

# **Memorial-Spaulding School Family Handbook 2023-2024**



**Personal Achievement  
Communication**

**Effort  
Kindness**

**250 BROOKLINE STREET  
NEWTON CENTRE, MA 02459  
617-559-9600**

**ABSENT/TARDY NUMBER  
617-559-9617**

**EXTENDED DAY NUMBER  
617-630-5151**

## WELCOME FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Memorial-Spaulding Families,

On behalf of the faculty and staff, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the Memorial-Spaulding School! I would especially like to welcome those families who are new to us this school year. I look forward to working together in order to create a productive and successful school year for all our children.

We firmly believe that children are more likely to experience success when school and families work in partnership. Our children's academic, artistic and social-emotional progress is a collective responsibility. Together we can guide our children toward acquisition of the skills necessary to become responsible, well-educated, compassionate, creative and productive citizens.

As we foster this collaborative relationship, communication between home and school is an essential ingredient. This handbook is one means of such communication. It contains important information regarding practices, policies, rules, regulations and services. Many of your questions have been anticipated and are discussed in some detail; however, we are always available to clarify your questions and concerns as they arise.

As part of our work together, we ask that you please take the time to read this handbook and discuss pertinent information with your child(ren). This information, combined with weekly principal and PTO e-newsletter, classroom newsletters, and additional notices, will keep you abreast of school information, policies and events.

We encourage parents to become involved in the school by participating in parent-teacher efforts such as; Memorial-Spaulding PTO meetings, serving on committees, attending functions, volunteering as a room parent, and attending scheduled parent-teacher conferences. Please feel free to visit the school and maintain dialogue with teachers and myself regarding the progress of your child.

Please contact our office with any questions you may have: 617-559-9600. Again, I welcome you to the Memorial-Spaulding School community and look forward to a successful school year!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Morris". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tom Morris, Principal  
[morrist@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:morrist@newton.k12.ma.us)

9/1/23

Dear Families,

On behalf of the PTO of Memorial Spaulding Elementary School we would like to welcome you to a new school year! We are proud to be part of this vibrant school community and look forward to helping make the school year both enjoyable and enriching for students, teachers, and parents. Our PTO is made up of parents who volunteer their time and talents to support the efforts of the wonderful teachers and staff of Memorial Spaulding, and to provide unique learning and enrichment opportunities for our children. We already have many wonderful events planned for this year:

- Back to School Movie Night (September)
- Backyard Bash (October)
- Halloween Party (October)
- Book Fair (November)
- Parents Spring Gala (April)
- International Festival (April)
- Teacher Appreciation Week (May)
- End of Year Picnic (June)

The above events as well as funding to support classroom activities are made possible because of your time and financial contribution. Our goal is to make fundraising convenient. The Memorial Spaulding PTO primarily brings in revenue through our annual appeal and our After School Creative Arts (ASCA) program:

- Annual appeal – A fundraising drive where each family is asked to make a one- time annual contribution
- ASCA – Our After School Creative Arts program is our largest income generator. This program offers a variety of fun and unique after-school classes that take place right at Memorial Spaulding! Sports, art, music, language, martial arts, cooking and science are just a few of the classes we have offered in the past.

The PTO fundraising efforts have also resulted in a new playground that our children will enjoy for many years to come, interactive classroom projectors, outdoor seating and a gaga ball pit for a fun new recess activity. This year we are excited to invite professional mural artist David Fichter to lead us in a collaborative mosaic mural project that will hang on the front of our school! Mr. Fichter and Ms. Etscovitz will guide students through the envisioning process to create a mosaic, piece by piece, collaboratively with the community through drop in family sessions, alumni visits, and many open houses. We will create a space for everyone to come together to make an everlasting masterpiece that represents Memorial-Spaulding's colorful and vibrant community. More details to follow soon!

Everything we do is reliant on volunteers and we encourage you to get involved. There are big and small ways to get involved and your time will be an investment that produces lasting benefits. Visit our website for more information and/or contact us directly. We look forward to serving as co-presidents of the PTO this year and working with you to create an unforgettable experience for our children. Welcome to the Memorial Spaulding community!

