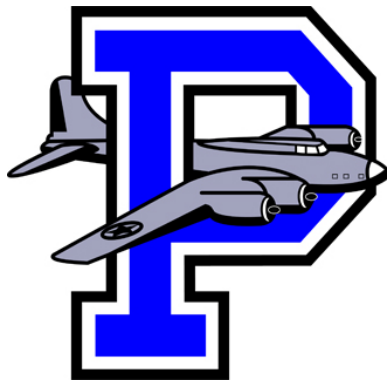


TOWAMENSING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

7920 Interchange Road
Lehighton, PA 18235

610-681-4024
Fax: 610-681-6410



PARENT/GUARDIAN/STUDENT HANDBOOK

2020 - 2021

www.palmerton.org



**PALMERTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
TOWAMENSING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

7920 Interchange Road
Lehighton, PA 18235
610-681-4024

Christine C. Steigerwalt
Principal

August 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Students:

Welcome to Palmerton Area School District and Towamensing Elementary School! The staff and I are very excited for the 2020-2021 school year.

Our school mission statement is, “*Palmerton Area School District educates and provides students with opportunities to soar in society with PRIDE*” which is the foundation of our belief in how we operate our schools. Every student is important to us, and we strongly believe that we are a community of learners as well as a community committed to each and every student.

This past school year has not been typical in any way, shape, or form. This coming school year will certainly not be normal as we know it, but we are cautiously optimistic that we will be able to complete this school year. However, we will have many changes related to our students and staff safety, and we know that you will support us to keep your children safe.

Our school handbook is designed to be informative and concise. It contains the beliefs, practices, procedures, and rules that govern what we do. We know that students are most successful in an environment where there is mutual respect and a sense of responsibility among the entire school community. This is best achieved in a supportive setting where all stakeholders share ownership for the development of positive behavior. All students are expected to follow SOAR, which is our School-Wide Positive Behavior Support Program.

You are an essential part of this process! Please take the time to read this handbook carefully with your child. Our goal is to create a partnership with parents/guardians to provide a safe, healthy, and happy learning environment for all students. We ask that you join us by supporting our efforts and becoming an active participant in your child’s education.

Should you have questions or concerns, please contact us.

Sincerely,

Christine C. Steigerwalt

Christine C. Steigerwalt
Principal

The Palmerton Area School District educates and provides students with opportunities to soar in society with PRIDE.

Palmerton Area School District is an equal opportunity education institution and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, and handicap in its activities, programs, services or employment practices as required by Title VI, Title IX and Section 504.

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Policies will be sent home to families on the first day of school:

- PASD Bullying/Cyberbullying Policy
- PASD Dress and Grooming Policy
- PASD Possession of Weapons Policy
- PASD Terroristic Threats/Acts Policy
- PASD Tobacco Use Policy
- PASD Elementary Schools Drug Policy
- PASD Attendance Policy

PALMERTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
2020 – 2021 DISTRICT GOALS

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

To continue a plan that sets high standards, raises levels of achievement, and ensures student success.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR

To continue a positive behavior system that sets high standards and encourages an intrinsic motivation for responsible behavior.

COMMUNICATION

To continue a plan that encourages communication at the building level as well as across the district.

PALMERTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT

“Palmerton Area School District educates and provides students with opportunities to soar in society with **PRIDE.**”

PALMERTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT VISION STATEMENT

“The vision of Palmerton Area School District is to educate and prepare all students for success in a globally competitive society. This shall be accomplished through activities that enhance their social, mental and physical well-being.”

PALMERTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT SHARED VALUES

1. Learning is a lifelong process, encouraged through a partnership of home, school and community.
2. Effective communication among all students, faculty, administration, school board, parents and the community is essential for a quality school system.
3. Through the promotion of a challenging standards-based curriculum and quality instruction, students are more likely to achieve their full potential.
4. Technology in our schools will enhance our curriculum and provide an effective learning environment.
5. Community involvement, through various projects and public events, will improve the overall success of our students.
6. The student learning process is a shared responsibility among parents, students, and teachers.
7. Students are individual learners that deserve a quality education designed to meet their individual needs.
8. Effective learning occurs in a welcoming environment that offers safety, understanding and genuine guidance.

SCHOOL HOURS

Office Hours	8:00AM – 3:30PM
Grades K-6	8:30AM – 3:00PM
Early Dismissal	8:30AM–11:45AM
Two Hour Delay	10:30AM– 3:00PM

It is very important that **ALL STUDENTS**, kindergarten through grade 6, attend school regularly and be at the bus stop on time. When tardiness is frequent, parents will be called. Because of supervision concerns, children being brought to school by parents **should arrive at school no earlier than 8:15AM each morning.** Please note that the school doors **DO NOT OPEN** prior to 8:15AM.

FIVE-DAY SCHEDULING CYCLE

Students in grades kindergarten through six will be on a Day 1 to Day 5 scheduling cycle. The first day of school is Day 1; the second day is Day 2, etc. Should unscheduled days off occur, we will continue with the next scheduled number. For instance, if Monday is Day 2 and we have a snow day on Tuesday, Day 3 would be Wednesday or the next day we return to school.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING

The decision to cancel school is made by the Superintendent of Schools. Cancellation of school sessions due to inclement weather or any other emergency situation is announced by **Blackboard Connect** and over local radio and television stations:

Radio: AM-WYNS 1160, WAEB 790, WKAP 1320, WLSH 1410, WXKW 1470FM – WZZO 95, WLEV 96, WODE 99.9

Television: WYOU-22, WNEP-16, WBRE-28, WFMZ-69

Internet: www.palmerton.org

BLACKBOARD CONNECT (Automated Calls)

Blackboard Connect will call parents to notify of any delays or dismissal changes in the normal school day (two hour delay or early dismissal). **Please make sure that you update all contact information on the Emergency Form Update that is sent home at the beginning of the school year.** Should contact information change during the school year, please contact the office to update your information. Blackboard Connect may also be used to notify parents of any pending school events, i.e. first day of school, concerts, etc. **It is very important that you listen carefully to the call when you receive it to avoid unnecessary confusion. Parents and students are asked not to call the school or the busing contractor to check/verify school closings, but to stay tuned to all local radio and television stations. The safety of our children and entire staff is always the primary concern when the decision is made to dismiss early, start later, or cancel school.**

In the event of cancellations, the school district may remain open during a regularly scheduled holiday in order to avoid extending the school year through the month of June. This should be kept in mind if you plan to make vacation arrangements over Presidents' weekend or Spring break.

