

# Mary McLeod Bethune Elementary School

3301 Old York Road

Philadelphia, PA 19140

*Jamina Dingle, Principal*

*Yasmin Evangelista, Assistant Principal*

## **Family Handbook**



FROM THE DESK OF PRINCIPAL CLAY- DINGLE

*Dear Bethune Families,*

*I would like to welcome you to another school year!! We have many wonderful things in store for you and your children. This handbook is a roadmap for academic success and behavioral expectations. In addition to the information found in this handbook, you will receive monthly newsletters from the school, a monthly calendar of events, and phone announcements. You will also have the opportunity to sign up for SMS text message and/or email communications from Bethune.*

*I am excited about the school year and what our young scholars will accomplish. We will continue with several successful community partnerships and seek out new opportunities to expose our students to learning experiences. Our greatest partner, however is YOU! We invite you to partner with your teachers to work toward the academic achievement of your student.*

*Included in this handbook is a parent acknowledgement letter. This letter is to be signed by each parent/guardian after they have read and reviewed the student handbook with their student.*

*Jamina Clay-Dingle*

*Principal*

## Our Vision

Mary McLeod Bethune Elementary School is a student centered humanistic learning community that provides an engaging and rigorous educational experience in a safe and welcoming environment for all students.

## Our Mission

Our mission at Mary McLeod Bethune Elementary School is to nurture and produce children who are lifelong learners, critical thinkers and problem solvers who will be productive and responsible members of society.

## Values and Beliefs

We believe that:

1. All children have a right to a superior education
2. Students need to develop an understanding and appreciation of one's own culture, as well as others
3. A safe environment is essential for learning
4. All teachers, staff, parents and students should have respect for themselves and others
5. All teachers, staff, parents and students should take responsibility for their actions
- 6.

# BETHUNE BEARS

Be Brilliant  
Be Engaged  
Be Accountable  
Be Respectful  
Be Safe



## ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT OF HANDBOOK

**Please return this form signed to school**

By signing below my child and I acknowledge that we:

1. received the Bethune Elementary School handbook;
2. read through and understand the contents of the handbook;
3. agree with all the policies and procedures;
4. understand that any violation of the policies and procedures will result in certain consequences.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian (Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian (Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student (Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student (Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **SCHOOL HOURS**

**Regular full day: 8:30-3:09**

**Early Dismissal (1/2 day) 8:30-11:45**

**School Opens for morning line up: 8:25am**

***Note: No students will be permitted to enter the building prior to 8:25am every day. There will be no supervision of students prior to 8:25 am each day. Students are not permitted to enter through the main entrance front doors without an adult (Exception-Late Students)***

### **PLEASE DO NOT SEND STUDENTS TO SCHOOL BEFORE 8:25AM**

There is no supervision of students before 8:25am. Students will not be able to enter the building until 8:25am. This includes inclement weather. No students will be permitted into the building prior to 8:25am even in inclement weather.

## **ADMISSIONS AND DISMISSALS**

### **BREAKFAST PROGRAM**

We are participating in the universal breakfast program. All students are able to eat breakfast between 8:30 and 8:45am in their classrooms.

### **REGULAR ADMISSION**

- Students must line up for admission by 8:25am
- Grades K-8 will line up in the yard for morning admission at 8:25am
- Teachers will escort classes inside the building beginning at 8:30am
- At 8:35 am the gate will be closed. Students arriving after the gate is locked must enter through the front doors and obtain a late pass.

**NOTE: Students are not permitted to leave the yard once they have arrived on school grounds.**

### **REGULAR DISMISSAL**

All students in Grades K- 5 will be dismissed through the main yard

- Grades K-2 will be brought to the line up by 2:55pm.
- Grades 3-5 will be dismissed into the big yard at 3:05pm.
- Grades 6-8 will be dismissed on the Ontario Street side of the building at 3:05pm.
- All students are to go directly home or to their assigned after school programs. Students are not permitted back into the building unless for official school clubs or programs.
- Parents must wait in the parent area inside the gate or outside the gate.  
Parents are not permitted to retrieve students from the class line or move throughout the

- yard during dismissal. Please determine a meeting location outside of the gate for family members to meet.
- Students waiting for pick-up must remain at the gate.
  - Students are not permitted to play in the yard after school, they must go straight home.
  - At 3:10 students in grades K-1 who have not been picked up will be escorted to the front of the building to the inside lobby. Parents who have not picked their children up by 3:10 will be contacted and authorities will be notified.
  - Students are not permitted to wait for parents or siblings in the Main Office

#### **INCLEMENT WEATHER ADMISSIONS**

Students in grades K-2 will be admitted through the main yard into the gymnasium, beginning at 8:25am and will walk to the cafeteria. Students in Kindergarten, and 1st grade will wait at their tables for their teachers to pick them up.

