

ASHLAND PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

Family Handbook



Ashland Clockers

Setting New Standards of Academic Excellence

**William Pittaway School
Preschool - PreK
75 Central Street
Ashland, MA 01721
Phone: (508) 881-0160
Absentee Phone: (508) 881-0160
Fax: (508) 881-0148
School Hours: 8:30 a.m.-2:55 p.m.**

**Sara Davidson
*Director***

**James Adams
*Superintendent***

School Committee

Laurie Tosti- Chair
Marc Terry- Vice-Chair
Tina Fitanides - Secretary
Marcy Culverwell - Member
Paul Kendall- Member

The information in this handbook is current as of March 2024 publication. Ashland Public Schools reviews and revises its policies and curriculum on a regular basis to meet local and state guidelines.

Table of Contents

Section	Page
Introductory Letter	4
Our mission, Vision & Core Values,	4-5
Program Goals, Affiliations, How to Reach Us, Scheduling, Routines & Procedures: The First Week, Building & Security, Personal Belongings,	5
Full Day Classes, Snacks & Lunches, Birthdays And Celebrations, Outdoor Play, Departure,	6
Parental Authorization for Pick Up, Cars & Booster Seats , Our Statement of Philosophy For Curriculum and Learning Effectiveness Enrollment Policy,	7
Withdraw from the Program, Tuition and Refund Policy, Confidentiality Plan; Parent Information,	8
Progress Reports, Parent Conferences, Assessment of Child Progress, Field Trips, Child Abuse, Toileting & Changing Policy,	9
Communication between School and Home, Weather Related School Closings, Newsletters and Informational Flyers, Toys from Home, Parental Involvement	10
Guidance and Discipline, Conflict Resolution Strategies	11-12
Handbook Scope and Limitations, Statement of Non-Discrimination, District Policies	12
School Attendance; Warren/Pittaway Site Council, Leaving a Message for Teacher	13
Health Services, Transportation Medication, Health Record, State Mandated Requirements Management of Life Threatening Allergies, Chronic Illness Policy,	14-16

Translation of the Parent/Student Handbook

Please call the main office at the school if you would like a copy of this document translated into a language other than English.

Por favor llame a la oficina principal en la escuela si desea una copia de este documento sea traducido a otro idioma que no sea Inglés.

Por favor, ligue para o escritório principal da escola, se você quiser uma cópia deste documento traduzido em uma língua diferente do Inglês.

يرجى الاتصال على المكتب الرئيسي في المدرسة إذا كنت تريد نسخة من هذه الوثيقة مترجمة إلى لغة غير اللغة الانكليزية.

Gelieve telefonisch contact op het hoofdkantoor op de school als u graag een kopie van dit document vertaald in een andere taal dan het Engels.

만일 당신이 그 문서의 사본을 영어가 아닌 다른 언어로 번역하려는 학교에 메인 사무실로 전화 주시기 바랍니다.

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you and your child to our program. The Ashland Preschool is an inclusion model offering enriching developmental experiences to children of preschool age. This non-profit organization is governed by the Ashland Public Schools and enhances the educational experiences of the children through the Ashland Preschool PTO.

Our program is represented by experienced, certified, and credentialed staff. Our teaching and support staff interact with children in a friendly, positive manner. Children are listened to and allowed the chance to respond with comments and suggestions to open-ended questions. The child is valued as an individual and given constructive, positive reinforcement and personalized attention. Our staff recognizes and stresses the importance of accepting one another's unique qualities, abilities, and cultural heritage.

In order to achieve our goals, our curriculum is designed to stimulate learning in all developmental areas-physical, social, emotional, and intellectual. Language development is an essential part of our program, because children at this age are constantly seeking answers to their questions. We encourage them to not only ask what they want to know, but to talk, discuss things, and offer their own ideas to develop thinking and problem-solving.

We encourage children to do things for themselves. To help foster independence, we have designed the classroom activity areas so they can plan, initiate, and carry through on tasks that interest them. We stress good personal habits, cleanliness and responsibility for belongings. Our goal for our families is to develop a partnership of trust and respect as we work towards supporting them in their child rearing efforts. Our goal for the community involves presenting a program that will help in meeting the needs of the very young, while contributing to the wholesome growth and development of our future citizens.

We look forward to our time with you and your family.

Sincerely,
Sara Davidson

Our mission is to provide a safe, engaging, and inclusive learning environment, empowering every student to acquire and develop the necessary skills and knowledge to become active, caring, and passionate life-long learners and citizens in an evolving and diverse world.

