

MONTOUR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
STUDENT / PARENT HANDBOOK
2017-18 SCHOOL YEAR



Montour Elementary School
221 Clever Road
McKees Rocks, PA 15136
412-490-6500

www.montourschools.com

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Mr. Jason Burik, Principal - Montour Elementary School - Team Curiosity

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Mr. Dustin Kerr, Guidance Counselor
Mrs. Maureen Callas, School Nurse
Mrs. Kathleen Burik, School Nurse
Mrs. Nicole Fraser, Nurse Assistant

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Mrs. Diane Freese, Secretary - Team Discovery
Mrs. Katie Herman, Secretary - Team Curiosity

WELCOME STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

Welcome to the 2017-2018 school year and the grand opening of the new Montour Elementary School. We are thrilled to welcome you to a new school year of learning and growing. The administration, faculty, and staff extend a warm welcome to all students and families entering our building. We take great pride in educating the children of the Montour community, providing many opportunities to learn and grow in a safe and caring environment. We set high expectations both academically and behaviorally for all of our students. We expect students to work hard and come to school each day with a positive attitude.

The information in this handbook has been compiled to help students and families become familiar with district and building policies. The handbook includes information regarding the scope of school programs and activities offered. Students and parents are expected to become acquainted with the district's core values, school rules and requirements. Parents are encouraged to take an active role in their child's education and stay connected with their child's teachers and administration whenever questions arise.

During the first few days of school a variety of forms will be sent home. Please be sure to complete and return them promptly. Many communications from the school will be emailed to you, therefore it is very important that you keep your contact information (phone number and email address) up-to-date in the Skyward Family Access Center. To access Skyward please visit www.montourschools.com and click the Skyward link on the home page.

Please read and discuss this handbook with your child so that you may become familiar with the expectations and responsibilities of the students. Thank you for your cooperation and we look forward to a wonderful new beginning at Montour Elementary School.

Sincerely,

Jason Shoaf and Jason Burik
Principal Principal

MONTOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT 2017 - 2018 CALENDAR

		<u>Teacher Days</u>	<u>Student Days</u>
August 29	Clerical Day/No Students	3	
August 30	Teacher In-Service/No Students		
August 31	Teacher In-Service/No Students		
September 1	Teacher In-Service/No Students		
September 4	Labor Day/No School		
September 5	Clerical Day/No Students		
September 6	First Day for Students	20	18
September 25	Open House - Elementary TBD, DEW Grades 7&8 (1 Hr. Early Dismissal for All)		
September 26	Open House - Elementary TBD, MHS & DEW Grades 5&6 (1 Hr. Early Dismissal for All)		
October 2	2 Hour Late Start for Students - Professional Development/Act 80	22	22
October 30	2 Hour Late Start for Students - Professional Development/Act 80		
November 6	Parent/Teacher Conferences - Act 80 Day/No Students	19	18
November 7	Teacher In-Service/No Students		
November 22	Early Dismissal		
November 23 - 27	Thanksgiving Recess/No School		
December 4	2 Hour Late Start for Students - Professional Development/Act 80	15	15
December 21	Early Dismissal		
December 22 - 31	Holiday Recess/No School		
January 1	Holiday Recess/No School	21	21
January 15	Local Holiday/No School		
February 5	2 Hour Late Start for Students - Professional Development/Act 80	19	18
February 16	Teacher In-Service/No Students		
February 19	Local Holiday/No School		
March 12	2 Hour Late Start for Students - Professional Development/Act 80	20	20
March 28	Early Dismissal SNOW MAKE-UP DAY		
March 29-30	Spring Break/No School		
April 2	Spring Break/No School	20	20
May 4	Local Holiday/No School SNOW MAKE-UP DAY	21	21
May 15	Act 80 Day/No Students		
May 28	Memorial Day/No School		
June 13	Last Day for Students/Early Dismissal	10	9
June 14	Teacher Clerical/Last Day for Teachers		
TOTAL DAYS		190	182

<u>In-Service Days</u>	<u>Clerical Days</u>	<u>1 Hour Early Dismissal Days</u>	<u>Grading Periods</u>
Aug. 30	Aug. 29	Sept. 25 & 26	Nov. 9 - 1st nine weeks (45 days)
Aug. 31	Sept. 5		Jan. 26 - 2nd nine weeks (45 days)
Sept. 1	June 14	<u>Early Dismissal Days</u>	April 6 - 3rd nine weeks (45 days)
Nov. 7		Nov. 22	June 13 - 4th nine weeks (45 days)
Feb. 16	<u>Act 80</u>	Dec. 21	Dec 5 - END OF 1ST TRIMESTER (60)
	Nov. 6	March 28	March 13 - END OF 2ND TRIMESTER (60)
<u>Local Holidays</u>	May 15	June 13	JUNE 13- END OF 3RD TRIMESTER (60)
Jan. 15	<u>Snow Make-Up Day(s)</u>		Homecoming game/dance - Sept. 29, 30
Feb. 19	March 28	<i>If March 28 is needed for a make up day, March 28</i>	Graduation - June 13
May 4	May 4	<i>will be a full day and March 29 will be a 1/2 day</i>	Kennywood School Picnic - TBD

2 Hr Late Start - Staff Development/Act 80

Oct. 2	Feb. 5
Oct. 30	March 12
Dec. 4	

Calendar is subject to change. Approval Date: 2/23/2017



District Values

PUTTING CHILDREN FIRST

We are devoted to knowing the needs of every child and to tailoring our decisions to best serve the children in such a way that each learner is afforded the opportunity to achieve her or his full potential.

“The well-being of children above all else!”

We are committed to knowing the needs of every child and to make decisions that best serve all children.

SUPPORTING A GROWTH MINDSET

We believe that all people have the potential of limitless growth, unique ingenuity and expanding intelligence through inspired dedication to the principles of hard work, resilience, persistence and personal responsibility.

“Effort produces results!”

We believe that the principles of hard work; resilience, persistence and personal responsibility lead to a life of limitless personal growth, and expanding intelligence.

CREATING A LEARNING CULTURE

We are committed to stimulating empowered learning opportunity for all those we serve through a culture delineated by reflection, flexibility, engagement and personalization.

“Leading in the age of empowerment!”

We believe in a learning culture founded on the principles of reflection, engagement, empowerment and personal responsibility.



Personal Values

HONESTY

As members of the Montour Education Community we commit to conduct reflective of the highest moral standard and in so doing we pledge to be straightforward, fair and compassionately direct using truth as a base for all interaction.

“Make honor a matter of daily living!”

We are truthful in our interaction with each other, complete our obligations, and hold each other and ourselves accountable for decisions and actions.

RESPECT

As members of the Montour Education Community we pledge to honor all people by building a foundation of trust based upon an ethos of listening, seeking to understand, accepting differences and at all circumstances treating everyone with dignity.

“Treat others as we expect to be treated!”

We operate in the spirit of cooperation by keeping promises and honoring human dignity through the acceptance of individual differences.

INTEGRITY

As members of the Montour Education Community we pledge to conduct reflecting an ethic of moral behavior in all of our decisions at all times.

“Do the right thing!”

We pledge unwavering ethical, legal, and socially moral responsibility at all times

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Montour School District is to provide an exemplary and challenging educational experience that enables all students to achieve maximum potential, to respect self and others, to become a responsible and productive citizen in a global society and to develop a lifelong enthusiasm for learning.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Students are encouraged to thoroughly read the information presented in this handbook. You will be held responsible for knowing the contents of this code. At the start of the school year, and when deemed necessary, all students will be addressed, in mass, to review the code of conduct. A copy of the code of conduct will be posted on the school website.

Students are encouraged to work with their school counselor or the principal whenever there is a concern regarding the contents of this handbook. Student input is imperative and should be accomplished by working with the above mentioned individuals.

REVISION STATEMENT

Revisions to this handbook may be made during the school year as the result of Board policies and/or building procedures implemented after the date of publication. In such cases, students and their parents will be advised of additions and deletions and their impact on students' safety and conduct via verbal or written communication.

INCIDENTS NOT COVERED BY GUIDELINES

It is imperative to realize when dealing with students in the various situations that may occur that it is not possible to foresee all types of incidents that might occur. This list of aggravating and mitigating circumstances and infractions may not be complete. If a situation, which is not listed, should occur, the school official will use best judgment in placing the infraction in a specific level and then following through with specific consequences.

