

**Sterling Schools  
Elementary School Handbook  
2008-2009**

**Franklin Elementary School**

1510 E. 25<sup>th</sup> Street  
Sterling, Illinois 61081  
Telephone: (815) 625-5755  
Fax: (815) 622-4187

Lisa Vasquez, Principal  
Deanna Cochran, Secretary  
Terri Scanlan, Nurse

**Jefferson Elementary School**

806 E. LeFevre Road  
Sterling, Illinois 61081  
Telephone: (815) 625-6402  
Fax: (815) 622-4191

Ron Rick, Principal  
Kim Burge, Secretary  
Maggie Wike, Nurse

**Lincoln Elementary School**

1501 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
Sterling, Illinois 61081  
Telephone: (815) 625-1449  
Fax: (815) 622-4196

Kathy Howard, Principal  
Lora Peugh, Secretary  
Joan Miller, Nurse

**Washington Elementary School**

815 W. LeFevre  
Sterling, Illinois 61081  
Telephone: (815) 625-2372  
Fax: (815) 622-4199

Pat Fortney, Principal  
Vicky Salas, Secretary  
Kami Shank, Nurse

**Sterling C.U.S.D. #5 Administrative Services**

410 E. LeFevre Road  
Sterling, Illinois 61081  
Telephone: (815) 625-5050  
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Mr. Tad Everett, Superintendent  
Tim Schwingle, Assistant to the Superintendent  
Jason Austin, Director of Student Services  
Jeff Hippen, Director of Technology  
Cheryl Robinson, Coordinator of Staff Development

**Sterling C.U.S.D. #5 Board of Education Members**

Jim Brotheridge, President  
Gonzalo Steven Reyes, Vice President  
Gail Dancey, Secretary  
Jim McPherson, Assistant Secretary  
Frank Rausa, Treasurer  
Jay Van Horn  
Bob Allen

## **Accelerated Reader**

The Accelerated Reader Program is available to all students. Accelerated Reader is an incentive program that allows students to earn points for reading library books and taking tests about the information read. Reading is like many other activities where focused practice brings improvement. Students are encouraged to read and earn points through the Accelerated Reader Program.

## **Accident, Illness and Emergency Information**

If your child becomes ill or is injured in school, he/she should report it to the teacher or to the office immediately. The school nurse or secretary will call home if necessary.

In the event of a serious accident or illness at school, parents will be called. If we are unable to reach parents, emergency numbers will be called. Please be sure that people indicated as emergency contacts are aware that you have given the school their numbers. If at any point during the school year this information should change, please notify the school immediately so that we may update our records.

## **Aggressive Behavior**

Efforts, including the use of early intervention and progressive discipline, shall be made to deter students, while at school or a school-related event, from engaging in aggressive behavior that may reasonably produce physical or physiological harm to someone else. The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that the parent(s)/guardian(s) of a student who engages in aggressive behavior are notified of the incident. The failure to provide such notification does not limit the Board's authority to impose discipline, including suspension or expulsion, for such behavior.

## **Attendance Regulations**

### **Absences**

Research indicates that regular attendance at school is very important. Please help your child develop a commitment to come to school everyday on time. Students with excessive absences and/or tardiness are subject to discipline and referral to the Whiteside County Truants' Alternative Program or the Sterling Police Department. Unexcused absences or tardiness are considered truanancies. If it is necessary for your child to be absent, please call the office.

In accordance with state law, we are required to verify student absences from school within the first hours of the school day. Please call the office by 8:00 A.M. to report your child's absence. An answering machine is available from 4:00 P.M. to 8:00 A.M. for your calling convenience. When reporting a student absence, please provide the following information: your name and relationship to the student, the student's name, the name of the student's teacher, and the reason for the absence. If due to illness please include specific symptoms (fever, nausea, headache) so that our school nurse is able to track certain illnesses and watch for trends and patterns of illnesses. Your cooperation with this policy is greatly appreciated. Failure to notify the school of a student's absence will result in an unexcused absence. In order to be eligible for the perfect attendance award, students need to be present everyday with no tardiness.

After three consecutive days of absence or seven cumulative days of absence, verification may be required, or at the very least, a visit to the school nurse prior to the start of the school day. Students with three unexcused absences will be referred to the Whiteside County Truant's Alternative Program.

## **Tardiness**

It is important for students to be on time at the beginning of each school day. Tardiness and absences do affect a child's academic and social progress. Students should report to the office first when tardy. This enables us to take care of attendance and lunch count. After ten tardy days, a student will be referred to the Whiteside County Truants' Alternative Program.

## **Vacations**

Every effort should be made to plan vacations around school holidays. When vacations occur during the school calendar, please inform the school office in writing at least one week prior to the dates of student absence. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to make sure that their student completes assigned make-up work. Absences beyond five days, due to vacation, will be considered unexcused.

## **Bicycle, Roller Blades, and Scooters**

Students are permitted to ride bicycles to school with parental knowledge and permission. Students should walk their bicycles while on the school grounds and should lock their bicycles in the bicycle racks located on the playground. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen bicycles. Heelys are not to be worn to school. For safety reasons, skateboards, roller skates, scooters, or heelys may not be used on the playground.