To accomplish this mission, Ashland Public Schools:

- Will improve student achievement for all students while closing the achievement gaps for our students of color, low-income status, ethnicity, English language learners and students with disabilities through targeted instruction and curriculum.
- Will ensure student success by supporting students, faculty, staff, and parents to develop strategies, skills, and tools necessary to maintain a healthy physical and mental well-being.
- Will create a district environment based on collaboration, respect, and open lines of communication through partnerships with parents, businesses, and the entire Ashland community.
- Will support educators in their continual effort to improve instruction and student achievement through targeted professional development, focusing on best practices, use of data, productive collaboration, and sensitivity to the needs of every student.

Our Vision

The Ashland Public Schools will be a model district that embraces the academic and social-emotional growth of all students through a supportive, collaborative and challenging experience. Our students will develop into life-long learners who will contribute positively to society.

Core Values

Responsibility: We believe in the importance of individual and group accountability to make thoughtful, appropriate decisions that produce positive results for all.

Respect: We believe in the inherent value of all: including oneself, one's peers, and all who are part of our community and greater global society.

Excellence: We believe as individuals, schools, and a community, in the cultivation of an environment in which each member is supported in achieving his/her greatest potential. **Integrity:** We believe in making decisions that uphold the values of honesty, decency, and sincerity in all our actions.

Program Goals

The goal of Ashland Preschool is to provide a warm, safe and secure environment to promote the healthy growth and development of each and every child. We offer enriching and fulfilling experiences to build a strong foundation of readiness skills for positive self-image and future learning.

Ashland Preschool is a program that recognizes and welcomes children at all developmental levels. You will find children with and without disabilities learning and playing together. Our teaching staff utilizes strategies and methods to accommodate children within a wide range of needs to include the classroom environment, activities, materials and instruction. Our classroom and specialist staffing include, but is not limited to, professionals experienced in the areas of early childhood, inclusion, speech and language, occupational therapy and physical therapy. Through this inclusive setting, they are available to work and meet with each other on an ongoing basis. This allows for the coordination of services that ensure the consistency necessary to meet every child's needs.

If you have questions or need information about preschool screening, or types of services available, please contact: Sara Davidson at (508) 881-0160 or email: sdavidson@ashland.k12.ma.us

How To Reach Us

Phone # - (508) 881-0160 email- preschool@ashland.k12.ma.us

Fax#- (508) 881-0148 website: www.ashland.k12.ma.us

Mailing Address- Ashland Preschool Program, William Pittaway School
75 Central Street, Ashland, Ma. 01721

Scheduling

Classrooms are open from 8:30am-2:55pm, Monday thru Friday during the public school year. The program is closed on public school holidays, vacations, and whenever the schools are closed due to inclement weather. A copy of the current school year calendar is provided to all parents. Enrollment options available include the following:

AM session (8:30-11:00 am) Monday through Thursday (3-4 yr. old)
PM session (12:10-2:55 pm)-Monday through Friday (3-5 yr. old)
Full day (8:30am-2:55pm) - Monday through Friday (3-5 yr. old & 4-5 yr. old)

- Early drop-off (7:30am) and extended time (until 4:30pm) is available depending on need and availability of staff.

Routines & Procedures

The First Weeks of School

We will share with you our Parent Information Packet that includes our Guidance and Behavior process, PTO and other helpful information. While every effort is made to make your child feel comfortable at school, some children may require a period of adjustment in their new surroundings. If helpful, we recommend that you individually discuss with the staff, suggestions you have to best help your child transition more easily. We welcome any information families are willing to share regarding your family and how best to care and educate your child.

Building Security and Access

All school buildings in the Ashland School District have in place a visual security monitor and door lock system. The main doors to all schools remain locked at all times when school is in session. When you approach the school entrance you will note a buzzer. Please press the buzzer to alert us of your arrival. You will be asked to identify yourself and the nature of your visit. It would be helpful to let us know in advance if you or a family member intend to visit or pick up at a particular time. Although this system may seem somewhat impersonal, it is intended to keep your children as safe as possible.

Personal Belongings & Clothing

Each child has a cubby, with his/her name on it for coats, backpacks, and other belongings. If needed, please sew tabs on or label coats, jackets and sweaters. Children are encouraged to be self-reliant, and tabs are helpful in achieving this. In addition, your child will need appropriate seasonal outdoor wear such as a sweater or jacket, raincoat, rain boots, warm coat and hat, mittens, boots, and snow pants. **Please no child umbrellas- they pose a safety hazard around others.** In cold winter weather we will spend time outdoors if the **wind-chill (feels like)** temperature is 20 degrees or above. Children should wear simple, comfortable play clothes and closed toe rubber soled shoes or sneakers. **Please, NO sandals, clogs, jellies, crocks or other ornamental shoes that may slip off the feet. These are not safe for playground play.** Each child should send in a complete set of spare clothing: underwear, socks, shirt, pants, which will remain at the school in the event of "accidents." They will be returned at the end of the school year.

