

# Washington Township Public Schools

## BELLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

### ELEMENTARY PARENT / STUDENT HANDBOOK 2023-2024



**227 Greentree Road  
Turnersville, NJ 08012**

**Phone: 856-589-8441  
Fax: 856-589-6607**

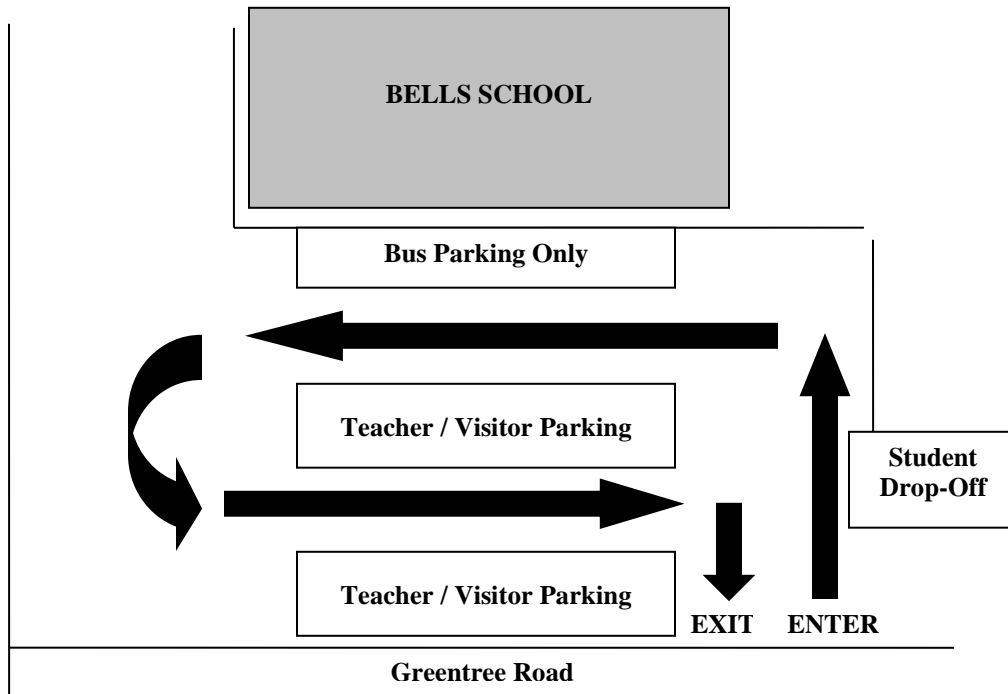
**Virginia Grier  
Principal**

The mission of the Washington Township Public Schools is to provide a safe educational environment for all students to attain the skills and knowledge specified in the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards at all grade levels so as to ensure their full participation in our global society as responsible, self-directed, and civic-minded citizens.

**REGULAR SESSION  
9:05 AM – 3:25 PM**

**EARLY DISMISSAL  
9:05 AM – 1:45 PM**

# STUDENT ARRIVAL



**Car-driven students:** All students are to be dropped off at the entrance to the Bells School parking lot on Greentree Road. No students should be dropped off at school before 8:55 am as there is no supervision available at that time. **PLEASE, DO NOT DROP STUDENTS OFF WHERE THE BUSES PARK.** This area is for buses only. The speed limit in the parking area is 5 mph - please watch for students.

## **Walkers**

Students walking to school should arrive at the appropriate entrance not more than 5 minutes prior to the start of school as there is no supervision provided.

## **Regular Dismissal**

Students will board the buses at the front loading area. Parents who are picking students up must send a note to their child's teacher that morning. Parents must personally sign their child out at the Main Office. If a teacher does not receive a note about the change in the child's regular dismissal, the child will be sent home on his/her assigned bus or to Kids Choice, whichever is the student's regular dismissal. ***Students are not permitted to ride any other bus other than the one that is assigned to them.***

## **Absence or Early Dismissal:**

**Parents must call the school to report student absences or tardiness.**

**Bells School Phone Number: 589-8441**

Every attempt will be made to notify parents by 11:00 am if a child is absent and the Attendance Office has not been notified. When calling in an absence, please leave a brief message, including your child's name, grade, and teacher. Please make requests for absent work with the teacher directly. (Requests for homework must be received before 11:30 am to allow the teacher time to get the necessary materials together.) A note is required on the day the child returns to school after an absence. A doctor's note is required after three days absence.

