

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW 2015-16

TESTING PROGRAM

The Parkland Board of School Directors has approved a district-wide testing program designed to provide information concerning the academic proficiency and learning aptitude of all students in the district. Students in grades 3 – 8 will participate in the PSSA Mathematics and Language Arts assessment. Students in grades 4 and 8 will participate in the PSSA Science assessment. Students completing courses in Algebra I, Biology and Grade 10 Literature will participate in the Keystone Exams as well as students needing to retest. College entrance examinations and advanced placement examinations are also available and optional for high school students. The specific dates for many of these assessments are listed in the district activities calendar.

FREE/REDUCED PRICE LUNCHESES

In compliance with state and federal requirements, the Parkland School District provides free or reduced price breakfast and lunches to those children whose family cannot afford to pay the full price. Eligibility is determined by several criteria including size and total income of the family. Application forms are available online at: www.parklandsd.org/departments/foodservices/.

MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION

When an illness is serious enough to warrant the administration of medication, the parent or guardian should attempt to administer the medication before or after school hours. However, the district recognizes that there are extenuating circumstances that make it necessary for certain students to receive prescribed and/or nonprescription medication during the school day. In this event, parents should contact the school nurse about the medication required. The school nurse will provide information concerning authorization forms and procedures for administration. Please note that authorization forms and contact with the school nurse is also necessary in order to allow students to carry their own asthma inhalers for self-administration.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING

Experience indicates that each year emergency conditions may require school officials to close one or more of the district's 11 schools. Although weather conditions are the major reason for an emergency closing, the loss of a school's water or power supply or the breakdown of a heating system or other emergency may also necessitate closing a school.

Most parents know when impending weather conditions may require a late start, a cancellation or an early closing of the schools. However, parents have virtually no way of anticipating a school closing for any other emergency. Consequently, an emergency closing usually creates difficulty for children for whom there are no accommodations when they arrive home prior to the normal dismissal time.

When any emergency necessitates the cancellation or early closing of school, we will utilize the district's rapid notification system which calls and e-mails all parents that have opted into the system at the beginning of the school year or during the new student registration process. Information will also be posted immediately to the District's web site at www.parklandsd.org. We will also notify local radio and TV stations and request that they air the appropriate information as soon as possible. Due to the number of students in each school and the many incoming calls that are common when there is an emergency closing, parents are urged to opt into the rapid notification system as well as develop a contingency plan, which will provide accommodations for any child who arrives home early due to an emergency closing. Arrangements with neighbors, friends or relatives constitute the contingency plan already developed by many district residents.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

The Parkland Board of School Directors recognizes the importance of an orderly climate for learning.

As a result, the district staff and district programs are focused on assisting students in the development of self discipline. In no instance will corporal punishment be permissible in those circumstances where discipline measures must be imposed on students.

STUDENT INSURANCE

The district does not have insurance coverage for expenses resulting from accidental injuries occurring on district property during the school day.

Medical expenses incurred from an accident are a personal responsibility and as such should be reported to your medical insurance carrier if such coverage exists and/or under the optional school insurance plan, which is available for parent purchase through the school. Applications are provided at the beginning of the school year.

EDUCATIONAL TRAVEL

A student may be excused from school to travel if the trip is of an educational nature. A written request for approval of the travel should be submitted to the principal of the school by the parents or legal guardian prior to the planned trip. Work may be assigned for the student to complete during the time of absence.

DISTRICT EMERGENCY PLAN

The district has adopted a comprehensive emergency response plan designed to aid district personnel in responding to any emergency. Questions regarding emergency preparedness may be directed to the director of transportation and safety or the building principal.

SCIENCE ACTIVITIES INVOLVING ANIMALS

Senate Bill 727 states that public school pupils from kindergarten through grade twelve may refuse to dissect, vivisection, incubate, capture or otherwise harm or destroy animals, or any parts thereof, as part of their course of instruction. Any students wishing to exercise this right should speak with their science teacher at the start of the year or semester.

AIDS UNIT IN HEALTH CURRICULUM

School districts in Pennsylvania are required by the State Board of Education to provide instruction about Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) at the elementary, middle and high school levels. The Parkland School District health curriculum will be providing that instruction through a series of lessons about AIDS in grades 3, 6, 8, and 11.

A student can be excused from instruction in AIDS. A written request from the parent/guardian is required. Parents/guardians wishing more information about this instruction should contact the building principal or the office of curriculum and instruction. Curricular materials are available for home instruction when a student is excused from the district's program of instruction.