Full Day Classes

We encourage one small soft cuddly stuffed animal or favorite small blanket for **rest time**, and a **small handled toothbrush**. (The bigger novelty toothbrushes do not fit in our holder) for use after lunch that will remain at school. **Rest time** will begin after lunch and last approximately 45 minutes. Children are asked to rest, but your own child's need will dictate whether or not he/she sleeps. Books are offered and story tapes and soft music is played during this time.

Snacks & Lunches

Families will provide healthy morning and afternoon snacks, to include: grains, fruits, vegetables, and juice or water. Sweetened beverages should be avoided. We ask that children's **lunches** contain items from the main food groups and discourage foods high in salt or sugar. Finger foods such as sandwich sections, fruits and spoon foods (yogurt, applesauce) are healthy choices. **To avoid choking: grapes, hot dogs, melon, etc. should be cut lengthwise, not circular. Do not pack nuts, popcorn, raw peas, or hard pretzels.** Box lunches cannot be cooked or heated, as we do not have the facilities or staffing to accommodate this. Hot foods may be packed in a large-mouth thermos. Include a cold pack for foods as needed.

Please alert the school about any allergies or sensitivities to foods or drinks your child may have. You may also choose to have your child purchase lunch. Menus are sent home monthly, indicating daily choices. Please list any food allergies so the cafeteria manager can accommodate your

child's needs.

Birthdays and Celebrations

Children may want to share birthdays at school with their friends. Please check with your child's teacher to schedule a day. Because of the increasing numbers of food sensitivities among our children, and in keeping with our Wellness Policy, birthday snacks may not be brought into school. We supply freeze pops for all students. You are more than welcome to send in special birthday party favors to share with the class. They cannot contain food.

Outdoor Play

Outdoor play provides activities that are beneficial to overall physical health and the general well-being of young children. Each class will have opportunities for outdoor play when weather conditions are safe and appropriate. Children will use program outdoor equipment and the adjacent field for additional large motor activities. In the event of inclement weather or unsafe conditions, large-motor activities will be provided indoors using recommended appropriate equipment from the CFOC (Caring for our Children) Outdoor play times are listed in each classroom schedule and posted for your reference.

Departure

Departure time is another critical transition for children, and it is very important that you pick up your child on time, either 11:00am or 2:55pm., or 4:30pm for those in extended time. Please follow the same procedure as for arrival by staying in a single line. Once you have pulled all the way up. Please shut your car off. Exit your vehicle and take your child's hand. You must then buckle your child in their car seat. A late fee of \$20.00 for each 15 minutes or fraction thereof will be charged. Families who are consistently late picking up their child may be unenrolled from the program. Parents picking up from late pick-up should park, enter the building through the side entrance, and ring the buzzer.

Parental Authorization for Pick Up

PLEASE NOTE- Teachers will only release your child to adults who you have specifically authorized on the Authorization form at the time of Enrollment. Should you need to designate additional people please send in a note indicating the person's name, relationship to the child, and the type of vehicle they will be driving. If necessary, you may call and give the needed information over the phone. A picture ID (ex. Driver's license) will be requested when the identity of the person picking up is unknown to the staff.

Car Seats and Booster Seats

Please note-The Ashland Preschool Staff strictly enforces the **Massachusetts Child Passenger Safety Law (MGL, C.90,S.7AA & C.90,S.13A)**

Mass. Child Passenger Safety Law requires all children riding in passenger motor vehicles must be in a Federally-approved child passenger restraint that is properly fastened and secured until they are 8 yrs. old **or** over 57 inches tall. The child passenger restraint shall be properly fastened and secured according to the manufacturer's instructions. An operator of a motor vehicle who violates the provisions of this section shall be subject to a fine of not more than twenty-five dollars.

Our Statement of Philosophy for Curriculum and Learning Effectiveness

Ashland Preschool is an educational program designed to promote the social, emotional, physical and cognitive development of our young children. The curriculum encourages children to be actively involved in the learning process by providing valuable, "hands-on" type of experiences. Our curriculum is comprised of the *Houghton Mifflin Pre-K*, and supplemented by activities that are a reflection of the Massachusetts Dept. of Early Education and Care's *Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences* that is based on the standards for PreK- K in the approved revisions of the 2011 & 2017 *Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks*. These guidelines structure learning through play and meaningful activities in a developmental sequence. They can be accessed at www.eec.state.ma.us.