Students in grades 3-8 will be admitted into the gymnasium for line up beginning at 8:25am. They are to enter the gymnasium through the main yard and stand on their line up locations.

#### **INCLEMENT WEATHER DISMISSAL**

Students in Kindergarten will be brought into the cafeteria by 2:55. Parents will be permitted into the building through the yard beginning at 2:55. Students will be seated with their teachers. No parents will be given access to the building through the front door.

Students in grades 1-2 will be brought into the gymnasium by 2:55. Parents will be permitted into the building through the yard beginning at 2:55. Students will be with their teachers. No parents will be given access to the building through the front door.

Students in grades 3-5 will be dismissed at 3:05 out into the main yard. If they have to pick up younger siblings they are to enter the gym through the yard door.

Students in grades 6-8 will be dismissed at 3:05 on the Ontario side of the building. If they need to pick up siblings they are to walk around to the yard entrance to the gymnasium.

Please speak with your children about dismissal procedures and direct them to pick up siblings and go straight home at dismissal.

### ***Legal Custody and Release of a Child***

#### ***Legal Custody***

Parents/guardians are asked to inform the main office and the child's teacher when legal custody of a child resides with one parent. School personnel can only make decisions about the child based on official legal documents. It is important for the school to have a copy of the custody decree. Custodial parents/guardians likewise are asked to supply the school with copies of restraining orders.

#### ***Release of a Child***

A child will not be released to a parent/guardian who does not have legal custody without the

written consent of the custodial parent/guardian. To determine the custodial parent/guardian, all separated or divorced parents must provide the school with a copy of the court order or custodial agreement adjudicating that determination of custody. This court order/custodial agreement is placed in a confidential file in the Principal's office.

### **EMERGENCY CLOSING**

In cases of severe weather conditions, which may necessitate the closing of school, please listen to the radio or television reports concerning "All Philadelphia Public Schools". The emergency number assigned to Philadelphia Public Schools is 100. School closing information can also be found on the School District's website.

**In the event of an early dismissal due to weather conditions or some other emergency there should be an emergency plan for your child. Please make sure that you have filled out our emergency contact form for your child. The form outlines a place for your child to go and a responsible person to care for your child.**

### **ATTENDANCE**

#### **STUDENT ATTENDANCE**

It is important that children come to school every day prepared to learn. Regular attendance is critical to academic success. Each day your child is absent an automated voice message from the School District of Philadelphia will alert the parent of the absence. If you receive a phone call and your child was not absent, please notify us immediately. Do not delay! If an error was made we need to correct it as soon as possible!

If your student is absent 2 days in a row, please expect a phone call from your child's classroom teacher. We want to touch base with you to see if your child will have an extended absence and to offer to send homework home with a sibling or peer.

An absence report will be filed for students who are absent three or more times.

A child who has been absent from school is required to bring a written note to the teacher upon returning to school. This note must be submitted within **THREE** days of the absence, it cannot be accepted after that.

If an acceptable absence note is not received the absence will be recorded as an unexcused absence. Excessive absences may lead to truancy issues.

#### **LATE STUDENTS**

Late arrivals disrupt the instructional process for all students. Late students miss instruction. Make every effort to have your child in the yard on time each day.

Students are late if they arrive after 8:30am

Late arrivals are a part of your child's official school record

**Late arrivals after 11am count as a half day absence.**

All late students are escorted to class by a staff member. Parents may not escort late students to the classroom door.



### **LATE PICK UP**

- It is imperative that students are picked up on time.
- Staff members are not available after 3:09 to watch children.
- It is necessary for you to have a back up person who can pick up your child in the case of an emergency.
- Late pick up of students will be closely monitored and parents must sign a late log for late students. Excessive late pick-ups will be treated as parental neglect.