Any questions relative to the objectives, content and resources in any part of the district curriculum, should be directed to the office of curriculum and instruction at 610-351-5540.

EXEMPTING REQUIRED COURSES BY EXAM

Students who wish to opt out of a required course, because of an existing knowledge base or for reason of acceleration, must demonstrate achievement of the required course material by the successful completion of an examination. A request to take the examination must be made by a current Parkland student, in writing, to the principal prior to March 25, 2016. The student will not receive academic credit for any exempted course.

ACCEPTABLE USE OF COMPUTERS, NETWORK, INTERNET, ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS POLICY

The Parkland School District provides employees, students, and guests with access to the School District's electronic communication systems and network, which includes Internet access, whether wired or wireless, or by any other means. Guests include, but are not limited to, visitors, workshop attendees, volunteers, independent contractors, adult education staff, students, and board members.

Computers, network, Internet, electronic communications and information systems provide vast, diverse and unique resources. The Board of School Directors will provide access to the School District's CIS systems for users if there is a specific School District-related purpose to access information and research; to collaborate; to facilitate learning and teaching; and to foster the educational purpose and mission of the School District. A copy of the entire acceptable use policy is available at <http://www.parklandsd.org/AUPsummary.htm>, on our district intranet, or from any Information Systems staff member.

SCHOOL BUS POLICY

Safety, while riding the school bus, is a responsibility that must be shared by all concerned parents, students and school officials as it is always our top concern. The PSD has more than 2,500 bus stops, many of which are along roadways with a high volume of traffic. Therefore, we urge all students who must cross the roadway to board the bus, not to cross until the bus arrives, is completely stopped and red lights are flashing. Students should check both directions to be sure all traffic is stopped before crossing the roadway.

Parents must reinforce with their children the need to obey the rules. The complete policy and regulations are available in the central office of any Parkland school. Buses are equipped with cameras capable of audio and visual recording.

Violation of any of the regulations of the Parkland School District bus policy may result in withdrawal of transportation privileges and/or other disciplinary action for a period of time to be determined by the seriousness of the offense at the discretion of the administration.

Withdrawal of school bus privileges does not relieve either the student or the parents of their responsibilities insofar as the compulsory attendance laws apply. Absence from school for the above reason will be considered an unexcused absence.

In the event of serious or repeated violation of bus regulations, the district may file a summary offense, misdemeanor, or felony complaint with the local magistrate.

UNAUTHORIZED SCHOOL BUS ENTRY

The Pennsylvania legislature has amended the Crimes Code to classify as a felony the entrance onto a school bus by any person not authorized by the school district. This legislative change has been enacted to limit disruption or interference of bus operation and to guarantee the safety of student riders.

THREATS

The Parkland School District recognizes the importance and responsibility of providing an environment safe from threatening and violent behavior. To this end, any student who makes threats orally, electronically, or in writing against any other member of the school community may be suspended from school and may be required to have psychological or psychiatric clearance prior to return.

POSSESSION OR USE OF WEAPONS IN SCHOOL

The possession or use of a weapon on the premises and/or property of the Parkland School District, or at any school-sponsored activity, and in any public conveyance providing transportation to school or a school-sponsored activity or while the student is coming to or from school, is prohibited both by policy and state law (Act 26 of 1995). A violation of the weapons' policy and Act 26 may result in expulsion from the Parkland School District for a period of not less than one year.

It is absolutely imperative that parents discuss this information with their children. All of the following are considered weapons: knife (any type), cutting instrument, cutting tool, nunchaku, firearm, shotgun, rifle, knuckles, chains, clubs, and stars.

Articles that are designated for other purposes, but which are used to inflict bodily harm and/or intimidate other persons, are also prohibited. These articles may include matches, lighters, belts, scissors, files, etc.

REPORTING DRUG & ALCOHOL ABUSE INFORMATION

Parents and residents are encouraged to report known or rumored incidents of drug or alcohol abuse by school-age children, particularly incidents known or rumored to occur during school hours. Contact the appropriate school principal who is responsible for investigating the reported incidents. A Student Support Team has been trained and is in operation at each of the district's two middle schools and high school. There is an Instructional Support Team at each of the district's eight elementary buildings.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY

The Parkland School District is committed to providing a drug/alcohol free learning environment for the students. A coordinated curriculum providing a wealth of information at various grade levels is utilized to prevent student use of drugs, alcohol and mood altering chemical substances.