CAFETERIA SERVING POLICY FOR EARLY DISMISSAL AND SNOW DAYS

Early dismissal before noon – No lunch will be served

Early dismissal after noon – All students will be served lunch

Please note that daily menu items may change when unplanned school delays or closures occur. Please keep this in mind when planning for your child's lunch.

SCHOOL ACTIVITY POLICY FOR EARLY DISMISSAL AND SNOW DAYS

All district activities are canceled on snow days and early dismissal days. All activities that are not District operated (PTO, scouting, booster club activities such as basketball) are canceled on early dismissal and snow days and on any school holidays.

SCHOOL GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Student attendance is strongly encouraged and closely monitored. Regular attendance in school has proven to support children in academic achievement. **Please note, that although kindergarten is not mandatory, once a child has been enrolled in kindergarten, attendance is then mandatory.**

Attendance will be taken by the classroom teacher each morning. A child who reports to school after 11:15AM will be marked absent for 1/2 day. If a child is absent, the teacher will provide the child with an excuse blank to be completed by the parent/guardian. **This excuse must be returned within 3 days** after the absence. State law requires a written parental report stating the reason for absence from school. A phone call will be made if we have not been notified by the parent/guardian of your child's absence. After 3 successive days of absence, a doctor's certificate is required. This is

done to fulfill the responsibility of monitoring attendance, as well as opening the lines of communication between the school and home regarding attendance irregularities. Please see the policy regarding attendance.

ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

1. Be responsible for notifying the school each day your child is absent.
2. Do not keep your child home from school for minor ailments.
3. Encourage your child to develop good personal habits that deal with time schedules for getting to bed, getting up, leaving for school, etc.
4. Be aware of the school attendance policy.
5. Do not provide/write false excuses for your child/ren.
6. **PLEASE DO NOT SCHEDULE APPOINTMENTS AND/OR VACATIONS DURING PSSA TESTING:**

Grades 3-6	English Language Arts	April 19, 20, 21, 22, 23
Grade 3-6	Math	April 26, 27
Grade 4	Science	April 29, 30

PHYSICIAN'S EXCUSE REQUIREMENT

When a student has accumulated **10 days of absence**, parents will be notified, and a doctor's excuse will be required for any and all future absences. **Absences without the required doctor's certificate will be regarded as illegal and all the penalties of the compulsory attendance law will be applied.** All absences, whether excused or illegal, are cumulative. If you feel there are extenuating circumstances surrounding your child's irregular attendance, a conference should be arranged with the school principal.

EXCUSED ABSENCE

School law determines that the following excuses for absences are valid and excusable:

1. Illness, including if a student is dismissed by designated district staff during school hours for health-related reasons
2. Obtaining professional health care or therapy service rendered by a licensed practitioner of the healing arts in any state, commonwealth, or territory
3. Quarantine
4. Family emergency
5. Recovery from accident
6. Required court attendance
7. Death in family
8. Participation in a project sponsored by a statewide or county wide 4-H, FFA or combined 4-H and FFA group, upon prior written request.
9. Approved religious holiday
10. Educational travel with prior approval by principal. A request should be completed at least one week prior to the educational trip to allow teachers time to gather the necessary assignments.

UNEXCUSED/UNLAWFUL ABSENCE

Three (3) unexcused/unlawful absences are cause for further action on the part of the school. The following excuses will be regarded as unlawful:

1. Shopping trips
2. Oversleeping
3. Car failure
4. Parental business trips
5. Family educational trips/vacations without prior approval of the principal
6. **Personal reasons must be explained to the principal**

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT CONFERENCE

When a student has been absent for three (3) days during the current school year without a lawful excuse, district staff shall provide written notice to the person in parental relation, who resides in the same household as the student, of the student's third unexcused absence. If the student incurs additional unexcused absences after issuance of the notice, a School Attendance Improvement Conference will be scheduled. In addition, an Attendance Improvement Conference will be scheduled for students who incur unlawful absences by not submitting the required doctor's certificate for absences exceeding ten (10) days.

Arrival after 8:30AM – Tardy
Arrival after 11:15AM – 1/2 day Absence
Leave before 12:15PM – 1/2 day Absence
Leave after 12:15PM – Present for the whole day

Parents are expected to sign students in at the main office after 8:30AM

If a parent/guardian signs out a child before 9:10AM, the student will be considered absent for the entire day.

HOMEWORK REQUESTS

Homework requests will be granted as long as requests are made to the office by 9:00AM. This will provide teachers with sufficient time to prepare assignments. Assignments and materials will be gathered and sent to the office for parent pick-up after 2:00PM and prior to 3:00PM. Please avoid dismissal time (3:00PM – 3:30PM) for picking up homework.

A parent or another designated adult may come to the office to pick up the homework. If there is a sibling at Towamensing Elementary, we will allow siblings to take homework home. If we are to send homework home with your child's friend, please make the proper arrangements with the child and parent before contacting the school.

DOCTOR AND DENTAL APPOINTMENTS

Students and parents are discouraged from scheduling appointments during school hours. If you must remove your child from school during the day, please provide a written request to your child's teacher. The child will be dismissed through the office not from the classroom. Please adhere to this practice for the safety and welfare of your child. Students are encouraged to report back to school and complete their classes for the remainder of the day whenever possible.

Please make sure appointments are not scheduled during PSSA testing times.

Grades 3-6	English Language Arts	April 19, 20, 21, 22, 23
Grade 3-6	Math	April 26, 27
Grade 4	Science	April 29, 30

VACATIONS

Vacations taken during the school year are discouraged. However, when vacations are planned, parents must request a vacation form from the office **at least one week prior to the departure date.** It is the student's responsibility to obtain all assignments and see that they are completed upon returning to school. The nature and length of the assignments, as well as the make-up of any missed assignments, is at the discretion of the classroom teacher. **Any vacations not pre-approved by the principal will be considered unexcused absences.** Our approach to this aspect of attendance flows directly from our belief in the critical importance of instructional time and the further conviction that loss of such time has negative consequences that neither teacher nor school cannot be expected to fully remedy.