**Bethune does not have a late pick up program for students. All students must be picked up by 3:09. If students are not picked up on time the Police Department and the Department of Health Services (child protective services) will be contacted. If you need assistance locating an afterschool program, please reach out to one of our community partners.**

### **EARLY DISMISSALS**

- To ensure the continuity of the instructional program for all students, parents must keep the Early Dismissals to a minimum.
- **Early Dismissals prior to 1pm will count as a half day absence.**
- Parents must send a written note to the teacher with the expected time of arrival. Teachers will have children packed and prepared to leave.
- An authorized adult must come to the main office and sign the Early Dismissal log book. Students are dismissed from the office only. Parents may not go to the classroom to retrieve students.
- For safety and security reasons a PHOTO ID WILL BE REQUIRED.
- Children will not be released to adults who are not on the school record as authorized to pick the child up. Please update record on a regular basis to ensure that they are accurate.
- Parents are encouraged to schedule medical appointments after school hours.

## **BUILDING SECURITY**

### **GENERAL SECURITY**

The security of our students and staff is of the utmost importance. To that end security measures have been enacted and will be followed:

- The front doors will be locked at all times. You will be asked to show your ID to the camera **BEFORE** being buzzed into the building. You will also be asked to state your business in the building **BEFORE** being let into the building. Upon gaining entry of the building you will have to sign in at the front desk. After signing in please proceed directly to the main office. **Parents are not permitted to go to any classrooms without receiving a pass from the main office FIRST.**

- Pre-Kindergarten doors will be open from 8:45-9:00 and from 2:50-3:10 for entry of our prekindergarten students. ONLY pre-kindergarten students will be allowed to enter the building through these doors. Kindergarten and grade siblings must line up and enter the building with their classes. Pre-Kindergarten parents MUST walk their children around to the 11<sup>th</sup> street entrance. They may not transition through the building.
- Exterior gates will be locked at 8:35am and at 3:15pm

### **Parental Exclusion**

If it is determined that a parent's behavior poses a threat to the school climate or is in consistent violation of building policies, that parent will be excluded from the building. A formal exclusion letter will be provided to the parent and to the 25th district of the Philadelphia pOlice Department. If a parent violates that exclusion letter, the police department will be called to have the parent removed from the building. Trespassing charges may be filed.

## **MATERIALS**

### **BOOKS**

Students are expected to take care of their belongings, including their books and learning materials. Every student must carry his/her own books and supplies to and from school in a suitable schoolbag. All notebooks should be clearly labeled with the student's name, grade and room number.

The student must pay all lost or damaged books, which belong to the school, in full. This includes textbooks, workbooks, independent reading books and all electronic equipment. A charge will be made at the cost of a new item.

### **SUPPLIES**

Students are given a supply list in June and September. All students are expected to obtain the appropriate supplies to be kept in the classroom for use during the school day. In addition, students must have appropriate supplies at home with which to complete their homework.

If additional supplies are needed throughout the school year, Kindergarten through second grade classroom teachers will send a notice home. Third through Eighth grade students should replenish supplies at the close of each marking period as necessary.

### **PERSONAL ELECTRONICS**

Personal electronics (such as iPad, cellular telephones, etc.) are not permitted at Steel School. These items are disruptive to learning and can be easily lost or misplaced. Any electronics brought to school will be confiscated and held for parents to pick up. The staff assumes no responsibility for confiscated items. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

## **UNIFORMS**

Uniforms are mandated by the School District of Philadelphia. All students (K-8) are required to wear the Bethune uniform. During gym days students may wear a solid light blue or dark blue T-shirt (NO PRINTS OR PICTURES) blue sweatpants and sneakers. If there is a hardship in obtaining the uniform please see the counselor.

### **KINDERGARTEN-5<sup>th</sup> GRADE**

#### **BOYS**

**TOPS** Collared light blue solid shirt  
Or golf style shirt (long or short sleeve)

**BOTTOM** Solid navy blue long pants

**SHOES** Rubber sole shoes or sneakers

#### **GIRLS**

solid light blue blouse or  
golf style shirt (*long/short sleeve*)

Long navy blue pants, skirt or jumper

Rubber sole shoes or sneakers

### **MIDDLE SCHOOL (6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> GRADE)**

#### **BOYS**

**TOPS** Collared **navy blue** solid shirt  
Or golf style shirt (long or short sleeve)

**BOTTOM** Solid khaki tan long pants

**SHOES** Rubber sole shoes or sneakers

#### **GIRLS**

Solid **navy blue** blouse or  
golf style shirt (*long/short sleeve*)

Long khaki tan pants, skirt or jumper

Rubber sole shoes or sneakers

### **ATTIRE NOT PERMITTED:**

Tee shirts, long cut tops

Tank tops

**\*\*Hooded sweatshirts**

Shirt without collars

Hooded sweatshirts and knit sweaters will be available for sale in the main office. Students will be permitted to wear Bethune Sweatshirts and knit sweaters.