## **Breakfast / Lunch Program**

A Breakfast Program is offered. Students must notify their teacher the day before if they intend to eat breakfast the following morning to assist our food service provider with planning for adequate amounts. Students who qualify for free or reduced lunch program also qualify for free or reduced prices for breakfast.

Parents may apply payment to their child's breakfast/lunch/milk account in advance by cash, check, money order, or credit card (forms available). Students will be using ID cards for all purchases. The payments should be brought to school in an envelope clearly marked with the student's name, date, teacher's name, grade and amount of money being sent. The price of a meal does include milk. All payments will be credited to the student's account regardless of dollar amount. No change will be given.

The only money that will be accepted through the service line will be for ala carte milk/extras or adult meals. We encourage students to make payments in the morning. This allows the service lines to move quickly and smoothly. This also gives the food service provider time to credit the student's account.

Forms for free or reduced lunch may be obtained from our office at any time. If you think your child qualifies, please fill out the form and return it to the **District Office** immediately. It will take approximately one week to process. Until you are notified, please send your child with a sack lunch or the money in an envelope to cover the cost of their meal.

If a student has forgotten either his/her lunch money they can still choose a regular lunch. If after three charged meals a payment has not been made, the student will be offered a PBJ meal. The Student will continue to be charged for each meal. There will be **NO LUNCH LOANS** issued from the office or teachers.

## **Building Use**

The school building and other facilities of Sterling Schools are intended to be of service not only to the school and its students, but also to the community at large. However, certain guidelines must be followed to make efficient use of our facilities. Guidelines and permission for use of the building after normal hours may be obtained through the school office.

## **Bus Rules and Regulations**

The administration shall assure school bus transportation operations are consistent and in compliance with School Board Policy and State Board of Education Rules and Regulations. The Principal will determine the disposition on bus violations. The action taken will assure due process, student rights and responsibilities, and communication to the parents and the bus company. Each violation will be processed after substantial and reliable evidence has been established. Each disciplinary action taken with a student violation will consider the evidence presented and observed, the student's disciplinary history of violations, and the natural consequence of the action leading to a positive behavior change.

The following process will be utilized:

On the first violation, a disciplinary action form will be given to the child to hand deliver to his/her parent. The bus company will be notified of the action taken by the principal for the infraction. The parent may be called in severe cases.

The same procedure will be followed for a second violation. However, the action taken by the principal will be more severe and the parent may be called or asked to come to school for a conference.

On the third violation and subsequent violations, the principal shall have the right to suspend the student from riding the bus. A suspension may occur at the first or second violation depending upon the severity of the offense.

Disciplinary action may include discussion and guidance, withholding of privileges at school, parental involvement, monetary reimbursement for vandalism, or suspension depending upon the severity of the violation and the number of violations of the student. Before any disciplinary action is taken, the student will be allowed due process. All disciplinary action dispositions will be communicated to the parent and the bus company.

School bus transportation is a service provided for eligible students in accord with the School Code of Illinois and policies developed by the Board of Education of this school district. While in transit, school bus riders are under the jurisdiction of the school bus driver unless the school designates some adult to supervise the riders. It is recommended that all riders, parents or guardians of riders, and school personnel become thoroughly familiar with the following regulations governing school bus riders. The School Code of Illinois states that the school board shall have the power to suspend, or by regulations, to authorize the superintendent of the district or the principal of any school to suspend pupils guilty of gross disobedience or misconduct on the school bus from riding the school bus. In the event that this may become necessary, a hearing review will be held upon request.

To ensure the safety of your children, all school busses will have cameras on them. The actual taping will be audio and video.

- Be on time at the designated bus stop. Help keep the bus on schedule.
- Stay off the road at all times while waiting for the bus.

- Be careful in approaching the place where the bus stops. Do not move toward the bus until the bus has been brought to a complete stop.
- Students may be assigned seats.
- Do not leave your seat while the bus is in motion.
- Be alert to a danger signal from the driver.
- Remain in the bus in the event of a road emergency until the driver gives instructions.
- Keep hands and head inside the bus at all times after entering and until leaving the bus. Do not throw anything out of the bus window.
- Remember that unnecessary confusion diverts the driver's attention and could result in a serious accident.
- Be absolutely quiet when approaching a railroad crossing.
- Treat bus equipment as you would valuable furniture in your home. Never tamper with the bus or any of its equipment.
- Assist in keeping the bus safe and sanitary at all times.
- Carry no animals on the bus without permission of the school bus driver and the principal
- Keep books, packages, coats and all other objects out of the aisles.
- Leave no books, lunches, or other articles on the bus.
- Be courteous to fellow students and the bus driver.
- Help look after the safety and comfort of small children.
- Do not ask the driver to stop at places other than the regular bus stop; he /she is not permitted to do this except by written authorization from the school principal.
- Observe safety precautions at discharge points. Where it is necessary to cross the highway, proceed to a point at least 10 feet in front of the bus on the right shoulder of the highway where traffic may be observed in both directions. Then wait for the signal from the bus driver permitting you to cross.
- Observe the same rules and regulations on other trips sponsored by the school as you observe between home and school. Respect the wishes of the chaperone appointed by the school.
- Smoking, as well as lighting of matches or lighters, will not be permitted on the bus.
- Possession of alcohol and/or illegal drugs is strictly against the law and is forbidden.

