

Allen Elementary Family Handbook



John Allen Elementary School
2560 Towner Blvd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

734-997-1210
www.a2schools.org/allen

Dear Allen Families,

On behalf of the Allen Elementary School staff, welcome to our school! Whether you are new to the Allen family or returning Allen Eagles, we look forward to building a partnership between you and the school which will last for many years to come. We are committed to making your child's first years in school filled with positive and enriching experiences. We believe that your child's success in school is dependent upon good communication between school and home, and hope this handbook helps you understand more about our school.

Please refer to this handbook throughout the school year as a reference. It should provide the answers to many questions, but feel free to contact us should you have any other questions or need more information.

Sincerely,
Allen Elementary Staff

Allen Vision and Mission Statement

Allen Vision: We will educate students at Allen to be high achieving.

Allen Mission:

Allen School strives to engage all students, parents, and community members in the learning process. Innovation, creativity, and collaboration are an integral part of the classroom experience.

Teachers frequently analyze data to drive instruction and support personalized goals for all students.

Optimal academic achievement occurs when students feel valued, safe, and invested in their own learning. Therefore, the staff is committed to fostering positive relationships with all students.

Arrival

Students should arrive no more than 5-10 minutes before the start of the school day as adult supervision is only provided 5 minutes before the first bell. Students who eat breakfast are able to enter the building about 15 minutes before the first bell. Otherwise, students should wait outside by one of the main entrance doors until the first bell rings. At that time they enter the building and head to their classrooms. Students who enter after the second bell need to be signed in by a parent at the office, will be given a slip to hand to their teacher, and will be marked tardy.

For the **2016-2017** school year the bell schedule is as follows:

8:44 First bell - students may enter building and walk to class

8:47 Second bell - after this bell students are marked tardy

3:50 Dismissal

Students who eat breakfast, attend before school child care, or have a fifth grade safety post/job in the morning may enter the building before the first bell.

*Please note a "bell" may not always ring; however, these are the official school times.

Attendance/Absences

Regular attendance at school is important and required by law. Please avoid scheduling vacations and appointments during regular school days. If your child is going to be absent for a scheduled appointment, please let the office and classroom teacher know in advance. If your child is ill or has an unexpected absence, please contact the office by 9:30am. If your child needs to leave school early or during the school day, report to the office to sign them out. The office staff will contact the classroom to retrieve your child. If someone other than a parent or designee on the emergency card is to pick up your child, you will need to notify the office of this information. Students are expected to make up any missed work during an absence from school.

Before/After School Child Care

Before and after school child care is available through Rec & Ed for all Allen students for a fee. Students must be registered in order to attend these sessions. Before care opens at 7:15 a.m. and ends at the beginning of the school day. After school care begins at the end of the school day and closes at 6:00 p.m. Scholarship assistance is available to families that qualify. Cost and further information is available at the Community Recreation and Education Website <http://www.a2schools.org/Page/4210> or by calling 994-2300.

Birthday Treats

The Allen School Policy requests that families refrain from bringing food treats for birthdays. We ask that any and all treats brought in for a birthday are non-food related items. If you wish to send something to school for your child's birthday, please consider bringing bookmarks, pencils, stickers, a donation of a book to the class library, board games, etc. Thank you for your cooperation, as we want to do our part to be inclusive of all

students with food restrictions and allergies, while maintaining their safety and the integrity of our educational program.

Box Tops for Education

Allen School collects **Box Tops** which are available on select products and typically worth 10 cents each. The Box Tops can be sent into school at any time, with three big collection dates in late October, late February and early June. Teachers will solicit parent volunteers to help cut and count box tops to prepare them for shipment. Allen uses the money generated from collecting Box Tops to purchase many items including such things as: playground equipment, the Allen Flag, outdoor benches, country flags in the front hall, book room supplies, etc.

Bus

Ann Arbor Public Schools has partnered with Durham School Services to provide bus transportation to our students. You will find the bus schedules posted on the district web site under Departments and Transportation. Students may not ride a different bus than their assigned bus without signed notes by parents of both families and the office staff prior to boarding the bus. You may contact Durham directly at 734-994-2330 with any questions and/or concerns you may have.

