



**Guilderland**  
CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

# **Pine Bush Elementary School**

## **2023-24 Student and Parent Handbook**

Welcome to our Learning Community at Pine Bush Elementary School. Our staff members are looking forward to an exciting and productive school year as we work together with you and your child. As parents, your support of the learning process will be a vital factor toward ensuring your child's success in school.

At Pine Bush Elementary, we are committed to sustaining a culture of life long learning which involves students, staff and parents. We believe that this culture must:

- Provide a safe learning environment for children to expand their knowledge, take risks, develop productive work habits and grow;
- Promote respect, responsibility and compassion for others; and
- Provide opportunities for academic exploration, challenge and productive collaboration.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you and your child with an overview of some basic procedural information concerning our school. It is also intended to make you aware of the academic and behavior expectations that we have established for our students. We hope that you will take the time to read and discuss the contents of this handbook with your child. Please feel free to contact the school at any time should you have questions or concerns.

### **Pine Bush Elementary Opening And Dismissal Times**

- Early Drop Off 7:30 a.m.
  - Supervision is provided to students dropped off beginning at 7:30 a.m. in the cafeteria.
- Start Time 7:45 a.m.

- Students arriving after 7:55 a.m. will be marked tardy
- Dismissal 1:55 p.m.
- Late Dismissal 2:55 p.m.

## Attendance

There is a strong correlation between a child's attendance in school and the success that he or she experiences. We ask parents to make every effort to have their children attend school on a daily basis. In the event of an absence please call and/or email the school nurse, Allison Card, as early as possible on the day your child will be absent from school at (518) 357-2770 or [CardA@guilderlandschools.net](mailto:CardA@guilderlandschools.net)

If a call is not made, the school nurse will call to verify your child's absence. Although we recognize the importance of school attendance, we also realize that children need to remain at home when they are sick. If your child does not feel well in the morning, you should carefully consider whether or not to send him or her to school using the [District's Guidelines](#). Children do not perform well in school when they are feeling ill and may risk spreading an illness to another child.

After 10- and 20- days an attendance letter will be generated from eSD and will be sent home.

## Medication and Immunizations

Per NYS law any prescription and/or over-the-counter medications that your child may need to take at school must include a written order by your child's Physician. Written permission from the parent is also necessary. This form is available on the GCSD website if needed [here](#).

An adult must drop off medications to school; children cannot transport medications. Medications may be dropped off during school supply drop off hours or anytime during the school day. Please have medications in their original, sealed containers. If the medication is a prescription, it must be labeled as it should be dispensed. You can ask the Pharmacist to label one container for home and one for school.

Please make sure your child has all required immunizations for school entry which can be found [here](#) or by calling your child's provider. Any child not having these immunizations must be excluded from school per NYS law.

## **Family Vacations During the School Year**

Vacations and trips that are taken by children while school is in session are viewed as unexcused absences. Despite the best efforts of teachers and parents it is not possible to compensate for class discussion, interaction and teacher directed instruction that is missed during an extended absence.

Please note that if a student absence for vacation purposes is unavoidable, classroom teachers are not expected to provide work to be completed over the vacation. Upon a child's return to school, copies of materials distributed to the class during the absence may be given to the student.

Although teachers will make reasonable efforts to help the child catch up with his or her missed work, the main responsibility for completing this work lies with the student and parent.

## **Late Arrival and Parent Pick-up**

Parents are encouraged to make every effort to have children arrive at school on time. It is difficult for children to successfully begin their school day when instruction has already begun. Any students arriving after 7:55 a.m. are considered tardy and must report to the main office for an entrance pass to the classroom.

If a child is being picked up prior to or at dismissal, parents must come in to sign out the child in the office. When at all possible, parents should notify the main office and their child's teacher that they will be dismissed early.

## **Driving Students to School**

Whenever possible we encourage parents to send their children to school on the school buses. If it is necessary to drive your child to school, we ask that you enter the parking lot to the right of the school, circle around the lot and drop your child at the curb. If a child needs to be accompanied into school, parents should park their vehicle and escort their child across the parking lot. Children are not permitted to walk across the parking lot unaccompanied at arrival and dismissal times.

## **Riding Bicycles to School**

During the spring and fall students who live in the vicinity of the school have expressed interest in riding their bicycles to school. Parents are asked to carefully consider this

option for children because the traffic in and around the school grounds can be very busy at arrival and dismissal time.

Bike riders must have written permission from a parent for the school to keep on file. The school encourages students to use the pedestrian path between the retention ponds and Coffee Drive when riding their bikes. They will be dismissed after the buses have left the school property. Under no circumstances should any student cross or ride on Carman Road.