## **Care of Building**

Everyone should take pride in our building and school grounds and do everything that can be done to help keep it clean and attractive. Please be a thoughtful citizen and pick up paper and garbage when you see it.

## **Cellular Telephones and Electronic Paging Devices**

Engaging in any activity that constitutes an interference with school purposes or an educational function or is disruptive, including using electronic signaling and cellular radio-telecommunication devices is prohibited, unless authorized and approved by the Building Principal. Electronic signaling devices include pocket- and similar-electronic paging devices.

## **Change of Address**

It is very important you inform us immediately of any changes in your telephone number, address, or the person we should notify in case of an emergency. Please notify the office in advance of a planned move from our school. See the procedure for withdrawing students under that heading in this handbook.

## **Conduct**

### **Hallway and Restroom Rules**

Students are expected to ...

- Be polite, courteous, and cooperative.
- Recognize the rights of fellow students and school staff.
- Keep the hallways free of litter. You should place litter and refuse in the proper containers.
- Recognize the importance of building maintenance by not writing on any school property including walls, lockers, bulletin boards, water fountains, or restrooms.
- Be in academic work areas rather than in hallways during class.
- Be quiet while walking in the hallways.

### **Lunchroom Rules**

Students are expected to...

- Always use inside voices.
- Make minimal messes and to cleanup after themselves.

### **Playground Rules**

- No activity that is unsafe will be allowed. This includes playing on the ice.
- No pushing, wrestling, tackling, tripping, or fighting is allowed. Touching another student is allowed in games such as tag or touch football as long as the touching is not extreme.
- Students are not allowed to pick up, throw, or kick rocks.
- Students are to take turns on the playground equipment. Only one person at a time is allowed on a swing or a slide. No jumping from the playground equipment is allowed.
- Students must stay within the playground boundaries.
- No ice or snowball throwing.

- Students are to line up to enter the building immediately when the bell rings or the whistle is blown.
- All students are to obey the playground supervisors on duty.
- Courtesy should be given to all students and supervisors.

During times of significant snowfall, students must wear snow boots AND snow pants in order to leave the blacktop and play in the snow. Students must also remain off of snow mounds and snow hills.

## **Conferences and Evaluations**

Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled before school begins and at the end of the first quarter. Teachers and parents are encouraged to request additional conferences at any time during the year. In addition to conferences, parents receive report cards four times a year, at nine-week intervals.

## **Crisis Plan**

Each school within the Sterling Schools district has developed a crisis response plan. This plan is on file in case of a dangerous circumstance or situation. The staff reviews this plan frequently, ensuring understanding and revisions, if necessary. Please contact the building principal if you are interested in reviewing this document.

## **Deliveries**

Any special gifts, flowers or balloons sent to a student, will be kept in the office until the end of the day. The student will be notified of their arrival and may pick them up in the office after school.

## **Discipline**

Our staff desires for the school to run smoothly and for everyone to get along. This is not possible without some rules and policies.

Our goals in the area of discipline include...

- Helping students develop self-control, respect, and to manage their own behavior.
- Helping students improve classroom performance through proper behavior during instruction.
- Improving overall school discipline through instruction.
- Maintaining a positive school atmosphere.

### **Discipline Ref: (7.190)**

Maintaining an orderly and secure environment for our students is a crucial part of providing quality education. The classroom teacher will maintain discipline. Teachers will inform their

students of classroom rules and routines and the necessary consequences for not complying with those rules. Students will be sent to the principal or his designee for disciplinary action after the teacher has first instituted steps to change and/or stop the disrupting behavior. Any student involved in physical fighting, disrespect or insubordination toward staff and adults in the building will be sent immediately to the principal or his designee.

Students who are sent to the principal or his designee for minor disciplinary action will be handled as follows:

First offense: Student will discuss the problem with the principal or his designee who will record the offense for future reference. The student is responsible for solving the problem in each step. Privileges may be taken away.

Second offense: Student will discuss the problem with the principal or his designee who will record the offense, write a note to parent(s) for signature, OR call parents and revoke privileges.

Third offense: Student will discuss the problem with the principal or his designee who will record the offense and contact the parent(s) to arrange a conference. A detention at lunch or after school may be given and/or privileges revoked.

Fourth offense: Student will discuss the problem with the principal or his designee who will record the offense and contact the parent(s) to arrange a conference. Appropriate disciplinary action will take place immediately.

In cases of serious disobedience or misconduct, which is dangerous to the safety of the student or others, parent(s) will be contacted immediately to arrange a conference. In-school or out-of-school suspensions may be given until such time as the conference is held and a disciplinary action determined. In these cases, the first three steps of the disciplinary action may be waived.

### **Discipline Plans for the Classroom**

Your child's teacher will establish classroom rules. You may want to ask your child's teacher about his/her rules during Parent-Teacher Conferences. Students are obligated to do their homework assignments on a regular basis. Students who fail to do their assignments may lose certain privileges or be assigned detentions.

### **Discipline of Special Education Students**

The District shall comply with the provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) when disciplining students with special needs. Please refer to School Board Policy 7.230- Misconduct by Students with Disabilities on the Internet at [www.sterlingschools.org](http://www.sterlingschools.org) for additional information.

