

ARRIVAL

Students are welcome on the playground, and in the cafeteria if they are having breakfast, at 8:30 a.m. Playground supervision is only provided beginning at 8:30 a.m. until 8:50 a.m., when the bell rings for all students to line up to go to their classrooms with their teachers. Students must be in their classrooms by 9:00 a.m. or they will be considered tardy.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Please call the office - 676-6413 - before 9:00 a.m. if you know your child will be absent or tardy that day. We will inform your child's teacher. Students who arrive at school after 9:00 a.m. must stop by the office for a "PASS TO CLASS". Mrs. Ferguson will contact parents/guardians if a student is frequently tardy to school.

We need to know if your child is going to leave early for any reason such as doctor or dental appointments. Advance notice in writing to your child's teacher is advised. No child shall be removed from any school classroom, building, grounds, or building function except by a parent having legal custody, a legal guardian, or a person designated in writing by the parent. Students must be signed out and picked up at the office.

Students in the State of Washington are required to attend school 180 days each year. The law requires the school to report unexcused absences. Excused absences are illness, medical appointments, family emergencies, and school-approved activities.

BIRTHDAYS AT SCHOOL

We ask that parents do not send birthday treats to school. We are encouraged by the district to look for healthy alternatives to "treats" in the classrooms. Please do not pass out party invitations at school, or send gifts for after-school parties, as this may cause hurt feelings and misunderstandings.

COMPLAINTS AND/OR CONCERNS

If a student or parent has a concern about a school policy or an employee, the following procedure should be followed in order to resolve the problem as quickly as possible:

1. Contact the person you have a complaint about to discuss both sides of the problem.
2. If the problem still exists, contact the principal.
3. If still unresolved, contact the assistant superintendent's office.

COLUMBIA PARENT ASSOCIATION (C.P.A.)

At Columbia we are proud of our outstanding students, staff, and parents. Our parent involvement and CPA support allow us to provide many wonderful learning experiences for our children. Assemblies, field trips, art projects, and trips to Mt. Baker Theater are just a few of the many opportunities that are funded directly by the CPA. The CPA also provides curriculum and teacher support monies, as well as, monies for larger projects like the climbing rock wall and the playground enhancement project. CPA volunteers work on projects, in the classrooms, and at the many CPA sponsored events and activities that take place throughout the year. These events include the book fair, family dance, jog-a-thon, and carnival. The CPA has volunteer opportunities for all levels of participation. Please join us at one of our monthly meetings the first Thursday of each month from 7:00 to 8:15 PM. Every Columbia parent is encouraged to participate. Thank you for your support!

Susan Hofstetter
President
734-1656

John Smith
Vice-President
647-2899

Lisa Fleck
Secretary
733-4186

Nancy McNeely
Treasurer
676-1978

COLUMBIA AND DISTRICT WEBSITE

Visit the Columbia school website at <http://columbia.bham.wednet.edu>. This website contains links to important information for Columbia parents, and resources for our students. Each classroom has a home page, that teachers update with current schedules, and program information. Electronic versions of the Columbia monthly newsletter and calendar are also linked online. As a new feature this year, there is a link to the Columbia library card catalog on the main page of the website, this will allow students and parents to browse our library collection from home, and record call numbers of books they are interested in checking out on their library day.

The DISTRICT website offers many resources for parents and pertinent information about our school year. The "For Families" section of the Web site is designed for the approximately 7,500 families who have students attending our schools, as well as families new to the area and needing information. This section provides access to District policies and procedures, schedules, and demographic and student achievement data. Off-site links provide further information on helping children learn. A frequently asked questions page provides answers to a variety of topics.

DISMISSAL TIMES & LOCATIONS

Grades 1 and 2 - 2:30, grades 3,4, and 5 - 3:30,
Kindergarten a.m. - 11:30, p.m. - 3:00

Pick up Location: Mr. Palmer and Mrs. Sampson's class: North Entrance, all others: Playshed

EARLY RELEASE SCHEDULE

There is no morning recess on Early Release Days. Lunch and lunch recess for grades K to 2 is 11:00 to 11:45. Lunch and lunch recess for grades 3 to 5 is from 11:35 to 12:20. All students, including kindergarten, go home at 12:30.

ILLNESS AND INJURIES AT SCHOOL

ILLNESS Please do not send your child to school if they have any of the following symptoms:

fever - child must be temperature free for 24 hours before returning to school

common cold - nasal discharge, unusually loud breathing, coughing, sneezing or sore throat

skin sores/rashes - fever, itching, oozing, spreading, child may not return to school unless a doctor says it is safe

diarrhea or vomiting

skin color/eyes - pale, pasty, flushed, glassy or red eyed

behavior - irritable, whiny, cranky, lethargic, withdrawn (if accompanied by other symptoms)

appetite - change in eating habits (if accompanied by other symptoms)

headache - stiff neck, chills, or fever

Parents will be called to pick up their children who become ill at school.

INJURY If a student has an injury at school or on the school grounds, a certified trained employee will administer first aid. Parents will be contacted in those cases that are serious enough to warrant communication. If you cannot be reached, we will call the emergency numbers provided by you. Please assist us by leaving reliable emergency numbers. It is very important that the information you provide us is always current. If you change your phone number, address, doctor, emergency contacts, place of employment, etc., please inform us immediately.

If we are unable to reach you and the injury is a serious one, or if a student has symptoms or behavior that causes them to be incoherent or unable to communicate clearly, emergency aid (911) will be called immediately. Parents/Guardians are responsible for any medical bills incurred if this should be necessary.