Montour Elementary School School Information

Bus Arrival / Student Drop-off	8:30 AM – 8:45 AM
Starting Time	8:45 AM
Tardy	8:46 AM
Student Dismissal	3:15PM - 3:30 PM

Attendance Policy

One of the greatest obstacles facing schools is the high rate of absenteeism. Students who are frequently absent miss important instruction and acquisition of skills, have fewer social opportunities, lack confidence and have a higher dropout rate when compared to students who attend school consistently. According to Pennsylvania State Law and Students Rights and Responsibility Regulations (Students Rights and Responsibility #12.200), all students are expected to attend school regularly to benefit from the instructional program and to develop habits of punctuality, self-discipline, and responsibility. Attending school is not only a privilege, it is an obligation. It is compulsory.

School attendance is the responsibility of the student, parents, guardians, community members, and the school district. When a student is absent from school, it is the duty of the parents or guardians to promptly provide a written explanation of the student's absence.

Excused Absences

A maximum of ten (10) parent/guardian notes can be used to verify an excused absence. Retroactive excuses submitted after the three (3) day period will not be honored. Parent/guardian notes submitted after the tenth excused absence will not be honored and the student's absence from school will be coded as unlawful. Excused absences will not be considered for perfect attendance. Written Statement Required for All Absences. **Upon return from an absence from school for any reason, the student shall present to the Attendance Secretary a written statement, signed by the student's parent/guardian, giving the date of the absence and reason for the absence. If the written statement is not presented within three (3) days of the student's return to school, the absence shall be considered as an unlawful absence.** Additionally, the school administration may require that a student provide a medical statement or excuse from a licensed practitioner of the

healing arts for every absence from school subsequent to that student having accumulated absences of ten (10) school days in any school term. Failure to provide the requested medical excuse may result in such absence being classified as unlawful.

Unlawful Absences

Pennsylvania law states that all absences should be treated as unlawful until the school district receives a written excuse explaining the reason(s) for an absence. Parents/guardians and students should submit the written explanation within three (3) calendar days of the absence and should be informed that if they fail to provide a written excuse within three (3) days of the absence, the absence would be permanently counted as unlawful. An unlawful absence is considered to be illegal if the student is of compulsory school age 16 years or younger.

Definition of Truancy

Three (3) or more school days of unexcused absence during the current school year by a child subject to the compulsory school attendance law.

Definition of Habitual Truancy

Six (6) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a child subject to the compulsory school attendance law.

Tardy Students

All students must report to the office with a parent if they have arrived late, prior to going to the classroom. A note from the parent or legal guardian is necessary for tardy students. The note will be presented at the office upon arrival and should include a reason for being tardy. Students are considered tardy when they are not in homeroom by 8:45AM.

Attendance Letters

As a student accumulates absences and tardies, attendance letters will be sent home as a written notice of that child's attendance.

First Absence = Parent is emailed

Second Absence = Parent is emailed

Three Unexcused Absences = Parent is emailed, certified letter is mailed home and parent is invited to attend an attendance improvement meeting.

Sixth Unexcused Absence = Magistrate's office or Children Youth Families (CYF) may be notified.

Student Attendance Requirements

All absences are considered either excused or unexcused and will be considered class absences under the following definitions.

1. Reasons for excused absences are:
 - Physician's excuse (from state licensed practitioners)
 - Illness
 - Quarantine
 - Death in the family
 - Impassable roads
 - Recognized religious holiday services
 - Health-related appointments
 - Court appearances
 - School Board sanctioned absences
 - Emergency reason (at the discretion of the principal)
 - School Board approved trips

2. The following reasons are considered illegal and unexcused absences in accordance with the Pennsylvania State Attendance Laws:
 - Truancy
 - Missing the school bus
 - Trips not approved in advance
 - Shopping
 - Slept in
 - Hunting, fishing, sporting events
 - Birthdays or other celebrations
 - Employment
 - Excuses saying "personal" or "needed at home"
 - Take your child to work day
 - Any other reason not listed in the legal excuse grouping

Homebound Instruction

A child of school age enrolled in the public schools, who is homebound and unable to attend the public schools as determined by a medical examination and who is receiving approved homebound instruction or instruction in the home, shall be counted for attendance purposes as if in regular school attendance. During the time such homebound student is able to receive instruction in the home, the district or intermediate unit or both shall provide such instruction in the home. The parent/guardian must secure a Home Bound Instruction Form from the

Main Office for the physician to complete. The form must be returned to the Administration. All home bound assignments, books, materials, and return of materials must be coordinated through the Guidance Office.

Dental and Medical Appointment

Students who wish to leave the school for dental or medical appointments are required to bring a note from the parent/guardian or appointment card from the physician to the Main Office for written approval by the Administrator/Support Personnel to be excused from class. This should be done before the Homeroom bell on the day of the appointment. Students/parents/guardians are asked to schedule medical appointments after school as often as possible. For early morning appointments, the request from the parent/guardian may be submitted the day prior to the appointment. The approved excuse will be taken to the Attendance Secretary, where the student's name is entered on the sign-out sheet and an Excusal Form is given to the student. The student should request that the physician sign, date, and list the time of the appointment. This form must be returned to the Attendance Secretary upon the student's return to school, or the absence from school will be considered unlawful. When a student returns from an appointment, he/she will receive an Admit Slip to enter class from the Attendance Secretary. This Admit Slip should be retained by the student and should be presented to the teacher whose class the student reports to first. Students are expected to return to school from an appointment in a reasonable amount of time.

Early Arrivals

For safety reasons, students ARE NOT to be dropped off at the school prior to the designated Bus Arrival/Student Drop-off times.

Early Releases

A note signed by the parent or legal guardian is necessary in order for a student to be dismissed early during a school day. Notes should also be provided if parents wish to pick up children at the end of the school day. If there is no note from the parent, the student will be put on his/her regular bus. ***All early releases must occur prior to 3:00, so as to not disrupt the dismissal process.*** The note should be presented to the student's homeroom teacher and should include the following:

1. Date
2. Name of person who will be coming for the student
3. Time of the early dismissal
4. Reason for early dismissal
5. Parent or legal guardian's signature

NOTE: The parent or adult who comes for the student will be required to show picture

identification and sign for release of the student.

There will be no scheduled bus passes or daily changes to the student's assigned bus. Bus passes will only be permitted in emergency situations. Students are not permitted to ride home on a different bus for purposes other than emergencies. A note or phone call must be given stating the nature of the emergency.

Early Dismissal Days

There are four early dismissal days indicated on the 2016-17 school calendar. On those days, students are released 3 hours earlier than the typical dismissal times at each building. Expect buses to arrive at their stops at the end of the day, 3 hours earlier than a full school day.

There are 1-hour early dismissal days for Open House. You should expect students to arrive to their bus stops an hour earlier than they typically would.

Please refer to the School District Calendar for the above mentioned dates.

Please note:

- *A student missing three or more hours of the school day will be marked one-half day absent.*
- **Students are required to bring in an excuse within three school days of the absence. All absences are considered unexcused until a valid and legal excuse is received by the school.**

Special note regarding attendance awards:

Perfect Attendance is defined by a student having no tardies, no early releases, and no absences. Students must be present for the *entire school day*, every day.

Visitor/Security Information

Doors will remain locked throughout the day. *All visitors must sign in using our School Check-In procedures at the security desk upon arrival to the school.* All visitors will need to *provide a valid photo ID* that will be used to perform a child abuse background check on anyone that intends on entering the building. A visitor's pass will be printed, displaying a photo of the visitor and their reason for visit. This pass must be worn and visible at all times. We ask that parents picking up children for dismissal at the end of the day do not arrive until 3:15 P.M.

For the safety and security of all students, the following guidelines are mandatory for all visitors:

- All visitors must sign in at the security window upon arrival to the school.
- All visitors must wear a visitor's pass that is visible at all times
- No visitor is permitted to leave the lobby/office area without a security guard, teacher, or principal escort.
- All visitors must sign out using the School Check In procedures

Failure to comply with the above guidelines may result in removal from the building for an amount of time to be determined by the building principal and security staff.

Student Records

Special information is made available upon request. Results of psychological reports and special education information are contained in files kept in the Pupil Services Department. Special education information is also contained in separate building files. These files are confidential and can be accessed only by appropriate personnel. Parents and guardians have the right to review all files (the records policy) and, if necessary, request that certain material be deleted from the student's file. No individual or agency outside the school system will be permitted to inspect the child's record without written parental permission.

Should parents wish to examine their child's record file at any time, they may arrange to do so by making an appointment with the school principal or counselor.

Registration Requirements

A child entering a Montour school for the first time must be five years of age by September 1st or fulfill the requirements outlined in the Early Admission of Student Policy # 201.1. The following documents for the child are required at registration:

1. Proof of Age (Original Birth Certificate)
2. Three Proofs of Residency
3. Immunization Documentation
4. A signed statement about the student's disciplinary record

A packet of forms will be given out at registration. These forms will need to be completed and returned to the registrar at the Central Administrative Offices at the Montour High School campus as soon as possible. Registration forms are also available on the Montour School District website at www.montourschools.com.