If your child is going to leave school **early** for a doctor's appointment, etc., please notify your child's teacher and the main office. **We request you DO NOT come during dismissal time to ensure the safety of all students.** You are encouraged to schedule appointments for your child(ren) outside the scheduled school day. Parents **are not** permitted to meet their child(ren) as the students are exiting the school building or walking to their assigned bus. If an emergency exists and you must pick up your child(ren) at dismissal, please phone the school ahead of time to inform them of your plans. You must enter the school and sign-out your son/daughter at the office. **You will need photo identification to enter the school.**

Students arriving **late** for school must go to the office for a pass before going to class. Parents must bring the child to the door to sign them in. A student must be present at least four hours to receive credit for a full day (excluding lunch). Absences for **family vacations** are unexcused absences and discouraged. However, if necessary, please notify the teacher and nurse in writing at least two weeks in advance.

The parent/guardian will be contacted in writing by the principal or school nurse when a child reaches 10 and 15 excused or unexcused absences/tardiness. Retention will be considered after 20 days with the final retention notice sent after 30 days (Board Policy 5200).

## **Visitors**

All parents and visitors must sign in at the main office and **must present a photo ID** to obtain a visitor's pass before going to any other part of the building. Please ring the bell at the front door. Someone will greet you over the intercom. You will be directed how to enter the building or be greeted at the door.

## **Parent/Teacher Communication**

We believe that effective communication between the home and school provides the foundation for a student's successful education. Accordingly, we have worked to provide means of promoting ongoing communication. As a result of the technology available in our school, we are able to offer voice and e-mail communication for you to communicate with your child(ren)'s teachers. If you have access to a telephone or computer, you can leave a voice or an e-mail at your convenience.



The preferred method of communication is e-mail. E-mail may be accessed using the first initial followed by the last name and wtps.org. However, at anytime, you may call **589-8441**, enter the four-digit extension number provided during back-to-school night and leave a voice mail message (bypassing the main office).

## **Bus Riders**

### **Transportation Policy**

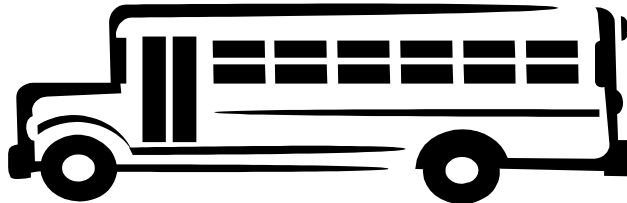
Your child has the privilege of using a school bus. This transportation is provided in accordance with state law for children living remotely from the school, at public expense. All children are entitled to this provided they do not infringe upon another child's rights. It is, therefore, important that you impress upon your child the importance of conducting himself/herself in a quiet and orderly manner traveling to and from school. The safety of all passengers demands that the attention of the driver must be on the road and must not be distracted in any way, least of all, by any disorder on the part of the transported children. All buses are equipped with video cameras. The following policy shall be adhered to with regard to behavior on buses:

1. Students, upon boarding a bus, shall immediately be seated with seatbelt fastened.
2. Students shall remain seated until the bus has come to a full stop at their destination.
3. Students shall, at all times, keep their entire bodies within the bus.
4. Hazing of any sort or type shall not be permitted.
5. Unnecessary noise, shouting, or use of objectionable language shall not be permitted.
6. Throwing of articles within the bus or out of the bus windows shall not be permitted.
7. Damage to buses by student shall not be tolerated. Payment for repairs shall be

- assessed to the parents of the child(ren) involved.
8. No gum chewing or eating on the bus at any time.
  9. While waiting for the bus, students should line up and be well behaved. Students should not run in the street or on private property. Any complaints from residents will be considered a bus violation.
  10. No student may ride another bus other than the one assigned. If a student misses a bus, it is the parent's obligation to provide transportation.