LIBRARY/MEDIA

All students use Columbia's Library/Technology Lab. Our Library/Media Specialist, Lisa Christensen, meets with each class on a weekly basis for stories, instruction in the use of the library, computer instruction and for book check out. Books are checked out for one week. Students are responsible for all books loaned to them during the school year. Parents are responsible for lost or damaged books. Access to technology enables students to use a great variety of educational resources and communicate with students in other schools worldwide. Per Board Policy, independent student use of electronic information will be permitted if students and their parents sign usage agreement forms. Students are responsible for good behavior on the networks.

LOST AND FOUND

Please put your child's name in coats, sweatshirts, backpacks, lunchboxes, etc. Items found on the school grounds are placed in the cafeteria. The school is not responsible for personal property.

MEAL PROGRAM

Nourishing and healthy breakfast and lunches are served daily at all schools. A wide variety of foods, which meet, recommended dietary guidelines are offered. Purchased products are specified with lower levels of fat and sodium, and food preparation methods reflect this. "Choices" includes ethnically diverse menu items and vegetarian choices daily at all schools. Nutrition education is addressed in the cafeteria by food service staff. Computerized meal accounts allow deposits and assure confidentiality.

All payments may be made in the cafeteria between 8:40 and 8:55 each morning. Please make your check payable to Columbia Elementary. Breakfast is \$1.25 and lunch is \$2.25 (includes milk). Reduced prices are breakfast - free and lunch - \$.40 (includes milk). Milk only is \$.50. Adult breakfast is \$1.55, lunch is \$3.50. Applications and information are available in your school calendar and our office for the free and reduced meal program. If you have any questions, please feel free to call the Food and Nutrition Services office at 676-6504 or 676-6574.

MEDICATION

Washington State law requires a written doctor's order for school personnel to dispense medication at school. Medication Authorization forms and Medication Procedure Guidelines are available in the Columbia School office. Students requiring medication during the school day must have authorization from parents and specific instructions from the doctor prior to dispensing medication.

Medications include over-the-counter items such as cough drops, cough syrup, Tylenol, etc, and prescriptions. Medication must be in the original container and must be delivered to the school office by a parent or guardian. School personnel cannot administer any medication that has been brought to school by the student and students are not allowed to bring any medication for personal use to school. School personnel are not allowed to dispense medication, or allow students to take them unless the above procedure has been followed.

PETS

We ask your cooperation in keeping all pets off the school grounds and out of the building. Pets on the playground can be a serious problem for the children and for an animal. With everyone's cooperation, we can avoid such accidents and conditions as animal bites, scratches, salmonella food poisoning, asthma, allergies, etc. The personal safety of Columbia students is our foremost responsibility. If a pet continually appears on the school grounds, we must call the Humane Society to pick it up for the protection of the animal and the children. Sharing pets in individual classrooms must be arranged in advance with classroom teachers.

RECESS

Morning recess is from 10:30 to 10:45 for grades K to 2 and from 10:45 to 11:00 for grades 3 to 5. Lunch and lunch recess for grades 1 to 2 is from 11:30 to 12:15 and from 12:00 to 1:50 for grades 3 to 5.

SAFETY

Please take time to observe your child's safety habits while walking to school.

Make sure your child:

- 🚶 stops and looks both ways before crossing any street;
- 🚶 does not play on the way to school or at school by climbing fences, backstops, or railings;
- 🚶 refuses to accept rides or even talk to strangers on the way to and from school;
- 🚶 goes directly home after school using the same route each day.

SEVERE WEATHER

During snowy and icy conditions, parents should use their own judgment as to whether conditions are too hazardous for their children to attend school. Parents may keep their children at home, and an excused absence will be given. If you wake up one morning to find snow and/or ice on the roads, please listen to our local radio stations - **KAFE FM 104.3 - KGMI AM 790 - KBFW AM 930 - KISM FM 92.9** - for announcements regarding school closures or if schools are running late. Remember, severe weather means that children need to be dressed adequately with coats, hats, gloves, and warm appropriate footwear.

STUDENT SERVICES

The Bellingham School District provides a variety of important elementary student support services to help ensure the success of every student. A support team is assigned to each school. These specialists are itinerant and move from school to school and others are site-based and provide highly specialized services to individual students, teachers, and families.

TELEPHONE AT SCHOOL

We ask students to use classroom or office phones for emergencies only. Students who want to make last minute arrangements to go to a friend's house after school are a particular concern. Please make these arrangements before your children leave home in the morning.

If you have an important message you need to get to your child, feel free to call. Please refer to the listing at the end of this handout. The classroom teachers check their voice mail during the day as time permits. It is helpful for you to make sure there is sufficient time to retrieve messages.

VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS

VISITORS You are welcome to visit the school and your child's classroom. Please let your child's teacher know in advance of a visit, sign in at the office, and wear a visitor sticker while you are on school grounds.

VOLUNTEERS Columbia students benefit from our volunteers. Our volunteers assist in the classrooms and library, on field trips, and C.P.A. events. Your child's teacher will coordinate a volunteer program that suits the classroom needs. Each year all volunteers are required to fill out a Volunteer Packet and submit it to the office. Parent drivers and other volunteers who will have regularly scheduled, unsupervised access to students are required to undergo State Patrol background checks (including fingerprinting). It may take up to eight weeks for the Washington State Patrol to process the records check. Therefore, it is imperative that volunteers who fit this category begin the fingerprinting process and records check immediately.