Thank you,  
DayAna Davidou and Margaret Stefater

9/1/23

Dear ELL Families,

The ELL Committee is wishing you a warm welcome to a new school year at Memorial-Spaulding Elementary School. It is always wonderful to see new families at the school and we cherish the diversity all the ELL families bring to the school community.

The ELL families at the school often have very different backgrounds. Some have lived abroad for a long time and are quite familiar with the school system. Others just moved here from their home country, and everything seems very new and different. But the thing we all have in common is that our children need a little extra support learning English.

If your family is new to the school, you'll be contacted by the classroom teacher and the ELL teacher, and they'll introduce you and your child to the ELL program, the new class and the daily routines.

As something extra, Memorial-Spaulding also has an ELL Committee consisting of a group of volunteer ELL parents. The committee is here to answer questions, help with translation, introduce you to the school community, and if you're interested we can find you a matching buddy family (a support family at the school). We also recommend that you take a look at the two school handbooks and join our Facebook groups. The School Handbook contains a lot of important information about the school, and in the ELL Handbook you'll find answers to most questions asked by ELL families.

Helpful links:

School Handbook and ELL Handbook

<https://www.memorialspauldingpto.org/familyresources>

Memorial-Spaulding ELL Facebook group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/873772613382651/>

Memorial-Spaulding PTO Facebook group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/memorialspauldingpto/>

Please don't hesitate to reach out.

All the best,

The ELL Committee

[ell@memorialspauldingpto.org](mailto:ell@memorialspauldingpto.org)

Marie Lundbak Eriksen, Chairperson and Danish ELL parent

Celia Zhu, Board member and Chinese ELL parent

Sivan Elyashiv, Board member and Israeli ELL parent

Saharnaz Talebiyan, Board member and Iranian ELL parent

9/1/23

## **MEMORIAL- SPAULDING SCHOOL**

### **OUR VISION**

School is a community in which all children have the right to learn, to grow, to be valued for who they are and who they can become. As the faculty and families work together in a true partnership all our children will prosper.

We recognize that each child is unique and deserves to have the opportunity to learn the meaning of freedom and responsibility; respect and compassion for others; and to contribute to the larger world. Our school recognizes, values, and celebrates individual differences and creates a safe environment for all learners.

### **MEMORIAL-SPAULDING CORE VALUES**

**C**ommunication

**A**chievement

**K**indness

**E**ffort

### **RESPONSIVE CLASSROOM**

We want to take this opportunity to tell you more about our school's Responsive Classroom approach, a research-based approach to education that is associated with greater teacher effectiveness, higher student achievement, and improved school climate. It emphasizes teaching children to take care of themselves, each other, and the school environment so that everyone can learn at his/her best. You will notice our students paying attention to how we treat one another throughout the day. You will also see a strong emphasis on students setting goals for their own learning and taking responsibility for reaching those goals.

There are **seven principles** that guide this approach: The social and emotional curriculum is as important as the academic curriculum; How children learn is as important as what they learn; Great cognitive growth occurs through social interaction; To be successful academically and socially, children need to learn a set of social and emotional skills that include cooperation, assertiveness, responsibility, empathy, and self-control; Knowing the children we teach—individually, culturally, and developmentally—is as important as knowing the content we teach; Knowing the families of the children we teach is as important as knowing the children we teach; How we, the adults at school, work together is as important as our individual competence: Lasting change begins with the adult community.

To ensure success for all students, we begin each year with a particular focus on teaching school-wide expectations for recess, safety, and lunch. It is our hope that time spent teaching and reviewing some of our school-wide expectations will continue to promote our school as a welcoming, safe and supportive community for all students and families.

## **SCHOOL RULES**

**Try Your Best**

**Be Kind**

**Take Care of Yourself and Others**

**Take Care of Everything Around You**

### **GRADE ORGANIZATION AND CLASS SIZE**

Memorial-Spaulding School is a school of approximately 470 students from Newton and Boston (through participation in the METCO program), grades K – 5. There are currently 19 classrooms with an average class size of 20 students.