Students in grades K-5 who are eligible for district-provided transportation or who are eligible for such transportation but elect not to use it, shall be permitted to leave the building unescorted unless the parent/guardian provides prior written notification to the school of any arrangements for pupils requiring an escort. All documented escort arrangements will be considered applicable for the entire school year. Parents/Guardians may alter such arrangements upon **prior written notification** to the building principal. **Alternate emergency arrangements for dismissal must be documented in writing to the building principal on the day of the emergent alternate dismissal arrangement.**

All pupils who are eligible for district-provided transportation and who elect to use such transportation shall be permitted to leave the bus stop even if no escort is present. For pupils who are not eligible for district-provided transportation if the parent/guardian indicates that an escort is required at dismissal, and the escort is unable or fails to pick up the pupil at the time of school dismissal, the pupils will be taken to the school office. The school staff will attempt to contact the parent/guardian or emergency contact person. If the pupil's escort fails to pick up the pupil from the school office within 30 minutes of the school dismissal time, proper authorities will be contacted, including the local police and/or DCPD. (Board Policy 8601)



**PLEASE DISCUSS EMERGENCY PLANS WITH YOUR CHILD IN THE EVENT YOU ARE NOT HOME AT DISMISSAL TIME.**

## ELEMENTARY DRESS CODE

The following dress code is in effect at all elementary schools in the district. These guidelines were developed in consultation with staff and the Board of Education Policy #5528.

1. Student apparel must be clean. Clothing should not be ragged nor should pants have frayed edges.
2. Footwear appropriate to the activity must be worn.
  - a. Street shoes or sneakers are considered suitable for everyday school use.
  - b. Sandals or Flip Flops are not permitted. The exposed foot is more vulnerable to dirt and injury.
  - c. Sneakers must be worn for physical education activities.
3. Halters and short shorts are not to be worn to school.
4. Sleeveless undershirts designed to be worn under regular clothing will not be permitted as an outer garment.
5. Hats may be worn when outside of the building only, and are to be removed when in the building.
6. Students who wear clothing so as to expose a bare midriff will be detained in the office until appropriate clothing is brought from home.
7. See through / mesh type jerseys without an undershirt are inappropriate for school.

8. Student clothing should be reasonably neat. Students who look unkempt or unduly sloppy will be asked to dress more appropriately. When a situation becomes serious, the parents will be contacted.
9. Make-up is discouraged for elementary school students.

## **ELEMENTARY CODE OF CONDUCT**

It is our belief that most children are eager to learn, will obey the school rules, and will conduct themselves properly. It is not only the responsibility of students to obey school rules, but also the responsibility of school staff to enforce them. Students are expected to exhibit proper behavior on the school bus, while walking to school, in classrooms and school gatherings, in the halls, in the lunchroom and on the playground.

Students who violate school rules will receive consequences based upon the seriousness of the offense and the Washington Township Pupil Discipline Policy (5600). The consequences include warnings, detentions (parents will be given 24 hour notice and must provide transportation for after-school detentions), in-school restrictions, or out-of-school suspensions. Parents will be notified of serious or repeated rule violations. In the case of serious or repeated offenses, parents will be required to meet with a building administrator or his/her designee. When appropriate, the service of the guidance counselor will be provided.

### **Each student is expected to:**

1. Refrain from conduct that disrupts the learning of other students
2. Attend school regularly
3. Respect the rights of others
4. Respect school property
5. Come to school prepared with appropriate books, materials, and homework

### **Violations of the following rules will result in disciplinary actions:**

- a. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom or on school property
- b. Fighting or provoking a fight
- c. Harassment, bullying, intimidation, or verbal assault
- d. Disrespect to any adult (teacher, substitute, assistant, secretary, etc.)
- e. Possession or use of anything which may be considered a weapon
- f. Possession or under the influence of controlled/dangerous substances
- g. Possession of smoking materials, matches, or smoking on school property
- h. Possession or lighting of fireworks on school property
- i. Damage or vandalism to school property
- j. Stealing
- k. Absence from class without permission /or misuse of lavatory privilege
- l. Truancy from school
- m. Failure to report to detention
- n. Dress or appearance that is disruptive to the school program

### **Lunchroom/Playground Expectations**

1. We will respect others by not teasing, arguing, or name-calling.
2. We will have a pleasant atmosphere by talking in a low tone.
3. We will show good table manners by sitting and eating properly and staying in our seats.
4. We will show courtesy to others by using "thank you" and "please".
5. We will have a safe lunchroom and playground by not throwing objects, running, hitting or pushing others, climbing fences, and not leaving an area without permission.
6. We will keep our lunchroom and playground clean by placing all papers and wrappers in the proper container.