Cell Phones

We recognize that cell phones have become a common tool for communication. However, they can also be a major distraction to the learning environment and are vulnerable to theft and damage. We ask that your child only carry a cell phone to school if absolutely necessary.

Phones must be **turned off and stored inside backpacks/book bags during school hours**. This means cell phones are out of sight all school day. Phones may not be used to talk, take pictures, play games, record or text during school hours, including recesses. If you need to communicate with your child during the school day, call the main office to leave a message for them. Students are asked to follow the rules set by the bus driver regarding cell phones while on the school bus.

If cell phones are used during the day, or provide a distraction to the learning environment, staff may hold the cell phone until the end of the day or until parents can pick it up from the principal/office. Multiple infractions of this policy may lead to the need for a parent conference.

The school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged cell phones or personal electronic devices.

Classroom Celebrations

Teachers host classroom celebrations as they relate to PBIS and student behavior. These celebrations are earned by the students and selected from a variety of choices in which the students have expressed interest. These are typically scheduled after they have been earned. If teachers need help with the celebrations or donations for the event, they will notify families. Valentine's Day is celebrated at Allen with classes having a Valentine exchange. Again, teachers contact room parents for any support they need with these events. Periodically throughout the year, the school earns an *Eagle Extravaganza*. When this happens an announcement is made and the students and staff prepare for this special event. It is not announced in advance of the event. *Eagle Extravaganzas* are whole school celebrations related to meeting PBIS expectations. During this time students have the chance to travel to many different rooms in the building enjoying different activities.

Curriculum and Instruction

The district has created curriculum maps for each grade level and content area that provide a vision for the desired learning outcomes. They can be found on the district [website](http://www.a2schools.org/site/Default.aspx?PageID=11672) at: <http://www.a2schools.org/site/Default.aspx?PageID=11672>
Classroom teachers will keep you informed of what your child's class is working on throughout the course of the year.

Dismissal and Pick Up

At the completion of the school day, students are escorted out of the building by their classroom teacher. Teachers help students make it to their appropriate pick up location, whether that be the bus loop or parent pick up. We ask that you please refrain from entering the building to pick up your child at the end of the day, but instead wait for them at a designated pick up area near one of the main doors, if on foot, or at the parent pick up loop if in a vehicle.

If you are picking up your child in a car, you may park in a parking space. If you do so, you will need to wait for the buses or line of cars to clear before you can get out of the parking space. Alternatively, you may want to consider parking legally on one of the neighborhood streets and walking to the school to meet your child. If you do so, please be aware that parking on Towner Blvd. is not legal or safe. There needs to be enough distance around the school for buses and cars to safely pull out of the parking lot.

Parent pick up runs in a continuous loop with the goal of loading as many cars as quickly as possible and getting them on their way. Please stay in the loop and wait for your child to come to you. Once your child is loaded, remain in the loop to exit the parking lot. Please refrain from using cell phones during this time so that you can assist the staff in expediting the pick up process. Please also be patient as safety for all students, parents, and staff is our first priority.

Please be aware that no one should be walking between buses unless there is a large gap between the buses and the driver can see you. Also know that any cars coming around the

buses do not expect to see you coming between the buses. It is safest to walk around all the buses, not between them.

If you are walking through the parking lot to get to or from your car, please keep your children with you. Many times students are excited to dash ahead to a car or loved one. Remember there are moving vehicles in the lot. Everyone should be watching for traffic and walking safely in the parking lot at all times.

Drop Off

In the morning you may use the upper or lower loops to drop off your children. Please be aware that the lower loop doors close and lock pretty quickly after the first bell rings and students are out of sight, as staff need to get to their teaching assignments. If it is after the first bell and you do not see an adult nearby, you will need to drop your child(ren) off at the upper loop. Please park your vehicle in a parking space. Do not park on the curb for any drop off. Staff and buses need to get by. Buses need to get into their drop off location and other drivers are expecting you to follow the same process as they do. Please do not use your cell phone during drop off and look to staff to direct you if/as needed. Please do not hurry or be in a rush during this time. Safety of all students, families, and staff comes first.