We provide developmentally appropriate materials and equipment to emphasize the learning process rather than the product produced. This enables us to achieve goals in several areas.

Language Development- Language and Communication Skills are a major part of the curriculum. Our program encourages children to ask questions, tell stories, recite poetry, and take part in dramatic play. There is on-going encouragement to verbalize feelings during play and group time.

Self-Help Skills- Learning self-help skills enables the child to examine the environment and to develop confidence, independence, and self-esteem. Early childhood educators and support staff encourage good personal grooming, cleanliness, organization, and responsibility for belongings. Activity centers are designed to allow children the option to make choices and engage in activities they have interest in or ones they are curious about.

Positive Self-Concept- The staff values the child as an individual and gives constructive, positive reinforcement. A positive well being leads to the prosocial types of behavior that we strive for in home and school environments. Self-confidence in a child is a cornerstone for future competence and success.

Learning Through Play- Play is a major vehicle for learning and intellectual development. It is a purposeful activity that has enormous influence on a child's development. Play combines fun with function, and in the process fosters joy in learning. Often play is self-directed and engages a child in activities which are important to language and social development.

Enrollment Policy - (Please see the registration process on our website)

At the time of enrollment a non-refundable registration fee is required, and is not applied towards tuition. The child must be a minimum of 3 Years Old by August 31, and preferably toilet trained when attending our preschool program. Your child must not be eligible for Kindergarten. Please fill out the Enrollment Packet that is on the Ashland Public School Website under the Parent tab. Once the enrollment packet is completed, you must contact the Registrar at the Central Enrollment office and make an appointment or email. Please bring with you a birth certificate; a current physical form with immunizations and lead test; and Proof of Residency (mortgage or lease information) and Proof of Occupancy (Utility bill), and photo ID of Parents. A separate packet of PreK Specific Information will be emailed to you. This may be downloaded, filled out, and then emailed back to the Preschool@ashland.k12.ma.us.

Withdraw From the Program

A one month notice is required before withdrawal of a child from the program. Failure to do so will result in two weeks tuition due at the time of withdrawal. **Please note: This is not a pay as you go service, but a financial commitment for the year. You are responsible to make tuition payments, even if you choose to take extended time away during the school year. Please plan your vacations carefully.**

Tuition and Refund Policy You may pay your yearly tuition in full or you may opt to pay in 10 monthly payments, Payments begin July 1st and end April 1st. Tuition fees are based on your child's session schedule and are not adjusted for absences due to illness, holidays, vacations, extended periods of non-attendance- planned or unplanned, weather related cancellations or any other event that results in your child not attending school. All tuition is due on or before the 1st of each month. Any payment not received by the 1st, will be charged a late fee. *Any tuition or late fees that are not paid will directly impact your child's ability to attend school.* A statement will be sent via email by the 15th of each month.

Confidentiality Plan- *The use or disclosure of any information pertaining to an individual child and his/her family, both in the home and in the school setting, shall be **used only for the purposes directly connected with program planning, and the administration of the Ashland Preschool Program.** Disclosure of a child's records beyond family members, program personnel, and consultants having an obligation of confidentiality shall require written familial consent (except in the cases of suspected abuse or neglect). The Ashland Preschool Program's Confidentiality plan is based on mandates from the Ashland Public School System, the program standards for Early Learning Experiences from the Mass. Dept. of Early Education and Care, and the guidelines for accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children. A child's individual file, health record, assessment information will be kept in a locked, and secure location.*

PARENT INFORMATION:

Parents are welcome in the building for conferences, various presentations, meetings, occasional lunch, etc. All visitors must have a valid CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) conducted by the Ashland Public Schools. Visitors must enter and exit the building at the main entrance and sign in on the Visitors' Log which is on the counter by the front office. Visitors must wear a visitor's badge and check in with the secretary to inform where one is headed. Please note that this is for the safety and security of the children. Additionally, should there be a need to evacuate the building; the Fire Department has requested we keep a log of people visiting the building. When your business in the school is complete, please sign out on the Visitors' Log to indicate that you are no longer in the building and kindly return the visitor's badge to the main office.

Progress Reports

Formal reporting of students' progress occurs three times per year (December, March, and June). The final report card is sent home with the student on the last day of school. The standards are based on the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and are available at <https://www.doe.mass.edu/>

Parent Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled during the fall PreK-5 Early Release Days and the spring PreK-5 Early Release Days. Children requiring additional services and/or support will receive their child's information as outlined in the individualized plan (IEP) from the Special Education department. Team meetings for student progress, annual review, and IEP development will be scheduled through the Special Education Dept. An end of the year Progress Report will be sent home in June, summarizing your child's developmental skills.

