual reminder for students. Building expectations for student behavior parallel with District guidelines outlined in the Edwardsville CUSD #7 Handbook.

Any student behavior that may risk the safety of students and/or school personnel during the educational day may result in consequences as outlined in the District Handbook.

Cafeteria/Playground Procedures

The cafeteria and playground are intended to be safe and pleasant for all. To ensure the safety of everyone, students should make good choices and exhibit appropriate behavior. In the cafeteria, good manners are expected to be used at all times. In addition:

1. Students will follow directions given by the cafeteria and/or playground monitors.
2. Students will sit in their assigned seats.
3. The tables and eating areas will be kept clean.
4. Students will use a conversational voice level when talking to others at their table. They will not leave their table to talk to other students.
5. All food and drink will stay inside the cafeteria.
6. Students must have a pass from their teacher to return to the classroom after lunch.
7. When the weather makes it necessary, students will bring their coats, hats and gloves with them to the cafeteria.

Students have twenty minutes to eat their lunch in the cafeteria. When dismissed to the playground, those students not finished eating may move to a designated table to finish lunch before joining their classmates on the playground.

The price for lunch in the cafeteria is \$1.90. The cost for breakfast is \$.95. Milk is \$.60.

This fall, the Food Service Department is implementing *myLunchMoney*, a new service that allows parents to prepay for their child's school breakfast, lunch, and ala carte food items using their credit or debit card. The website www.myLunchMoney.com will go into service in time for the start of school. *The service is optional.*

On the playground, all students will be able to enjoy the time spent outdoors if everyone is treated with respect. In addition:

1. Equipment is to be used in the manner for which it was manufactured.
2. All students should be provided the opportunity to participate in the activities taking place.
3. All students will walk from the building to the playground and from the playground back to the classroom.
4. Students need permission to re-enter the building.
5. Students will follow playground rules and comply with directions given by school personnel.
6. Students will use equipment provided by the school.

Detention Procedures

Detention at Columbus School is a consequence for making poor choices. After school detentions will be served on Tuesday or Thursday, from 3:30-4:30 p.m. A slip will be sent home to parents indicating why a detention was assigned, and when it will be served. The slip requires a parent signature. If the slip is not returned to the teacher on the following day, a second detention may be assigned. The same procedure applies to referrals sent home from the office.

When assigned a detention, a student will arrive at the detention room promptly and bring all necessary materials to the room. There will be no talking during this period, and students will not be permitted to leave the room until dismissal. Transportation arrangements should be made before the detention is served. If a student does not serve the assigned detention, he/she may be assigned a half day in-school detention, to be served in the office the next day of student attendance.

Homework Procedures

Students will be assigned weekly homework to be completed outside of the classroom. Assignments will be recorded in assignments books, which are provided by the Columbus PTO. Homework is due to the teacher on the assigned date. Students not completing tasks on time will incur the consequences as set by the grade level.

Columbus School Grading Scale

The following scale will be used by all third, fourth and fifth grade teachers:

100	A+	82-83	B-	64-69	D
94-99	A	80-81	C+	62-63	D-
92-93	A-	74-79	C	60-61	F
90-91	B+	72-73	C-		
84-89	B	70-71	D+		

Those students who earn a 3.5 GPA or higher on their reports cards will be placed on Honor Roll each quarter. The Grade Point Average is calculated using the average of grades from Reading, Math, Spelling, English, Social Studies, Science and Health.

Assignment Books

All students at Columbus School will be provided with an assignment book, courtesy of the Columbus PTO. It is used to record homework assignments. Along with teaching students important organizational and study skills, this is a vital communication tool for teachers and parents. The assignment book should be reviewed with your child every night and should be signed by a parent or guardian.

Parent Conferences

Communication between home and school is an important link to a child's academic success. To set a parent/teacher conference, an appointment should be made in advance with the teacher for a time when he/she can give the parent/s his/her full attention. Parents coming to school for a conference must sign-in with the office before going to the classroom.

Medication Policy

Edwardsville Community Unit School District 7 has adopted a policy regarding administration of medication (including non-prescription medications such as aspirin and Tylenol) during school hours and at school-related events. A student who needs medication to be administered during school hours or school-related events must have authorization from the building principal. A student may possess an epinephrine auto-injector and/or medication prescribed for asthma for immediate use and self-administration at the student's discretion provided the student's licensed health care provider and parents(s)/guardian(s) have authorized self-administration through a completed and signed "School Medication Authorization" form, and this form is on file at the child's school. Please see Mr. Schlueter or the nurse regarding the District's medication policy and to obtain required forms.

The STUDENT INFORMATION FORM is the **only source** for school personnel to know **whom** to contact in the event of a serious injury or illness, and exactly **how** to contact these persons. **It is imperative** that the information on this form **be kept current** at all times.

Medical Excuse from P.E. and/or other restrictions

If a child has been absent from school or under a physician's care, the student needs documentation from a health care provider, giving guidance about the activities in which he/she can participate. A release from the physician when a child can return to all scheduled activities is needed as well. Documentation can be provided in letter form or can be faxed to the school at (618) 655-1099.

Leaving School

1. Students may not leave the school grounds without permission from the office.
2. If parents/guardians wish to sign their child/children out before the end of the school day, check in at the office first. Office personnel will call the students to the office. Teachers will not dismiss a student from class unless a request to do so has been made from the office. This procedure maintains students' safety and accurate attendance records.
3. Students will not be permitted to go home with a friend or relative unless a note or phone call is received before dismissal.
4. Students will not be dismissed to anyone other than parents or adults listed on the emergency card, unless a note or phone call is received.
5. These procedures will be followed, with no exceptions.