Please refrain from taking vacations during PSSA testing days.

Grades 3-6	English Language Arts	April 19, 20, 21, 22, 23
Grade 3-6	Math	April 26, 27
Grade 4	Science	April 29, 30

CUSTODY

If there is a court order regarding the parental rights of your child, the court order must be submitted to your child's school immediately upon receipt. A copy will be made and filed. **Without a court order, both parents have equal access to their child and their child's records. If custodial rights change, changes must be submitted to the school immediately upon receipt. Otherwise, the school must follow the documents that are currently on file at the school.**

HEALTH

We will make every effort necessary to provide a safe, healthy, happy, and encouraging environment for each child. In order to do this, we need parent/guardian cooperation. We have implemented well-planned programs to meet the individual child's needs. Our state-mandated health program consists of:

Physical Examination	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kindergarten, new first graders, sixth graders and students new to the district who have not had the required exam. A private physician may be chosen
Scoliosis Check	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sixth grade
Dental Exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• K and 3 and children new to the district without the required exam. The school dentist or a private dentist may be chosen by the parent/guardian
Vision Checks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annually for all students
Height/Weight/BMI	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annually for all students
Hearing Screening	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• K-3, students with hearing difficulty and/or suspected hearing difficulty
Tuberculosis Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New entrants as required and any adults working with the children during the school day

Any child with a suspected problem will receive a referral to be acted upon as soon as possible. Parent/guardian should notify the nurse when the problem is corrected.

The school nurse is available to our students at all times. However, parents will be notified if a student appears to be developing a habit of frequent visitation to the health room without sufficient reason.

MEDICATION

Medications should be given at home whenever possible. However, if it is absolutely necessary that medication be given at school, the following requirements must be met:

1. **ALL MEDICATION MUST** be in the original prescription container.
2. **Parent/guardian must bring the medication to the school nurse. No medication should be sent to school with a child.**
3. The parent should also provide a written authorization for the medication with the following information:
 - Student's name
 - Date
 - Name and amount of medicine/time for medicine to be taken and how long medication is to be taken
 - Side effects and allergies
 - Listing of any other medications being taken by the child
 - Parent/guardian signature
 - Physician signature if it is a prescription

Parents/guardians must complete emergency forms every year. In cases of injury and/or illness, parents/guardians will be contacted. It is vital that changes in home/work phone numbers and addresses be reported as soon as possible to the school.

First aid services are provided when accidents or sudden illness may occur at school. Accidents or illnesses that happen at home are **not** to be treated by the school nurse. If a child is too ill to remain in school, the parent/ guardian must provide transportation home. In the event that our school nurse requests that your child leave school, please make the necessary arrangements to do so immediately. Your child's health, as well as the health of other children he/she may come in contact with, is our primary concern.

Please do not send your child if:

1. He/she has a fever (100 degrees or more). Student must be fever free without fever-reducing medication for 24 hours before student may return to school.
2. Vomiting and/or diarrhea are occurring.
3. A severe head cold, continual runny nose, sore throat, earache, or persistent cough exists.
4. Any suspicious skin rash, disease of the eye, or contagious disease is present or suspected.
5. Lice are present.

Any student who shows signs of a contagious problem such as lice, pink eye, scabies, or questionable rash will be sent home from school. A physician's certificate should accompany the student upon return to school. Students who are returning after lice infestation are required to present a box top from the pediculicide (shampoo used) to the school nurse.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

1. Students are not permitted to walk to school.
2. Students are not permitted to ride bicycles to school.
3. Weather permitting; students go outside for recess. Students should be dressed appropriately for the existing weather conditions.
4. Students are expected to go outside for recess unless a doctor's certificate for health reasons has been received.
5. In the interest of safety and in compliance with our district dress code, **flip-flops are not permitted to be worn to school.**
6. Children will not be allowed to leave the building with anyone other than the parent unless written permission to do so is sent to the office **by the custodial parent.** Any person picking up a child should be prepared to present identification.

The entire school community is asked to cooperate regarding our daytime building security system. It has been installed with the safety of everyone in mind. All school doors are locked, and the security system is armed. Visitors to the building must approach the front entrance (route 209) to request admittance. Once in the building, all visitors, parents, and community members must stop at the office, sign in, and receive a visitor's badge. **Parents are not permitted to go directly to any classroom without first signing in at the Main Office and obtaining a Visitor's Badge.** This procedure enables us to monitor who comes into the building, thus ensuring your child's safety. Upon leaving, you must return your Visitor's Badge, sign out and exit by way of the main entrance.

The Palmerton Area School District is committed to the safety and security of our students, staff, and schools. We encourage and welcome visits from local law enforcement agencies; we will also routinely conduct safety drills so that we can be as prepared as possible in the event of a true emergency. Please know that we will not provide notice, either before or after, these routine visits and drills. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

AHERA INSPECTION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN COMPLIANCE

The purpose of this notification is to inform interested parties such as teachers, school personnel and their representatives, as well as parents, concerning the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) requirements and the actions that the Palmerton Area School District has taken to comply with the AHERA regulations. The regulations were published in the October 30, 1987 Federal Register, pp. 41826 under the title "Asbestos Containing Materials in Schools" and call for an inspection of the schools to find asbestos containing material (ACM) with the inspection conducted by EPA accredited Building Inspectors. The regulations also require that a Management Plan be written by an EPA accredited Management Planner for any ACM found and that both the Management Plan and the Inspection Report be available for public inspection.

The Palmerton Area School District contracted with Spotts, Stevens and McCoy, Inc. for both the Building Inspections and the Management Plans and these reports were submitted to the State of Pennsylvania in compliance with the AHERA regulations. These reports are available for public review at the Administration Office. The individual building reports are available for public review at each school and include the schedule for periodic surveillance of ACM and re-inspections conducted by an accredited EPA Building Inspector.

INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT

This notification is to advise you that the Palmerton Area School District occasionally applies pesticides, herbicides, and fertilization products to property and inside buildings. The application of these type products is in accordance with the district's Integrated Pest Management Program (IPM), which is available for public review in school offices.