Although parent-teacher conferences are specifically scheduled in the fall and spring of the school year, teachers are encouraged to confer with parents on an ongoing basis as needed. If there are concerns regarding a student's academic progress, motivation, effort, or behavior, parents will be notified immediately. Telephone conferences are permissible and encouraged in those instances where it is difficult for the parent to come to the school during the day. Both teachers and parents who have a concern about a child's progress may request additional conference time throughout the year as needed.

Assessment of Child Progress

Our assessment process is an ongoing, systematic approach to collect information on your child's learning and development. It is used to help determine the needs of individual students when planning for curriculum content and instruction. We achieve this using a variety of methods that include: family input from student registration, communication with families, observations, anecdotal records, data collection, work sampling, portfolios, checklists, informal testing, and progress reports. All information on development and learning that is shared with families will be done so privately, as outlined in our Confidentiality Policy.

Field Trips

We will notify parents in advance as to the date, time, location and cost. Parents will have an opportunity to chaperone. Chaperoning parents will be required to fill out a CORI form prior to the field trip. This is a criminal background check mandated by the school district. Since volunteers are depended upon to be available to the children for supervision and care, *infants and siblings are not allowed on field trips.*

Safety precautions will be taken during field trips including but not limited to: the use of school buses having seat belts, first-aid supplies to include epi pens, emergency contact information for each student, communication device to contact the school or for use in emergencies, and extra clothing or snack if needed.

Child Abuse

Teachers and support staff are mandated reporters and State Laws require them to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Family Services. Information will be

documented and kept on file.

Toileting & Changing Policy

Children are taken to the bathroom on a regular basis in keeping with the daily routine. Children are also taken individually when they express a need to go or when staff notice visible indicators that the child may need to use the bathroom: wiggling side to side, or grabbing their clothing. Children who are wearing “pull-ups” are dealt with in the same manner as those in underwear. They are given the opportunity to use the toilet and reminded to ask an adult to take them if they feel the urge to go.

We encourage your child’s active participation in the routine so we ask that you send your child in clothing that is easy for them to manage; pull-on elastic waist pants vs. jeans with zippers, snaps, and/or belts. This is especially helpful if your child is still trying to master independent toilet usage. As they become more proficient, you will be able to introduce more complex forms of clothing.

Please remember to send in a complete change of clothing that can be kept at school in case of accidents- shirt, pants, underwear, and socks. Also, if your child is in the process of training, extra pull-ups and flushable wipes in the backpack are needed.

Although we try to offer as many opportunities as possible for bathroom use, “accidents” do happen. In the event of an accident, we will assist the child in removing the soiled clothing, cleaning themselves, and putting on clean clothing. We will send the soiled clothing home in a plastic bag for you to launder. We ask that you then send in another set of clothing to be kept at school.

Communication between School and Home

Communication between school and home is a continual process, and strongly encouraged. While our multilingual resources are limited, every effort is made to share information in languages that families use and understand, as well as providing other adaptive communication systems as needed. Please let administration know of any special arrangements that need to be made to maintain the connection from school to home. We welcome volunteers who speak the language of the children we serve to help us with our efforts to share information with children and families.

Staff will communicate with families on a weekly basis, either in person or through alternative means to include: notes, email, phone calls, and communication folder.

Weather Related School Closings & Delays

Ashland Preschool follows the Ashland Public School schedule for Holidays and vacations. When the Ashland Public School closes due to inclement weather, Ashland Preschool will also be closed. In the event a storm develops during the day and causes hazardous driving conditions, we will broadcast on the news as well as send emails to the parents. If in doubt, you are encouraged to call the school directly. Watch or listen to the following stations for all cancellations: TV- Channels, 4,5,7 Radio- WBZ, WRKO, WCVB, or check the school website at: [Ashland Public Schools / Homepage](#)

Delays – If a delay is called, AM Preschool is canceled. Full Day students arrive at 9:30 if it’s a one hour delay, or 10:30 if it’s a two hour delay. If they call a delay and students sign up for Early Drop off 8:30 am Drop off for a one hour delay, or 9:30 am Drop off for a two hour delay. **Early Releases** – PM Preschool is canceled and full day students will have an early release.

Connect Ed, a notification system to reach large numbers of people at the same time, will be used in emergencies or in time sensitive situations that require immediate notification to parents and families.