If you drop off your child late, you will need to escort them into the building and sign them in at the main office.

Emergency Drills

According to Michigan State law, public schools grades K-12 are required to conduct at least:

5 Fire drills per school year (Three of which must be completed by December 1)

2 Tornado safety drills (One of which must take place in March)

3 Lockdown drills per school year, including security measures appropriate to an emergency "such as the release of hazardous material or the presence of a potentially dangerous individual on or near the premises." At least one of the drills must take place by December 1 and at least one after January 1.

Schools are required to conduct at least one of the above-listed drills during lunch, recess, or at another time when a significant number of students are present, but not in classrooms.

Enrollment

The enrollment process must be completed by a parent or legal guardian.

For kindergarten and above, students must be five (5) years old by September 1 for the enrolling school year.

Required documents to be presented to the school secretary upon completion of the enrollment process:

- Original birth certificate (with raised seal), student passport or Visa
 - Official immunization records
 - Kindergarten Enrollment: Health Appraisal/Vision Screening
 - Address of the school your student last attended (report cards and transcripts are helpful)
 - Certified copies of court orders or placement papers, if applicable (i.e., Appointment of Legal Guardianship, Divorce Decree, etc.)
 - Driver's license of Parent/Legal Guardian, Passport or Visa
 - Proof of residency documents
 - Homeowner: Purchase agreement, closing papers or deed
 - Renter: Current lease or rental agreement
 - Property tax statement
- AND
- Two (2) different current utility bills: gas, electric, cable TV, or land line phone bill with the name and AAPS District address of the person enrolling the student or written start up confirmation from company OR Moving company invoice or truck rental receipt validating address in district.

Field Trips

All classes at Allen participate in field trips during the course of the school year. Prior to an upcoming trip, teachers will notify the parents of the event and will send home a permission slip. Please complete this form thoroughly as teachers take these with them and use this information to contact you in the event of an emergency on the trip. Please return all forms to your child's teacher in a timely way so that your child is able to participate on the day of the event. Teachers will indicate what special items, if any, are needed for the trip and will let you know if they need chaperones. Some trips are only able to take a limited number of extra adults, if any. Please understand that tickets are purchased far in advance and a limited number of extra tickets may be available. Per the district policy, younger siblings are not allowed to attend field trips.

Head Lice and Prevention:

Head lice is not a significant health threat and is not known to spread disease. Once discovered, a student with lice may remain at school for the duration of that day, but then must receive lice treatment. The next day, the student must be checked by the school nurse or other designee for live lice and viable nits prior to returning to the classroom.

Lice Prevention and Care Tips:

- Check your children weekly for lice all year long. Many people do not itch, so they do not realize they have lice.
- Check ALL family members if one member is infected.
- If your child has head lice, report it to school so other families can check their children.
- Follow all the directions for the lice treatment you have selected. This usually involves a 2nd treatment 7-10 days after the 1st treatment.

- Make sure to perform care of the home environment (bedding, stuffed animals, etc). Vacuuming is important.
- Have your student check in at the school office when they return to school after lice treatment. Their head will be checked by the school nurse or secretary before they are allowed to return to their classroom.
- Comb (pick) your child's head DAILY for 2-3 weeks until ALL lice and nits are gone. Thoroughness is ESSENTIAL! If one viable nit is left, the whole cycle will start again.

Health

The Ann Arbor Public Schools follows the guidance of the Washtenaw County Health Department on when children should stay home due to illness. Infectious diseases (also called communicable diseases) can spread between people many different ways including through coughs and sneezes, contaminated food, and skin-to-skin contact. Sometimes a person is contagious to others even before they start to feel sick. In most cases, it is important that a sick person stay at home so that they do not spread the disease to others.

The following guidelines to keep a child home are recommended:

Fever: A **temperature of 100° F** or above when taken by mouth, the child should remain at home until fever free for 24 hours without taking fever reducing medication.

Vomiting: Children should have not vomited for 24 hours prior to returning to school.

