

Covid-19 Policies & Guidance

For policies and guidelines on Covid-19, please see dcpsreopenstrong.com for all the latest information.



2021-2022 PARENT HANDBOOK

Welcome, Mustangs, to the 2021-2022 school year!

If you have questions or need assistance at any time, please reach out to us via the Shepherd Welcome Center at 202-576-6140. We look forward to seeing you soon!

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Administration and Staff

- Principal: Phyllis Hedlund
- Assistant Principal: Keiron Phillips
- Administrative Assistant and Registrar: Robyn Brooks

Visit the [Staff page](#) for a complete list of school administrators, teachers, and staff.

Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

- Co-President: Taryn Losch-Beridon Bradley
- Vice President: Sara Faulman
- Treasurer: Andrea Smith
- Recording Secretary: Ayanna McIntosh
- Corresponding Secretary: Liz Bradley

Visit the [PTA page](#) for more information, including PTA membership, vision, meetings, and fundraising.

Communication

Our school website— <https://www.shepherd-elementary.org/> —provides school announcements, important dates and events, messages from Principal Hedlund (posted every Friday) and all the latest news about students and teachers.

To receive the latest information into your email in-box every week from the PTA and Dr. Hedlund, sign up for the Shepherd's PTA's e-newsletter list. The newsletter includes all new information from our website (including Principal Hedlund's message) and is your go-to source for information each week. Sign up for the newsletter by clicking [HERE](#).

Make sure to like our Facebook page — Shepherd Elementary School DC — to receive notification of events, updates and reminders.

Transportation

Through the Kids Ride Free Act, the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) offers students reduced Metrorail fares through the School Transit Subsidy and free Metrobus/DC Circulator access Monday-Friday, 5:30–9:00 am and 2:00–8:00 pm only. Students must use their active and registered DC One Card in order to ride the Metrobus/DC Circulator. They will only have to visit a Metro Sales Office once every school year to activate the DC One Card and will be able to renew their monthly pass at any

Metro station—unless they let their pass expire. Students will also be able to enroll online and receive partial refunds for lost or stolen passes. DCPS only provides transportation for specific students, such as medically fragile students. Contact Ms. Brooks for a DC One Card at robyn.brooks2@k12.dc.gov.

Curriculum

International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme

Shepherd Elementary is an International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (IB PYP) school. IB aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

Our goal is to nurture internationally minded students who demonstrate the attributes of the IB learner profile. IB learners strive to be:

- Inquirers
- Knowledgeable
- Thinkers
- Communicators
- Principled
- Caring
- Open-minded
- Courageous (Also Known As Risk-Taker)
- Balanced
- Reflective

Visit the [IB page](#) for more information.

Early Childhood Education (ECE)

Creative Curriculum informs instruction in PreK3 and PreK4.

Kindergarten (K) – 5th Grade

Shepherd follows the DCPS scope and sequence, which are aligned to the Common Core State Standards.

World Language Program

Our world language program includes instruction in Spanish and French. Students in Pre-Kindergarten through second grade receive three days of instruction, and our intermediate students receive two days of instruction in their target language weekly.

Specials

Art, Music, PE/Health and Library classes are held in dedicated classrooms, except for PK 3 and PK 4, which have Specials in their homerooms.

Assessments

One way that we measure and respond to student progress is by tracking their performance on Math and Reading/Writing unit assessments. The DCPS unit assessments are tools that schools use to assess student progress for grades 3-5 throughout the year. After each unit assessment is given and

scored, teachers use this data to modify instruction to student needs.

Another way we measure and respond to student progress is through an annual summative assessment, the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). This online assessment is aligned to the Common Core and will be administered to students in grade 3-5.