Before a student can receive special education programming and/or services, the following criteria must be met:

1. The student must be registered in Sterling Schools District.
2. The student must have a measurable disability.
3. A handicapping condition must result from the disability.
4. The student must be a resident of Sterling Schools District.
5. The student must have an educational need.
6. Appropriate procedural safeguards must be followed in order to guarantee the student's civil rights.

These criteria are established through diagnostic testing and evaluation, information provided by school personnel and family, and other sources as requested by the family of school. Eligibility for services is determined and agreed upon at a child review at which parents, school personnel, Bi-County personnel, and others are invited to attend to review the results of the case study evaluation. An Individual Education Program (IEP) is then developed to address the specific learning needs of the student.

## **Dress**

In order to maintain an effective learning environment, school clothing should be neat, clean, and appropriate. Gym shoes are needed for physical education classes. No chains on pants or jeans should be worn to school. Hats should not be worn in the building unless for spirit days. Any problems involving dress are handled on an individual basis.

## **Dropping Off and Picking Up Students**

To ensure the safety of all children, please have them cross the street only at crosswalks/corners. Crossing guards are on duty before and after school. Please do not drop students off in the middle of the street or call them over after school to cross to your car in the middle of the street.

## **Entering or Leaving the Building**

1. Students are to enter and exit the building in a quick, but orderly manner. Clean shoes of mud, snow, etc., before entering the building. Please try to help us keep the building neat and clean. Our playground supervisors begin duty at 8:00 a.m. Students are to remain outside each morning when weather permits.
2. Students shall not enter the building during recess period unless permission from a supervisor has been granted. Unless a student is hurt or sick, no other student may accompany a student entering the building.
3. Students should enter the building when the temperature or wind chill factor is below 15 degrees. In these cases, students should wait by their lockers until the 8:10 bell. They may then enter their classrooms.
4. When dismissed, students riding the bus must board their respective busses as they arrive on school grounds.
5. Occasionally, teachers may keep students after school to finish class work or for disciplinary reasons. If a student will be kept after school for longer than ten minutes or he/she rides a bus, arrangements will be made ahead of time by the teacher.

## **Equal Educational Opportunities**

Equal educational opportunities shall be available for all students without regard to race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, ethnicity, language barrier, religious beliefs, physical and mental handicap or disability, or economic and social conditions, or actual or potential marital or parental status. Any student may file a discrimination grievance by using the Uniform Grievance Procedure.

## **Excuses**

All students will be expected to participate in outdoor recess activities and physical education classes unless the school has a written note from a doctor requesting that the child not go outside or participate in physical education classes. In such cases, the child will report either to the office or their classroom during recess and/or P.E. class periods. Parents may request their child be kept indoors for a day or two following an illness by sending a note to the school nurse. Any request beyond two days must come from a doctor.

## **Field Trips**

Field trips are planned as an additional educational experience for your child. The Permission form for you to sign is on the back of the Sterling Schools Student Enrollment Form and will be turned in at Registration. Permission is necessary for your child to be included on these field trips. You will always receive advanced notice and information about upcoming field trips. Occasionally, teachers will contact parents to request assistance in supervising a field trip. The classroom and/or the PTO raise funds for field trips. Parents may be also asked to contribute toward the cost of the trip.

## **Fire and Tornado Drills**

Fire drills and tornado drills are held regularly during the year. Directions for exiting the school building are posted in each classroom. Students are expected to exit the building in a safe and orderly manner during all fire and evacuation drills.

## **Health and Medication**

Parents should bring special health concerns to the attention of teachers, the school nurse, and/or the school office personnel. The nurse is available for students as needed for emergencies, administering medications, and willingly discussing health concerns with parents/guardians. It is extremely important to keep the emergency cards accurate and complete with the person to be called in case of an emergency, physician's name, and child's physical condition (such as epilepsy, asthma, allergies, etc.).

### **Administering Medicine to Students (Policy 7.270)**

Students should not take medication during school hours or during school-related activities unless it is necessary for a student's health and well-being. When a student's licensed health care provider and parent(s)/guardian(s) believe that it is necessary for the student to take medication during school hours, they must request that the school dispense the medication to their child/ward and otherwise follow the District's procedures on dispensing medication.

No School District employee shall administer to any student, or supervise a student's self-administration of any prescription or non-prescription medication until a completed and signed "School Medication Authorization Form" is submitted by the student's parent(s)/guardian(s). No student shall possess or consume a prescription or non-prescription medication on school grounds or at a school-related function other than as provided for in this policy and its implementing procedures. A student may possess medication prescribed for asthma for

immediate use at the student's discretion, provided the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) have completed and signed a "School Medication Authorization Form." The School District shall incur no liability, except for willful and wanton conduct, as a result of any injury arising from a student's self-administration of medication or the medication's storage by school personnel. Parent(s)/guardian(s) must indemnify and hold harmless the School District and its employees and agents, against any claims, except a claim based on willful and wanton conduct, arising out of a student's self-administration of medication or the storage of the medication by school personnel.

Nothing in this policy shall prohibit any school employee from providing emergency assistance to students, including administering medication.

## **Homework**

Homework is assigned as an extension of our daily school program. Examples of homework assignments your child may have are:

- Make-up work after an absence.
- Using individual math or sight word flash cards.
- Extra practice of basic skills in math, language arts, or reading.
- Collecting or reading material for writing reports.
- Gathering news and other current information from newspapers and magazines.
- Special projects.