## **Bus Notes**

Students are **not** permitted to be transported to a location other than his or her normal drop off point.

## **Communicating with teachers**

Open communication between school and home is an important component of student success. Teachers are the closest and best resource concerning individual children. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your child in the classroom, you are encouraged to contact the teacher directly through email or written note. Any urgent matters that need to be addressed by the end of the school day, should be handled through both a phone call and or email to the main office, along with direct communication with the teacher(s).

## **Parent Conferences**

Parent conferences provide an opportunity for parents to speak with their child's teacher in detail about their progress to date as a young learner. We ask that you please consider sharing any important information that you feel will assist your child and his or her teacher toward a successful school year.

Parent conferences for all students in grades K-5 are held each fall. Spring conferences will be scheduled for all students in grades K-2 only. If you would like to meet with your child's teacher outside of these scheduled times, please contact them for an appointment.

## **Visitors and Building Security**

The main entry door in the front of Pine Bush Elementary will be locked at all times. Anyone who arrives will be asked to press a button to the right of the main entry door. This will activate an intercom system in the main office where a staff member will remotely unlock the door. It is our intention to continue to provide members of our

school community necessary access to our school with an additional level of security during the instructional day.

Visitors should be prepared to display photo identification when entering the building during school hours. All visitors will be provided with a school issued identification pass, which should be visible at all times while on school grounds.

## **School-Wide Newsletters**

Pine Bush Elementary School publishes a periodic school newsletter informing parents of upcoming activities, school events and other important information. An electronic message will be sent to those individuals who are registered with this notification system with a link to each newly published newsletter. We encourage you to read this newsletter carefully as it will often contain information concerning early dismissals, school closings, changes in procedures, and special events.

The Pine Bush Elementary PTA also prepares seasonal newsletters that provide information concerning PTA activities. Both of these pieces of communication will be helpful resources for you throughout the school year.

## **ParentSquare**

As of August 1, 2023, ParentSquare fully replaced SchoolMessenger as a way to receive email news from the district and its schools. If you are a parent or guardian of a student and had been receiving email news through SchoolMessenger you are not required to do anything if you would like to keep receiving messages through ParentSquare.

The district began utilizing ParentSquare in the 2023-24 school year for emergency notifications, such as school closings/delays and emergency situations in schools, and has since expanded its use to include school and district-level messages. Learn more about [ParentSquare here](#).

## **eSchoolData Parent Portal**

Research shows that when parents and teachers work well together, everyone benefits. This is one of the reasons the Guilderland Central School District utilizes our parent and student portals— to keep the parent-school connection open and thriving.

Directions on how to navigate the site, reset your password and update contact information can be found below.

**VIDEO:** [Navigating the Parent Portal](#)

**VIDEO:** [Navigating the Student Portal](#)

Users will be able to view attendance information by period, schedules, report card grades, progress reports and important dates and announcements.

Students will only have access to their own information, and parents will only have access to the profiles of the GCSD students for which they are a registered parent or guardian.

Once you are a registered user, click below for the appropriate portal.

**Parent Portal Link:** <https://parentportal-neric.eschooldata.com/Guilderland>

**Student Portal Link:** <https://studentportal-neric.eschooldata.com/guilderland>

Elementary school level portal information will display teacher placement information. Once your account is activated, you can use the Parent Portal. If you still need assistance, please contact the main office at (518) 357-2770.

## **Lost and Found**

The school's lost and found is located in the front of the school. Articles of clothing and lunch boxes that have been found are placed there. Students and parents are encouraged to check the lost and found from time to time for any items that may be missing. Articles of value such as jewelry, money and electronics that have been found are kept in the main office. Owners are asked to identify their property when they come to claim it. In an effort to reduce the number of articles in the lost and found, we request that student names be written on as much personal property as possible. Any unclaimed items will be donated to charitable organizations at the end of the school year.

## **After-School Activities**

Pine Bush Elementary School offers a variety of formal and informal after school activities for its students. Students who are members of a regularly scheduled group will receive a permission form that should be signed by parents and returned to the school. Arrangements for other after school activities may be made by telephone call and or note by the teacher involved. After-school activities will not be held on Wednesdays and Fridays, as there are no late buses on these days.