Planned applications of products will be preceded by a notification posted in buildings not less than 3 days prior to anticipated date of service. Notifications will not be sent home unless requested in writing by the parent or legal guardian. Exceptions to the notification process would be an application in an emergency-type situation where there is an immediate threat to the health and safety of occupants. An example of this would be an infiltration of bees into an occupied space whereas the pests would need to be controlled immediately so as not to pose a health threat to occupants.

If your student has a history of experiencing adverse health effects from the use of pesticides or herbicides, you should provide that information to the school office. If you require notification of planned applications, please submit a written request to the school office.

For further information, review the IPM plan in the school office.

STUDENT ARRIVAL

Students should not arrive at school prior to 8:15AM. The doors will not be opened prior to 8:15AM. Students may not enter the school building before 8:15AM. Buses will be dropping off students at the front of the building. The front driveway is off limits to vehicles from 8:15-8:45AM. Parents/guardians who drive their children to school must enter the east parking lot and drive the perimeter of the parking lot (in a counterclockwise direction) to the sidewalk at the east doors. Students should exit the car curb side and walk to the ramp or to the stairs to enter the building. After your child has exited the vehicle, please follow the vehicle in front of you to exit the parking lot. **For the safety of your children, our students, do not park in a parking space and walk to the sidewalk with your child.**

Note: Parents must enter the building through the front entrance on route 209 and obtain a visitor badge from the office. The east doors are not accessible by parents/visitors.

STUDENT DISMISSAL

Dismissal for students who will be transported home by parents is at 3:00PM. Students will walk toward the east doors and wait until called by a staff member. Parents/guardians transporting students home must park their cars (Pets must remain in the car.) and walk up the steps or use the ramp to the landing. The student will be called by a staff member to meet his/her parent/guardian and exit with parent/guardian. The staff member will watch student walk to his/her parent/guardian. Any person picking up a child should be prepared to present identification.

DISMISSAL CHANGES

Dismissal arrangements should be made in advance to avoid any confusion for children, teachers, and office personnel. If there are changes in the dismissal procedures on any given day, please put the instructions in writing to your child's teacher so that phone calls to the office regarding dismissal changes may be avoided. Any verbal dismissal changes must be received by the office before 1:00PM to allow normal school business to occur. Dismissal changes, without written confirmation may result in information not getting to a student in time or incorrect information being passed on to a student.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS AND/OR TELEPHONE NUMBER

Please notify the school office immediately of any change in a student's address, telephone number, or parents' work numbers. Emergency numbers that enable the school to reach parents/guardians should be continuously updated. **It is imperative that the school be able to reach you anytime during the school day.**

MOVING DURING THE YEAR

If you plan to move within the Palmerton Area School District to another address, a moving permit is required. Please call the Towamensing Elementary School office at 610-681-4024 for more information. In the event of a move out of our district, please notify the office as soon as possible, and return all textbooks, library books, and other school materials to your child's classroom teacher. All outstanding debts (cafeteria, etc.) must be settled prior to leaving the district.

"WEDNESDAY EXPRESS"

In an effort to keep you informed about your child's progress and important happenings at school, each child receives a large envelope called the "Wednesday Express". Parents should check this envelope every Wednesday, sign the outside and return it to school the next day. This is a requirement for every student. If you do not receive the "Wednesday Express", please ask your child for it or contact the classroom teacher.

DISCLAIMER:

As a service to our students and families, the Palmerton Area School District allows community organizations that operate activities for children and youth to provide information about their activities for take-home distribution. The use of the District as a source of such information should not be construed as District support for, sponsorship of, or endorsement of any of the activities of these organizations. Families are cautioned to investigate carefully both the organization and the activity it is offering to determine the appropriateness of participation for their children.

NOTES TO SCHOOL/OFFICE

Should a note be written that will be sent to the office, certain information must be included on the note:

- Child's first and last name
- Child's classroom teacher
- Parent/guardian's first and last name
- Date

The office personnel appreciate your cooperation with providing the above information on notes. Occasionally, there may be a substitute in the office who is not familiar with families. Sometimes, a child's last name is not the same as the parent/guardian's last name.

TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES

The following rules and regulations are necessary to ensure the maximum safety level for all students of the Palmerton Area School District. Failure to comply with these rules may result in the student being suspended from riding the bus for a period of time, depending on the seriousness of the problems. Continual refusal to comply may result in permanent suspension from riding the school bus. If this occurs, parents are responsible for finding a way for their children to get to school. Absence from school due to bus suspension will be considered an unexcused absence.

DISTRICT SCHOOL BUS REGULATIONS: Bus students will be permitted to ride their assigned school bus only. Only in an emergency situation or for educational purposes will a student be transported on another bus to or from an alternate bus stop. If your child, due to an emergency situation or for educational purposes, needs to be transported to or from another bus stop on a bus other than his/her regularly assigned bus, you must contact the school office in writing and make the arrangements. A bus pass with the appropriate verification will be issued. Students who attempt to board alternate buses without a bus pass from the office **will not be permitted to do so.**

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES AT THE BUS STOP:

1. Be on time, but not earlier than five minutes.
2. Respect the rights of property owners in the area of the bus stop.
3. Form a single line when the bus is approaching. There shall be no pushing, shoving or horseplay at any time.
4. Parents are responsible for the behavior of their children before the bus arrives.
5. Students shall remain in place until the bus comes to a complete stop and the driver gives the signal for safe crossing, at least 10 feet in front of the bus.
6. **All SOAR rules apply at the bus stop.**

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES ON THE BUS:

All students being transported by the Palmerton Area School District shall not:

1. Use any kind of tobacco products.
2. Eat or drink on the bus.
3. Engage in scuffling, fighting, or creating a disturbance.
4. Use profane, foul, or indecent language.
5. Use the emergency exit unless permitted to do so by the driver.
6. Tamper with the bus or any of its equipment.
7. Regulate windows unless permitted to do so by the driver.
8. Extend any part of their bodies out of the window.
9. Throw any object(s) on the bus or out of the window.
10. Stand or walk when the bus is in motion.
11. Carry hand-held radios or other audio-visual games, electronics, etc.
12. Place any article in the aisle or in front of the emergency exit.
13. Carry or use any potentially dangerous object including, but not limited to knives, firearms, matches, lighters, fireworks, water guns, scissors, etc.
14. Litter the floor of the bus or the seats.
15. Transport any animal.
16. Board or disembark at a bus stop other than their designated bus stop unless given written permission by a school official.
17. Behave in a manner that would endanger the health, safety or welfare of other students or the driver by distracting the driver from his/her responsibility to operate the bus in a safe manner.
18. **All SOAR rules apply on the bus.**

STUDENT BUS DISCIPLINE PLAN

The Palmerton Area School District employs a fair and consistent plan for addressing misconduct on school buses.

