

## Parent/Student Handbook

The information in this student handbook will help you better understand school policies and procedures. You are encouraged to read the information and to share it with your children. If you have any questions, please ask your child's teacher or contact the office.

### Mission Statement

The mission for the *Worcester County Northern schools*, a growing and diverse community, is to provide a rigorous, sequential, and balanced curriculum for all students to become responsible lifelong learners. This will be accomplished through instructional excellence in partnership with family and community in a safe, caring, well-maintained environment. We will recognize the uniqueness of each student's role as a productive citizen in an ever-changing world.

### Showell Student's Mission Statement

Our mission is to encourage Productive citizens who become Responsible, life-long learners, provide Instruction that is challenging for all in a Diverse and safe environment, and share Excellence in partnership with our school, our families and our community (**PRIDE**).

### School Motto

**TO DO IS TO BE**

**TO DO THE 5 C's:**

Character, Commitment, Consistency, Citizenship, and Community

**IS TO BE a successful Showell Citizen!**

### A.C.T. With PRIDE

A.C.T. with Academics

A.C.T. with Character

A.C.T. with Technology

### School Mascot

Willet

### Our Belief Statements

We believe that...

- ❖ Our students are unique in their needs, thought processes, and learning styles and are motivated in different ways.
- ❖ A balanced curriculum best meets the needs of the whole child.
- ❖ The student, family, educators, and community must be involved in the educational process.
- ❖ Every child wants to succeed, can succeed, and is accountable for his or her success.
- ❖ All students are entitled to a socially, emotionally, and physically safe learning environment.
- ❖ Consistent rules and discipline, positive values, and social skills are necessary for all individuals.
- ❖ It is important to accept and respect each student and teacher as an individual of worth and dignity.
- ❖ A positive self-image and self-respect are critical to becoming productive citizens in an ever-changing world.

### Our Four School Rules

A disciplined environment is essential to enable all students to reach their potential. Showell Elementary School has four basic rules that are centered on the value of respect. These rules serve as the foundation for the discipline code at our school. The four basic rules are supported by all teachers and support staff. ***We believe that ALL of our students can and should be expected to behave appropriately in school.*** At no time should a student's behavior interfere with his or her learning or the learning of others. Your child's teacher will work very hard during the first few weeks with their children and throughout the year to ensure that each child knows the rules and more importantly, that your child can demonstrate each of these rules.

We ask that all parents take time to discuss these rules with their children and encourage them to demonstrate ways in which they follow these rules. *Your support and involvement is the key to helping your child do his/her best.* The four rules are as follows:

1. **Respect yourself**
2. **Respect others**
3. **Respect learning**
4. **Respect the environment**

#### School Hours

**8:30 A.M.** – School Opens

**8:50 A.M.** – Opening Exercises

**9:00 A.M.** – Classes Begin

**11:30 A.M.** – Morning PreK Ends

**12:50 P.M.** - Afternoon PreK Begins

**3:30 P.M.** – Dismissal Begins

Children are to arrive at 8:30 A.M., and are expected to be ready for classes to begin promptly at 9:00 A.M. Since your child will participate in a variety of important morning activities, *we ask that you make every effort to have your child arrive by 8:30 A.M.*

#### Attendance Policy

Education requires a continuity of instruction, classroom participation, learning experiences and study in order to reach the maximum educational benefits for each student. For these reasons, the Worcester County Board of Education believes it is very important to insist on good attendance. *The following reasons are listed by the Maryland State Department of Education as “Lawful” Cause of Absence:*

1. Death in immediate family
2. Illness of student
3. Court summons
4. Suspension
5. State emergency
6. Observance of a religious holiday
7. Lack of authorized transportation
8. Work approved or sponsored by the school
9. Hazardous weather conditions
10. Other emergencies identified by the Superintendent

*Parents may certify up to ten (10) student absences due to illness. All absences for student illness beyond the ten (10) must be certified with a physician’s certificate. Absences beyond the ten (10) that are not certified with a physician’s certificate will be unlawful. Monthly attendance letters will be mailed home by the school to remind parents of the attendance policy and the accrued number of unlawful absences if the school feels there is an attendance concern.*

#### Students Who Arrive Prior to 8:30 A.M.

We strive to ensure the safety of all students; therefore, we ask that students not arrive at school prior to 8:30 A.M. *Due to our visitor access system, parents **MUST** accompany the child to the front door in order for the child to gain access to the building,* in the event a student arrives a few minutes early. Once the student is in the building, we ask that they sit quietly at the tables in the cafeteria. At 8:30 A.M., when all staff is on duty, the students will be sent to class.