Students are obligated to do their homework assignments on a regular basis. Students who fail to do their assignments may lose certain privileges or be assigned detentions.

## **Inclement Weather**

### **School Cancelled**

Please listen to WSDR (12.40 AM), WSSQ (94.3 FM), OR WLLT (107.7 FM) on the radio or tune in to local TV Channel 11, TV Channel 6 (KWQC-TV), or TV Channel 8 (WQAD-TV) if you feel that school may be cancelled due to weather or other conditions. The District Office notifies local radio stations immediately following a decision to close. We urge you not to call the school or the District Office for this information. Announcements of school closings will be made as early as possible.

### **School Closing Early**

If you are not sure if school will be closing early, due to weather or other conditions, please listen to WSDR (12.40 AM), WSSQ (94.3 FM), OR WLLT (107.7 FM) on the radio. Channel 11 also has up-to-date information regarding school closings. We urge you not to call the school or the District Office to check on a possible closing when school is in session. The District Office notifies local radio stations immediately following a decision to close early. Please establish a plan for emergency school closings with your children and child care providers. By planning ahead, you will ensure that your child is properly cared for without the anxiety caused trying to contact the school when phones lines are very busy.

## **Instrumental Music**

Instrumental music instruction on a part-time basis is available to students in grade 5 upon application. If you are interested, please contact the school. Band or orchestra students should only bring their instruments when requested by the instrumental music teacher. Instruments should be taken to the homeroom with the teacher's permission; they should not be left in the office or the student's locker.

## **Internet Access**

Sterling Schools has the ability to enhance your child's education through the use of the Internet. The Internet offers vast, diverse, and unique resources. The District's goal in providing this service is to promote educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication. Your authorization is needed before your child may use this resource.

Please read and discuss the Authorization for Electronic Network Access policy with your child that is available during Registration. If you agree to allow your child to have Internet access, sign the authorization form that is found on the back of the Sterling Schools Student Enrollment Form.

The Authorization for Electronic Network Access form is also available online at [www.sterlingschools.org](http://www.sterlingschools.org) or by requesting a copy from the individual schools and if you agree to allow your student to have Internet access, sign the authorization form and return it to the school.

## **Library**

Your school has an exceptional library which houses the school's book collection. All students are encouraged to check out books. Students may check out two books at a time.

Books may be kept for as long as two weeks and returned on or before the due date. If a book is overdue, a notice is given to the classroom teacher.

A book is considered lost if over due for longer than one month. You will be asked to pay for the replacement book. If a lost book is later found and returned in good condition, a refund will be made. Students who return books that are damaged will be issued a bill for the cost of the book, and you will be asked to pay for the replacement book.

We ask for everyone's help in the proper care and handling of our books: no writing or marking in the books, having clean hands and no food or drink when reading, and keeping books in a safe place. With everyone's cooperation, we can continue to provide its students with a selection of quality books and enjoyable reading experiences.

## **Lockers**

Students are issued a locker at the beginning of the school year. Please make sure that lockers are kept clean throughout the school year. Students are not allowed to place stickers or other items on the door or the inside of the locker itself.

## **Lost and Found**

Lost and found articles are turned in to the office and displayed in the hallway outside the office. Wallets, jewelry, and other valuable items are kept in the office. Have your child check the "Lost and Found" to recover lost items or to turn in articles that are found. Students are responsible for his/her personal property.

## **Medicaid Reimbursement Notice**

Medicaid reimbursement is a source of federal funds approved by Congress to help school districts maintain and improve special education services. Therapy and diagnostic services provided to your child are partially reimbursable. Unless you object in writing, Bi-County/Sterling Schools will claim Medicaid/Kid Care reimbursement for services provided. These claims will have no impact on your ability to receive Medicaid funding either now or anytime in the future. If you do not object to this release of information related to Medicaid claims for your child, do nothing.

## **Messages to Students**

Students are allowed to use the school's telephone only for emergency purposes. Your child's teacher or office personnel will determine if the call falls in the realm of an emergency based upon their judgment of the situation.

Unless it is an emergency, please avoid calling to leave a message for your child during the school day. This results in interrupting the classroom and loss of instructional time. If it should be necessary to contact your child because you are picking him/her up after school and you do not want him/her to ride the bus, please inform our office prior to 2:00 p.m. Please remember that we allow students to use the school phone only in an emergency and this is at the discretion of his/her teacher or by office personnel. Please try to take care of family procedures prior to the start of each school day.

## **Non-Custodial Parents' Rights to Information**

All pertinent information regarding the progress of a child will be shared with non-custodial parents as it would with custodial parents. Federal law (Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act) and state law (Illinois Student School Records Act) mandate that non-custodial parents receive the same consideration as custodial parents and should receive such information as:

- Report cards
- Statewide test results
- Invitations to parent-teacher conferences
- Access to child's records
- Other information shared with the custodial parent

The only way in which a non-custodial parent may be denied access to this information is if there is a court order specifically prohibiting the non-custodial parent's contact with the school. The request from a custodial parent in itself is not enough to deny access to a non-custodial parent.