Newsletters and Informational Flyers

Each week a program newsletter is sent home to parents informing them of program and PTO news. In addition to the newsletter, curriculum information, event news, fundraising, tuition reminders, and other educational information is sent home. An email system will be used in an attempt to reduce the amount of paper. **Please make sure we have a current email address on file.**

Toys from Home

Bringing “toys” from home is discouraged, as we cannot be held responsible in the event of items being lost or broken. We do however encourage items of interest to “share” with the group at meeting time.

Parental Involvement

We love having our families' visit the program, and we ask that you follow our procedure for doing so. Our "Be Our Guest" program allows parents and other family members to set up a day and time that is convenient for you to visit. We reserve the right to schedule times that are the least disruptive to student learning and program operations. Information about visiting is sent home after the first few months of school.

The Ashland Preschool PTO is an organization that allows many opportunities for parents and other family members to volunteer and get involved. The Preschool PTO enhances the educational program by providing enrichment programs and events that strengthen the relationship between home, school and community. Please refer to our school calendar regarding these fun, family based activities. You may be able to attend some of the monthly PTO meetings, help out with an event, or show your support by attending the functions.

ASHPAC (Ashland Parent Advisory Council) is an additional resource and opportunity for parental involvement. This council supports the parents of children receiving special educational services, and meets monthly.

You may also consider involvement in our Pittaway/Warren Site Council, a group of parents, staff and administration which work to develop ongoing improvement through the development of yearly goals.

Guidance and Discipline

The Ashland Preschool Program strives to maintain an environment in which children are taught about responsibility, safety, respect, care of property, and consideration of others. We are also aware that our children come to us at different stages of emotional development, and sometimes display unacceptable behavior that needs to be addressed by staff. We attempt to identify with the child what that unacceptable behavior is, and how his/her behavior may affect others. We then help the child see the possible consequences of this behavior and find more suitable alternatives. We arrange our classroom environment in such a way as to prevent negative behavior and conflict as much as possible. We accomplish this by setting limits, discussing rules, giving acceptance and acknowledgement for prosocial behavior with smiles, nods, and verbal praise, and most of all allowing the children to understand one another's actions by encouraging them to "use their words" in expressing feelings. When a child is unable to control behavior, attempts are made to redirect a child to an alternate activity or be given some personal space so he/she can regain control and rejoin the group, when ready. Please refer to the insert in the Parent Information Folder entitled, "Guidance & Discipline". This is posted in each classroom and lists strategies that are used by staff for intervention and redirection.

Ashland Preschool also implements a school-wide **Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS)** program, which is also carried over to our other schools in the district.

Through this framework we teach and support positive behaviors for ALL students. This school-wide approach focuses on building a safe, positive environment in which all students can learn. Our two fundamental expected behaviors are: **Be Safe and Be Kind**.

System of Discipline for Students with Special Needs

The disciplining of special needs students is governed by federal special education law and the regulations promulgated thereunder. These laws include the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. *1400, et seq.; *300.519-529 et seq., Massachusetts General Laws c.71B, and, 603 C.M.R. 28.00

In the event a child is presenting with oppositional behaviors and intervention is necessary, the special education team will meet to discuss a behavior intervention for success plan. The student profile will be presented in the context of a team meeting. The child's teacher and other relevant team members will outline concerns and strategies attempted to address the issue, and any other pertinent information. The team will brainstorm next options and develop a behavior action plan. The plan will include definitions of the dangerous and/or maladaptive behavior, the teacher and other staff's response, and include proactive strategies to promote acceptable behaviors during the day. Staff will be trained as needed for management of behaviors, and behavior plans will be developed based on IEP goals and included in the IEP under accommodations.

Teachers, Assistants, Parent-helpers, etc. May NOT punish a child for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet, engage in psychological abuse or coercion. Threats and derogatory remarks are never used. Physical punishment such as shaking or hitting shall not be used. No child shall be denied food as a form of punishment.

Conflict Resolutions Strategies- Our program is committed to working with individual families, should differences arise. Just as we do with our Guidance and Behavior Process, we will look at these adverse situations as opportunities to help us learn and guide each other as we look for ways to resolve issues and differences for everyone's benefit. We will act as facilitators in gathering information, respecting each other's viewpoint, and working together to problem solve. Outside resources will be recommended as necessary. Above all, we will strive to do what is in the best interest of the child we educate and care for. Together we will: Listen and ask questions, share positions, ideas, and feelings, give information as appropriate, give opportunities for each other to respond, choose possible solutions, or agree to ring in additional administrative or professional support.

Please visit the APS [Ashland Public Schools](#) under the [William Pittaway School / Homepage](#) for additional information about the district and Ashland Preschool.