CONSEQUENCES:

1ST OFFENSE Driver may bring student into the school office to meet with the principal and discuss the rules of the bus at which time a letter or phone call will be sent/made to the parents. Possible disciplinary action may be given at the first offense depending on the seriousness of the offense. A referral may also be written.

2ND OFFENSE A detention or bus suspension will be given, at which time a letter will be sent to the parent stating the consequence of the next offense. If a bus suspension occurs as a result of the current offense, a meeting needs to be scheduled with the parent, principal, student, bus driver and bus contractor to sign a Bus Reinstatement Contract. This contract will state that the next infraction will result in bus riding privileges being revoked for the remainder of the present school term. The student is not permitted to return to the bus until the meeting has been held.

3RD OFFENSE Bus riding privileges revoked for the remainder of the present school term.

***NOTE** – Depending on the severity of the offense, a bus suspension may be issued. A student will be expected to sign a Bus Reinstatement Contract after any bus suspension. Once the reinstatement contract is signed, loss of riding privileges will follow the next offense.

****Building Administrators “reserve the right” to determine the seriousness of the offense and its consequences****

SOAR SCHOOL-WIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT PROGRAM

Rationale

Towamensing Elementary School has implemented a positive behavior support program that is designed to create a culture that emphasizes a sense of unity and pride within our building and community. This program, titled **SOAR**, aims to teach and encourage positive behavior throughout the school. It is our goal that the **SOAR** program will create a school-wide environment that promotes self-respect, respect for each other, academic success, and pride in our school and community. The **SOAR** acronym stands for the following:

Safety First
Our Responsibility
Always Try Your Best
Respect Yourself and Others

Behavior Chart

At the beginning of the year, each student brings home a behavior chart that the student and parent must sign and return. This behavior chart outlines the behavioral expectations in your child's specific grade level. At the top, you will see different settings (classroom, bathroom, etc.) and on the left-hand side, you will see the four behavior expectations. Then, within each box, you will see a few behavioral examples that students are expected to follow. During the first few days of school, students are taught what it means to **SOAR** in each school setting and will be provided with opportunities to practice these positive behaviors. A copy is also sent to be kept at home.

Positive Reinforcement

A major component of the program is to recognize students and classes demonstrating positive behavior through positive reinforcement. A certain number of tickets will be given daily throughout the building by our staff. Staff will give a ticket to a student who is demonstrating positive **SOAR** behavior. At the end of the day, students who received a ticket will come to the office for recognition. Parents will be called; students will sign the **SOAR** Celebrity book and place their magnet on the **SOAR** 200 Board which is located in the main hallway of our school. Should a student receive two or more tickets, a postcard will be sent home with the student to inform the parents/guardians of the positive behavior. Once ten magnets in a row have been reached on the board, those students will receive a "Mystery Motivator" for their efforts and the magnets will be returned to their owners.

We will continue to use our **Passport to Success**. This program allows staff to acknowledge classes who are collectively demonstrating positive **SOAR** behavior. When a grade earns a certain number of passports, they will earn a grade-wide activity.

Consequences

There will be situations where a child may behave in a manner that is not positive and causes a disruption to the learning environment. We expect students to make mistakes; it is part of the learning process. However, in the event that a student is continually disruptive to the learning process, his/her teacher will complete a referral form and an authentic consequence appropriate for the student's grade level will be given. For example, if a student says something offensive to another student, he/she may be asked to write an apology letter. Additionally, the student will be asked to complete a behavior reflection that will need to be signed by the parent/guardian and returned. Depending on the severity of the behavior, students may be referred to the principal and may also be given detention or receive in-school or out-of-school suspension. The goal of this program is to have students accept responsibility for their actions at an early age and understand that there are natural consequences for behaviors that interrupt the learning of others.

Parent Involvement

This program cannot reach its ultimate goal without your help. Research shows that one of the biggest contributors to a student's success is when parents and the school work together. There will be a brief presentation about **SOAR** at "Meet the Teacher" nights. We are firm believers that with your support, we can help your children reach their goals, and with this program, we believe they will have the tools to reach and **SOAR** above those goals. If you have any questions about the **SOAR** program, please call our school counselor or building principal at 610-681-4024.

ARTICLES PROHIBITED IN SCHOOL

Students are not to bring to school any articles or equipment that interferes with the learning process or that is hazardous to the safety of themselves or others. This includes, but is not limited to, laser pointers, iPods, MP 3 players, DS players, and all other electronic devices, skateboards, roller blades, water guns, trading cards (Pokémon), collectibles, Boc-u-gons, pogs, yo-yos, etc. **If parents require their child to have a cell phone for contact before and/or after school, the cell phone must be TURNED OFF and kept in the child's book bag or it may be confiscated. Articles that are confiscated will be held in the office for parents to retrieve.** The school is not responsible for any such items should they be lost, stolen or damaged. Defiance of this rule will result in a warning. Further violations will lead to disciplinary action.

Students are not to bring any illegal substances to school, i.e. tobacco of any kind, offensive reading material, matches, lighters, look-alike drugs, knives, guns, ammunition, weapons, or imitation weapons. Defiance of this rule will result in suspension and possible legal intervention by the authorities. Aerosol containers of any kind must not be brought into school. Please see the Palmerton Area School District Weapons Policy for additional information.

PROFANITY

Vulgar or profane language will not be tolerated at any time on school grounds. This includes when a student is riding on the bus. Use of such language or gestures will result in disciplinary action. Any student using profanity toward a staff member or threatening a staff member, in written or verbal form, may be suspended out of school for three (3) days. Continued offenses of this type may result in a full ten (10) day suspension.

