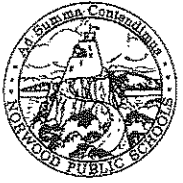


BALCH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

STUDENT HANDBOOK

BLUE PAGES

2018-2019



NORWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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DAVID L. THOMSON, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

ALEXANDER WYETH, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum,
Instruction & Assessment

September, 2018

Dear Families,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to Norwood Public Schools for the 2018- 2019 school year. The mission of the Norwood Public Schools is to seek academic excellence for all children in an environment which is safe, nurturing, and supportive, to inspire in them an enduring love for learning, and prepare them to contribute as citizens of a diverse community. This handbook is provided to make certain that each student and their family has full knowledge and access to the rules, expectations, and day-to-day procedures to ensure success in the Norwood Public Schools. Thus, it is imperative that you review this document together and should you find any questions or concerns, please be sure to contact the administration at your student's school.

As you know each school year is an exciting opportunity to learn and develop as individuals. Central to this effort is good communication between the home and school that creates a partnership focused on an enjoyable and productive learning environment. We look forward to working together to ensure a successful school year.

Sincerely,

David L. Thomson, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools



NORWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BALCH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1168 WASHINGTON STREET, NORWOOD, MA 02062

TEL (781) 762-0694

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DIANE FERREIRA
Principal

September 2018

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Welcome to the Balch Elementary School. I would like to extend a warm welcome to any new families and a “Welcome Back” to our returning families. Our student population is a diverse mix of students in grades 1-5. We have 4 sections of first grade, and 3 sections of grades 2-5, with a total population of around 300. The Balch is home to Norwood’s Language Based Learning Disabilities classroom (LBLD) and Learners Exploratory Academics Program (LEAP), where students with specific learning profiles throughout the district may attend.

Balch teachers, staff, students, and families are committed to working together to create a safe, secure, and nurturing environment that promotes high academic achievement and social development. Students are expected to act responsibly and always do their best academically, behaviorally, and socially.

This handbook has been prepared to answer some of your questions about the Balch. The handbook also contains information about the policies of the Norwood Public Schools, and the rights and responsibilities for students, parents, and guardians. The blue pages in the middle are specific to the Balch Elementary School, and should be of particular interest to you. Please take the time to read it thoroughly, and keep it handy for reference throughout this school year.

In addition to the information in the handbook, you will find more about the Norwood Public Schools and the Balch Elementary School when you visit our webpage:
<http://www.norwood.k12.ma.us> .

Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Diane Ferreira

Diane Ferreira, Principal
dferreira@norwood.k12.ma.us

THE BALCH SCHOOL

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BALCH SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

The World is My Classroom!

Our mission is to insure that all students achieve at high levels and are well prepared as they further pursue their education.

Through the cooperation of parents and educators, the Balch School strives to provide our children a quality education that will foster a life time desire and ability for learning along with the confidence and skills to succeed in an ever-changing world.

We believe this mission must be pursued with compassion and caring for the strengths, weaknesses, and uniqueness of each child. Learning should be an enjoyable and rewarding experience. We hope that all students will leave the Balch School with a deep appreciation of the value of a good education.

In pursuit of this mission, the Balch School endeavors to help all students achieve the following educational and personal development goals:

- Develop the intellectual abilities of logical, critical, and creative thinking.
- Become proficient in the basic communication skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
- Acquire a broad range of knowledge through the directed study of all core disciplines.
- Promote self-confidence, the desire and ability to achieve and pride in good workmanship.
- Promote good citizenship and character through respect for self and others, safety in work and play, and responsible behavior.

HISTORY OF THE BALCH SCHOOL

The first Balch School, a wooden frame building, was constructed on the front grounds in 1867 and named in memory of Reverend Thomas Balch. In this rambling wooden structure, the young people of South Norwood were educated until 1913, when the current Balch School was constructed on its present site. In 1923, the school was enlarged by an eight-room addition and by a large playground at its rear, known presently as the Charles W. Eliot Park. A second wing containing the Nicholas Abdallah Auditorium, kitchen facilities, gymnasium and conference areas were appended to the school in 1966.

DAILY SCHOOL SCHEDULE

8:35 AM	First Bell
8:45	Instruction begins
10:30	First Recess
10:45	Second Recess
12:10 PM	First Lunch
12:30	Second Lunch
2:55	Dismissal Bell

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Arrival:

WALKERS report to the back play area or cafeteria on inclement weather days 8:25-8:35. **Children should not arrive at school before any supervisory personnel are on duty on the playground. Plan your child's arrival at school NO SOONER than 8:25 a.m.**

CAR DROP-OFF – all cars should queue up along the sidewalk in the north parking lot, **parents stay in the car**, and drive up to the principal (or designee). Children should alight on the passenger side of the car only when the principal opens the car door or acknowledges the car. Follow the arrows to exit the parking lot (do not park or pull out of the car line). **Parents may not drop off their students before the principal (or designees) is outside.**

Dismissal:

All Students who do not take the bus will be dismissed as **WALKERS**. Parent **MUST** park in a parking spot in the north parking lot. **There is no parking along the sidewalk.** Parents will walk up to the building to pick up their children.

Grades 1 and 2 – will be dismissed out Door 1

Grades 3 – will be dismissed out Door 2

Grades 4 and 5 – will be dismissed out Door 7

Parents should meet their youngest child at the appropriate door, older students will walk to your younger student's location.