Parking Facilities

To pick up students after school, parents must use the circle drive adjacent to the playground on the College St. side of the school. It will require that parents pull their car onto the parking lot, and pick up students in the drive-through area where they will be supervised. Students may not be picked up on College St. or cross over to the church. The procedures will better ensure student safety and will be followed, with no exceptions. Please leave the school bus lanes clear of parking and drive slowly during school hours.

The First Presbyterian Church allows us to use their parking area. Please observe the signs in the church lot. During church activities, parking may be restricted. The church is a very gracious neighbor, and we appreciate their willingness to help Columbus expand available parking during the school day.

In the event of inclement weather, students will remain inside the building. Parents may drive up to the cafeteria entrance on College St., and school personnel will send students to vehicles as cars arrive at the entrance.

Recess during Inclement Weather

Many considerations must be made in determining use of the playground for recess. The temperature (including the wind chill factor), the condition of the playground, the length of time the children will be outside, and finally, students' play attire, must all be considered when determining where recess is to be held. If it is not appropriate for students to be outside, an alternate activity will be planned.

Special Occasions

When sending treats to celebrate a special occasion, please send goodies that are pre-packaged and store-purchased. Due to health procedures, homemade treats cannot be shared with a classroom.

If your child is planning a party, please do not distribute invitations in class. Students who are not invited to the special occasion feel hurt, and classroom issues sometimes occur.

Visitors

To maximize instructional time for students, and to ensure their safety, the following procedures are in place for visitors to the building:

- 1. Building access is provided only through the Kansas St. main entrance during normal school hours of 9:05 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.**
- 2. All visitors are required to provide photo identification and sign-in with the School Safety Officer at the SSO station, where they will receive a Visitor's Pass.**
- 3. If you are in the building without a pass, faculty and staff will direct you back to the office.**
- 4. Student visitors are not permitted to accompany registered students to school or to lunch/recess.**
- 5. All unauthorized persons shall be required to leave the premises.**

Safety Alert Program

In order to improve communication with parents, District 7 has instituted a new safety and weather alert system. The system will consist of three components: an email safety alert system, a safety alert hotline, and a web alert system.

Safety Alerts - Violence

The system will be used to alert parents to *viable* threats and/or to dispel rumors. Students sometimes attempt to use fear to manipulate others around them—often because they think it's funny or just want to have a day off.

All threats will be treated seriously and will be investigated by the district and public safety officials. Anyone responsible for threats faces tough penalties, including possible expulsion from school and criminal prosecution.

Safety Alerts - Weather

The system will be used to alert parents to cancellation of school due to inclement weather.

Safety Alert Notification

A message will be posted on each alert component stating one of the following:

- There are no current safety alerts; please disregard rumors
- There is a viable threat
- School has been cancelled due to inclement weather

Parents can access safety alert information in three ways:

- Subscribe to the email alert system at www.ecusd7.org/alert/subscribe.asp
- Call the Alert Hotline at 655-6090
- Visit the District's website at www.ecusd7.org/alert

Subscribers to the Email Alert system will not be able to reply to the system. Callers to the hotline will not be able to leave messages.

Web Page

Technology is a valuable communication tool that can be used to get information about school activities or discuss issues with teachers. The Columbus web site can be accessed at www.ecusd7.org/columbus.

Student Dress Code

According to the Edwardsville ECUSD #7 Handbook policy, the following guidelines will be enforced at Columbus School:

1. Dress indicating affiliation with any group that advocates dangerous or unlawful activity is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.
2. Hats, caps, and outerwear such as coats and jackets may not be worn in the building during the school day and must be placed in the student's storage area.
3. Clothes displaying alcohol or drug related images, words, or phrases, or logos are not acceptable.
4. Clothes displaying vulgar or suggestive writing, pictures, or images are not acceptable.
5. Clothes that expose a student's undergarments by being excessively loose and sagging, sheer, small, or having holes in them are not acceptable.
6. Clothes that expose the back, sides, or midriff of a student are not appropriate for the school setting, and are not acceptable.
7. The use of unusual make-up, such as face and/or hair painting, creates disruption and distraction in the building and is not acceptable.
8. The wearing of dog collars, chains, or wallet chains is not acceptable.

Each student has the responsibility to dress and groom in a manner that meets reasonable community standards of good taste, health, safety, and cleanliness while not disrupting the educational process. The above guidelines describe some types of dress that are not acceptable in the school setting.

A Home-School Partnership Promise

By coming together as families, teachers, and school staff, we form this partnership and affirm the importance of family involvement in children's learning. We promise to:

- Share responsibility at school and at home to give students a better education and good start in life.
- Be welcoming to families; reach out to families before problems arise; offer challenging curriculum; create safe and drug-free learning environments; organize opportunities to improve student learning; and support families to be included in the school decision-making process.
- Encourage families to monitor student attendance, homework completion, and television watching; take time to talk with and listen to their children; become acquainted with teachers, administrators, and school staff; read with children; volunteer in school when possible; and participate in the school decision-making process.
- Promote effective two-way communication between families and schools.
- Provide opportunities for families to learn how to help their children succeed in school and for school staff to work with families.
- Support home-school efforts to improve student learning by reviewing progress regularly and strengthening cooperative actions.

If you need clarifications or have questions about any of the material covered in this handbook, contact Mr. Schlueter at 656-5167.