SIGNS OF AFFECTION

Students are to refrain from public displays of any affection. Violations will result in a warning. Continued violations may result in disciplinary action.

PETS

Due to student illness, allergies and safety issues, pets and animals will not be allowed in school. Special permission may be granted for therapy dogs.

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to read and understand the Acceptable Use Policy #815, which is posted on the district website at www.palmerton.org. Kindergarten and new students will be given a hard copy upon entering school. Written copies are available upon request.

SCHOOL CAFETERIA PROGRAM

Students have the option to purchase breakfast, which is available from 8:15AM to 8:40AM, or lunch from our cafeteria or bring their own lunches and/or buy juice, white, chocolate or skim milk. Each month a menu is sent home so that families can plan for their children's meals each day. This menu is also available on our district website at www.palmerton.org

We have a lunch payment program, which allows the parent to put money on account for their child's breakfast and/or lunch. The appropriate amount will be deducted each day from your child's account. This enables your child not to have to carry money on a daily basis. The following prices will be charged: **Breakfast \$1.20; Lunch \$2.65; milk 55 cents.** For those who qualify, there are free and reduced meal prices available. During the month of August, applications are sent home with your child's class assignment or may be obtained from the school office at any time during the school year.

LOST AND FOUND

Please label all students' clothing and possessions to allow us to return lost articles. There is a lost and found container located in the hallway outside the cafeteria. Lost and found articles are set out at the end of the year for students to claim. However, many, many items are unclaimed. Money and jewelry items are held by the school secretary until claimed. At the end of each school year, unclaimed articles not able to be used by the health room will be disposed of. Students shall NOT bring more money to school than is needed for the day. When it is necessary to bring in large amounts of money (fund-raisers, photo day, Holiday Shoppe, Book Fairs, etc.), please place money in a sealed envelope with the child's name and homeroom teacher, and it is then secured in the office safe. **The school is not responsible for any lost money/checks left in desks, book bags, etc.**

SCHOOL PHOTOS

Individual photographs are taken of children each year, as a service to parents. Photographs are made available at a cost basis and purchase of these pictures is optional. Notices are sent home prior to the date on which pictures will be taken. The composite photo will be available for distribution after all absentees and retakes are processed.

Fall photos will be taken Tuesday, September 29, 2020 and Wednesday, September 30, 2020.

INSURANCE

A school-endorsed insurance policy is available. This policy covers medical expenses from accidents that may occur both in school and traveling to and from school. Two plans are available: regular school hour coverage and 24-hour coverage. Announcements concerning this accident policy are made at the beginning of the school year. Families opting to purchase school insurance should send their payment directly to the insurance company.

TEXTBOOKS

Students are responsible for all textbooks issued to them. Textbooks are to be covered at all times in order to protect them, using Book Sox or paper, **but not sticky paper.** The student's name and grade should be listed on the book cover. Lost or damaged textbooks and/or library books must be paid for at the end of the school year at replacement cost as per Board Policy #224. Students are expected to carry their belongings in a sturdy book bag to/from school.

HOMEWORK GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

We strongly believe that homework is an extension of the learning experience found in the classroom setting. It is an integral part of the educational process for children, and as such, should be viewed as a help to students in working independently and improving their ability to organize their work. Homework brings the home and school closer together by allowing parents to participate in their child's school program. Please note that parents may also be able to access their child's daily assignments by going to the teacher website located under schools on the district website www.palmerton.org

1. Review schoolwork with your child and sign homework assignment book/sheet.
2. Reduce TV time and turn off the radio while your child is studying.
3. Provide an area for your child to study that is away from the center of family activity.
4. Set up a regular study time and help your child organize assignments.
5. Be aware of assignments and talk to teachers to make sure work is being done.
6. Read at the same time your child is studying – sort of a “study hour” for the whole family.
7. Provide educational trips to libraries, museums, local sites, etc.
8. Ask your child questions about what he/she has learned.
9. Set a limit on extracurricular activities on school nights.
10. Support your child while he/she is doing homework by checking-in every now and then to see how things are going.

ELEMENTARY READING REQUIREMENT

Students in grades 2-6 are required to read at least **10** books for each school year. Those books are to consist of 2 biographies, 2 non-fiction, 2 fiction and 4 books of the student's choice. The book report forms may be found on the district website at www.palmerton.org (click on Schools, then click on Towamensing Elementary) or are available from your child's teacher. Students are required to complete a form for each of the 10 books read. Parents are asked to sign this form. The number of books read will be listed on the report card to inform parents of their child's progress throughout the year. Students may choose to do the required reading during the summer months prior to the new school year. This option will be up to you and/or your child and the forms may be completed and returned to school during the first week of the new school year. Students receive a coupon when the Reading Requirement is completed.

REPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS

We are committed to open and continued communication regarding student progress. Parent conferences for kindergarten-sixth grades will be November 23, 24, 25. Formal report cards are prepared four times a year: November, January, April, and June. Parents may check grades on a daily basis through PowerSchool on the district website www.palmerton.org. There are no formal conferences held in the spring. However, parents are welcome to request a conference with teachers to discuss any concerns.

CONFERENCE REQUESTS

Sometimes a parent may require additional time to meet with teachers, the school counselor, or the principal to discuss their child's progress. Please call or send a note at least one day before an appointment might be scheduled, when an individual conference is desired before, during, or after school. **Unscheduled parent conferences will not be held during the instructional day.** Arrival and dismissal times are not conducive to confidential parent/teacher conferencing. Our teachers are expected to remain in their classrooms, with students, until all buses have been called. Parents are urged to stay informed about all phases of the school program by accepting invitations to visit the classrooms and meet with teachers on occasions such as “Meet the Teacher” night, and parent conferences.

HONOR ROLL and PRINCIPAL'S LIST

Listed below are the requirements for students to attain Honor Roll or Principal's List:

Honor Roll – students must have all As and Bs in all major subjects and at least an “S” (Satisfactory) in all special areas. If your child receives an “N” or “U” in a special area, he/she will not be eligible for Honor Roll during that Marking Period.

Principal's List – students must have all A's in all major subjects and at least an “S” (Satisfactory) in all special areas. If your child receives an “N” or “U” in a special area, he/she will not be eligible for Principal's List during that Marking Period.