Change of Contact Information

A change in phone number or email address should be reported to the school as soon as

possible to ensure that parents/guardians can be notified in the event of an emergency. ***Parents should update their Skyward account with their most current phone number and email address.***

If a change of address occurs, the Change of Address form (located on the district website registration page) must be completed, and new proofs of residency must be submitted.

Release of Records for Transferring Students

All student records are kept confidential. Student records will only be released upon receiving written permission from the parent and/or legal guardian. Records will not be released directly to the parents/guardians. Copies of all student records will be forwarded directly to the new school district once a release of records consent form is received.

Withdrawals

Parents/guardians who wish to withdraw a student from the district must complete the form provided on the Montour School District website. For student records to be released to another school district, a release of records request must be received from the requesting school district. Please allow the school district sufficient time to process your requests and prepare the student's records for release.

Medical and Health Information

The Montour School District attempts to provide an environment in which the child will be safe from accidents. If a minor accident occurs, the school nurse or school personnel will administer first aid. The parent/guardian will be notified if further attention is needed. *The school nurse is available for the care of accidents and illness that occur during school hours.*

Emergency Cards

Should your child become ill or be injured at school, it is essential that we contact you or a responsible friend or relative. The school nurse or secretary will call and ask you to come and take the child home or for medical treatment if necessary (**IF YOUR CHILD SEEMS TO BE ILL IN THE MORNING - PLEASE KEEP HIM/HER HOME!**). Please update emergency information as needed.

Medication Policy

Medication cannot be administered at school without a written note from the doctor. Administering medication during school hours is strongly discouraged because of safety concerns about students forgetting to take it, having a reaction to the medication or other students taking it.

Medication Policy requires:

1. A written doctor's order submitted *annually* for each medication.
2. A written parental permission (forms available).
3. All medication must be in the original bottle with proper label attached.
4. Students are NOT to transport medication to school.

Parents should be aware that many children take medication or cough drops to school and self-medicate. Children often share the medicine. The nurses are concerned that cough drops can become lodged in the throat. If your child's throat is extremely sore or if your child is coughing constantly, keeping them at home to not infect others would be reasonable.

Fevers

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Pennsylvania Department of Health Guidelines, children need to stay home from school until they are fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications (Tylenol, Motrin, etc.). A temperature of 100 degrees or more is considered a fever.

Health Screenings

Pennsylvania's school immunization requirements can be found in 28 PA.CODE CH.23 (School Immunization)

All immunizations and medical forms must be completed prior to August 1 to be permitted entry.

Immunization Requirements

All grades K-12

4 doses of tetanus if the series was started from birth through 6 years of age, (1 dose of tetanus after 4th birthday) 3 doses if series started after 7 years of age
4 doses of diphtheria if the series was started from birth through 6 years of age, (1 dose after 4th birthday) 3 doses if series started after age 7
4 doses of polio
2 doses of measles
2 doses of mumps
1 dose of rubella
3 doses of hepatitis B
2 doses of Varicella (chicken pox) or written statement from physician/designee indicating month and year of disease or serologic proof of immunity

School Health Services

EXAMS/SCREENINGS REQUIRED BY LAW

Physical/Medical* – Kindergarten or 1st, 6th and 11th grade

Dental* – Kindergarten or 1st, 3rd and 7th grade

Hearing** – Kindergarten, grade 1, 2, 3, 7, 11

Vision** – All grades

Height/Weight/BMI** – All grades

Color Vision** – Kindergarten or 1st

**Private dental and physical exam forms are available upon request from school. Please ask for them before you schedule your appointments. You will be notified of the school dental and physical exam dates.

Head Lice Treatment

The following is suggested if your child is found to have head lice:

- Parent/guardian **MUST** notify the school district immediately. This allows for proactive treatment measures to be put in motion.
- Wash the child's hair with a pediculicide (head lice) shampoo.
- Remove all lice nits (eggs).
- Soak hairbrushes and combs in hot water or pediculicide shampoo for 10 minutes.
- Machine wash, in hot water, bed linens, towels, and clothing most recently worn (including hats, hair bands, sweaters, and jackets). Dry at least 20 minutes on hot cycle in dryer.
- Vacuum mattresses, upholstery (couches and stuffed chairs), and carpets. Throw away the vacuum bag.
- Place any stuffed toys and pillows that can't be washed in a dark, tightly sealed plastic bag for 2 weeks.

Teach your child the importance of not sharing combs, hair brushes, headbands, hats, caps, and pillows. Your child can return to school when all nits (eggs) are removed. ***The school***

nurse must check each child before being allowed to return to the classroom. Please call your child's school to schedule the head check. Also, be advised that a parent/guardian must bring your child to be checked. Do not send the child to school on the bus.

Your child should be back in school within 3 school days or the days can be counted as unexcused absences. Once your child has had head lice, check your child's hair every day until it is time to retreat the hair – usually 7 to 10 days. Remove any nits you find. After re-treatment, check your child's hair regularly.

Please refer to the Montour School District's website under the Nursing Services tab for more information.

Elevators

Use of the elevators is limited to those students who have a doctor's excuse or permission from the school nurse.

Food Service Program

Nutrition Inc. is the District's food service provider. Cafeteria personnel prepare hot breakfast and lunch menus for students who choose to purchase at school. Students have the option of bringing a packed lunch or purchasing a lunch. Parents/guardians are urged to send nutritious items, such as a sandwich, yogurt, fruit and vegetable sticks for lunch.

Cafeteria

Our cafeteria will offer a hot lunch for \$2.60 per day. Breakfast will also be provided for \$1.25. Menus will be posted to the district website each month. The children who choose to carry their lunches may purchase milk or other drinks in the cafeteria.

School Lunch Account - SchoolCafe

The Montour School District uses the SchoolCafe.com service which gives you the option to prepay for your child's school breakfast, lunch and/or a la carte food items using your credit or debit card.

Features of the Program:

- Spending History- Parents can view a 7 day history of student purchases.
- Low Balance Email Notification – Parents can receive email notification when their

student's account balance is low.

- Smart Pay - Set accounts to automatically replenish
- Expired Credit Card Notification – Parents can receive email notification prior to credit card expiration.
- There is a transaction fee each time you add money to your account.

How to Enroll:

1. Visit the District Food Services webpage to Register for an Account.
2. Create an account - you will need your child's school name, grade level, birth date and district ID number.
3. Provide debit or credit card information.
4. Select the automatic pre-payment option if desired.
5. When making payments, please verify that the correct school is listed for your student. If it is not the correct school, please change it. Otherwise your money will not be applied correctly.

Free and Reduced Price Meals

Under the federally funded National School Breakfast and Lunch program, free and reduced price breakfasts and lunches are available to those who qualify. *Applications for Free & Reduced Price Meals are available on the district website or upon request in the school offices.* Only one application is needed for both the breakfast and lunch program. Families that believe they are eligible should complete one application per family and return it to the school cafeteria. All questions must be completed on the application.

If an application is needed during the school year, it may be obtained from the office in your school building.

During the month of September, only those students who were eligible for Free & Reduced Price breakfasts or lunches last year in the Montour School District will be given breakfast or lunch free or reduced while a NEW application is being processed. New applicants will not receive free or reduced price meals until their applications have been processed and approved.

Extra-Curricular Activities

In addition to the daily scholastic schedules, there are times during the year when assemblies, intramurals, and other extra-curricular activities are offered to our students. Announcements will be made to those grade levels involved.

Party Invitations

Students are not permitted to distribute party invitations in school unless all students in the class are receiving invitations. The school does not provide contact information of students to others for this or any other purpose.

Birthday Treats

Due to various student health concerns if your child wishes to celebrate their birthday with their homeroom class we ask that it be a nonfood item. Some suggested items include pencils, crayons, erasers, mini notepads, bookmarks, something that all the kids can sign such as a birthday shirt/sweatshirt, tote bag, stuffed animal etc. (Pinterest has many ideas and suggestions!). If a food item is sent in, it will be sent home.

Personal Property

The school cannot assume any responsibility for personal belongings brought to school by any child. Students **may not** bring games or toys to school.

Student Assistance Program (SAP)

The Student Assistance Program (SAP) program is designed to help students who have problems which interfere with success at school. Sometimes students need help to cope with these problems. The Student Assistance Team at Montour is made up of a concerned group of teachers, counselors, and principals, who are trained to help and are ready to assist with student problems in a positive, direct manner. Please see the district website for the most updated information.