## Library Media Center

As a flexible schedule library (open 7:45 a.m. – 1:45 p.m.), our mission is to encourage our school staff and students to enjoy a variety of literature, access information effectively, and become engaged lifelong learners. The library's mission is to ensure that students become independent library users who enjoy literature and are able to access, evaluate and use information effectively. Students in kindergarten through fifth grade participate in our library media program once per week during a thirty-minute class with our full-time librarian and their teachers. Please visit the Library Program Overview on the curriculum portion of the school library homepage.

Kindergartners may check out two items at a time for a loan period of one week. First graders may check out three items at a time for a loan period of one week. Second through fifth graders are allowed to have up to five items checked out in their library account for a loan period of two weeks. Overdue materials must be returned before new materials can be checked out. We do not charge overdue fees. Students and parents may login to the Destiny Catalog with their student ID to view their library account information (items out, holds, etc.) Additionally, students may check out up to 5 eBooks or audiobooks through BOCES Sora.

Students should take good care of library materials when using them and carrying them in their backpacks. Books should be kept away from food, drink and pets. Damaged or lost books must be replaced before new materials can be checked out. This policy should in no way deter library use, but rather help students recognize their responsibility and demonstrate respect for shared resources.

For additional questions, please contact our Library Media Specialist, Sarah Kransler, at [kranslers@guilderlandschools.net](mailto:kranslers@guilderlandschools.net)

## Volunteers

Pine Bush Elementary School welcomes parents, grandparents and community members who wish to volunteer in the school. There are many opportunities within the school to assist in the learning process. Some of these opportunities include working with individual students or small groups in the classroom, assisting in library activities, chaperoning school trips, copying instructional materials for teachers and serving as a guest speaker or local expert on curricular subjects. If interested in volunteering, please complete the following forms and submit them to the main office:

- [Volunteer Application](#)
- [Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement](#)

## **Student Cell Phone and Smartwatch Use**

The Pine Bush Building Cabinet has developed the following guidelines for cell phone and Smartwatches in school:

- Devices that are capable of sending and receiving text messages or phone calls, taking pictures and/or video recording, or have WiFi capability will not be allowed to be used by students during the school day.
- Devices should be off or placed on vibrate mode at all times when they are in school. These items should be kept in children's backpacks in their lockers.
- If a parent requests that a child contact them, the student should come to the office and make the phone call as per building procedures.
- Violation of this policy will result in confiscation of the electronic device. These devices will be turned over to parents at the main office.

## **Party invitations**

Invitations for parties and other celebrations that occur outside of school are special occasions for children to invite friends from their classroom community. While we recognize the importance of celebrating these special occasions with our students, we ask that invitations be given out in school only if the entire class is being invited. Otherwise, this special occasion for one child can become an unintended hurtful occasion for the child who does not receive an invitation. Parents should obtain children's addresses through other means such as a class directory if available and mail the invitations to avoid hurt feelings.

## **Birthday Treats**

Our goal was to develop guidelines that support our district Health and Wellness policy and encourage healthy food options or alternative activities for birthday celebrations. Your child's teacher will advise you of the procedures they will follow in recognition of student birthdays in their classroom.

Due to food allergies, the Guilderland Central School district wellness policy, and the effort to provide equitable experiences for all, students should not bring in food or toys to share with their classmates. Instead, each teacher or team of teachers will celebrate



birthdays in different ways. Information about birthday celebrations will be provided at Open House.

## Classroom Celebrations

Throughout the year, classes may celebrate special events on occasion. Any food items brought into school for such events need to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Items must be store bought in the original sealed package
- All ingredients must be clearly labeled
- Individually packaged items are preferred
- **Due to food allergies, we cannot accept any homemade food items**

## Guiderland Central School District Elementary Code of Conduct

A code of conduct is a set of rules that was written to keep our students and schools safe so that all members of our school community can learn and work in a positive environment.

<b>Student Dress Code</b>	<b>Expected Behavior</b>	<b>Respect</b>
<p>Students will dress in clothing that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is safe</li><li>• Does not distract others from learning</li><li>• Respects the feelings and rights of others</li></ul>	<p>Students will behave in a positive manner by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Coming to school each day ready to learn</li><li>• Following school and classroom rules</li><li>• Helping others to learn</li><li>• Making safe choices</li></ul>	<p>Students will treat others with respect. Guiderland students must never:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bully others</li><li>• Make fun of others</li><li>• Hurt others with words that are spoken, written or electronically sent</li></ul>

### **Student Rights**

- Learn in a positive school community
- Be treated with respect and dignity
- To a school environment that is clean and safe

### **Student Responsibilities**

- Follow the Code of Conduct
- To tell an adult if there is a problem
- Contribute to our positive school community