### **PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION**

Memorial-Spaulding is fortunate to have an interested, talented, creative and involved parent community. The PTO sponsors many activities and events, which both supports and enriches the school program.

<http://memorialspauldingpto.org>

### **BEFORE CARE/AFTER CARE**

#### **Early Morning Program**

Newton Public Schools offers an Early Morning Program for students in Grades K through 5 in each of the elementary schools. The program is designed to provide a service by giving parents the opportunity to bring their children to school prior to the beginning of the regularly scheduled school day. Within the program, each elementary school will offer supervised before school care from 7:20 a.m. until 8:10 a.m. when the school day begins. More information about the Early Morning Program is available at their web site [Early Morning Program](#). Please call 617-559-9025 to sign your child up for the early morning program.

#### **After-School Program**

Memorial-Spaulding has an Extended Day Program in the building. It is a semi-structured, recreational program, which operates from 2:50 pm – 6:00 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. On Wednesday the program runs from 12:20-6:00pm. Information can be obtained by contacting the administrator, Nicole Sawyers, sawyersn@newton.k12.ma.us / 617-630-5151. [Extended Day Program](#)

### **SCHOOL DAY**

#### **Start of the School Day**

- Students may enter the building at 8:10 AM. This gives them time to get settled and prepared for learning. Instruction begins promptly at 8:20am.
- Students who arrive after 8:20am must enter through the front of the building and sign in at the office.
- The Blue Zone is a drop off/pick up area. It is a drive-through (stop, drop and move on), no parking area during morning arrival and afternoon dismissal.
- For safety reasons there is NO parking or dropping off in the faculty lot.

## **POLICIES**

### **NPS Student Attendance and Absence Procedures**

#### **ABSENCES, TARDINESS**

Parents **must** report children who are absent or late to school. The Absence/Tardy phone number is **617-559-9617**. After the recording, please leave the child's name, classroom teacher and day and date of absence. Call the day before or prior to 8:10 a.m. on the day of the absence. You may also report unavoidable absences such as prolonged illness. Any child who is absent or tardy more than 18 times in a year is considered chronically absent and these absences are reported to the state by NPS.

#### **Extended absences, 10 or more days**

- [Student Attendance and Absence Procedures](#)
- Procedure for students at any grade who are leaving Newton for an extended period of time.
  - When a student leaves their Newton address to reside in a different community, state, or country for a period of more than 10 school days, and is unable to attend school daily, the student will be unenrolled from the Newton Public Schools and should be enrolled in school in the locality of residence or apply to create a [home school plan](#). The family may re-enroll the student in the Newton Public School at any future time that the student returns to residence at a Newton address.

#### **ASPEN**

Please be sure your emergency information is updated. Information can be changed directly through ASPEN, the Newton Public Schools student database system. The office must make home address changes. When an address is changed, NPS requires two utility bills from the new address and a lease, or mortgage information.

#### **BUS**

You need to call the Transportation office (617-559-9051) or fill in the online form to apply for a bus pass. The transportation web site is <http://www.newton.k12.ma.us/Page/214>

#### **CAFETERIA**

Children are seated together by their classrooms to continue to build and expand social relationships with classmates. Children in grades five will eventually be able to choose where to sit. Children should eat as much of their lunch as possible before going out to recess or back to class.

#### **CELL PHONES/Apple Watch**

For a variety of reasons, **students may not use cell phones at school**. Phones must be turned off and kept in a backpack/locker. Apple watches can be worn to school, but should not be used for any communication during the school day. If necessary, the classroom teacher may choose to collect cell phones/Apple watches at the beginning of the day or ban those items from coming to school altogether. *Memorial-Spaulding School/Newton Public Schools is not responsible for phones or devices that are lost, stolen, or broken while on the premises.*

#### **CLASSROOM CONCERNS**

If there is an issue in your child's classroom, or if your child is having a problem, your first step is to make an appointment with the teacher to discuss the issue. If you find that the problem is not addressed or resolved, the next step is to set up a meeting with the principal and the teacher to discuss next steps.