7. We will line up at the appropriate place when the signal is given.
8. Remember and use these two GOLDEN RULES:  
Treat other people the way you want to be treated.  
If you don't have something nice to say to someone, don't say anything at all.

### **Playground Procedures**

1. Stay in your assigned area
2. Students may only use playground equipment with permission
3. Keep your hands and feet to yourself
4. Speak in a respectful manner at all times
5. Follow the Assistant's directions at all times
6. Line up immediately when the bell rings
7. Remember and use these two GOLDEN RULES:  
Treat other people the way you want to be treated.  
If you don't have something nice to say to someone, don't say anything at all.



In the event that weather prevents students from going outside during lunch/recess, students are expected to follow all classroom rules.

**WEAPONS OF ANY KIND ARE NOT  
PERMITTED IN OUR SCHOOL.**

**Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying  
(Including Electronic Bullying\*)  
BOE Policy # 5512**

**Acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying are prohibited!**

“Harassment, intimidation, or bullying” means any gesture, written or verbal, or physical act, or electronic communication\* that takes place on school property at any school-sponsored function or on a school bus, or any time at home if the result negatively affects any student's education and causes disruption to the school environment.

- 1) Bullying can be perceived as being motivated by a characteristic such as race, color religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, beliefs, or mental or physical disabilities, or any other distinguishing characteristic; and
- 2) A reasonable person should know that the act will have the effect of harming a pupil, damaging the pupil's property, or placing the pupil in fear of harm; or
- 3) Bullying can have the effect of insulting the pupil or group of pupils in such a way that causes substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school.

*\*Note: This policy includes electronic communication which can take place from home or school including telephones, cell phones, pagers, computers, Instant Messaging, Email, text messaging, and/or fax machines.*

Complaints alleging violations of this policy shall be reported to the principal. A prompt and thorough investigation will be conducted. There will be no reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

**Do not hurt anyone  
on the outside  
or  
on the inside!**

### **Cell Phones**

Cell phones are not permitted to be turned on during the school day therefore it is best that they be left safely at home. If a student needs to contact a parent or guardian, school phones are available for necessary communication. If a cell phone is brought to school, they must be kept in their backpack on silent. The school can not be responsible for damage or loss of a student's personal property.



### **Electronic Games, iPods, Cameras,**

Students are discouraged from bringing electronic games, iPods, cameras, or other hand-held toys to school. They are often distracting to our students and the school can not be responsible for damage or loss of a student's personal property.



### **Birthday Parties and invitations**

Due to our health and wellness practices, student birthday parties may not occur at school. Students will be recognized during their special day throughout a variety of activities that are consistent among the grade levels. The school will not distribute food products to students or a class as part of a birthday celebration. Thank you for your support and cooperation.



**Private birthday party invitations will not be passed out at school unless every student is invited.**

### **Counseling**

The Counselor is available to our students. Students may make an appointment with the counselor by speaking to their classroom teacher. Counseling services include: Peer Mediation, Peer Tutoring, Friend to Friend groups, and Social Interaction groups as well as individual counseling.

### **Homework**

Homework is an important part of a student's educational program. Homework is an activity that provides additional practice for important skills. Students in grades 3, 4, and 5 should keep an assignment book to assist them in becoming organized. Students should also set aside a certain time each day to study and do their homework to make their educational experience a positive one.

### **Nurse**

The nurse is available to handle any emergency that arises during the day. If an accident or sudden illness occurs, first aid will be administered and the student's parents will be notified. No care beyond first aid will be given. If a parent cannot be contacted and the emergency warrants the assistance of a physician, the Washington Township Police Department will be summoned and the student will be transported to the nearest hospital. No medication will be administered without an order from a doctor.