## **Open Enrollment Requests**

Open enrollment requests are to be mailed to the Superintendent's office no sooner than June 1st of each year. Open enrollment decisions will be made before the start of the new school year. You will be notified by phone regarding the final decision.

## **Parental Calls**

If you wish to talk to a staff member, please call the school office. During the school day, our office staff will take your number and notify the staff member to return your call. From 4:00 P.M. until 8:00 A.M., an answering machine is available for the placement of messages to the staff or to inform the school as to your child's attendance.

## **Parental Request for Teachers**

Students are assigned to next year's classes following registration. If it is possible, your child's tentative teacher for the following school year will be written on his/her report card at the end of the school year. These are tentative assignments and are subject to change. We try to balance out each class by leadership, ability, gender, numbers, etc. We do not honor parent requests for a specific teacher due to the criteria used in assignment. If you have a request for your child not being assigned to a specific teacher:

- Make an appointment with the building principal to discuss the matter prior to the last day of school.
- Write a rationale for your request and bring it with you to the meeting.
- The Principal will have the final say on all student/teacher class assignments.

## **Parties**

Class celebrations are planned and organized in cooperation with the PTO. If you are interested in becoming a room mother/father, please contact the school office. All parents will be asked to contribute drinks, snacks, paper supplies, etc. or organize games for classroom celebrations.

Birthday invitations should not be distributed at school unless there is an invitation for every child in the classroom. Children often enjoy being able to celebrate their birthdays at school. As a safety precaution, treats that are shared at school must be "store bought" or pre-packaged, Homemade treats will not be allowed.

## **Personal Property at School**

We ask that children not bring valuable property such as radios, cassette players, CD Players, Gameboys, collectibles, trading cards, or other such objects to school unless their teacher has given them permission. Items that are brought from home should be clearly marked so they can be easily identified. The school cannot assume responsibility for the loss or breakage of items brought from home.

## **Pesticide Application Notification**

At times it may be necessary for the school district to apply pesticides to school buildings or school grounds. If you wish to be notified of pesticide application, please register with the principal of your school.

## **Promotion and Retention**

It is the intention of Jefferson to strive to ensure that students meet district goals and objectives and can perform at the expected grade levels for their grades before being promoted.

Decisions to promote retain, or remediate students in any class shall be based on successful completion of the curriculum, attendance, test performance, individual needs, and parent input.

No student shall be promoted to the next grade level for age or any other social reasons not related to the student's academic performance.

Students who do not qualify for promotion to the next higher grade level shall be provided remedial assistance, which may include a summer bridge program of not less than 90 hours, tutorial sessions, increased or concentrated instructional time, modification to instructional materials, and/or retention in grade.

Consultation with the parent/guardian throughout the school year will be maintained and documented when educational progress is not satisfactory. The final decision regarding the need for supplemental education outside the regular school day or school year and the student's promotion to the next grade shall be the responsibility of the building principal.

## **PTO**

The P.T.O. is an important part of our total educational program. The P.T.O. is the major fund-raising organization for our school and it also provides ideas and input into school improvement programs. You are encouraged to become involved in this organization.

We encourage and welcome parent volunteers to help in the lunchroom, the playground, classrooms, special classes, the library, and in the computer lab. If you are interested in helping at the school on a volunteer basis, please contact the office or your child's teacher. Volunteers are required by School Code law to complete a form for background checks.

## **Public Relations**

### **Public Relations, Radio, Television, Newspapers, Websites**

#### **Pictures of Unnamed Students**

Students may occasionally appear in photographs and videotapes taken by school staff members, other students, or other individuals authorized by the Building Principal. The school may use these pictures, without identifying the students, in various publications, including the school yearbook, school newspaper, and school website. No consent or notice is needed or will be given before the school uses pictures of unnamed students taken while they are at school or school-related activity.

#### **Pictures of Named Students**

Many times, however, the school will want to identify a student in a school picture. School officials want to acknowledge those students who participate in a school activity or deserve special recognition. Parents must notify the school principal if they do not want their child's name or picture released to the media for public recognition of student achievements, class projects or promotional purposes.

#### **State Report Cards**

District and individual school State Report Cards are available at [www.sterlingschools.org](http://www.sterlingschools.org). Paper copies are available at each school in English and Spanish.

#### **Sex Offender Information**

Individuals may obtain information concerning sex offenders at the Illinois State Police website [www.isp.state.il.us](http://www.isp.state.il.us). Information may also be obtained from any police department or sheriff's department.

## **Recess**

All children are expected to go outside during recess times unless it is raining or extremely cold. During cold weather, students should be dressed warmly, including hats, scarves, and mittens/gloves. Please insure that your child has boots during wet or snowy weather.

## **Release of Students During a School Day**

Sometimes it is difficult to schedule dental, orthodontic, or medical appointments after school. Requests for early dismissal for such appointments will be approved. Please send a note to the office indicating this request along with the date and time of appointment and urge your child to remember the time to report to the office to meet you. We try to avoid interrupting instruction by calling students over the P.A.

For your child's protection, we require that you sign your child in and out of the office. No student will be released unless picked up and signed out by an approved adult. Your child should also check in at the office upon returning to school, if it is on the same day. If someone other than a parent or legal guardian picks up the student for an appointment, we require a note giving us permission to release the student to that person.