Grade Level	Assessment	Description	Frequency
ECE	GOLD	An observation-based tool that allows teachers to capture and organize data related to student's development across multiple areas, including cognitive and social-emotional skills.	Throughout the school year
K-2	Dynamic Indicators of Early Literacy Success (DIBELS)	A set of procedures and measures for assessing the acquisition of early literacy skills.	Three times per year
K-1	Text Reading and Comprehension (TRC)	An assessment of oral reading accuracy and comprehension using a set of calibrated benchmark books.	Three times per year
2-5	Reading Inventory (RI)	An adaptive, computer-based reading assessment that measures student's reading level and progress.	Three times per year
K-5	iReady	An adaptive online assessment that identifies students' strengths and weaknesses across Common Core math standards.	Three times per year
3-5	Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)	A computer-based assessment that measures students' mastery of the Common Core State Standards in ELA and math	Once a year

Please continue to work with your child's teacher, the person who best can provide information on your child's areas for improvement and suggest strategies that will help your child in both instruction and assessment.

To further support student success, we encourage you to review your child's assessment results. More information about assessments is available at dcps.dc.gov/assessments. If you have any questions, please contact the school or email to dcps.testing@dc.gov.

Homework

First through fifth grade teachers may assign meaningful homework to aid students in the progress of their studies.

Recommended Homework Guidelines

1st grade: 10 minutes

2nd grade: 20 minutes

3rd grade: 30 minutes
 4th grade: 40 minutes
 5th grade: 45-50 minutes

Pre-K thru Kindergarten students do not receive mandatory homework, but teachers can suggest activities such as set the table, read aloud, and other optional assignments for extra practice at home. Parents should provide a suitable environment for the completion of daily homework and find time each day to discuss what their child has learned at school.

Attendance

Regular school attendance is critical for academic success. Documentation must be provided for an absence to be considered excused.

Excused Absences	Unexcused Absences
Illness Medical or dental appointment Death in the immediate family Observance of a religious holiday Religious activity (non-holiday) Court appearance Military deployment of immediate family Take Your Child to Work Day	Vacation Transportation issues Adult illness

Documentation, handwritten or via email, must be provided within 5 days after a student returns from an absence. If sending documentation via email, please cc Mrs. Brooks at robyn.brooks2@dc.gov. Please contact Mrs. Brooks with any questions.

LATE ARRIVALS

All students arriving after 8:45 AM should report to the Welcome Center for a tardy slip. Habitual tardiness will affect a student’s academic progress. You can expect a call from a Shepherd staff member if a student is consistently tardy.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Morning Arrival

- The entrance to the school building opens at 8:20 am.
- To ensure the safety of your children, parents should stay with their children until 8:20 when teachers are on duty.
- All students enter the building through the Main Entrance at 14th and Kalmia Streets, except PK 4 and
- Parents walk Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten students to their classrooms.
- 1st-3rd grade students report to the multi-purpose room.
- 4th-5th grade students report to the lower field near the gate on Kalmia Street.
- Teachers begin picking up students at 8:35 a.m. in order for instruction to begin by 8:45 am.
- Students are late after 8:45 am and should report to the Welcome Center for a tardy slip.

Afternoon Dismissal

- The doors to the building open at 3:15 pm for dismissal.
- Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten students are picked up from their classrooms unless they are in car pool, and they will be walked to the multipurpose room and called for carpool.
- First through fifth grade students who walk home or are picked up by someone will dismiss from the multi-purpose room. Parents of 5th grade students and their younger sibling(s) who walk home must complete a self-dismissal form.
- Carpool students are brought to the multi-purpose room and released from the 14th Street entrance.
- Students enrolled in Star Achievers After Care program are picked up from their classroom for grades PK-1. 2nd-5th graders will report to the cafeteria.
- Students must have all of their books and belongings, as they will not be allowed to return to the building (or classrooms) following dismissal.
- Students who have not been picked up by 3:25 pm will be taken to the main office.

Early Dismissal

- Parents or guardians must report to the office and sign the “Early Dismissal” book *before* a student may be allowed to leave the school grounds.
- No student may leave the school grounds without being signed out by an authorized person.
- Parents **should not** go to the classroom to pick up a child, and a teacher will not release a student until s/he receives a call from the office.
- Whenever possible, please send a note if an early dismissal is needed. This practice will assist the teacher in making arrangements so that disruptions in the school day are minimized. Email your child’s teacher before noon if your child’s dismissal plan will change. After noon, call the Welcome Center so the change can be communicated to your child’s teacher.