Rash: Any rash and fever illness should be checked by a health care provider. A fine red or blotchy rash on the face, trunk or arms and legs is a reason to keep a child home until a healthcare provider has determined it is not infectious. A child with a limited known allergic rash does not need to stay home.

Loose bowel movements: The child should have no loose stools for 24 hours prior to returning to school.

Children with the following diseases should remain at home until successfully treated: impetigo, strep, lice, pink eye (if bacterial), ringworm, and scabies. Notices are sent to families of children in a classroom where a communicable disease is discovered. Please report communicable diseases to the school.

For more information on communicable diseases visit the Washtenaw County Public Health department website:

http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/departments/public_health/disease_control/cd_factsheets.html

Hearing and Vision Screening

Hearing and vision screening is required by the Michigan Public Health Code. The free screening is provided by public health technicians from Washtenaw County. Vision screening includes testing for visual acuity, farsightedness, ability to use two eyes together and symptoms of eye problems. Hearing screenings are done with an audiometer and other

equipment based on the child's needs. Both hearing and vision is screened in preschool, kindergarten and 1st grade. Hearing is screened in 2nd and 4th grades. Vision is screened in 3rd and 5th grades.

Medication

The Ann Arbor Public Schools require a physician's written order and the parent's or guardian's written authorization for administration of all medications, including over-the-counter medications. Medications must be in their original container. Authorization for administration forms can be obtained at the main office. Medications must be picked up by the last school day or they will be discarded.

Homework

Grade level teachers work together to assign homework consistent with the Board of Education homework policies along with the *Everyday Mathematics* suggested use of Homelinks to practice skills taught at home. Allen school staff value reading and math practice at home and use reading and math logs to document this.

The Ann Arbor Public Schools Board of Education guidelines are not meant to be minimum or maximum quotas. Times are in addition to the expectation that all elementary students will read or be read to at home each day.

Kindergarten - occasional, consistent w/readiness of students
First grade - 10 minutes, 1-3 days per week
Second grade - 20 minutes, 2-4 days per week
Third grade - 30 minutes, 3-4 days per week
Fourth grade - 40 minutes, 3-5 days per week
Fifth grade - 50 minutes, 4-5 days per week

Inclement Weather

Students have outdoor recess daily unless it is raining or the temperature and/or wind chill are below 0° Fahrenheit. On days when the temperature and/or wind chill are below -20° Fahrenheit schools will be closed. The Ann Arbor Public Schools protocol for closing school for snow days is available on the district [website](http://a2schools.org//site/Default.aspx?PageID=9320) at: <http://a2schools.org//site/Default.aspx?PageID=9320>

When the schools are closed, parents will be notified through the contact phone number(s) provided in [Infosnap](#).

Lost and Found

Allen has a Lost and Found area typically located near the north Great Room entrance. Periodically throughout the year the items are spread out in the Great Room for students to claim any items, and unclaimed items are then donated. Some smaller Lost and Found

items(necklaces, watches, keys, etc) may be kept in the office. If you think your child has misplaced something, please ask them to check the Lost and Found. It is helpful if

backpacks, lunch containers, coats, boots, and snow pants are labeled inside with your child's name. A lot of items end up piling up in the Lost and Found area and having things labeled helps get them back to the rightful owner.

Lunch and Breakfast

Chartwells School Dining Services, in partnership with the Ann Arbor School District, provides meals for children at school daily, often at a reduced price or free for those who qualify. We participate in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program (NSLBP), a federally funded program that helps children receive free or reduced meals. These meals are the same as other children are served. Families need to apply for this service either online (meals.aaps.k12.mi.us) or by completing a paper application.

Breakfast and lunch menus are sent home monthly with elementary students and can be viewed online at <http://www.a2schools.org/Page/619>

Students are not required to pre-order their breakfast or lunch. However, the meals must be pre-paid prior to receiving the meals. Payment for meals can be made online, by check or cash. To set up an online account to pay or view your child's account, please visit mypaymentplus.com. You can also send a check made out to **AAPS Food Service** or cash to school. Please put it in an envelope printed with your child's first and last name, grade, teacher, and amount enclosed in the envelope.