Custody Agreements

In some families there are special circumstances that prohibit school personnel from releasing children to certain family members or other adults. Please contact the school if there are special circumstances in your family about the release of your child. It is important to realize that a child's birth parent has the right to pick up their child, see their records, and communicate with school personnel unless there are court orders dictating otherwise. A copy of such court orders must be on file at the school before the school can comply.

In cases of blended families, a non-custodial parent may request conferences, grade reports, calendars, etc. Please contact the school counselor or principal if there are court orders prohibiting this sharing of information.

If a custody situation is present for your child, please bring in a copy of the court ordered custody agreement to the main office.

Cell Phones

At their discretion, parents may permit students to have cell phones to be used for emergency purposes only (*cell phones must NOT be used in the school building during school hours or on buses*). These items must be kept in the student's backpack at all times. The school assumes no responsibility for broken, lost, or stolen personal items.

School Security / Surveillance Equipment

In various areas of the elementary school security/surveillance equipment is installed. This equipment serves multiple purposes, but more specifically, to assist in the safety and welfare of students and staff. Any attempt to tamper, modify, manipulate, or destroy any parts of the equipment shall be punishable by both school and criminal law.

Montour Elementary Security personnel are on-site to assist with supervising students specific to student safety. Montour Elementary students are expected to comply with all verbal and non-verbal directives that are given by Montour Elementary Security.

Safety Drills

Fire drills are held regularly to comply with state law. When the alarm rings, everyone must leave the building quietly. The students are to move quickly, but walk. Teachers will lead students to an assigned area and remain there until the fire drill is complete. At the completion of the fire drill, the students will return to their classrooms. All fire drills are conducted quickly and in a serious manner.

Weather drills are held regularly to comply with state law. When the alarm rings, everyone must quietly evacuate to an assigned area of the building. The students are to move quickly, but walk. Teachers will lead students to an assigned area, assume the proper position, and remain there until the drill is complete. At the completion of the drill, the students will return to their classrooms. All weather drills are conducted quickly and in a serious manner.

Lock Down drills are done throughout the year as practice for staff and students in the event that the building would need to be locked down. During a lockdown, no guests will be permitted in the building until the lockdown is over. Lockdown procedures are maintained by the building crisis response team and are not shared with the public.

Conferences

We encourage you to arrange to meet your child's teacher early in the school year. The district will have a parent teacher conference day early in the school year, please check the district calendar for the exact date for this event. Every teacher has one period per day set

aside for class preparation and/or parental conferences. If it is inconvenient for you to meet with a teacher during this time, it may be possible for us to schedule a meeting time at 8:00 a.m. or 3:30 p.m. Please give teachers a few weeks to get acquainted with the children, unless there is some serious matter which you feel cannot wait.

School Closings

For school closing information or delays in starting times, visit the Montour School District Webpage www.montourschools.com or listen to the following radio stations or TV stations for up to the minute information: **1020-AM, 1410-AM, KDKA, WTAE, or WPXI**. The District sends out an Alert Call to the phone number listed in the Skyward Family Access Center as well.

There is always the possibility of an unforeseen emergency which could cause the school to close and make it necessary for all children to be sent home (heating malfunction, water line breaks, sewage problems, weather and road conditions, etc.) In cases of an extreme emergency, all children may be evacuated to an alternative location.

An alert call will be sent out by the District with specific instructions for parents. Students will be kept in an alternate location, if need be, until they can be reunited with a parent or their designee.

Volunteers/Clearances

Any person wishing to volunteer in the schools is required to have the following clearances:

Act 151 – PA Child Abuse Clearance*

Act 34 – PA Criminal History Check*

Act 114 – FBI Criminal History Report*

*Clearances are valid for 5 years.

Those wishing to volunteer must annually submit the Volunteer Application to the Human Resources Department. Please visit the Human Resources page on the district website to access required forms and view procedures.

Grades and Homework

Grading System

GRADE PERCENTAGE	EXPLANATION
A 90 - 100	Superior Work
B 80 - 89	Above Average
C 70 - 79	Average
D 60 - 69	Below Average
F 59 and below	Failing

Unified Arts Classes:

Mastered = (+)

Progressing = (=)

Needs Improvement = (-)

Skyward

Skyward is the district Student Information System. The Family Access Center is an online service where parents can view real-time grades and attendance. The student/parent handbook, media release form, internet usage form, and Google chromebook form will be housed in Skyward. Parents will have to select “No” if they wish to opt their child out from from one of the items mentioned above. Contact the technology department at 412-490-6500 ext. 6502 or skyward@montourschools.com with any questions.

Google Classroom

Google Classroom is a web-based platform that integrates Google Apps for Education with all Google Apps services, including Google Docs, Sheets, Sites, Gmail, and Google Calendar. Classroom saves time and paper, and makes it easy to create classes, distribute assignments, communicate, and stay organized. All students in grades 3 – 12 in the Montour School District receive Google accounts. Google Classroom will serve as the Learning Management System for all teachers and students.

Homework

Homework assignments will vary with the subject area and grade level of the child. It is intended to reinforce what has been taught during the school day, and give your child practice of a newly learned skill. You should encourage your child to spend time each evening going over the day’s lessons and preparing for classes the next day. No homework will be assigned on Friday that is due on Monday.

Make-Up Work

Students are required to make up schoolwork if they are absent due to illness or other reasons. The classroom teacher will prepare the work and set appropriate limits for the time that the work should be completed. If a student is absent from school, parents/guardians can arrange for schoolwork to be sent home with another student or picked-up in the office. Parents/guardians need to telephone the school by 9:30 A.M. to request make-up work. ***This is recommended for students that will have an extended absence (beyond 2 consecutive days).***

Putting Children First: At Montour we are devoted to knowing the needs of every child and to tailoring our decisions to serve the children in such a way that each learner is afforded the opportunity to achieve her or his full potential.

Creating Learning Culture: At Montour we are committed to stimulating empowered learning opportunity for all those we serve through a culture delineated by reflection, flexibility, engagement and personalization.

Supporting a Growth Mindset: At Montour we believe that all people have the potential of limitless growth, unique ingenuity and expanding intelligence through inspired dedication to the principles of hard work, resilience, persistence and personal responsibility.

- Learning the essential content and skills is the best preparation for the world beyond.
- The goal is that all students learn the content, not just the ones who can learn on the uniform timeline. Curriculum goals do not require that every individual reach the same level of proficiency on the same day, only that every student achieves the goal.
- Grades are not rewards, punishments, motivators, or compensation. They are communication of learning that has been demonstrated.
- Second-chance learning is inherent in the academic process. In the assessment process, learning is co-owned by teachers and students and therefore should lead to re-teaching and practice opportunities.
- All students have second-chance learning opportunities, regardless of their grade on the original assessment. Educators shall support students who are seeking excellence. Those students that score below a 70% will be required to complete some form of remediation and retest until they demonstrate a proficiency level at or above 70%.
- To be effective, second-chance learning cannot consist solely of a retest. Academic gains result from a combination of remediation and retesting.
- The demands of second-chance learning must be shared by the teacher and the student. Teachers provide the opportunity, and students take on the responsibility of completing some corrective action and demonstrate their level of mastery of their learning.

- Once it is determined that the student will retake an assessment, the teacher will either meet with the student or provide some additional practice for the student to complete that will help the teacher and student identify any content and/or skills that the student needs retaught or addressed. The teacher will then determine the course of remediation and set a timeline for completion of the remediation and the reassessment.

Report Cards

All grades, K-4 will utilize a Common Core standards-based report card. These reports will be issued to students and parents on a *trimester* basis.

The purpose of the standards-based report card is to provide more detailed and specific feedback to parents regarding their child's progress towards mastery of Pennsylvania Core Standards at their current grade level.

There are several advantages and benefits to using standards based report cards, including:

- Clear expectations so that teachers, students and parents know what is expected to achieve mastery.
- Consistency between classrooms in terms of student expectations, up-to-date knowledge on what students know and are able to do.
- More detailed information about the actual skills and concepts the child has mastered.

Throughout each trimester, teachers will collect evidence that documents a student's progression toward mastery. The teacher's collection of evidence may include, but is not limited to, the following: tests, quizzes, projects, conversation (teacher commentary) anecdotal notes, observations, writing samples, journal writing, etc. The types of evidence and tangible products that can be used to show a student's progression, and subsequent mastery of a particular standard are endless.

The standards-based report card represents an ongoing reporting tool documenting student mastery of the Montour curriculum and state standards. The information documented will guide instruction, improve student achievement and ultimately provide a better education for the learner.

In addition to the standards students will also receive a traditional grade in each subject area that will be reinforced by skill mastery ratings and evidence portfolios.