BEFORE SCHOOL EXTENDED DAY

The Balch School Extended Day Program begins each day at 7:30 a.m. Transportation is not provided. The cost is \$4.50 per child. A 10% discount is given to families with more than one child. The program begins on the first day of school.

BREAKFAST AT THE BALCH!

The Balch School is fortunate to qualify for the National School Breakfast Program. A nourishing breakfast is available to all students each morning from 8:15 – 8:40 a.m.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT DAYS

In order to enhance student learning, teachers participate in workshops to increase their knowledge and skills. Additionally, they learn about issues relevant to education or to discuss and update the curriculum and instructional practices. On the Professional Development/Curriculum Development half days, lunch is served for Grades 1-5 and dismissal for those students is 12:30 p.m. There is **no** school on the Full Professional Development Day.

ABSENCES AND TARDINESS

Parents are encouraged to use good judgement in keeping children home from school. Youngsters who are ill will have a difficult time attending to work and will expose other children to illness.

In enclosed classrooms, communicable diseases are easily spread. Children with such diseases should always be kept at home until parents are assured by their physician that the child is well enough to return to school.

Parents can often prevent tardiness by seeing that children have sufficient sleep, time for a good breakfast, and enough time to dress and prepare for school.

The attendance of children will be checked on the morning that a child is absent from school. The cooperation of parents is needed in order to accomplish this practice.

ABSENCE LINE

The absence line is the number to the main office. Calling 781-762-0694 allows you to inform the school of your child's absence or you can leave a message for school personnel.

Please remember that for the safety of your child, we ask you to call the school in the morning if your child is to be out of school for any reason. If a parent or guardian is not heard from by 9:00 a.m., the school will attempt to reach them by using numbers recorded on the emergency card. In all cases of absences, a note signed by the parent or student's physician is required upon a student's return to school.

Please display the following numbers in a convenient place at home.

Balch School

Main Office: (781)762-0694
Office Fax: (781)255-5610
School Nurse: (781)440-5933
Nurse Fax: (781)769-5281

Children (TAFDC) Program, children under the age of 14 must meet specific school attendance requirements and teen parents must graduate from high school, or attend a program which will lead to a high school diploma or a GED. The Department of Transitional Assistance will notify schools on a regular basis of the children who are subject to this new requirement and schools will then notify DTA quarterly if any of these students have unsatisfactory attendance as defined in the law.

EARLY DISMISSAL

Children are asked to go directly home from school at regular dismissal time.

Early dismissal from school should be requested only when absolutely necessary and will only take place through the Main Office. If parents wish to make any changes in their child's daily schedule at school such as early dismissal for a doctor's appointment or if the child is being picked up at school by someone other than a parent, a note must be sent to the child's teacher signed and dated by a parent informing him/her about the change.

TRAFFIC SUPERVISORS

Traffic supervisors are stationed at key locations throughout the town during those hours when children are going to and from school. Their purpose is to ensure the safety of youngsters. Children should obey their crossing guards and practice good safety. The Balch Traffic Supervisor is assigned directly opposite the main entrance to the school on Washington Street. Children and families should utilize the crossing guard and crosswalk when crossing Washington Street

BICYCLES

For safety reasons, the school does not allow children to ride their bicycles, rollerblades, roller-skates, scooters, hover boards or skateboards to school.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Conferences are a means by which a two-way flow of information about your child may be established. They provide you with detailed information concerning the school life of your youngster. Equally important is the assistance that you can give the teacher by providing that information which will help the teacher know your child better.

The staff is most willing to meet at a mutually agreeable time. Conferences are generally held after school, but special times can be arranged. Please request an appointment time either by note or by telephone.

It is not recommended that parents attempt to hold an extended conference during classroom visitation times or at P.T.O. meetings. On such occasions, there is neither the time for preparation nor the privacy necessary to discuss individual youngsters. This is, however, a good time to set a conference time, visit with the teacher, and view children's work.

PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION

The Balch School P.T.O. is an active and essential part of our school community. The P.T.O. officers and committee coordinators provide leadership that allows the organization to support the students and teachers with many enrichment activities, assemblies, field trips as well as educational supplies for worthwhile classroom projects. The calendar of events include such favorites as the Fall and Spring Book Fairs, Family Game Night, Pancake Breakfast, and the Italian Festival. In addition, the P.T.O. annually presents financial awards to two graduating seniors who were former Balch School students.

Parents are encouraged to contact the Balch School P.T.O. if they would like to be more involved in P.T.O. activities. Parents are also encouraged to attend monthly Board Meetings.

BALCH SCHOOL COUNCIL

The Massachusetts Education Reform Act provides for the establishment of local school councils. The Balch School Council is an advisory council comprised of the Principal, teachers, parents and a community member. The teachers are nominated and elected within the Balch School. Parent members are chosen in an election open to all parents. Community members are appointed by the Principal.

The School Council works with the Principal to review our budget, discuss school curriculum needs, and to enhance all existing programs. At the end of the academic year, the Council develops educational goals for the upcoming school year and presents them in the form of a school improvement plan for approval by the Norwood School Committee.

VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL

All visitors to the Balch School must enter through the front door and ring the buzzer located in the lobby. Upon entrance, all visitors must report directly to the main office and check in with the secretary, sign the Visitors Log and take a visitor's pass. Please refer to the Visitors/Volunteers to School section in the white pages of this handbook for additional information.