9/1/23

## **CLOTHING**

Children should dress neatly and comfortably for the school day. Keep in mind that students may be involved in using paint, glue, and other messy materials. On the days that children have physical education, they should wear comfortable clothing and appropriate footwear. *Children will not be allowed to participate in physical education without proper footwear.* Children do go outdoors on snowy and cold days, so be sure to dress your child appropriately for the weather (boots, gloves or mittens, hat). A second set of clothes, to be kept in your child's locker, is recommended for grades K-2. For safety outside at recess, the children must wear closed toe/heeled shoes. If flip-flops are worn to school they should bring other shoes to change into for recess. *(Wood chips on the playground have caused injury to students wearing open toe shoes.)*

## **Appropriate Dress**

We ask that you please support our expectations for appropriate student dress at school. Students and parents have the right to determine how the student will dress. However, the attire should not be destructive to school property, should comply with requirements for health and safety, and should not cause disorder or disruption. Also, please keep in mind that attire should be weather appropriate and should be safe while playing on the playground during recess. Student, faculty, or parent groups may recommend appropriate dress for school or special occasions; however, students will not be prevented from attending school or a school function or otherwise be discriminated against so long as their dress and appearance meet the requirements set forth above. If your child is not dressed appropriately, please know that we will contact you. We appreciate your support in reminding your child of these expectations

## **COMMUNICATION**

Check your children's backpack daily for work they have completed, and for teacher communication. School-wide and citywide flyers are usually sent home on Fridays. Please be aware of how your child's teacher communicates with families. Please speak with your child's teacher about any problems, questions or thoughts you may have. You may email the teachers or call the school to leave a message to have a teacher call you.

## **CONFERENCES**

There are two parent/teacher conferences scheduled each year. The fall conference is a two or three way conference (i.e. teacher, child and parent) depending on the teacher's preference.

## **CORI**

For the safety of your child, all parents who volunteer in the school, including library volunteers, room parents, field trip chaperones, and PTO committee members, must complete a **CORI**. Please come to the office with your driver's license or passport and fill out the form. It takes at least a week for CORIs to be processed. Please plan in advance if you want to volunteer for a specific event. CORIs are valid for 3 years.

## **DISMISSAL**

- Early Dismissal: School is important, so we ask that you make every attempt to avoid taking your child out of school except in rare emergencies. If your child will be released from school early, a note must be sent to your child's teacher. Ring the bell at the front of the school and the administrative assistant will call down to the child's classroom to have the child dismissed.

9/1/23



- Pick-Up: Children need to be picked up in a timely manner. Please make sure that the person responsible for picking up your child is here when the dismissal bell rings (12:20 p.m. on Wednesdays, and 2:50 p.m. on all other days). Also remember that there are 6 “special early release” days, other than Wednesdays, scheduled during the school year. Please check your calendar to make sure your children are picked up at **12:10 p.m.** on these days. The office and classroom teachers cannot be responsible for your child after the school day ends. Establish a consistent pick-up place for your child. Let your child’s teacher know your daily dismissal routine.
- Children Grades K-3 who do not take the bus will only be dismissed to an adult or older sibling
- Change in Pick Up Arrangements: If your child’s usual after-school arrangements change; we ask that you send a written note to the teacher in the morning. We know emergencies happen, in that case, please call the office with the emergency dismissal change so we can notify the classroom teacher. Do not email changes to your child’s teacher because he or she may not check email during the day.

## **FOOD/CELEBRATIONS**

Food may not be shared at school due to concerns regarding food allergies. Likewise, food may not be used to celebrate birthdays and other special occasions at school. Please check with your child’s classroom teacher with regard to celebrations.

## **GIFT AND SOLICITATIONS POLICY (2015)**

The Newton Public Schools Staff Gifts and Solicitations Policy is updated and incorporates current Massachusetts Conflict of Interest Law M.G.L. c. 268A. This replaces the earlier 1991 policy. Newton Public Schools allows a group gift to an individual staff member only if the gift is identified as being from the entire class, the identity of the givers and the individual amounts are not disclosed to the recipient, and the gift does not exceed \$150 per school year. This differs from a gift for the classroom (\*). Individual gifts of appreciation in the form of sentimental tokens are allowed. Gifts of commercial value are not permitted.