Skill Ratings:

- + Mastered
- = Progressing
- Needs Improvement

Standardized Testing

Benchmark assessments are a series of tests that measure your student's general knowledge in reading, language usage, and math. The tests are given to students throughout the course of the school year. The test results provide a measurement of development of basic skills and are available to the parents/guardians upon request. The results are used to analyze a student's progress and to carefully consider the additional learning experiences a student may need. These tests results are used to supplement, not replace, teacher judgment. They are used to make continually academic decisions for your child.

Third and Fourth grade students take the PSSA test in the late spring. The tests evaluate learning in reading, writing, math, and science (grade 4) and are based on the PA Common Core Standards. The scores are used to see how children are progressing and to evaluate our school's instructional program. Student attendance on testing days is very important. No Child Left Behind, the federal education law, requires that districts have a 95 percent participation rate on these tests. Absent students will be tested on a test make-up day. Students' results are mailed directly to the parents or guardians.

Discipline

Code of Conduct

The Montour School District strives to educate on both an individual and collective basis. Therefore, the district's procedure promotes respect for others as well as respect for authority and established standards.

Discipline is the responsibility of the total school community. Everyone in the school community has the right to expect that the school environment shall be safe, well organized, and conducive to learning. Disruption of the learning environment through inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated.

Student Responsibilities

Students attend school so they may learn to become productive members of society. Positive social behavior is expected of Montour School District students at all times. Therefore, each student should:

1. Know all rules and regulations for student behavior and ask questions if they do not understand a rule.
2. Accept responsibilities for his/her actions.
3. Recognize that by law, the teacher serves in place of the parent while the student is in school.

4. Maintain standards of hygiene and dress that meet the reasonable standards of health and safety so as to not cause disruption to the educational process.
5. Respect and protect school property and the property of others.
6. Deliver and return all school/parent communications as requested.
7. Be Honest and Ethical.
8. Demonstrate respectful behavior to all school personnel and visitors.
9. Use respectful language with others.
10. Respect the personal space of others.

In addition to the Student Responsibilities listed above, the following Rules of Conduct should be followed at all times:

Cafeteria Conduct

1. Students are to follow the directions of the cafeteria supervisors in a respectful manner at all times.
2. Good manners for eating and socializing should be practiced at all times.
3. Excessive noise is not permitted. Conversations are limited to the people sitting near you at your table.
4. No sharing or trading of food is permitted.
5. Students should make all efforts to keep the tables and floor clean.

Hallway Conduct

1. Walk quietly to your assigned destination.
2. Do not distract other students/classrooms.
3. Do not touch student displays, artwork, or papers on walls.
4. Absolutely NO RUNNING in the hallways.

Playground Conduct

1. Follow the direction of the playground supervisors at all times.
2. Remain in the designated playground areas at all times, do not enter any parking areas.
3. When playing games follow the rules and demonstrate teamwork and sportsmanship.
4. No Physical Contact sports may be played at any time.
5. Appropriate shoes that are secure must be worn to participate in recess.

School Bus Conduct

1. Students will be monitored by both audio and visual recordings.
2. Follow the directions of the bus driver at all times.
3. No Food or Drink is permitted on the bus.
4. Speak at a normal volume to the students around you, no yelling or calling for students in other sections of the bus.

5. No student has the right to any particular seat (unless they are assigned to it by school personnel). Students are not permitted to save seats or demand a seat from another student.
6. Once seated, the student must remain in that seat for the duration of the trip and not move to another seat.
7. Bus windows are to be opened only with the bus driver's permission. Hands, arms, heads and all items/objects should stay inside the window at all times.

NOTE: The School Code permits drivers to stop only at designated bus stops. Please do not request additional stops to the driver.

There will be **no** scheduled bus passes or daily changes to the student's assigned bus. Bus passes will only be permitted in emergency situations. Students are not permitted to ride home on a different bus for purposes other than emergencies. A note or phone call must be given stating the nature of the emergency.

Students should arrive at their bus stops 5 minutes prior to the arrival time of the bus.

Tips for Safe Bus Riding

Before the bus arrives....

- Make sure you are waiting at your bus stop on time
- Stay off the road
- Wait in a safe place that can be seen by passing cars
- Be thoughtful and friendly to other students at the bus stop

When the bus arrives....

- Make sure that the bus comes to a complete stop before you go near it
- Get on the bus without pushing or shoving
- After getting on the bus, go directly to a seat and sit down
- Remain in that seat until you get off the bus. Do not change seats.

While you are on the bus....

- Bus conduct should emulate classroom conduct
- Obey the bus driver at all times
- Be courteous at all times
- Do not eat or drink on the bus
- Keep the bus clean

- Stay in your seat
- The driver is authorized to “assign” seats. Students are not permitted to save seats or demand a seat from another student.
- Keep heads, hands, and feet inside the bus. Bus windows are to be opened only with the bus driver’s permission.
- No smoking
- No profane language
- Do not throw objects or articles
- No loud, boisterous noise or shouting
- No fighting

CONSEQUENCES OF MISCONDUCT

The intent of applying consequences is to act as a deterrent to future, unacceptable behavior while serving as a learning experience for the student. Consequences are given on an individual basis and may not be consistent due to a student’s past history or the degree of the misconduct. The principal or their designee has the authority to assign consequences as warranted by the situation. Students exhibiting consistent negative behavior may be placed on a behavior plan requiring a daily parental signature.

The following are possible consequences for inappropriate student behavior:

1. **A verbal warning**
2. **Parental contact by the teacher or principal (parental signature required)**
3. **A written assignment describing his/her actions and stating alternative, appropriate behaviors that can be followed.**
4. **Assigned seating in the cafeteria, school bus, or other area of concern.**
5. **Loss of extracurricular or nonacademic activities occurring on school property during or after school hours.**
6. **In the case of a bus referral, a student may be suspended from the bus for duration of time determined by the principal.**
7. **Before, During or After School Detention (Reflective Lunch or Recess)**
8. **In or Out of School Suspension**

Additional disciplinary actions, as determined by the school principal may be implemented in addition or in lieu of the above consequences.

At the beginning of each school year, the principal or homeroom teacher will review the rules with all students in an age appropriate manner. Parents will be informed of serious violations of the rules or repeated minor violations either by the student’s classroom teacher or the school principal.

Interpretation of Various Offenses

- **Arson**--Refers to a student attempting to cause damage or destruction to property and/or placing another person in danger of death or bodily injury by igniting an object or causing an explosion.
- **Assault (on a student)**--Refers to one or more students' unlawful attempt to injure another student/students physically without physical retaliation by the victim. Students shall neither intentionally nor recklessly attempt to cause nor threaten to cause injury to another person or persons. Reasonable self-defense will not be considered physical retaliation.
- **Assault (on a staff member)**--Refers to one or more students' unlawful attempt to injure a member of the staff by attempting intentionally and/or recklessly to cause or threaten to cause injury.
- **Bomb Threats**--Refers to the act or involvement in the act of reporting a threat that could cause the evacuation of the building, place of assembly or facility of transportation.
- **Defiance**--Refusal to obey a direct, reasonable request from any staff member including teachers, administrators, secretaries, custodians, aides, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, etc. Reasonable is defined as that which will not threaten the health, safety or welfare of an individual student.
- **Disrespect**--Students and staff are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful (toward staff manner. However, students must understand that staff members are member) responsible for providing direction, correcting misbehaviors and giving directives. Although students may not agree with the directives, unless they are a threat to their health, safety or welfare, students must follow them without disrespectful gestures and/or language. A student who engages in disrespectful behaviors as indicated will be subject to Level II disciplinary actions.
- **Drug and Alcohol Violations**--School Policy is summarized in this document. Students involved in drug and alcohol policy violations will be disciplined according to the guidelines set forth in this policy.
- **Ethnic Intimidation**--School Policy provides that ethnic intimidation of any type is prohibited on school property and violators may be prosecuted. Ethnic intimidation is defined as: A person commits the offense of ethnic intimidation, if with malicious intention towards the race, color, religion or national origin of another individual or groups of individuals; he/she commits an offense under this act. This policy is summarized in this document.
- **Extortion**--Refers to the act of obtaining money or property from an unwilling person by physical force, intimidation, blackmail, ultimatum, threatened exposure of any secret tending to subject any person to hatred, contempt or ridicule, or wrongful use of actual or threatened force, violence or fear.
- **False Alarms**--Refers to students who intentionally pull emergency alarms and/or manipulate emergency or security alarms thus causing possible threat to the safety of those present in the school building.
- **Forgery**--Refers to the alteration or otherwise falsification of any school document or communication. Such communications include but are not limited to hall passes, tardy to school or absent from school excuses, early dismissal passes, request for temporary absence,

field trip requests, scheduling changes, dental or doctor appointments, request for educational trips or tours, permanent records, athletic eligibility, report cards, deficiency reports, discipline referrals, physical examination forms and identification requests by school personnel.