If you have further questions or need help with the application process, please contact the Ann Arbor Schools Chartwells Office at 994-2265.

As of the 2016-17 school year, student lunch is **\$2.50** and just milk is **\$0.50**.

Parent Council

Allen Parent Council is the school's PTO (Parent Teacher Organization). This group fundraises as well as focuses on building school community where teachers and students can do their best work. Parent Council meets monthly in the evenings at posted times and locations. This group volunteers their time and talents to raise money, through donations and fundraising activities, to purchase educational and enrichment programs and materials that directly benefit the students. All parents are welcome to attend any parent council meeting and free child care is provided to school aged children during the meeting. The weblink for Parent Council is: <http://www.allenpc.org/>

Peanut Allergies

We have children in our building who have severe allergies to peanuts and tree nuts that could result in a life-threatening situation. Any contact with even a small trace of tree nuts or peanuts; tasting, touching or smelling, could be life-threatening to these children.

Because of the seriousness of these allergies, we will have the following **PEANUT / TREE NUT FREE ZONES**: all common areas, including the art room, media center, music room,

computer lab, playground, gymnasium and office area. The individual classrooms that the students are in will also have special limitations on snacks and other food items. Based on other allergies students have, and the severity of the allergy, specific classrooms may have other guidelines. **Please** honor all school requests regarding food. Students will be allowed to have peanut products in the lunchroom and a nut free area at each grade level will be available for students with allergies. Foods with peanuts or nut products are not served for breakfast or lunch.

Reporting to Parents

Elementary teachers send home report cards with the students three times a year. This occurs in mid-November, mid-March, and the last day of school. Teachers hold fall parent teacher conferences for all students and welcome meetings throughout the year as the need arises. Teachers also have a system of communication for the year that is shared during Curriculum Night each fall.

Science Olympiad

Science Olympiad is a fun and challenging team-based competition for 2nd-5th graders. It is designed to help teach science through hands-on group participation. There are many events offered that cover a wide variety of interests. Parents, teachers, or other community volunteers run the sessions, typically lasting about an hour per practice. Science Olympiad typically starts sometime in February and runs until the Washtenaw Elementary Science Olympiad (WESO) competition which is often in late May or early June. The goal is to enter as many students who attend practices as possible, but not all students will be able to compete in the events at this final competition as there are restrictions that WESO places on the number of participants. For more information about WESO please visit <https://sites.google.com/a/aaps.k12.mi.us/weso-wizards/home>

Supplies

We ask that your child bring a book bag or back pack to school daily, their homework folder provided by the school, a plan for lunch, and a pair of headphones. For many reasons, including health and sanitation, we ask that students bring an inexpensive pair of headphones to use at school for the entire year. Please put them in an appropriate size zip lock bag or container labeled with your child's name. We do have some headphones available in the media center and computer lab in the event that your child needs to borrow a pair while they are in that location.

Teachers will provide students with a homework folder and supplies they will use in the classroom. Donations of facial tissue, disinfecting wipes, and wood pencils are always welcome. As other needs arise, teachers will let you know of particular donations they could use to support their classroom.

Toys

Please ensure your child is leaving all toys at home. This includes small figurines, Legos, Pokémon or any type of cards, outdoor recess equipment, electronic devices, cars, etc. Those items that do make their way to school often become a distraction, a problem among peers, and are prone to theft. Valuable time can be lost working to problem solve around these objects. The exception would be for a classroom celebration in which children are bringing in a stuffed animal for a day or board games to play. If your child's class is participating in any of these events, you will be notified ahead of time. Please note the school cannot be responsible for lost or broken personal items or toys that are brought to school.

Visitors and Volunteers

For the safety of the school community, the school office needs to be notified of any visitors in the building. All visitors are asked to report to the office, sign in the guest book, and wear a visitor badge during their visit. Parents are encouraged and welcome to visit classrooms, but teachers should have prior knowledge of, and should agree to, any classroom visitors. Unexpected visitors can be disruptive to the teaching and learning environment. If you would like to visit or volunteer in your child's classroom, please work with the classroom teacher to find a mutually convenient time that works for all parties involved.