Safety and Emergency Procedures

The School Emergency Response Plan and Management Guide prepares schools to respond to emergencies including weather, natural disasters and threats involving weapons. If an emergency occurs during the school day, know that the staff has been trained to evacuate, shelter in place or take the appropriate measures depending on the situation. Shepherd students and staff participate in monthly fire drills, two lockdown drills, and one earthquake drill. Whenever possible, the Shepherd Principal will notify families before a drill occurs. Some drills, however, are unannounced for safety reasons. In case of a building evacuation, Shepherd students and staff will report to either Ohev Shalom at 1600 Jonquil Street NW or Tifereth Israel at 7701 16th Street NW.

Security Officer

Shepherd will have 1 security guard during the 2021-22 school year. The security officer works with the staff to ensure that students are physically safe at all times. He/she will conduct security patrols and be posted at the front door, receiving visitors and monitoring cameras.

School/Classroom Visitors

All school visitors must sign in and obtain a visitor's pass at the security desk. All visitors must adhere to the posted visitor's policy, which includes showing identification and then reporting to the main office. A "Visitor" badge will be given to each guest that must be worn at all times within the building. There is a 100% ID check policy. This is to ensure the safety and welfare of all students. Thank you in advance for cooperating.

Classroom visits or observations MUST be scheduled in advance.

Closures & Delays

The decision to delay or close schools is made with careful consideration of road safety, sidewalk safety and meal availability. You can always decide whether your child should attend school that day or leave early. Inclement weather includes rain, sleet, snow, and temperatures below 32 degrees Fahrenheit. This also includes code orange or red days for severe heat degrees.

There are several options for staying informed about school emergencies, delays or closures:

- Listen to the local news on the TV and radio
- Check the DCPS homepage (dcps.dc.gov)
- Sign up to receive email alerts (dcps.dc.gov/signup)
- Follow DCPS on Twitter (twitter.com/dcpublicschools)
- Follow DCPS on Facebook (facebook.com/dcpublicschools)
- Sign up to receive text messages by texting NEWS to 91990

Health & Wellness

Nut Free Policy

Shepherd Elementary is a **nut-free school**, including, but not limited to the following:

- Peanut
- Almond
- Brazil nut
- Beechnut
- Butternut
- Cashew
- Coconut
- Hazelnut
- Macadamia nut
- Pecan
- Pine nut
- Pistachio
- Walnut

Please do not send any of these items or food containing these items, including peanut butter, granola bars with nuts, Nutella, etc., for lunch, snack or classroom parties. Children can react to an allergen by eating or touching a food they are allergic to, and they can also react by touching something that has traces of that food on it, such as peanut butter residue. If they have traces of food on their hands and put their hands in their mouth, they can have a life-threatening reaction.

Review the [Shepherd Handbook for Food Allergies](#) for more information.

Illness

If a child has been ill during the night or became ill upon awakening, please do not send the child to school. Students with low-grade fever, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or other acute symptoms will be sent home. If your child has been ill at home with any of these symptoms, please keep him/her home until these symptoms have subsided for 24 hours. If a child becomes ill after coming to school, the parent will be contacted. If a child has a fever of at least 100 degrees or has vomited, the student will be sent home. Please see appendix for Covid-19 related guidance.

If the parents cannot be reached by phone, the emergency contact person(s) listed in the student file will be called to pick up the child. **Please maintain accurate and current information for the emergency file. Any addition or deletion for emergency contact person(s) should be given immediately to the school office.** We will make every attempt to contact parents in the event of an emergency. 911 will be called at the nurse's discretion. If students need medical attention, the DC Fire Department Emergency Unit will transport students to Children's Hospital or to the nearest hospital providing pediatric care.

Medications

Families are encouraged to administer medications at home. If medications are needed during school hours, please have your medical provider complete the appropriate form found [here](#) and return them to the school nurse.

When your child needs to receive medication or treatment, school staff will ensure that your child is released from class to go to the nurse's office where the school nurse will administer the medication or treatment. Sometimes the school's nurse is not at the assigned school due to a normal absence or to cover another school. When this occurs, the school will ensure other trained school staff are available to administer your child's medication.

Mental Health Support

To support the emotional well-being of students, Shepherd's mental health team comprises of a full-time social worker and school psychologist, who are able to help with a range of issues including, but not limited to, school culture and climate and self-advocacy. In addition, in October 2021, we will have an additional social worker on site through our partnership with Paving the Way.