## **Safety Patrol**

School Safety Patrols play an important role in helping young pedestrians learn and fulfill responsibilities regarding safety.

The boys and girls who contribute their time as Safety Patrol Members deserve special thanks for their efforts to help classmates avoid street traffic accidents.

Students and parents are requested to cross at the corners with crosswalks and obey the general rules of the Safety Patrol. They include:

- Walk across the street only when given the signal by the Safety Patrol Member.
- Walk one's bike across the street, if one is riding a bike to/from school.

\*Please also refer to our handbook section on walking to school.

Problems concerning Safety Patrol Members should be directed to the Fifth Grade Teachers.

## **School Admissions**

All children entering kindergarten must have reached their fifth birthday on or before the 1st day of September, as specified in the School Code of Illinois.

Students enrolling in the Sterling School District for the first time must present a birth certificate, or other proof of identity of age, two different proofs of residency, proof of immunizations, and the required physical exam (Grades K, 6, 9) and dental exams (Grades K, 2, 6).

## **School Insurance**

A student accident insurance plan is available. Student Insurance Plan benefits offer several options. Please read this information very carefully. Checks for insurance must be made payable to the insurance company and NOT to the school. As these envelopes are not opened in the office, please do not include money for the book rental or lunch.

## **School Phone Use**

Students are allowed to use the school's phone only for emergency or school-related purposes. Students will get a pass from their teacher's to use the phone. Staff will determine if the call falls within these parameters based upon their judgment of the situation.

## **School Security**

In order to provide increased security and ensure a safe, secure learning environment for our students, all building doors will be locked during the school day. A security camera and "buzz-in" system are being added to the front doors of all Unit #5 buildings. Visitors will be required to "buzz-in" for admission to the buildings and stop in the office reception area to register.

## **School Visitation**

The schools are open to all adult visitors and encourages classroom visits, provided their presence does not disrupt the flow of education. Please call your child's teacher if you would like to observe class. Visitors are required to register in the office. Special invitations will be extended to parents on certain occasions for programs and assemblies.

For your student's safety, any staff member may request identification from any person on school grounds or in any school building; refusal to provide such information is a criminal act. The Building Principal or designee shall seek the immediate removal of any person who: (1) refuses to provide requested identification, (2) interferes with, disrupts, or threatens to disrupt any activity or the learning environment, (3) or engages in activity in violation of School Board Policy 8.30, Conduct on School Property.

## **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment of students is prohibited. Students, who believe they are victims of sexual harassment or have witnessed sexual harassment, are encouraged to report the incident to the school administration. Students may choose to report to a person of the student's same sex. An allegation that one student was sexually harassed by another student shall be referred to the Building Principal, Assistant Principal, or Dean of Students for appropriate action. (Policy 7.20 Students)

## **Special Services**

The following special services may be available to students: speech therapy, hearing and vision screening, Title I reading, after-school tutoring, bilingual services, Student Assistance Counseling Program, and special education services. At some time during the school year, it may be beneficial for teachers and parents to request the help of these specially trained people. Your written permission is needed for some of these services.

## **Student Pictures**

Once in the fall, all students will have the opportunity to have their pictures taken. The PTO handles this service. Advance notification of picture day and price lists will be given to parents and students.

## **Student Records**

The District will maintain two sets of school records for each student: a permanent record and a temporary record.

The permanent record includes:

- Basic identifying information
- Academic transcripts
- Attendance records
- Accident and health records
- Information pertaining to release of this record

- Honors and awards
- School-sponsored activities and athletics

The temporary record includes:

- Family background
- Intelligence and aptitude scores
- Psychological reports
- Achievement test results
- Participation in extracurricular activities
- Honors and awards
- Teacher anecdotal records
- Disciplinary information, including information regarding any punishment for misconduct involving drugs, weapons, or bodily harm to another
- Special education files
- Verified reports or information from non-educational persons
- Verified information of clear relevance to the student education
- Information pertaining to the release of records

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Illinois Student Records Act afford parents/legal guardians and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's educational records. They are:

> The right to inspect and copy the student's education records within 15 school days of the day the District receives a request for access.

Students less than 18 years of age have the right to inspect and copy their permanent record. Parents/legal guardians or students should submit to the school principal (or appropriate school official) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent(s)/legal guardian or eligible student of the time and place where the record(s) may be inspected. The District charges \$.15 per page for copying but no one will be denied their right to copies of their records for inability to pay costs.

The rights contained in this section are denied to any person whom an order of protection has been entered concerning a student (105 ILCS 5/10-22.3c, 105ILCS 10/5a, and 750 ILCS 60/214(b) (15).

> The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, irrelevant, or improper.

Parents/guardians or eligible students may ask the District to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate, misleading, irrelevant, or improper. They should write the school principal or records custodian, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify the reason.

If the District decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) or eligible student, the District will notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) or the eligible student of the decision and advise him/her of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent(s)/guardian(s) or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

> The right to permit disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that the FERPA or Illinois School Student Records Act authorizes disclosure without consent.

Disclosure is permitted without consent to school officials with legitimate educational or administrative interest. A school official is a person employed by the District as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the District has contracted to perform a special task (such as attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent(s)/guardian(s) or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the District discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student has enrolled or intends to enroll as well as to any person as specifically required by state or federal law. Before information is released to individuals described in this paragraph, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will receive prior written notice of the nature and substance of the information, and an opportunity to inspect copy and challenge such records.