TEACHER REQUESTS

Parents Please Note: We will not accept requests for specific teachers for your child's upcoming school year. Consideration will be given to learning styles and teaching styles when developing class lists for the coming year. Thank you in advance for your understanding in this matter.

HIGHLY QUALIFIED STAFF MEMBERS

Parents may request information regarding the professional qualifications of their child's teacher(s) and/or paraprofessional by contacting the building principal with a written request.

PROMOTION/RETENTION

Learning and maturation take place at different rates for every child. Some children need more time to learn basic concepts necessary for success in later grades. For this reason, sometimes the school will recommend retention. Parents need to be aware that:

- The School District has the obligation and right to assign students to appropriate educational settings where they can make their best progress.
- Decisions concerning promotion or retention of children are individual in nature and are made with the combined input as needed, of the parent, teacher, principal, school counselor, and school psychologist
- Most children are expected to move through the elementary school program in seven years. When retaining children, grades kindergarten, one and two seem to be ideal times to repeat for the strengthening of skills or for the development of needed maturity. Since most retentions occur in the primary years, only in extreme cases will a child be retained after third grade
- Retention is a school responsibility and we are committed to keeping parents/guardians advised throughout the school year of the true nature of the performance of their child. Contact with the home will be made when the child first shows signs of failing. If the parent desires, a conference can be held with the teacher, counselor and/or principal. Possible retention will be discussed with parents/guardians prior to the end of the school year

SPECIAL SERVICES

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COUNSELING SERVICES

The guidance and counseling needs of students in grades K-6 in the Palmerton Area School District are well served by a comprehensive counseling program offered at our elementary schools. In the elementary grades, the approach taken by the counseling program involves both the remediation of problems already being experienced by students and, equally important, the prevention of future problems. These two goals are achieved through the following services offered by the elementary school counselor.

1. Classroom guidance lessons cover the following topics:

- study skills
- social skills/making friends
- decision making
- conflict resolution
- career exploration
- self-awareness/self-concept
- anger/stress management

2. Individual and small group counseling - arranged as needed: (parent permission is required)
 - peer relationships
 - academic success
 - grief
 - social skills
 - anger management
 - emotion management
 - family concerns
 - coping skills
3. Testing – Regarding student’s strengths and weaknesses, the following tests are administered by the school counselor and/or the classroom teacher.

ACHIEVEMENT TESTS

GRADE(S)	NAME OF TEST
3, 4, 5, 6	PSSA English Language Arts and Math
4	PSSA Science

- Intelligence Screening Test
 - Testing for Learning Difficulties
- If the situation warrants, parent permission is obtained for psychological and educational evaluations administered by the school district psychologist
4. Consultation – The School Counselor acts as a consultant to:
 - Parents/Guardians
 - Teachers
 - Community Agencies
 5. Referral – If the needs of a child cannot be met in school, referrals can be made to others who can offer assistance to students and their families such as:
 - Carbon-Lehigh Intermediate Unit
 - Community Social Service Agencies
 - Mental Health Agencies
 - Medical Facilities

These are just a few of the school counseling services available in our elementary program and parents are urged to contact the school counselor with any concerns. It is only with input from parents/guardians that any school counseling program can be truly successful.

INCLUSION – ALL CHILDREN CAN LEARN

The goal of the Palmerton Area School District is to create an environment that enables all children to be successful learners. This process is accomplished by determining what works for each child through the collaborative efforts of the school, home, and community. We believe that all children belong and learn best with their age appropriate peers. We also believe that it is our responsibility to educate all of our children in an optimal educational environment that addresses academic, social, and emotional needs. Children with identified needs will receive additional support through special education teachers and our support team working with the classroom teachers. In this way, all children can benefit while learning to appreciate diversity.

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION AND INSTRUCTION – RtII

What is Response to Intervention & Instruction?

- **A Standards Aligned Strategy to Improve Student Achievement** using research based interventions matched to the instructional need and level of the students
- RtII provides all students with standards-aligned concepts and competencies, data-driven instruction and the additional support needed to achieve strong academic results
- Comprehensive, multi-tiered intervention standards-aligned strategy to enable early identification and intervention for students at academic or behavioral risk
- An alternate to the aptitude achievement discrepancy model for the identification of students with learning disabilities
- A data team comprised of the school psychologist, school counselor, school principal, reading specialist and classroom teacher will meet regularly to discuss those students who may be in need of interventions to be successful throughout the school year
- Parents are often requested to participate in the RtII process with the data team

SERVICES AND PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The Palmerton Area School District, either directly or in conjunction with the Carbon-Lehigh Intermediate Unit #21, provides programs and services which may be required by students with special needs. Screening activities for these services are ongoing throughout each school year. These activities are coordinated by the RtII Data Team in each building. The team is comprised of the building principal, school counselor, school psychologist, and teachers. Screening/s conducted by these teams includes a review of health history (including vision and hearing), informal social history, and an informal assessment of academic, social and development progress. Parents who wish to request screening for their child may do so by contacting the principal or counselor in their child's building. Special education screening and services are also available at no cost to school district residents attending private schools. Parents may request screening for their children attending private schools by contacting the Director of Special Education at 610-826-7101. For cases where screening indicates the possibility of a special need, the Director provides a Multidisciplinary Evaluation, with parental consent. Such an evaluation is conducted by the Multidisciplinary Team, which is chaired by the school psychologist and is comprised of the parent, building principal, school counselor, school nurse, teacher, and any specialist needed (such as speech, vision, or hearing therapists). Questions regarding the evaluation process may be directed to the Director of Special Education at 610-826-7101.

The types of programs and services available to special needs students include:

- Learning Support: for special needs students whose primary identified need is academic learning
- Life Skills Support: for special needs students with a need to focus primarily on independent living skills
- Multiple Disabilities Support: for special needs students with more than one disability
- Gifted Support: for students identified as mentally gifted
- Hearing Impaired Support: services for students identified as in need of hearing support
- Visually Impaired Support: services for students identified as in need of vision support
- Speech Support: services for students with identified needs in the area of speech and language
- Physical Support: for special needs students whose primary need is due to a physical disability

Parents with questions regarding these programs may contact the Director of Special Education at 610-826-7101. All information and documents regarding your child's involvement with any of these services is confidential.