- **Harassment**--Refers to the use of force, touching, noise, coercion, threat intimidation, fear, obscene language, obscene gestures, suggestive sexual actions or verbalizations of any other unwanted contact or interaction with another person as part of an isolated incident or as actions that take place over time. For purposes of the student code of conduct, bullying is considered a form of harassment.
- **Inciting (so as to Cause a Riot)**--Refers to the use of activities that may pose threat to the health, safety, welfare and/or morals of others in the school and/or disrupts the educational environment.
- **Physical Altercation**--Refers to the act of engaging in inappropriate and/or physical contact.
- **Physical Fighting**--Refers to the act of two or more students hitting, punching or wrestling with each other with physical intent to harm as determined by an administration investigation.
- **Public Display of Affection**--Refers to visible and open displays of affection that involves but is not limited to kissing, caressing, embracing and/or other bodily contact.
- **Safety Violations**--Includes throwing snowballs or objects, refusing to wear safety equipment in shop, blatant disregard for safety procedures, horseplay.
- **Terroristic Threats**--A threat to commit any crime of violence with the purpose to terrorize or to cause evacuation of a building, place of assembly or facility of transportation or otherwise cause serious public inconvenience.
- **Theft**--Refers to illegal taking of money or materials belonging to any student, staff member or the Montour School District.
- **Threats (to staff)**--Language directed to a staff member that demonstrates intent to harm a staff member or their family.
- **Truancy**--Student is absent from school without parent/guardian permission and/or knowledge.
- **Under the Influence**--A student shall be considered “under the influence” of drugs and/or alcohol if he or she has consumed or used either of the above prior to, during, or after school or school-related activities and this is discovered while the student is on school property or attending school or school-related activities.
- **Vandalism**--Refers to the will damage or destruction of the beauty or value of property.
- **Verbal Altercation**--Refers to a loud shouting match or argument between/among students.
- **Weapons Policy**--School Policy provides that weapons of all types are prohibited on school property and violators may be prosecuted. Weapons are defined as listed, but not limited to: knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nun-chuck stick, firearm (pellet guns, BB guns, air soft guns, look-alike firearms), shotgun, rifle, explosive device, any tool, Bowie knife, Dirk knife, lock-blade knife, hunting knife, chains, brass knuckles, night sticks, ax handles, metal knuckles, straight razors, poisons, noxious, irritating or poisonous gases (mace), razor, loaded cane, sword cane, machete, tasers, or shockers or anything used to threaten and/or cause harm. This policy is summarized later in this document.

Dress Code

Dress regulations serve as a guide for students; no regulations, however, are as effective as the individual's good taste, which is, after all, the final criteria for an individual's appearance. A student's appearance will be a source of pride not only to the school, but to the individual and his/her family as well. Students are responsible to dress appropriately and will be held accountable. If a student is uncertain as to the appropriateness of clothing for school wear, he/she should check with the principal before wearing the clothing to school.

Out of respect to fellow students and faculty, all students are required to maintain their personal hygiene. Although this is no attempt to include all items, the following types of clothing will be excluded from what is considered acceptable dress by district students:

Footwear

1. Footwear must be worn at all times.
2. Footwear must be securely fastened.
3. No footwear is permitted which is a potential danger to the wearer or others.
4. No footwear is permitted which can cause damage to property.
5. Flip-flops (shower thongs) and slippers are not permitted.

If appropriate footwear is not worn (must be securely fastened, without heels), a student will be excluded from recess. Tennis shoes must be worn to participate in Physical Education class.

Clothing

1. Clothing that depicts, advertises or promotes any of the following is prohibited:
 - a. Violence
 - b. Tobacco, alcohol or drugs
 - c. Profane language
 - d. Ethnically or racially inappropriate themes
 - e. Obscene content
 - f. Gang related activities
 - g. Display of symbols referring to any of the above
2. Other:
 - a. Loose-fitting pants must be secured with a belt and must be worn at or above the hips.
 - b. To avoid accidental tripping or falls, pant legs are not permitted to be worn below the student's footwear.
 - c. The midriff, lower back, chest, sides of the body and/or undergarments may not be exposed during normal activity. Therefore, garments which are backless, strapless, sheer (see-through) are unacceptable.
 - d. Torn clothing is prohibited.
 - e. Shirts and blouses must be properly buttoned, tied or otherwise secured.
 - f. Clothing with writing across the buttocks is not permitted.

- g. Shorts and skirts must reach the length of the mid-thigh or the tips of the fingers (whichever is longer).
- h. Tank tops must have shoulders that are at least 2 inches in width and necklines must be no lower than the collarbone.
- i. Pajama bottoms, lounge pants and form fitting sweatpants are prohibited.
- j. Outerwear (coats) must be placed on coat hooks during the school day.
- k. Stretch and spandex or clothing so tight as to be excessively revealing is prohibited.

Headgear

The wearing of hats, caps, hoods, sweatbands or other head coverings is prohibited inside the school buildings.

Accessories

- 1. Any accessory such as jewelry with spikes, dog collars, wallet chains, chains worn as belts, that may cause injury to a student may not be worn at school, at school functions or on book bags.
- 2. Sunglasses are not permitted.
- 3. Wristbands are not permitted.
- 4. Any apparel, jewelry, accessory, notebook, or manner of grooming is prohibited which by virtue of color, arrangement, trademark or any other attribute that denotes, advocates, or promotes any of the following:
 - a. Membership in a gang
 - b. Drug, alcohol, or tobacco use
 - c. Violence or disruptive behavior
 - d. Offensive or profane language
 - e. Ethnically/racially inappropriate behavior
 - f. Display of symbols referring to any of the above

If there is a question as to the appropriateness of dress, the building administrators will make the final determination. Students not conforming to the Dress Code will be subject to the Montour School District's Elementary Discipline Code.

Policies

Internet Usage Policy

Students will have the opportunity to utilize the Internet during the course of the school year. **NO student will be permitted to use the INTERNET without a dated permission form signed by both the parent and the student.**

Photo Media Release

The Montour School district often takes photographs to use in our District publications, including but not limited to newspapers, newsletters, marketing materials, and the district website. We will be featuring school activities, which may include photographs of students and samples of their work. We will identify children by first name and last initial only, except where the name(s) might reasonably be expected to be published (recognition, awards, competition results, etc.).

Please review the attached Photo Media Release form and complete accordingly.

Weapons

The Montour School District provides a safe and secure school environment. Any student possessing a weapon in a school building, on school grounds, or on the school bus will receive out of school suspension and be recommended to the School Board for expulsion from the school. In addition, the incident will be reported to the local police. "Weapons" shall include, but not be limited to, any knife, cutting instrument or tool, firearm, shotgun, rifle, and other tool or instrument capable of inflicting serious bodily harm. Weapons violations will be handled as outlined by Montour School District Board of Education weapons policy.

EQUAL RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

The Montour School District is committed to providing a quality education for all students, regardless of their background. Thus, there is a commitment to provide a positive safe educational environment that is free of any form of discrimination, which provides equal access to curriculum, programs, services, instructional materials, and activities. In accordance with federal and state laws, the district is committed to maintain a school environment free of harassment based on race, color, religion, gender, ethnicity, national origin, age, sexual orientation, medical condition, disability (physical, mental, emotional, or learning) or any other legally protected classification. Harassment by staff members, students, vendors and other individuals at the school or school sponsored activities is strictly prohibited. The Montour School District requires the staff and students to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner with respect to their fellow staff members, students and school community members. Violations should be reported immediately to the building principal.

Educational Programs and Services

English as a Second Language (ESL) Services

If a student is determined to be in need of ESL instruction, the district provides, at no cost to the student and his/her family, ESL services which are provided by highly qualified and certified ESL teachers. These services will be delivered during the regular school day. Students, if eligible for this service, MUST receive it. ESL is considered to be a core curriculum by the PDE and the USDE. Staff members are expected to work collaboratively with the ESL teacher(s) to provide a seamless transition between regular education and ESL services. Any questions regarding this service should be directed to the building principal or the district ESL Coordinator.

Gifted Education Services Program¹

Those students who qualify for the gifted program in the Montour School District are serviced through a Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP's). Specially designed instruction may include independent projects, acceleration, mentors, and expansion of classroom curricula through enrichment. The gifted program is designed to be an extension of regular classroom learning and is intended to challenge and broaden the mind of the gifted student.