NPS allows and encourages giving to charitable organizations such as school PTO’s or the Newton Schools Foundation’s *Honor Thy Teacher Program* which honors staff while supporting our schools.

## **HEALTH**

Please do not send your child to school if you see signs of illness.

A student will be excluded from school if he/she has:

- A fever of 100° or greater in the past 24 hours
- Vomiting or diarrhea in the past 24 hours
- A communicable disease diagnosis
- A cold in the active stages – coughing, sneezing, nasal drainage
- A sore throat and/or swollen neck glands
- Acute pain that requires relief by narcotic medication

The school nurse will assess each presenting condition on an individual basis and determine whether your child should be sent home because of an illness during school hours. The school administrative assistant must have alternate local telephone numbers of people to call in case of an emergency and neither parent can be reached. Please update your emergency contact information in our online student management system, ASPEN.

## **HOMEWORK**

9/1/23

Homework is a part of your child's schooling. We believe homework is a way to enrich classroom learning, to reinforce specific skills and to extend school activities to the home. We do not believe in "homework for the sake of homework". Part of the homework assignment is to build responsibility within students.

During the first few weeks of school, time will be devoted each day in the classrooms to clearly define our expectations and to teach students how to do homework successfully. Teachers will introduce homework slowly and incrementally and provide plenty of time for students to practice the routine under our guidance before expecting them to do it at home independently.

While routines may be slightly different among grade levels, all children will practice homework routines such as bringing home in-class assignments or using home-school folders. This will reinforce the learning that takes place during the school day, and allow parents to gain a better understanding of homework expectations so they are better able to hold their children to these expectations.

In addition, all Memorial-Spaulling students must read each night. Your child's teacher will have specific details regarding at-home reading. If at any time you are unclear about an assignment or have any questions about your child's work, please contact the teacher. Families and teachers working together will ensure that all Memorial-Spaulling students are successful learners.

As a part of homework routines, we would like to encourage our students to choose a homework buddy, someone they can call if they have any question about an assignment, forgot the assignment, or perhaps to assist one another in their learning.

Part of the homework assignment is for the children to be responsible for their work. Unless a teacher calls and asks for homework to be brought in that day, please do not bring homework into the office to be picked. Please do not go to the classroom or lockers to deliver homework to your child. **It is school policy that homework assignments are not given to students who will be out of school for a vacation.**

### **LOCKERS**

All children will be assigned a locker where they will place their backpack, outerwear and other belongings. Valuable items should not be kept in lockers because we do not permit the children to use a lock to secure their locker. Your child may also have his/her own cubby in the classroom, which will act as a "personal mailbox".

### **LUNCH/SNACK**

Students have time for snack each day. Please send your child with a nutritious snack and drink. Glass bottles, candy and soda are not allowed. Due to many children having allergies, snacks cannot be shared. Lunch can be brought to school or can be ordered through the food service department. You can also do a combination of both. If your child forgets to bring lunch, the food services department will provide one. If you need to drop off your child's lunch, ring the bell and leave it at the drop off table, and it will be brought to the classroom. You can get more information about Food Services at this website: [Whitson's NPS](#) or call them at (617) 559-6315.

### **OFFICE**

Ms. Rutherford is our administrative assistant in the office. Please see her with any needs or questions. If, in an emergency, you must drop off something for your child, you may leave the item on the drop off shelf. The child's name and teacher's name should be written on the item. The classroom will be called and the child will be sent down to pick up during a break in instruction time.

### **PROGRESS REPORTS**

9/1/23

The progress report is a formalized accounting of children's development as learners and is available through ASPEN twice per year, usually at the end of January/beginning of February and again in June. Progress reports are available for download in Aspen, they are not printed or sent home by the school.

Parent-teacher conferences during the school year provide an opportunity for parents to meet with teachers to discuss their child's development.