## **Medications**

The Washington Township School District's policy for administering medicine states that a certified school nurse or parent are the only people permitted to administer medication in school. Also, all medication brought to the school must be in the original container, appropriately labeled by the pharmacy or physician. The medication needs to be accompanied by a doctor's note and a note from the parent giving permission to administer the medication. The school provides a secured space for safe storage in the nurse's office.

## **Affirmative Action**

The Affirmative Action Goal is to foster sensitivity, tolerance, and understanding of the rights of all individuals regarding their beliefs, values and customs, recognizing our diverse community with varying cultural, ethnic, and religious holidays.

1. The Washington Township School District has an Affirmative Action policy, plan, and grievance procedure on file in the Principal's Office.
2. The Washington Township School district does not discriminate in its employment practices, business actions, and/or educational opportunities because of age, race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, marital status, sex, or handicap.
3. Affirmative Action questions, and/or concerns regarding personnel, students, or contracts, should be directed to the Superintendent's Office at 589-6644, ext. 6000.

## **BELLS SCHOOL 2023-2024**

**REGULAR SESSION  
9:05 AM – 3:25 PM**

**EARLY DISMISSAL  
9:05 AM – 1:45 PM**

### **SCHOOL CALENDAR**

<b>August 25</b>	<b>Kindergarten Movie Night at dusk</b>
<b>August 31</b>	<b>Kindergarten Meet the Teacher 2:00 in person</b>
<b>September 6</b>	<b>First day for Students</b>
<b>September 13</b>	<b>Back to School Night – Grades 3-5 @ 6:00 pm</b>
<b>September 20</b>	<b>Back to School Night – Grades K-2 @ 6:00 pm</b>
<b>October 11</b>	<b>Early Dismissal 1:45 – District Inservice</b>
<b>October 25 &amp; 26</b>	<b>Early Dismissal 1:45 – Elementary Parent Conferences</b>
<b>October 27</b>	<b>School Closed – Elementary Parent Conferences</b>
<b>November 9 &amp; 10</b>	<b>School Closed for Students – NJEA Convention</b>
<b>November 22</b>	<b>Early Dismissal 1:45</b>
<b>November 23 &amp; 24</b>	<b>School Closed – Thanksgiving</b>
<b>December 12</b>	<b>Early Dismissal 1:45 – District Inservice</b>
<b>December 22</b>	<b>Early Dismissal 1:45</b>
<b>December 23 – January 1</b>	<b>School Closed – Winter Break</b>
<b>January 15</b>	<b>School Closed – Martin Luther King Day</b>
<b>January 23</b>	<b>Early Dismissal 1:45 – District Inservice</b>
<b>February 16</b>	<b>Early Dismissal 1:45 – District Inservice</b>
<b>February 19</b>	<b>School Closed – Presidents' Day</b>
<b>March 20 &amp; 21</b>	<b>Early Dismissal 1:45 – Elementary Parent Conferences</b>
<b>March 29 – April 7</b>	<b>School Closed – Spring Break</b>
<b>April 19</b>	<b>Early Dismissal 1:45 – District Inservice</b>
<b>May 23</b>	<b>Early Dismissal 1:45 – District Inservice</b>
<b>May 24 – 27</b>	<b>School Closed – Memorial Day Break</b>
<b>June 17 – 20</b>	<b>Early Dismissal – 1:05 p.m. (no lunches served)</b>
<b>June 20</b>	<b>Last Day for Students</b>



## **SNOW MAKE-UP DAYS**

The school calendar assumes five snow/emergency days. That last student day will be June 21st. Unused snow days will be deducted in the following order: June 20, 19, 18, 17, 14. No snow days will make the last day June 13th. Additional snow days, above the five built in, will be added to the calendar in the following order (as possible): April 5, 4, 3, 2 & 1.

## **EMERGENCY CLOSING**

School closing and/or early dismissal information will be reported on the district website, **wtps.org**, Robo calls, and on twitter. The district's emergency closing number is **803**. We ask that parents do not call the school. Please check the website and social media for information regarding closings.

Please instruct your child on the procedures that he/she will follow in the event of an early dismissal. All students will be placed on their regularly assigned school bus on emergency early dismissal days. Arrangements must be made in advance with a neighbor or relative to meet your child if you are not going to be home. Kids Choice after school childcare program will not be in session on emergency early dismissal days.