

# HANDBOOK



**Countryside School  
115 Schoolhouse Lane  
Mt. Laurel**

**856-234-2750**

**Robert D. Smith, Principal  
Cania Kaiser, Secretary**

## WELCOME

The Countryside School Parent Teachers Organization welcomes you to our school. We want you and your child to be at ease as you begin this new experience. In an effort to answer any questions or concerns you may have about your child starting school, we have compiled this pamphlet of important information and the most commonly asked questions regarding Countryside School. As an additional reference to items pertaining to the entire school district, we invite you to look at the informational pages found in the yearly calendar the district provides.

## THE SCHOOL DAY

### **Grades SLD, 1 through 4:**

School begins at 8:30 am and ends at 2:55 pm

Half days begin at 8:30 am and end at 12:30 pm

### **Kindergarten Schedule:**

Morning Session: 8:30 am to 11 am

Afternoon Session: 12:30 am to 2:55 pm

### **Half Day Kindergarten Schedule:**

Morning Session: 8:30 am to 11 am (no change)

Afternoon Session: 10 am to 12:30 pm

### **Preschool Schedule:**

Morning Session: 8:45 am to 11:15 am

Afternoon Session: 12:30 pm to 3:00 pm

## THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

Most teachers will send home a welcome letter prior to the first day of school. It will state the teacher's name and room number. Kindergarten teachers will include a name tag for your child to wear for the first few weeks of school. Help your child to memorize the teachers name and room number. (It is always helpful for the child to know his/her own name, address and phone number.)

## **THE BUS**

Prior to the first day of school, children will receive a bus pass in the mail. It will show the bus number, location and time of the bus stop. It is important that your child be at the bus stop 10 minutes prior to the scheduled pick up time since times are approximated. Children may only take their assigned bus to and from school at their assigned bus stop. Also, for a variety of reasons, buses are sometimes late. If you are ever concerned, you should call the Transportation Department at (856) 778-6905.

## **WHAT HAPPENS WHEN MY CHILD GETS OFF THE BUS AT SCHOOL?**

The biggest anxiety for parents of Kindergartners is the concern that they will be lost or confused when they get off the bus. Don't worry, we will take the utmost care of your little one. There will be a "greeter" waiting for each bus to pull up. The "greeter" will direct all the Kindergartners off the bus and into a special fenced in schoolyard just for them. A kindergarten playground aide will be in the schoolyard at all times to watch over the children. When school begins, the teacher will direct them into the classroom.

## **HOW WILL MY CHILD KNOW WHICH BUS TO TAKE HOME?**

The Kindergarten teachers have a list of the buses and which child belongs on each. They walk the entire class outside and wait together for the buses to pull up. Then the teacher makes sure each child is put on the correct bus. In the unusual event your child ever gets misplaced, the bus driver will call the school and the school will notify you that your child is on the wrong bus. Your child will be delivered to your home as soon as possible

## **WHAT DO I DO IF I WANT TO PICK MY CHILD UP FROM SCHOOL?**

Whenever you enter the school, you must stop in the office first. To pick up your child, you must enter his/her name in the logbook and the time you are leaving with your child. The office staff will notify your child's teacher that you are here. **Please do not go directly to the classroom.** Please try not to pick your child up early unless it is an emergency. It is very disruptive when children are leaving at odd times.

## **EXTENDED DAY CARE**

The district does provide for extended day care, at your own cost, for before and after school hours at each of the elementary schools. An application will be sent home if you wish to apply. For information call: (856) 231-5890.

## **WHAT MUST I DO IF MY CHILD WILL BE ABSENT FROM SCHOOL?**

If you know in advance that your child will miss school, send a note into his/her teacher showing the child's name and dates of absence. **If it is unanticipated, call the teacher prior to 9 am to report the child's absence.** (You may call the night before or in the morning before school begins and leave a message on the answering machine.) As a safety measure, the school will call you if your child is not in school and we have not received notification. When your child returns to school, he/she must have or a note explaining the absence.

## **24 HOUR RULE**

If your child has a temperature, diarrhea, vomiting, throat infection or strep throat, he/she should not return to school until 24 hours after the symptoms have subsided, or after antibiotics have been noted.