We understand that some families may occasionally have extenuating circumstances which necessitate students being brought to school prior to 8:30 A.M., and we will try to accommodate those situations whenever possible. However, it is essential that we know ahead of time about these cases. *We ask that you write or call the principal or assistant principal to discuss the situation.*

There will be days in which inclement weather delays the opening of school. In such cases, we stress that parents listen carefully to the radio or morning news announcements for the delays. If there is an hour or two-hour delay, the school will not open until that time. *Please do not drop your child off for school at the regular time when there is a delay, as there are NO ADULTS ON DUTY.*

### Late Arrivals

Promptness is an essential trait that students need to learn. It is important for each student to have adequate time to prepare for the school day. *Students who arrive after 9:00 A.M. are considered tardy*, however, we would like students here and ready for class before announcements begin at 8:50 A.M. Tardy letters will be issued. *Due to our visitor access system, parents **MUST** accompany the child to the office to sign in.* Tardy students will not be admitted to class without a tardy slip.

### Picking Students Up Prior to 3:30 P.M.

If your child is to be excused early from school for medical or other legitimate reasons, please send a Transportation Change Form to the school on the morning he/she is to leave early. Please indicate the reason for the early departure and the time you will pick him/her up. *Please come to the office to sign your child out.* The secretary will have your child meet you in the office. Please remember that children have classes until 3:30 P.M. If they miss the same class every day, then this may affect their grades.

### Transportation Changes

During the year, if emergencies arise which necessitate a change in the means of transporting your child home, *the school **MUST** have a completed Transportation Change Form from a parent.* In addition, if a child needs to be picked up or dropped off at a bus stop other than the regular one, *the Transportation Change Form **MUST** have clear directions stating where and when this change is to take place.* *Without written parental permission, bus drivers are not allowed to disperse children anywhere except to their regular stop.*

*The Transportation Change Form can be sent to school with your child, dropped by the office personally, or faxed to 410-632-5359 by 2:30 P.M. The secretarial staff will inform your child's teacher of these changes.* The students who will be picked up instead of riding the bus will be sent to the front hall pick-up area (Cafeteria) at dismissal time.

### Students Who Arrive and Go Home in Cars

Due to the number of students being dropped off in the morning and picked up in the afternoon, we would like to clarify our safety guidelines for our morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up procedures. If you are dropping off your child in the morning or picking your child up in the afternoon, please do the following:

1. **In the morning, use the loop as a "Drop-off Zone." Pull your car up as far as you can. Allow your child to get out on the right-hand side of the car. Your child will come into the building by him/herself. Pull away from the "Drop-off Zone."**
2. **Use the "Parking Lot" if you would like to walk your child to the doorway of the school. Find a space to park your car that is NOT near the drop-off zone, and carefully walk your child to the doorway of the school.**
3. **In the afternoon, use the loop as a "Pick-up Zone." Pull your car up as far as you can. Using the "Parking Permits," a staff member will bring your child to the right-hand side to enter your car. Your "Parking Permit" must be visible at all times in order to pick up your child. When given permission, pull away from the "Pick-up Zone."**

At **NO time** should the bus loop be used to drop off or pick up your child when arrival and dismissal procedures are taking place (8:30 – 9:00 and 3:15 – 4:00). You will be asked to move your car if you choose to enter the bus loop. **Again, the reason for this clarification is safety.** We do not want any student or parent to be placed in any kind of danger.