Parents of preschoolers within Palmerton Area School District may contact Project CONNECT at the Carbon-Lehigh Intermediate Unit #21 directly at 1-800-223-4821 with any concerns about the development of a child in the areas of motor skills, cognitive/early academic skills, social development, self-help skills and speech/language development. Project CONNECT provides screenings, evaluations, classroom instruction, itinerant and consultative services for special needs students from ages 3 to 5. Project CONNECT services are available without charge to children and their families. All information regarding your family and child will be kept confidential.

NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Palmerton Area School District is an equal opportunity education institution and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex and handicap in its activities, programs, services, or employment practices as required by Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504. For information regarding civil rights, activities and facilities that are accessible to and useable by handicapped persons, or grievance procedure, contact the Title IX coordinator, Palmerton Area School District, 680 Fourth Street, Palmerton, PA 18071, 610-826-7101.

TITLE IX

The Palmerton Area School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, or age in its education programs and activities. Additional information can be found on the Title IX link, which is located on the district’s website under the “Student Resources” page and the “Parent Resources” page. Students and parents may also report issues directly to the principal or the Title IX coordinator.

SPECIAL AREAS

Art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art is offered to all students in grades K-6. Please provide younger children with an old shirt or smock for art classes
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health education is offered to students in grades 2-6
Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every student visits the library once a week for library/technology instruction and book exchange. No grade is given. Students are also encouraged to join their local library
Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music is offered to students in grades K-6. Classroom performances are held at certain grade levels. If your child is chosen for a part in his/her classroom performance, we will ask your permission for participation. If your permission is given, there is an expectation that the student will be present for any and all performances
Physical Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Education is offered to students in grades K-6. The children should wear or carry sneakers to school on the day of physical education. If a child must be excused from class, a doctor’s note is required. Clothing worn should allow for free and safe movement during physical education activities
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students in grades 3-6 will be given an introduction to technology through our computer lab settings. Emphasis is on understanding how to properly use technology, keyboarding, word processing and research use, depending on the grade level

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Art Exhibits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each year, our students participate in a variety of art contests, poster contests and exhibits
Chorus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students in grades 4 thru 6 may participate in chorus. Each year, chorus concerts are held in the winter and spring. All practices are generally held after school in preparation for these activities. All chorus members are expected to attend and participate in the concerts
Environmental Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students in grades 5 & 6 may participate in this club whose primary responsibility is coordinating the recycling program at our school
Envirothon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selected students in grades 2-6 participate in an annual county-wide competition held at the Carbon County Environmental Education Center
Sixth Sense Competition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A team of sixth grade students from Towamensing and S. S. Palmer Elementary School compete with local students in the Sixth Sense academic competition. This annual competition is held in the spring. Students meet regularly, under the direction of their advisors, to prepare
Student Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student representatives in grades 3 thru 6 are selected to be members of our Student Council. These students take an active role in our school's everyday activities and promote positive programs throughout the school year
Yearbook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Towamensing Elementary School publishes an annual yearbook. This yearbook encompasses the many exciting activities and events that take place throughout the school year. Everyone will be represented in our yearbook through class and individual photos

SCHOOL – COMMUNITY RELATIONS

PTO (Parent Teacher Organization) members together with the principal and faculty plan activities and programs for the good of the students, school, and the community. The PTO is a parent volunteer organization which has worked tirelessly to raise funds to enrich our school programs. In past years, the PTO has provided our students with field trips, assemblies, t-shirts, classroom supplies, holiday gifts, and treats.

You are invited to become an active member of our organized school association at a cost of \$1.00/year. Parents/guardians, and grandparents are welcome to join and give their support. Notices announcing activities, as well as monthly meetings, are sent to parents by this organization. All meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month. Please support our efforts to enrich the programs for our students.

2020-2021 PTO OFFICERS

Website: <http://www.towamensingpto.org/>

Ann Marie Coombe	President	amc0313@outlook.com
Kimberly Wentz	Vice President	kwentz@pencor.com
Jill Geissinger	Secretary	jgeissinger@carboncounty.net
Kim Barry	Treasurer	kbarry@ptd.net

PTO MEETING DATES

PTO meetings are the second Wednesday of the month. Childcare is provided for students in grades K-6.

September 9, 2020
October 14, 2020
November 11, 2020
December – no meeting
January 13, 2021

February 10, 2021
March 10, 2021
April 14, 2021
May 12, 2021

FIELD TRIP CHAPERONES

The following are general rules for chaperones on all field trips:

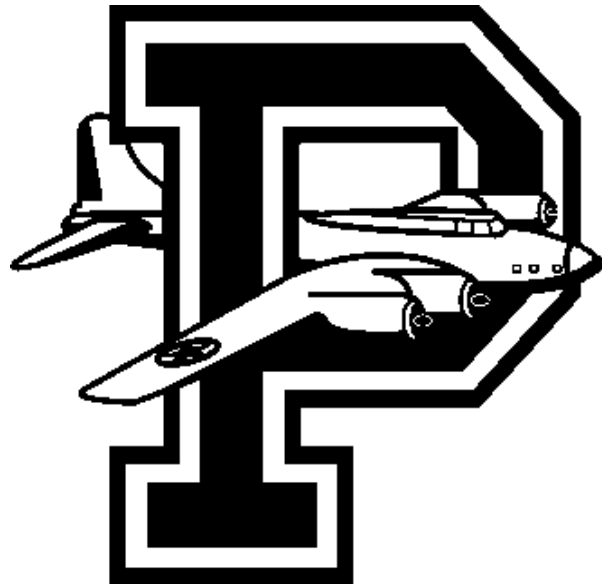
- Smoking/drinking is prohibited at all times and in all places
- All discipline concerns should be referred to the classroom teacher
- Never leave your assigned group unattended at any time
- Do not buy treats or souvenirs for your group

Teachers may have additional guidelines for you to follow, depending on the field trip. The classroom teacher will make these guidelines available to you.

PTO Field Trip Chaperones are selected based on points accumulated through PTO activities.

Field Trip Chaperones must have required clearances approved in the office

S O A R



Safety First

Our Responsibility

Always Try Your Best

Respect Yourself and Others