### **WHAT HAPPENS IF MY CHILD GETS SICK OR HURT DURING SCHOOL?**

Your child will be escorted to the nurse if he/she is sick or hurt. Minor injuries will be handled in the nurse's office. You will be called immediately in the event of any serious injury or illness. The nurse keeps your emergency phone card on file. Remember the one you filled out at the beginning of school? (It is important that this card be up to date at all times. Call the school if any number changes during the course of the school year.) If the nurse is unable to contact you, she will contact the alternate number or name you have provided.

### **WHAT DO I DO IF MY CHILD MUST TAKE MEDICATION DURING SCHOOL HOURS?**

Children are not permitted to transport medications. Any medications (prescription or over the counter), that need to be taken during school hours must be in the original containers along with written authorization from your physician. If it is prescribed for 3 doses daily, all should be done at home. First dose upon arising, second after school, and third at bedtime. These rules are extremely important for your child's safety.

### **SNACK TIME**

Kindergartners receive a light snack during the session.

Parents provide these snacks at the teacher's request. In addition, parents will be asked to send in milk money for the week every Monday. Don't worry if you forget to send in the milk money. Your child will still receive milk and a reminder notice will be sent home to you. Your prompt payment is appreciated.

### **LUNCH ROOM**

Grades 1 through 4 have lunch in the lunchroom. There are two sessions. Grades SLD, 1 and 2 have lunch from 11:30 to noon and then play in the playground from noon until 12:30. Grades 3 and 4 do the reverse. Lunch may be brought from home or bought at school. A daily menu is published by the school district and sent home with your child every month. Lunch may be paid for each day with cash, or lunch tickets may be purchased. Lunch tickets are sold on Mondays. (Lunch tickets are a convenient way for your child to buy lunch without carrying cash.) Prices are shown on the menu. Children inform the teacher, each morning, if they will be buying lunch and an order is placed. Any child who forgets their lunch will be given lunch and a notice will be sent home regarding repayment.

### **UNEXPECTED SCHOOL CLOSINGS**

Countryside's School Closing Number is 659. KYW News Radio AM1060 reports school closings. Cable Channel 19, which continuously broadcasts school events, is the fastest way to learn of a school closing.

### **SENDING MONEY TO SCHOOL**

On many occasions, it will be necessary for you to send money to school with your child. Generally, checks should be made out to Countryside PTO for PTO fundraisers. Book orders should be made out to the Book Company. Lunches must be paid for by cash or with lunch tickets. Be sure any money is put in an envelope with its purpose and child's name clearly printed.

### **SAFETY AND RESPECT**

Behavior is everyone's responsibility. You child's teacher and bus driver will provide some very important guidelines on the proper behavior on the school bus, in the classroom, hallways, lunch room, and school yard. In order to grow educationally, socially

and emotionally, children need to be in an environment in which there are concerned individuals who will set firm, consistent, positive limits while providing warmth and support for their appropriate behavior. Please help to reinforce these guidelines.

### **THE DRESS CODE**

Research shows that the way students dress for school affects their attitude and behavior. All students are expected to wear clean, sensible attire at all times. Sneakers must be worn on Gym days or your child will not be permitted to participate in gym activities for that day.

### **FORM, FORMS AND MORE FORMS**

At the beginning of school you will feel bombarded with forms coming home for you to fill out. Please give these forms your prompt attention. Some of the forms will include emergency phone cards, extended day care application, insurance forms, PTO volunteer forms etc. **PLEASE USE BLACK INK ONLY.**

### **LABEL EVERYTHING**

Be sure to label your child's backpack, coat, jacket, hat, gloves, scarves and anything he/she brings to school that will not remain on their person throughout the day. You can be sure of one thing your child will lose at least one article during their stay at Countryside. For just those occasions, we have a large bin for all nameless lost and found articles. It's funny how things without names never seem to get claimed! If your child leaves something on the bus, call the school or transportation department and they will attempt to locate it and return it to the school.

### **WHAT IS "BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT"?**

Back to School Night is held in the evening usually in September/October. This event is for parents and guardians. The evening will begin with an introduction from the school Principal and may include a list of speakers such as the Superintendent, School Board President, PTO President, etc. You will then be asked to visit your child's classroom and meet their teacher. The teacher will give a short outline on what he or she plans for the school year and what will be expected of your child. General questions will be answered. Specific concerns about your child should be address privately at another time. (Always feel free to contact your child's teacher, they welcome your communication.) A second session is provided on the same evening for those of you who have more than one child in the school. If you have more than two children, you will have to attend classes separately.