### Bus Regulations

Students must understand that transportation by bus is a privilege and that in accepting this privilege, they agree to abide by the bus rules adopted by the Board of Education that will be sent home at the beginning of the school year. *We ask that you read and discuss the bus rules with your child and return the rules signed.*

### School Lunches

Menus will be sent home monthly. On the back of the monthly lunch menus you will find a calendar of events. The prices of the school lunches and other items are as follows *unless changed by the county over the summer:*

Breakfast = \$1.40

Lunch = \$2.45

Milk = \$0.55

Ice Cream = \$0.75 (Thursday's Only)

Free and reduced priced breakfasts and lunches are available for those who qualify. Household Meal Benefit Applications will be sent home with your child at the beginning of school and are available on the school system website. Each school cafeteria has a computerized debit system, which allows parents to deposit money on their child's very own cafeteria account. To set up an account, please visit mySchoolBucks.com website.

### School Visitation

Parents are invited to visit the school anytime during the year. Please keep in mind, however, all school doors are locked at all times. In order to gain access to the building, all visitors **MUST** use the front door entrance that is monitored by a camera. There are signs posted on the door indicating the procedure visitors **MUST** adhere to upon entering the building. For the protection of all children and staff members, **ALL VISITORS MUST IMMEDIATELY REPORT TO THE OFFICE** where they will provide the secretaries with a driver's license in order to be issued a Visitor's Badge, once they have been given access to the building. *All visitors will be stopped and asked to go to the office if they are not wearing a badge.* If you wish to talk with the teacher, please arrange a time when they **DO NOT** have students in his/her classroom. *Also, please do not use cell phones while visiting a classroom.*

### Deliveries to School

Parents are asked to leave any lunches, books, etc., which have been brought for their children, in the school office rather than entering the classroom. *It is less disruptive to the class schedule to send items by school personnel than to have a parent deliver them.* Thank you for ensuring that learning continues with as little interruption as possible.

### Emergency Card Information

The staff relies on the information contained on this card to contact you. *Always contact the secretarial staff (410) 632-5350 whenever there is a need to update this information.* Please complete the entire card in detail (front and back) and return it to school as soon as possible.

### Parent/Teacher Conferences

In order to provide the **BEST** possible education for your child, the lines of communication must be open. Therefore, we encourage you to communicate often with your child's teacher. Please contact the teacher through a note or phone call to schedule a conference (you can be assured that your child's teacher will always make time to talk with you after school, during their planning times, or at a time which is most suitable to both of you.) *In order to be fair to all children, we do, however, request that teachers not talk to you when other students are in the classroom.* It is essential that this time be devoted to the educational needs of the students.

### When Your Child Is Absent

*Please send a note each time your child is absent.* The note should include the reason for the absence and be signed and dated. *If you take your child to the doctor, be sure to get a doctor's excuse to be turned in when your child returns to school.* After 3 consecutive days of absences, the school nurse will notify the parent to check on the child's condition. Please remember, *parents may certify up to ten (10) student absences due to illness.* All absences for student illness beyond the ten (10) must be certified with a physician's certificate. *Absences beyond the ten (10) that are not certified with a physician's certificate will be unlawful.*

### Illness/Injury

Parents will be notified if their child becomes seriously ill or injured at school. If parents cannot be reached, we will use the emergency contact information provided. If your child is seriously injured, he/she will be transported to the best available setting for treatment. *It is very important that the school be kept informed of changes in telephone numbers and residences.*

### Medications

*School personnel are not allowed, under any circumstances, to administer medication to a student without a doctor's signed authorization.* This includes such medicines as aspirin, cough syrup, cough drops, etc. We ask that you do **not** send such items to school without proper authorization. In order for us to administer any medication, your doctor must complete a **School Medication Administration Authorization Form**. The school has these forms as well as your doctor.

### Custody

In cases of divorce, separation, etc., where a mother and/or father, grandparent, etc., has custody papers for a student, *it is very important for the school counselor or secretary to receive a copy of such papers.* The school counselor is responsible for notifying the appropriate staff member of this information and placing the custody papers, and any other subsequent changes, in the student file. If you have not given the office a copy of the custody papers, we ask that you do so immediately. It is not necessary to do so again, if you previously gave the school a copy.