District rules and regulations are in place to provide a coordinated effort by district personnel to respond effectively to current and potential use and abuse of drugs and alcohol.

No student shall unlawfully manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess or use any controlled substance as defined in the applicable Federal and State laws and regulations including but not limited to Act 21 (U.S.C.812) and Act 64 (1972).

Any student who violates this policy may be disciplined, suspended and/or expelled and/or be required to participate in a drug/alcohol evaluation.

A student apprehended in the act of possessing, using, distributing and/or being under the influence of an illegal substance will be referred to the police as well as the building Student Support Team, Instructional Support Team, or school counselor and/or may be referred to an appropriate licensed agency for drug/alcohol evaluation. A student seeking individual help for drug/alcohol related problems may contact his/her building Student Support Team, Instructional Support Team or school counselor for a list of appropriate licensed agencies.

ANABOLIC STEROIDS

The use of anabolic steroids, except for a valid medical purpose, by any student involved in school-related athletics in the Parkland School District is prohibited. Bodybuilding, muscle enhancement, increasing muscle bulk or strength for the enhancement of athletic ability is not a valid medical purpose. Human Growth Hormone (HGH) shall not be included as an anabolic steroid.

No student shall be eligible to resume participation in school athletics unless a medical determination has proved no residual evidence of steroids exists. A student may be required to participate in drug counseling, rehabilitation, testing or other program as a condition of reinstatement into a school athletic program.

TOBACCO LAW

The Tobacco Control Act now defines possession and/or use of tobacco by students as a summary offense violation.

ACT 145 of 1996 SECTION 6306.1

Use of Tobacco in Schools Prohibited

OFFENSE DEFINED: A student who possesses or uses tobacco in a school building, a school bus or on school property owned by, leased by, or under the control of a school district, or at any school-sponsored activity, and in any public conveyance providing transportation to school or a school-sponsored activity or while the student is coming to or from school commits a summary offense.

GRADING: A student who commits an offense under this section shall be subject to a prosecution initiated by the local school district and shall, upon conviction, be sentenced to pay a fine of not more than \$50 for the benefit of the school district in which such offending student resides, and to pay court costs. When a student is charged with violating subsection (A), the court may admit the offender to an adjudication alternative as authorized under 24 PAC.S. Section 1520 (relating to adjudication alternative program in lieu of imposing the fine.)

NATURE OF OFFENSE: A summary offense under this section shall not be a criminal offense of record, shall not be reportable as a criminal act and shall not be placed on the criminal record of the offending school-age person if any such record exists.

DEFINITIONS: As used in this section, the following words and phrases shall have the meaning given to them in this subsection:

STUDENT: A person between the ages of 6 and 21 years who is enrolled in school.

SCHOOL: A school operated by a joint board, board of directors or school board where students are enrolled in compliance with the Act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30 No 14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, including area vocational-technical schools and intermediate units.

TOBACCO: A lighted or unlighted cigarette, cigar, pipe or other lighted smoking product and smokeless tobacco in any form, including electronic smoking devices.

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW 2015-16

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR THE DISABLED

All 11 district schools provide accessibility for the disabled. Parents of a disabled child should contact the director of student services, 610-351-5555, for inquiries regarding appropriate placement of their child. Disabled adults who wish to visit or utilize school facilities should contact the appropriate building principal for information. General questions regarding the accessibility of school facilities for disabled persons should be directed to the office of the assistant superintendent at 610-351-5505.

PROTECTED HANDICAP

In compliance with state and federal law, the Parkland School District will provide to each protected handicapped student, without discrimination or cost to the student or family, those related aids, services or accommodations which are needed to provide equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school program and co- and non-curricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the student's abilities. To qualify as a protected handicapped student, the child must be of school age with a physical or mental disability, which substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to some aspect of the school program.

These services for "protected handicapped students" are distinct from those applicable to all eligible or exceptional students enrolled (or seeking enrollment) in special education programs.

For further information on the evaluation procedures and provision of services to protected handicapped students, contact the director of student services at 610-351-5555.

NOTICE FOR DIRECTORY INFORMATION

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a Federal law, requires that Parkland School District, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. However, Parkland School District may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised the District to the contrary in accordance with District procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the Parkland School District to include this type of information from your child's education records in certain school publications.

EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

- A playbill, showing your student's role in a drama production
- The annual yearbook
- Honor roll or other recognition lists
- Graduation programs
- Sports activity sheets, such as for wrestling, showing weight and height of team members



Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, two federal laws require local educational agencies (LEAs) receiving assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 (ESEA) to provide military recruiters, upon request, with three directory information categories - names, addresses and telephone listings - unless parents have advised the LEA that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent.

If you do not want Parkland School District to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the District in writing by October 15 of the current school year.

STUDENTS RECORDS POLICY

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records.

THESE RIGHTS ARE:

The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the building principal or director of student services a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent of the eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate. Parents or eligible students may ask the school to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate. They should write the school principal or director of student services and clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent the FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the school board; a person or company with whom the school has contacted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his/her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his/her professional responsibility. Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. The results from a psychological assessment will be provided in an evaluation report. The protocol of the evaluation is not considered to be a part of the student record and will be destroyed.

Parents have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school district to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA are: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Dept. of Education, 400 Maryland Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20202-4605.

The records of each student with an exceptionality (special education) are reviewed at the end of each school year. Information the district no longer deems necessary to provide appropriate programming is discarded. Parents may claim discarded records by contacting the director of student services, at 610-351-5555, prior to June 1 each school year. Copies are available at a cost of 25 cents per page.

HOMELESS RIGHTS OVERVIEW

Per McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

The Act defines the term “homeless children and youths” as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

Students in homeless situations have the right to:

- Be identified as homeless and receive Title I services and other supports to ensure their academic success.
- Be immediately enrolled in school despite their unstable housing situation and despite their inability to produce documents ordinarily required of students who have a permanent residence.
- Receive assistance in procuring school records.
- Be allowed to stay in the school they attended when they became homeless or the school in which they were last enrolled (called school of origin).
- Be transported from their current place of residence to the school of origin to reduce the need for them to transfer from school to school.
- Receive free school nutrition.
- Receive referrals to medical, mental health, dental, and other appropriate services.
- Receive assistance in acquiring school supplies, standard dress or uniforms, backpacks, and other provisions needed to succeed in school.



SPECIAL SERVICES AVAILABLE

If you believe that your school age child may be in need of special education and related services or gifted education, please contact the director of student services. Screening and evaluation processes designed to assess the needs of the child and his/her eligibility are available to you at no cost upon written request. Early intervention services (Project Connect) are available for young children age 3 to school age. (If you know a disabled person in this age group who is not attending school, is attending a non-public school, or if you are concerned about a preschool child's development, in walking, talking, hearing, seeing, or learning contact the director of student services.) You may request screening and evaluation at any time, whether or not your child is enrolled in the district's public school program. Requests for screening and evaluation should be made in writing to the director of student services, 1210 Springhouse Road, Allentown, Pa. 18104. Parkland students will be screened for vision impairments in all grade levels. Hearing screening, as state mandated, is conducted in kindergarten, 1, 2, 3, 7, and 11 upon referral.

NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS UNDER THE PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT (PPRA)

PPRA affords parents certain rights regarding our conducting of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams.

THESE INCLUDE THE RIGHTS TO: CONSENT BEFORE STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO SUBMIT A SURVEY THAT CONCERNS ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING PROTECTED AREAS (“PROTECTED INFORMATION SURVEY”) IF THE SURVEY IS FUNDED IN WHOLE OR IN PART BY A PROGRAM OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (ED):

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family
- Sex behavior or attitudes
- Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior
- Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships
- Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors or ministers
- Religious practices, affiliations or beliefs of the student or parents
- Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility

RECEIVE NOTICE AND AN OPPORTUNITY TO OPT OUT OF:

- Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding
 - Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law
 - Activities involving collection, disclosure or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others
- ### INSPECT, UPON REQUEST AND BEFORE ADMINISTRATION OR USE:
- Protected information surveys or students
 - Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales or other distribution purposes
 - Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum
- These rights transfer from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law.

Parkland School District will develop policies, in consultation with parents, regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. Parkland School District will directly notify parents of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. Parkland School District will also directly notify, such as through U.S. Mail or e-mail, parents of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt his or her child out of participation of the specific activity or survey. Parkland School District will make this notification to parents at the beginning of the school year if the District has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and be provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys.

FOLLOWING IS A LIST OF THE SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES AND SURVEYS COVERED UNDER THIS REQUIREMENT:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales or other distribution.
- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by ED.
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:
Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-5901