Mentally Gifted is defined as outstanding intellectual and creative ability; the development of which requires specially designed programs or support services, or both, not ordinarily provided in the regular education program. This term includes students who have an IQ of 130 or higher and when multiple criteria as set forth in the Pennsylvania Department of Education Guidelines indicate gifted ability. Determination of gifted ability will not be based on IQ score alone. A student with an IQ score lower than 130 may be admitted to gifted programs when other educational criteria in the profile of the student strongly indicate gifted ability.

PA Chapter 15 – Section 504

The Montour School District recognizes that some students have disabilities, which substantially limit their participation in, or access to, school programs but who do not need special education. These students may qualify for reasonable accommodations in the regular classroom under Section 504 – Rehabilitation Act and under Pennsylvania Chapter 15 Service Agreement. For information please contact the building principal or the guidance counselor.

1

**MONTOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANNUAL PUBLIC NOTICE 2017-18**

The Montour School District uses the following procedures for locating, identifying, and evaluating specified needs of school-aged students requiring special programs or services. These procedures are described in this notice as required by law. The District, as prescribed by Section 1402 of the School Code, routinely conducts screenings of a child's hearing acuity in grades Kindergarten, 1, 2, 3, 7, and 11. Visual acuity is screened in all grades annually. Speech and language skills are screened in Kindergarten and on a referral basis. New students are initially screened the year of admission. Gross motor and fine motor skills, academic skills, and social-emotional skills are assessed by classroom teachers on an ongoing basis. Other screening activities include the review of cumulative group-based achievement and ability data; health and attendance records; grades; and information shared by the parents. Specified needs from all of these screening sources are noted within the child's official file.

School records are always open and available to parents, and only to school officials who have legitimate "need to know" information about the student. Information from the records is released to other persons or agencies only with appropriate authorization that involves written signed permission by parents. Parents with concerns regarding their child may contact building principals at any time to request a screening or evaluation of their child, or by contacting the Pupil Services Department. (Names and phone numbers of the appropriate contacts are listed at the end of this notice.) Communication with parents and eligible students shall be in English or the native language of the parents. Screening information will be used by the Instructional Support Team or Student Assistance Team within the student's school to meet his or her specific needs, or to document the need for further evaluation. Instructional Support Team services are provided to students in grades Kindergarten to grade four. Student Assistance Team services are provided to students in grades five through 12. The pre-referral process identifies those students at-risk for academic or behavioral needs and includes parental involvement in making determinations as to whether a student may benefit from intervention services. Individual student plans are developed and monitoring of specific goals with data to determine student progress and efficacy of interventions are put into place. If a student is not making sufficient progress, a referral for evaluation may be issued by the school district or a parent may request a multidisciplinary evaluation at any time.

The Multidisciplinary Team consists of parents, teachers, a certified public school psychologist, other related service personnel, and persons familiar with the student's educational experience and cultural background. The evaluations conducted by the Team must be sufficient in scope and depth to provide information about the student's academic functioning, adaptive and social behavior,

learning problems, strengths, information obtained by the Instructional Support Team or Student Assistance Team, and information from the parents. After all evaluations are completed, an Evaluation Report (ER) will be compiled and include specific recommendations for the types of interventions necessary to deal with the student's specific needs. This evaluation will be completed and a report sent to the parents within **60 calendar days**. Parents are then invited to participate in a meeting where the results of the evaluation will be discussed. If the student meets criteria for the presence of a disability and need for specially designed instruction, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) will then be developed for specialized services for the student within **30 calendar days**. The IEP team must consist of: the student's parent(s), special education teacher, regular education teacher(s), and local education agency representative (LEA). The building principal, Director of Special Services, or Assistant Director of Special Services will serve as the chair/LEA, and a district psychologist, other specialists as needed, and other administrative staff when appropriate may attend. Prior to the initiation of services, parents will be presented with a Notice of Recommended Educational Placement, which explains the services and educational placement recommendations. Parental consent must be obtained before providing initial special education and related services. The Procedural Safeguards Notice describes the parents' rights and options if they disagree with the individualized program presented. When screening results suggest a student may be eligible for Gifted Education, the school district seeks parental consent to conduct a multidisciplinary evaluation. The initial evaluation is summarized in the Gifted Written Report (GWR) and used by the Gifted Individualized Education Program (GIEP) team to develop the GIEP. After the initial evaluation, students identified as mentally gifted are reevaluated before a change in educational placement is recommended or under recommendation of the GIEP team. The Notice of Recommended Assignment (NORA), signed by the parent, gives the school district permission to provide services.

Services for Eligible School-Age Students

The Montour School District provides a free, appropriate, public education to eligible students. To qualify as an eligible student, the child must be of school age, in need of specially-designed instruction, and meet eligibility criteria for one or more of the following physical or mental disabilities, as set forth in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act and Pennsylvania State Regulations: Autism, Deaf- Blindness, Deafness, Emotional Disturbance, Hearing Impairment, Intellectual Disability (formerly referred to as Mental Retardation), Multiple Disabilities, Orthopedic Impairment, Other Health Impairment, Specific Learning Disability, Speech or Language Impairment, Traumatic Brain Injury, or Visual Impairment including Blindness. The Montour School District provides a full range of placement options and services to eligible students. Options in the district range from supportive intervention in the regular classroom to itinerant, supplemental, or full-time levels of intervention, depending on the student's individual needs. Inclusive intervention practices are the first step in the continuum of placement options. Other

placement options to meet the student's needs may include services secured from the Intermediate Unit, another school district, an approved private school, or a community agency. Placement options provide for a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) for all eligible students. The District also provides related services such as, but not limited to: transportation, speech and language therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, nursing services, psychological services, social worker services, and paraeducator support. The following programs are currently provided within the District: Learning Support, Life Skills Support, Emotional Support, Autistic Support, Blind or Visually Impaired Support, Deaf and Hearing Impaired Support, Speech and Language Support, and Gifted Support. As evidence of the full continuum of services, educational placements outside of the District have included: Emotional Support at Pressley Ridge School, Pace School, Wesley Spectrum School Programs, and Therapeutic Learning Center at Family Links; Learning Support at Katherine Dean Tillotson School; Life Skills Support at Mon Valley School, Pathfinder School, and the Children's Institute; Blind or Visually Impaired Support at Western Pennsylvania School for the Blind; Deaf and Hearing Impaired Support at the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf and the DePaul School for Hearing and Speech; Autistic Support at Pathfinder School, Mon Valley School, Pressley Ridge Day School for Autism, Therapeutic Learning Center at Family Links, and Education Center at the Watson Institute; and Multiple Disabilities Support at the Children's Institute, and Pathfinder School.

Services for Students Identified as Homeless

The Montour School District follows all protections outlined in the McKinney Vento Act related to ensuring that any child identified as homeless has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education as provided to other children. The District implements child find activities for other students in addition to those identified as homeless such as wards of the state, highly mobile children, and migrant children in order to provide equal access to evaluations and services. Further information may be obtained by contacting the District's Pupil Services Department at 412-490-6500.

Services for Students in Nonpublic Schools

Parents of nonpublic school students who suspect that their child has a disability and is need of special education may request a multidisciplinary evaluation through a written request to the District's Pupil Services Department. Parents can obtain further information by contacting their child's school principal or the District's Pupil Services Department at 412-490-6500.

Services for Preschool Age Children

Act 212, the Early Intervention System Act, entitles all preschool age children with disabilities to appropriate early intervention services. Young children experiencing developmental delays or physical or mental disabilities are eligible for early intervention services including screening,

evaluation, individualized education program planning, and provision of appropriate programs and services. The Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare is responsible for providing services to infants and toddlers, defined as children from birth through two years of age. Contact the Alliance for Infants and Toddlers at 2801 Custer Avenue, 2nd Floor, Pittsburgh, PA 15227, (412) 885-6000, or on the internet at <http://www.afit.org/>. The Pennsylvania Department of Education is responsible for providing services to preschool age children from three to five years of age. Contact Project DART of the Allegheny Intermediate Unit at 475 E. Waterfront Drive, Homestead, PA 15120, (412) 394-5736, or on the internet at <http://www.aiu3.net/>.

Montour School District ensures that all students transitioning from early intervention programs to kindergarten or first grade programs within the District are transitioned without disruption of services. Parents of children entering school age programs are notified of the District's transition activities, which occur before kindergarten registration of each year. The District follows the federal and state regulations pertaining to the evaluation process and based on identified needs, subsequent documentation and provision of special education and related services.