### Trips During the School Year

Continue to complete a **TRIP FORM** if you will be taking your child out of school for a family trip. The forms can be picked up from the school office. *It is strongly recommended that families plan trips around school holidays to minimize days lost from classroom instruction and KEEP CHILDREN IN SCHOOL DURING STATE TESTING IN May.* Please review the yearly calendar each year because testing dates are subject to change.

### Child Abuse and Neglect Policy

Occasionally, there are factors in a student's appearance and behavior that lead to suspicions of child abuse or neglect. Maryland law requires that **ALL educators and other school employees**, including volunteers, report suspected abuse or neglect to the proper authorities in order that children may be protected from harm and the family may be helped. If you ever have any questions regarding this information, please feel free to call the guidance counselor or the school nurse.

### Reporting

Report cards will be issued to the children at the end of each grading period. Attendance will be reported on the report card. *The report card MUST be signed by the parent and returned to the classroom teacher.*

### After School Program

Showell's After School Program is county regulated, and provides remediation and enrichment courses to enhance our curriculum. Information on the specific courses offered and registration forms may be obtained in the school office.

### Harassment

Harassment is unlawful and will not be tolerated as stated by Worcester County Public School policy. All allegations will be investigated. Appropriate action will be taken, depending on the severity of the offense. For further information on Harassment, please read the Worcester County Harassment booklet provided to your child during the first week of school.

### Threats

The maintenance of discipline in the schools is essential to an effective learning environment and is the responsibility of students, teachers, administrators, and parents. Threats of any type have no place in the school setting. Therefore, threats of any type that are made to students, faculty/staff, or others, whether they are verbal or nonverbal, will not be tolerated. Please discuss the inappropriateness of threats and teach your child to report any threat to a teacher, adult, and/or yourself. *Threats will result in disciplinary action.*

### Weapons

The following items should **NEVER** be brought onto school property:

1. **Toy Weapons:** water pistols, rubber knives, plastic guns, etc.
2. **Look-Alike Weapons:** switch blade combs, etc.
3. **Real Weapons:** guns, knives, slingshots, martial arts weapons, and any item that could be used as a weapon, etc.

**Any weapon brought to school will result in disciplinary action.**

### School Dress

A student's dress and grooming are the responsibility of the student and his/her parents and/or guardians. Statements on clothing not appropriate for school wear are listed below. This list is not intended to be all inclusive, but should provide an understanding of appropriate school dress:

- Student clothing should be clean, neat, and fit properly.
- Clothing should be worn appropriately and not reveal undergarments.
- Clothing and personal adornments that are prohibited include those that contain profanity, or offensive content, promote the use of alcohol, cigarettes, drugs or illegal activities, and clothing that creates a distraction or interferes with normal school activities.
- Clothing and personal adornments that cause damage to floors, furnishings, and school property are prohibited.
- Slippers or shoes worn with laces untied and other clothes that are a safety hazard are prohibited.
- Inappropriate clothing includes halter, tube and some tank tops, excessively tight clothing, clothing that exposes the midriff, and shorts and skirts which do not cover the leg to the mid-thigh.
- Hats, visors, caps, or sunglasses must be removed when in the building.

### Personal Property

Radios, tape recorders, cameras, electronic games, expensive watches and jewelry, and large sums of money should not be brought to school.

### Physical Education

Every student is required to participate in physical education. Any exception must be approved by the principal.

***Please make sure your child is dressed appropriately on physical education days.***

### Release of Names of Pupils

The names of students will not be released by schools to any individual, group, or organization where any solicitation, promotional, commercial, advertising, or profit-making objective is involved.

### Student Photographs and Videotapes

Our school and students are regularly featured in newspapers, local publications, and local television news programs. Parents and guardians may request that photographs and videotapes of their child **not** be taken by or released to the news media. ***Contact your school principal for additional information.***

### School Supplies

Parents should supply their children with the following items for the entire school year: pencils, erasers, ruled paper, and crayons. Teachers have prepared a list of supplies for each grade level. These will be sent home to each child as a reminder for the beginning of the school year.