The right to challenge school student records does not apply to: (1) academic grades of their child, and (2) references to expulsions or out-of-school suspensions, if the challenge is made at the time the student's school student records are forwarded to another school to which the student is transferring.

Disclosure is also permitted without consent to: any person for research, statistical reporting or planning, provided that no student or parent(s)/guardian(s) can be identified; any person named in a court order; appropriate persons if the knowledge of such information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other persons; and juvenile authorities when necessary for the discharge of their official duties who request information before adjudication of the student.

> The right to a copy of any school student record proposed to be destroyed or deleted. Student records are reviewed every 4 years or upon a student's change in attendance centers, whichever occurs first.

> The right to prohibit the release of directory information concerning the parent's/guardian's child.

Throughout the school year, the District may release directory information regarding students, limited to:

- Name
- Address
- Gender
- Grade level
- Birth date and place
- Parent's/guardian's names and addresses
- Academic awards, degrees, and honors

- Information in relation to school-sponsored activities, organizations, and athletics
- Major field of study
- Period of attendance in school

Any parent(s)/guardian(s) or eligible student may prohibit the release of any or all of the above information by delivering a written objection to the Building Principal within 30 days of the date of this notice. No directory information will be released within this time period, unless the parent(s)/guardian(s) or eligible student(s) are specifically informed otherwise.

> The right contained in this statement: No person may condition the granting or withholding of any right, privilege, or benefit or make as a condition of employment, credit, or insurance the securing by any individual of any information from a student's temporary record which such individual may obtain through the exercise of any right secured under State law.

> The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the District to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

> Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

PPRA governs the administration to students of a survey, analysis, or evaluation that concerns one or more of the following eight protected areas:

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family;
3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student's parent; or
8. Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program).

PPRA also concerns marketing surveys and other areas of student privacy, parental access to information, and the administration of certain physical examination to minors.

For more information on PPRA, please consult: Statute: 20 U.S.C. 1232h. Regulations: 34 CFR Part 98.

The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA and PPRA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
 U.S. Department of Education  
 400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
 Washington, DC 20202-4605

## **Students with Special Needs**

Sterling Schools, in cooperation with Bi-County Special Education Cooperative, offers a full range of diagnostic and instructional support services for students with identified special needs. Services are available for handicapping conditions and exceptionalities. Referrals of students for the special education programs and services may be requested by parents and/or school personnel. Referral forms and procedures are available in the school office.

Before a student can receive special education programming and/or services, the following criteria must be met:

The student must be registered at Sterling Schools.

The student must have a measurable disability.

A handicapping condition must result from the disability.

The student must be a resident of Sterling Schools.

The student must have an educational need.

Appropriate procedural safeguards must be followed in order to guarantee the student's civil rights.

These criteria are established through diagnostic testing and evaluation, information provided by school personnel and family, and other sources as requested by the family or school. Eligibility for service is determined and agreed upon at a child review. Parents, school personnel, Bi-County personnel and others are invited to attend to review the results of the case study evaluation. If eligible for services, an Individual Education Program (IEP) is then developed to address the specific learning needs of the student.

Special Education services are provided in and coordinated with the regular classroom program as much as possible. However, additional resource and/or support are provided as per the best interest of the student's needs. In some instances, placement outside of Sterling Schools is necessary to meet specific student needs.

Please address any questions regarding the availability of special education services to your child's teacher or the building principal.

## **Supplies for Students**

Basic supply lists are available in the office. Individual teachers may request additional supplies for their classrooms. You will be notified of these additions by a note being sent home with your child. From time to time, your child's classroom supplies may need to be restocked. Students must have gym shoes to participate in physical education classes.

## **Textbooks**

Textbooks are furnished by the school district. A fee for students is charged. Fines are assessed for lost or damaged books. The amount of the fine depends on the replacement cost of the book and the degree of damage caused to the book.

## **Vandalism**

Any persons damaging school property will be assessed the total cost of all replacement or repairs and be subject to disciplinary action.

## Walking Students

Student conduct and safety on the way to and from school should be a matter of concern to both parents and staff. The school will cooperate with parents on these matters. Parents should discuss the safest route to school emphasizing the use of sidewalks and not trespassing on private property. Students should cross streets only at the intersection and obey all students acting as safety patrol. Children should not arrive at school before **Earliest Supervised Playground Time**. Once they arrive, students are to stay on the school playground until they enter the building at the **First Bell Time**.

School	Earliest Arrival	Supervised Playground	First Bell	Tardy Bell	Start Time	Dismissal Time
Franklin	7:45	8:00	8:10	8:15	8:15	2:55
Jefferson	7:30	7:50	8:05	8:15	8:15	2:55
Lincoln	7:45	7:50	8:00	8:05	8:05	2:45
Washington	7:30	7:50	8:00	8:05	8:05	2:45

## Withdrawing a Student

The following procedure must be followed if you are planning to withdraw your child from school:

1. Please notify the office of the date your child will be leaving.
2. Insure that all books and materials are returned and library fines are paid.
3. When you enroll your child at the new school, you will sign a release of information form. We will then transfer copies of your student's records.