Dress Code

Shepherd Elementary is a uniform school. Students are expected to wear every day to school:

1. A Shepherd Elementary spirit t-shirt OR a white shirt (without a logo or decoration) and
2. Navy blue bottoms

Students who are dressed inappropriately will be given a school uniform to wear, whenever possible.

Code of Conduct

Shepherd Elementary operates under a set of essential agreements in all settings. The essential

agreements are:

- Be respectful
- Be responsible
- Be safe

Use of Electronic Devices

Students should not bring valuables, such as electronic devices such as cell phones, MP3 Players, PSPs, Nintendo DS, Kindles, electronic games – not even for use at lunchtime or on school grounds at dismissal. If a child has a device that is prohibited, it will be taken by a member of the staff and returned to a parent or guardian.

Students should not bring cell phones to school. The telephone in the main office is always available to students in the event of an emergency. The school is not responsible for phones that are lost or damaged. Likewise, if a child is found with a cell phone, it will be taken by a member of the staff and returned to a parent or guardian. Should a parent need to contact a student in case of an emergency during school hours, please call the main office and the child will be called to the office.

Response to Behavior

Shepherd Elementary's approach to school culture is derived from the Responsive Classroom model that incorporates social learning into the daily program as well as Restorative Practices. Through implementation of Responsive Classroom strategies, staff members at Shepherd create a safe environment where students recognize the importance of kindness, appreciate differences, and develop critical social skills.

Bullying

One of the most proactive measures families can take to shield their children from bullying is to talk to them early and openly about what it means to be bullied or to bully. Doing so not only ensures that you and your child maintain open lines of communication, but also reinforces the importance of speaking up about problems at school.

- DCPS has a Bullying Prevention Policy that is as proactive and comprehensive as possible when dealing with any and all reports of bullying.
- If you suspect your child may be bullied at school, don't be afraid to ask them about it.
- Make sure to tell them that you are there to help and you believe what he or she has to say.
- Please report, or have your child report, bullying to the school's Bullying Prevention Coordinator, Ms. Browne, or the principal.
- If you think your child is bullying others, discuss the behavior and make it clear that bullying is taken very seriously at school. At the same time, you may want to work with your child to understand some of the reasons behind the bullying.
- If you witness or become aware of cyber-bullying (use of the Internet and related technologies to bully) that includes threats of violence, child pornography or sexually explicit materials, stalking or hate crimes, please consider reporting the incident to law enforcement. Cyber-bullying can also create classroom disruptions and lead to in-person bullying.

Field Trips

Field trips will be communicated in writing in advance by the teacher in the form of a permission slip. Permission slips must be signed and returned to the school in order for the student to attend the field trip. The permission slip will provide details of the trip (destination, times, transportation, and cost) and a way for the parent to sign up to chaperone. Students must wear their school uniforms for all field trips unless another dress policy is approved by the principal. Parent chaperones on a field trip are not to bring other children on the trip.

Recess / Outside Play

When weather is dry and 32 degrees (wind chill will be considered) or above, the children will spend time outside. Consider weather conditions to insure that students are dressed appropriately. Hats, coats, and gloves should be sent with your children during cold weather months.

Lost and Found

The Lost and Found bin can be found in the 14th Street vestibule. Because children frequently lose or misplace items, please consider labeling ALL students' belongings, especially outerwear. At the end of the month, items that have not been claimed will be donated to a shelter or clothing bank.

Birthday Parties

Arrangements must be made in advance with the classroom teacher to recognize a child's birthday. Please see the list of recommended healthy snacks and adhere to our nut-free policy. Parties will take place in designated spaces where food is allowed. Birthday parties are contingent on Covid-19 policies and guidelines.

Meals

Breakfast

Free breakfast will be served in the Cafeteria every morning starting at 8:20 am for ANY interested 1st through 5th grade student. PK and K students will eat breakfast in their classrooms. Parents should enter the complex via the main entrance on Kalmia and 14th Streets and escort their children to the Cafeteria. Parents should remain with their children during breakfast and then walk them to their arrival location by 8:35 am.