Handbook Scope and Limitations

The school and administration reserve the right to establish fair and reasonable rules and regulations for circumstances that may require actions that are not covered in this handbook. In all cases, rules, regulations and possible consequences shall be as consistent as possible with previously established rules, regulations and consequences for similar incidents. Matters omitted from this handbook should not be interpreted as a limitation to the scope of the school's responsibility and, therefore, the school's authority in dealing with any type of infraction that may not be in the best interest of the safety and welfare of our students.

These rules and policies apply to any student who is on school property, who is in attendance at school, or any school sponsored activity, or whose conduct at any time or place directly interferes with the operations, discipline, or general welfare of the school, students and staff.

All students are responsible for adhering to the current rules and regulations set forth by the state of Massachusetts.

Statement of Non-Discrimination:

Massachusetts state law prohibits discrimination against students in public schools, including protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation. It states:

No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.

The Ashland Public Schools offer all courses of study, extra-curricular activities and school services without regard of race, color, sex, religion, national origin or sexual orientation. In addition, the School Department adheres to the Federal requirements provided under Title VI, Title IX and Section 504.

The Ashland Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or handicap in admission to, access to, treatment in or employment in its programs and activities.

The administrators identified at the link below have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies:

[Civil Rights Links / District Coordinator Information](#)

DISTRICT POLICIES:

The School Committee “shall have the power to establish educational goals and policies for the schools in the district consistent with the requirements of law and statewide goals and standards established by the Board of Education (M.G.L. c71, §37).” The Ashland Public Schools School Committee maintains policies to ensure the school district operates in an effective and efficient manner. Review of School Committee Policy is on-going throughout each school-year. It is the responsibility of each individual to monitor the Ashland Public School’s website for the most current policies. Policies printed within this handbook were current at the time of printing.

Please click this link to access the [Ashland Public Schools' Policy Manual](#). If you have any questions regarding current School Committee policies, please contact the Office of the Superintendent of Schools at 508-881-0150.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE: Attendance is a critical factor in school success for students. Studies have shown that consistent school attendance, academic success, and school completion have a positive correlation. **Please refer to the [School Committee Attendance Policy](#) for more details.** Please call the attendance line at **508 881-0160** if your child is going to be absent.

Warren/Pittaway Site Council

The Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993 mandated the formation of a School Improvement Council at each school in the Commonwealth. The council is composed of teachers, parents, the building administrators, and a member of the local community. Councils are responsible for assisting the building administrators in adopting educational goals for the schools, identifying the educational needs of students attending either of the two schools, reviewing the schools’ annual budgets, and formulating School Improvement Plans. The School Council’s Improvement Plans are submitted to the School Committee for review and approval each year. The Site Council provides a unique opportunity for parents to become involved in identifying and implementing educational goals that benefit both the children and the respective school community as a whole.

Leaving a Message for Teacher:

Should you wish to speak to your child’s teacher, you may leave a message with the office staff. However, teachers will not be able to return the call while school is in session. You may also email the teacher, including your telephone number and a good time to reach you. Our email addresses end with [@ashland.k12.ma.us](#). Most often the email address begins with the person’s first letter of their first name, followed by their last name, so William Pittaway would have an email address of [wpittaway@ashland.k12.ma.us](#).

HEALTH SERVICES

The role of our professional school nurses is to strengthen the educational process by assisting students in maintaining optimal health. This is accomplished in a variety of ways: evaluation of health concerns, first aid and emergency care, medication administration, monitoring of chronic illnesses, maintaining individual health records in accordance with DPH requirements, and performing state-mandated health screenings.

Illness and Clinical Guidelines

Families are strongly encouraged to communicate any student health concerns to the school nurse. If your child has allergies, asthma, diabetes, seizures, attention deficit disorder, or any other medical or mental health issues, please communicate with your school nurse regarding treatment plans and medications prior to school entry or upon diagnosis.

The nurse is available throughout the school day for students and staff who are injured or become ill in school. Note that the nurse's office is not meant for students who are experiencing common fatigue.

Those who wish to see the nurse during the school day must inform their teacher prior to visiting the health office. If the nurse is not in her office, the student must report to the main office so that the nurse may be located and notified. If a student misuses the nurse's office, administration and parents/guardians will be informed.

Because optimal learning requires good health, Ashland Public Schools enforces the following clinical guidelines:

Bacterial Conjunctivitis (also known as "Pink Eye")

The child must have 24 hours of antibiotic treatment before returning to school.

Diarrhea/Vomiting

A child with diarrhea and/or vomiting should stay at home and return to school only after being symptom-free for 24 hours without the use of anti-vomiting or anti-diarrheal medication.