### **WHAT ARE CONFERENCES?**

Conferences are held twice a year, in November and March. The November conferences are mandatory. The March conference is provided on an "as needed" basis. Check the School Calendar for conference weeks. Your child's teacher will send home an exact date and time and you will be asked to confirm your scheduled appointment. (A limited number of evening times are available.) At your scheduled time, you will meet with the teacher to discuss your child's progress. Children do not usually attend conferences. Any specific concerns should be freely addressed at this time. Communication between parent and teacher is vital to your child's success both emotionally and academically.

### **WHAT ARE "SPECIAL TEACHERS"?**

Naturally, we think all of the teachers at Countryside are special and the best in the district! At Countryside, we refer to subjects your child goes to outside his/her classroom as "Specials". The teachers who teach these "specials" are referred to as "Special Teachers". These "Specials" are Art, Gym, Library and Music. Other types of teachers at the school are for special needs. These teachers are referred to as Basic Skills and Resource Room teachers. We also have Speech and Reading Specialists.

### **THE PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION**

Countryside has a very active PTO. Our meetings are held bi-monthly the second Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. All are invited and encouraged to come. Our main business is work together with the principal and teachers to improve our school, receive reports on the district and school board issues, organize extracurricular activities for the children, raise funds and to get better acquainted with each other. You will receive a form at the beginning of the year to sign up for membership. You do not have to attend meetings to be a member. Membership fees help cover the cost of many school activities, assemblies and the yearbook. You will also be given a form to volunteer for the many school activities. Please try to volunteer for at least one activity described.

### **WHAT IS A ROOM PARENT?**

Countryside has three types of room parents: Head Room Parent, Assistant Room Parent and Contributing Room Parent. The Head Room Parent organizes classroom parties and activities under the direction of the teacher. The Assistant Room Parents aid the Head Room Parent by being present at the activity and contributing needed items. The Contributing Room Parent supplies items like baked goods for parties but does not attend. You will receive a form to sign up to be a room parent. We ask that you be Head Room Parent in not more than one class.

### **THE COUNTRYSIDE LIVE WIRE**

Countryside School has it's own newsletter, The Live Wire, which is prepared monthly. It includes a note from the Principal and PTO President, Classroom Happenings, PTO Events, the minutes of our PTO meetings and much more. It's one of the key forms of communications between the school and your home. Please take the time to read it when your child brings it home.

### **AM I PERMITTED TO BRING A YOUNGER SIBLING TO A CLASSROOM ACTIVITY OR FIELD TRIP?**

Siblings are not permitted at class activities or field trips. However, siblings are invited to activities involving the entire school, such as: Field Day, the School Picnic. When in doubt, check with your child's teacher.

### **FIELD DAY**

Each year Countryside has an all day outdoor sports event known as Field Day. Classes rotate around the school at different activities, such as relay races, obstacle course, ball toss, etc. Parents can help out at the different stages or they can attend just to observe. Siblings are invited to watch. Afternoon Kindergartners come in for the morning session. Children are randomly

divided into two teams - the "yellow" team or the "green" team (our school colors). Your child will be asked to wear his/her team color on Field Day and you will be notified ahead of time.

### **THE GYM SHOW**

The Gym Show is held in the evening at Lenape H.S. Each class puts on a demonstration of something they have accomplished in gym this year. It is an exciting evening for the children as well as the parents. You have the opportunity to observe not only your child's progression but also the accomplishments of all levels.

### **THE ART SHOW/MUSIC CONCERT**

The Art Show/Music Concert is held in the evening. Our art teacher transforms Countryside School into an art gallery, displaying the children's accomplishments during the school year. Under the direction of our music teacher, Countryside students perform in a musical event each Winter/Spring.

### **YEARBOOK**

The PTO publishes a yearbook each school year. Parents can help with this project by submitting duplicate prints of photos of any school activity. This helps to ensure that all children are represented. You will hear more about this during the course of the school year.

### **CLOSING**

We hope you have found this booklet helpful. It is our ongoing attempt to assist parents and children in any way possible to make their experience at Countryside the best it can be. Please feel free to offer suggestions to our Principal or PTO for additional material you feel needs to be included in future editions. Parents and Staff working together at Countryside School is the key to our children's success.