Lunch

Pre-K students will eat lunch in their own lunchroom. K-5 students will eat in the cafeteria. Students may bring their own or buy lunch. Visit the [DCPS Nutrition and Meals page](#) for lunch menus and additional information about school meals, nutrition, and methods of payment if your child buys lunch.

Nut Free Policy

Alexander R. Shepherd Elementary is a nut-free school, including, but not limited to the following:

- Almond
- Brazil nut
- Beechnut
- Butternut
- Cashew
- Macadamia nut
- Pecan
- Pine nut
- Pistachio
- Walnut

- Coconut

Please do not send any of these items or food containing these items, including peanut butter, granola bars with nuts, Nutella, etc., for lunch, snack or classroom parties. Children can react to an allergen by eating or touching a food they are allergic to, and they can also react by touching something that has traces of that food on it, such as peanut butter residue. If they have traces of food on their hands and put their hands in their mouth, they can have a life-threatening reaction.

Review the [Shepherd Handbook for Food Allergies](#) for more information.

Snacks

Students typically have a mid-morning snack. Please check with your child's teacher directly about snacks, and remember to pack an extra nut-free snack for snack time.

Healthy School Snack Suggestions

- Fruits
- Unsweetened applesauce, fruit cups and canned fruit
- Dried fruit
- Frozen fruit
- Fruit leathers
- Fruit salads
- Popsicles
- Smoothies
- Vegetables, including broccoli, carrots, celery sticks, tomatoes, etc.
- Salads
- Animal crackers
- Rice cakes
- Popcorn
- Baked Tortilla chips
- Yogurt
- Low-fat cheese

[Before and After Care](#)

Star Achievers provides before and after care. Visit the [Star Achievers page](#) for more information. Even if you plan to use Star Achievers occasionally for drop-ins, you must register on their website.

[Volunteering](#)

Volunteers who work directly with students on a regular basis or have the potential to be alone with a student are required to complete the DCPS volunteer clearance process. Volunteers must have a confirmed placement in a DC public school before going through this process. Even a parent chaperone on a field trip is considered a volunteer.

Please use the following link to start the process to volunteer at Shepherd: <https://dcps.dc.gov/page/dcps-fingerprinting-background-check-and-id-badge-processes-and-requirements>.

Other opportunities to volunteer include, but are not limited to, the following:

Special Activities

Teacher Appreciation Coordinator & Volunteers

Fundraising

Spring Auction/Gala

Grant Writing

Clerical Work

Photocopying

Classroom Help

General classroom assistance

Recess Volunteers

Field trip chaperone and/or driver Home
room Parent/party assistant Tutoring

Miscellaneous

Uniform resale coordinator Sorting

Tech assistance

School Enrollment

Key Enrollment Dates

Families should keep in mind several important dates during the school year that relate to DCPS enrollment:

- My School DC Application (Grades PK3-12) Opens – December of the current school year
- My School DC Application (Grades 9-12) Closes – February of the current school year
- My School DC Application (Grades PK3-8) Closes – March of the current school year
- Enrollment opens for upcoming school year available – April of the current school year
- Enrollment due for students who received a seat through the My School DC lottery – May of the current school year

Language Line

DCPS offers a free Language Line with over-the-phone interpretation services to support families during enrollment, parent-teacher conferences and other times when families need support in their native language. You can access the Language Line by contacting the staff of your local school or calling the Language Acquisition Division for support at 202.671.0750. “I Speak” Cards can also be downloaded from <http://ohr.dc.gov/ispeakcards> in multiple languages. For an in-person interpreter, school personnel must submit an Interpreter Request Form at least three days in advance to the Office of Bilingual Education. Parents needing translation or interpretation services should contact the school immediately.

Change of Information

Please notify our school registrar, Mrs. Brooks, if any of your information changes, especially phone numbers and emergency contact information.

Note: To enroll your child in a DCPS school, you will need to prove DC residency each school year. To enroll online, visit the DCPS website at dcps.dc.gov/enroll.

Covid-19 Policies & Guidance

For policies and guidelines on Covid-19, please see dcpsreopenstrong.com for all the latest information. Since this information is updated regularly, the website is the best place to access information and have your questions addressed.