Fever

If a child is not feeling well before school, the parent should check his/her temperature. A child should not be sent to school with a fever. A child with a temperature of 100° F (37.7° C) or higher will be sent home from school. Children must remain home for the next full school day, and may return to school only once they have been fever free *without fever-reducing medication* for 24 hours.

Head Lice

Ashland Public Schools supports the recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Centers for Disease Control, and the National Association of School Nurses in the management of head lice in the school setting. If a child at school is found to have live lice, the student may be sent home immediately for treatment at the discretion of the building nurse. The student must be treated and free of live lice prior to returning to school. When the child returns, the building nurse will assess the student's hair for evidence of treatment. If the nurse deems it appropriate, a parent will be asked to accompany the child to school for this assessment.

Note that, in accordance with the American Academy of Pediatrics and the CDC, Ashland Public Schools does not participate in whole classroom screenings, exclusion for nits, or notification to anyone other than parents/guardians of students with head lice.

View our [APS Lice Brochure](#).

Impetigo

A child must be on prescription medication for 24 hours before returning to school. Weeping sores should be lightly covered with a dressing until they are crusted over and dried up completely.

Strep Throat

A child must remain out of school until the strep test/ throat culture results are known. If the result is positive, the child must be on antibiotics for 24 hours before returning to school.

Students Requiring Crutches or Braces

Students who become injured and require crutches or hard splints/braces/casts must have a physician's letter stating the reason for the need of the equipment and for how long the equipment will be required. Students who are utilizing durable medical equipment should sit out from physical activity (both PE class and recess) at

school until the brace or crutches are no longer required, and a clearance letter for participation in physical activity is provided by the physician.

Guidelines for handling other conditions are at the discretion of the school nurse.

Transportation

If a student becomes ill or injured on school property, it is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to provide transportation and further care for the child. Students may not be sent home without parental approval. In an emergency situation, the school nurse will call 911 and the student will be transported to the nearest hospital. In this circumstance, an APS staff member will accompany the child to the hospital.

Medication

The school nurse is responsible for the administration of all medications taken by students during the school day. The school nurse, with the permission of the Department of Public Health, will delegate authority to administer medication on a field trip to another adult.

The Licensed Provider Order and Parent/Guardian Consent for Medication Administration form must be completed and on file in the health office before any medication is administered to a student. The child's physician must complete the first portion of the form and a parent/guardian must complete the second part. Please note that *both sections of this form must be renewed yearly.*

Under protocols written by Ashland's school physician, nurses may administer acetaminophen, ibuprofen, Tums, and throat lozenges as needed. Parent permission for these is required and is included on the Health Emergency form completed at the beginning of each school year.

The district's medication policy and all necessary forms can be found on the APS website in the Health Services section under [Documents & Forms](#).

State Mandated Requirements

Physical Exams and Immunizations

Students who are new to Ashland Public Schools are required to submit a current physical exam form and up-to-date immunization record. Further, documentation of lead screening is required for entrance to preschool and kindergarten. For kindergarten students, documentation of vision screening completed in the previous 12 months is also required (note that this is often included on a student's annual physical exam form). Meanwhile, *all* students must submit updated physical exam forms upon entering kindergarten and again in grades 4, 7, and 10. Students who are not compliant with up-to-date physical exams and/or immunizations will be excluded from school until appropriate documentation is provided.

Each student has an individual health record on file in the school health office. Please submit any new physical exams or immunization records to the school nurse.

In-School Health Screenings

Massachusetts requires school health offices to conduct the following types of health screenings:

- **Vision screening** occurs annually in grades PK, K-5, 7, and 10
- **Hearing screening** occurs annually in grades PK, K-3, 7, and 10
- **Postural screening** occurs annually in grades 5-9
- **Body Mass Index (BMI) screening** occurs in grades 1, 4, 7, and 10
- **SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment)** occurs annually in grades 7 and 9

All students are expected to participate in these mandated health screenings. Note that parents/guardians may submit a written request to the school nurse asking that their child not participate in BMI, postural, and/or SBIRT screenings.

Management of Life-Threatening Allergies

Ashland Public Schools recognizes that students with life-threatening allergies (LTA) require reasonable accommodations necessary to ensure access to available education and education-related benefits.

While Ashland Public Schools cannot guarantee an allergen-free environment for all students with LTA, the district actively strives to minimize risk to these students. We have established guidelines that include building-based plans, the implementation of individual care plans, and training programs for personnel. For specific information on how our Nutrition Services department works with families to ensure the safety of children with allergies, please see the [Nutrition Services section](#) of the APS website.

Please click here to access the [Health Services section](#) of the APS website.