### **PERSONAL ITEMS**

Personal items of value (apple watch, jewelry, cash, etc.) should not be brought to school by students. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

### **SCHOOL HOURS-ALL GRADES**

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday 8:10 AM - 2:50 PM

Wednesday 8:10 AM -12:20 PM

*Children will be marked tardy if they are not in their classroom by 8:20am.*

### **SNOW DAYS**

Newton has a reverse phone system in place. If you have designated a phone number to be called, you will receive a message from the school department when school is closed or delayed. The following radio and television stations also broadcast no school announcements: WBUR 90.9FM, WBX 1030AM, WILD 1090AM, WRKO 680AM, WNTN 1550AM, channels 4,5,7 and Newton Cable TV. Please listen to the radio or watch television if you do not get a call. We kindly ask that you **DO NOT CALL** the school department, the fire or police departments or the school itself.

### **VISITORS**

All visitors should use the front door, ring the bell and the administrative assistant will answer. All visitors to our building should sign in and obtain a visitors badge.

### **SPECIAL PROGRAMS**

#### **ART**

Elementary students receive visual art instruction from visual art specialist. The instruction is conducted in designated art classrooms. In addition, the visual art specialists are available to work with students and teachers on special projects. The visual art instruction is focused on providing students with experiences in a variety of visual art media and techniques while developing artistic and creative skills. Students are also given learning experiences, which are designed to increase their knowledge of art history and to develop art appreciation.

#### **MUSIC**

Music specialists who are assigned to each school conduct music instruction in the elementary schools. Each school offers general, vocal and instrumental music instruction. Students in grades K-2 & 4-5 receive 30 minutes of general music instruction per week. During this instruction, students are taught fundamentals of music through a sequential curriculum, which develops skills and knowledge in music performance, appreciation and history. Students in grade 3 receive 60 minutes (two 30 minute sessions) of general music instruction each week in a curriculum that introduces students to the recorder. Students in grades 4 and 5 participate in all-inclusive choral groups and can also sign up for instrumental music classes. The music specialist with the aid of paid piano accompanists conducts all choral-performing groups.

#### **LIBRARY**

9/1/23

The Library Media Program strives to ensure that every student is information literate and proficient in the use of information in all formats including current and emerging technologies. We will provide curriculum instruction and professional development opportunities to enable students and teachers to use technology creatively and effectively for teaching and learning and to construct and communicate new knowledge

Through effective teaching and engaging learning experiences we will create a community of life-long learners, critical thinkers, insightful readers, and ethical users of information resources prepared to participate in an evolving global society.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

The purpose of the Physical Education, Health and Wellness Department of the Newton Public Schools is to enhance the well-being of the school community by creating a culture that integrates and balances the six dimensions of wellness: social/environmental, physical, intellectual, career/occupational, emotional and spiritual. The department strives to encourage an active, healthy lifestyle, positive choices and student centeredness, which will provide each student with a diverse education in a safe supportive environment. It is the hope that this mission will help to promote self-responsibility, motivation and excellence in learning as well as life-long commitment to wellness.

## **SUPPORT SERVICES**

Memorial-Spaulding is extremely fortunate to have a very talented team. Support personnel include our social worker, psychologist, speech therapist, learning center teachers, occupational therapists, physical therapists, Team Specialist and Inclusion Facilitators.

### **Memorial-Spaulding Co-Taught Classrooms - Grades: 3 - 5**

Overview: The goal of the program is to address students' multiple needs by providing a comprehensive range of services and a consistent, structured, and nurturing environment throughout the school day. At the same time, a co-taught model enables students to fully participate in the general curriculum. Creating co-teaching partnerships between general educators, the masters of content, and special educators, the masters of accessibility, increases the probability of curriculum being seamlessly differentiated and strategies being implemented. Opportunities for extension of curriculum and expanded differentiated instruction emerge within the co-taught setting. All students are provided a challenging, developmentally appropriate curriculum in various aspects of the school day. All students participate in the curriculum of the grade level with small group teaching of specific skills for students who require specialized instruction. Staffing: The staff consists of a full-time elementary teacher, a full-time special education teacher, and a full-time intern or assistant. Classroom Instruction: Within the class there is a range of group sizes during teacher-facilitated instruction. At times throughout the school day students may participate in small group, mid sized group as well as whole class instruction.