Surrogate Parents for Students with Special Needs

Surrogate Parent Program

Federal law establishes the right of a free and appropriate public education for all children with disabilities. To ensure that this right is realized for all such children, procedures are written into the laws to ensure that children with disabilities who are wards of the state, or whose parents are unknown, unavailable, or have had their parental rights legally terminated, have appropriate representation when educational programming decisions are made. This is provided through the recruitment, training and assignment of volunteer surrogate parents who represent the child during the educational process. In Pennsylvania, Intermediate Units have been given the responsibility of recruiting, training and assigning parents to children meeting the qualifications listed. The Montour School District works with the Allegheny Intermediate Unit #3 in providing this service.

Identification of Children Eligible for Surrogate Parents

Special needs preschool and school-aged children receiving a free and appropriate education in a public school or an approved private school, who meet one of the following criteria, are eligible for the assignment of a qualified surrogate parent:

1. The Child is a ward of the state, or
2. The child's parent(s) or guardian(s) are unknown or unavailable.

To be identified as being in need of a surrogate parent, the preschooler or school-aged child must

have special needs, or be thought to have special needs, and be in need of special education services at the Montour School District.

Qualification for Surrogate Parents

Surrogate parents must meet the following qualifications:

- Be of a person of good character,
- Be at least 18 years of age,
- Possess reasonable abilities to make decisions regarding a child's educational needs,
- Be willing to acquaint themselves with the child's educational needs and with the special education system in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania,
- Have no vested interest that would conflict with the primary allegiance to the child they are representing. The surrogate parent should not be an employee of the agency responsible for the care of the child,
- Foster parents may be considered if they meet all other qualifications,
- Have Act 33 and Act 34 clearances from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania,
- Be willing to complete a training program conducted by the Allegheny Intermediate Unit.

Responsibilities of the Surrogate Parent

The surrogate parent is expected to act in place of a parent for the student concerning his or her educational program. This involves:

- Attending a planning conference to develop an individualized educational program,
- Being familiar with appropriate procedures for due process and confidentiality of school records,
- Receiving and responding to requests and notices concerning the evaluation and/or educational placement of the assigned student,
- Making self-familiar with the unique educational needs of the assigned student.

The surrogate parent takes on certain quasi-legal responsibilities in order to serve the best interests of the child. The primary function is to represent the student in those circumstances in which decisions need to be made concerning the student's educational program or placement. It is necessary for the surrogate parent to receive considerable training to familiarize him or herself with all aspects of the surrogate parent role. The demands of the role may be extensive and require the volunteer to make a significant commitment of time and learning in order to serve the best interest of the child.

If you are interested in being a surrogate parent for a child/youth with disabilities, please contact the **Department of Special Education; 223 Clever Road, McKees Rocks, PA 15136. 412-490-6500,**

ext. 6100.

Information Regarding Signs of Developmental Delays and Other Risk Factors for Parents to Look for that May Indicate the Possibility of a Disability

If your child is less than the age of beginners (age 5 before September 1) and at least 3 years of age, your child may be considered to have a developmental delay when difficulties exist in the areas of cognitive, communicative, physical, social/emotional and self-help development where a delay in comparison to typical development is present. Parents who have questions about their child's development or possible presence of a disability may talk with their family physician or healthcare provider or contact the Allegheny County Health Department at 412-687-2243.

If you have questions regarding difficulties your child may be experiencing, please contact the Pupil Services Department at 412-490-6500. Potential signs of developmental delay and other risk factors that could indicate the presence of a disability may include: By the age of 3: Not saying many words; not using 2-3 word phrases and sentences; not walking; awkward gait (walking); excessive salivation; not answering "show" or "what" questions; and/or not using utensils to feed self. By the age of 4 (all of the above included): Not toilet trained; difficulty with directional words (in, on, under, out); not playing with other children; not able to draw a circle, cross or imitate a vertical line; not able to understand the child's speech most of the time; and/or difficulty following simple two-step directions. By the age of 5 (all of the above included): unable to answer "where" questions; unable to recall details from a story; not drawing a person with at least 6 parts; immature speech patterns ("me" instead of "I"); and not able to hop forward with one foot without support.

Other warning signs at any age: Little to no eye contact; over/under sensitivities to pain, light, noise; hand flapping; no awareness of space (always bumping into other people or things); awkward hand or foot positioning; won't touch or eat certain textures; child no longer can do things he/she used to do; developed normally, then stopped; echoes what is said; and/or plays with toys inappropriately (watches wheels spin on a car toy, but does not play with the car).

Additional information and fact sheets on child development from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHCY), and other resources may be found on the Pupil Services Department webpage located at www.montourschools.com

Protected Handicapped Students/Chapter 15

The Montour School District, in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Chapter 15 of the Pennsylvania Public School Code, will provide without discrimination or cost to

the student or family, those related aids, services, or accommodations which are needed to provide the student equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the student's abilities. In order to qualify as a protected handicapped student, the child must be of school age with a physical or mental disability or diagnosis, which substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program. For further information on the evaluation procedures and provisions of services to protected handicapped students, contact the Pupil Services Department at 412-490-6500.

Confidentiality of Student Records

Montour School District and its employees are required by Federal Law and State and Federal Rules and Regulations to protect the rights of students including confidentiality of personally identifiable information for all students in accordance with state and federal law and the District's student records policy. The foundation of these rights comes from Federal legislation entitled, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (also known as the Buckley Amendments). There are State Rules and Regulations dealing with regular and special education students' rights and privacy. All students are covered by the State Regulations contained in Chapter 12 known as Students' Rights and Responsibilities. The basic premise of the above-mentioned laws, rules, and regulations is that information about students cannot be disclosed without written parental consent. There are different categories of information: Educational Records, Personally Identifiable Information, and Directory Information. Education Records consist of information directly related to students which are maintained by the educational agency. Personally Identifiable Information includes the student's name, the name of the parent or other family members, a personal identifier or a list of personal characteristics that would make the student's identity easily traceable. Education Records and Personally Identifiable Information cannot be disclosed or released without written parent consent, or if a student is over 18, without student permission. There is certain information that can be released without consent, which is called Directory Information. Directory Information means information contained in an educational record of a student which would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. The School District designates what information is labeled as Directory Information. It shall include the following: the student's name, address, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, and the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by the student. Disclosure of information means to permit access to or the release, transfer, or other communication of education records, or the personally identifiable information contained in these records, to any party, by any means, including oral, written, or electronic means. This means that information about a student cannot even be shared in conversation without permission. This also applies to other Montour personnel who do not have an educationally relevant reason to possess knowledge of a student. Written parental consent is necessary for disclosure of Personally Identifiable Information and

Educational Records. The consent must: (1) specify the records that may be disclosed; (2) state the purpose of the disclosure; (3) identify the party or class of parties to whom the disclosure may be made. Furthermore, the Montour School District must maintain a written record of disclosure for the parents to inspect in case information has been released.

Amendment of Education Records

A Parent/guardian or eligible student has the right to request amendment of a student's educational file if it is believed that any information is inaccurate, or in violation of a student's rights. The educational agency shall decide within a reasonable time whether to amend the record. If the district decides not to amend the educational record it shall notify the parent/student of the right to and arrange an informal hearing. The hearing will be conducted by an official of the school without an interest in the outcome, who will be either the Right to Know Officer or their designee. The parent may present relevant evidence. The school will issue a written decision based on the hearing. Informal inquiries may be sent to: ferpa@ed.gov or ppra@ed.gov. The website address is: www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guide/fpcd

Complaints regarding violation of rights accorded parent(s)/guardian(s) and eligible students with respect to student records are to be submitted to Dr. Robert Isherwood, Director of Special Education, 225 Clever Road, McKees Rocks, PA 15136, or by calling 412-490-6500 X6102.

All Complaints will be investigated and responded to in writing within a reasonable period of time. If complaints cannot be satisfactorily resolved by the District, complaints can be filed with the following

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605

Questions regarding the above information or requests for a copy of the records policy may be referred to The Right to Know Officer, Dr. Robert Isherwood, Director of Special Education, 223 Clever Road, McKees Rocks, PA 15136. 412-490-6500, ext. 6102.

Non-Discrimination Policy

The Montour School District will not discriminate in its education programs, activities, or employment practice, based on race, color, national origin, sex, sexual preference, disability, age, religion, ancestry, union membership, or any other legally protected classification. Announcement of this policy is in accordance with state and federal laws, including Title IX of the Education

Amendments of 1972, and Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Employees and participants who have an inquiry or complaint of harassment or discrimination, or who need information about accommodations for persons with disabilities, should contact: Office of the Superintendent, 225 Clever Road, McKees Rocks, PA 15136, (412) 490-6500; or the Director of the Office of Civil Rights, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20202- 1100.