## **INSTRUCTION**

### **CLASSROOM VISITS**

Parents/Guardians are welcome to visit their child's classroom, however to limit interruption of instructional time, parents/guardians who wish to schedule a visit must make an appointment at least 24 hours in advance. Pop up classroom visits will not be permitted.

### **HOMEWORK**

Homework is an important reinforcement of skills. Homework is assigned Monday through Thursday. It provides an opportunity for our students to strengthen basic skills, reinforce study and encourages independent thinking and creativity. Parents are encouraged to take an active interest by checking to make sure assignments are completed. Some teachers may require that homework be signed by a parent. Approximate suggested homework times are:

**Kindergarten**  
**20 minutes**

**Grades 3-5**  
**45 minutes**

**Grades 1-2**  
**30 minutes**

**Grade 6-8**  
**60 minutes**

Parents must assist and monitor the completing homework. Students are required to complete missed assignments if he/she is absent from school. All students should read every night for a minimum of 20 minutes.

### **Report Cards and Progress Reports**

- Academic interim reports are distributed 4 to 6 weeks before a report card is issued.
- All children in danger of failing will get a report. Behavioral interim reports may be issued at any time.

Report card conferences are held three times a year: December, February, and April. You will receive an appointment notice. If you cannot make the appointment, reschedule with the teacher. This conference is when you and the teacher look at your child's achievement and behavior, and plan what is best for your child. Come prepared with any questions you may have or information you feel the teacher needs to know. Teachers can only be helpful if they are informed of a problem.

### **MOVE UP DAY:**

An 8th grade closing assembly will be scheduled for the 8th grade students at the end of the year. Information will be sent home in the spring. Please note that kindergarten students do not have any closing assemblies, graduations, move ups, or ceremonies. A celebration of learning will be held in the spring for our kindergarten students. Information will be sent home in the spring.

## **CELL PHONE AND ELECTRONICS**

- Students are not permitted to use cell phones for personal reasons during school hours. While in school, cell phones must be completely turned off.
- Students are permitted to use cell phones before school and after dismissal for communication with parents or for academic purposes only.
- Students who violate this procedure will have his/her cell phone confiscated.

***1<sup>st</sup> confiscation: Returned at the end of the day***

***2<sup>nd</sup> confiscation: Returned to a parent***

***3<sup>rd</sup> confiscation: Returned at the end of the school year.***

### ***Middle Years Cell Phone Policy:***

***Middle years students have been provided with a locker to safely secure their cellular phones and electronic devices. We are also working to teach students appropriate use of their cell phones as educational devices. They are expected to use their electronic devices responsibly and to store them safely. The Bethune Elementary School cell phone policy does not assume responsibility for lost or stolen devices.***

***1st improper usage confiscation: Returned to a parent***

***2nd improper usage confiscation: Parent meeting***

***3rd improper usage confiscation: Daily Collection by administration***

Electronic devices (MP3 players, tablets, handheld video games, etc) are a distraction from the educational process and instructional delivery. Unauthorized electronics will be confiscated and returned at the end of the day. If electronics are repeatedly brought to school they will be held by administration until the end of the year.

***Bethune is not responsible for lost or stolen electronic devices. We will not devote instructional time to the search or investigation of lost or stolen electronic devices.***

### **Lockers**

We are fortunate to be able to provide students in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade with lockers this year. Access to school lockers is an important part of the middle school experience and imperative to preparing students for high school. Use of the lockers is mandatory for personal items including sweatshirts, coats and bookbags. However it is a privilege and a responsibility. Students who do not meet expectations may have their locker privileges revoked temporarily or permanently as needed. A locker contract will be sent home with students that will need to be signed by the student and parent. Only school issued lockers will be permitted on the lockers. Any other locks will be removed with bolt cutters and compensation will not be provided.

## **BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS**

Students committing any of the offences in the Student Code of Conduct Handbook, shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. Please refer to the Student Code of Conduct for a detailed explanation.

### **POSSESSION OF A WEAPON (Act 26)**

The PA General assembly has enacted legislation ACT 26, which requires all public schools to take mandatory course of action in dealing with a student found to be in possession of a weapon. There is no requirement that the student use or try to use the weapon. No one may carry a weapon for protection. A weapon is defined as a gun, knife, sharp object or any other object that can be used as a weapon. Act 26 was designed as a safeguard to ensure all public schools are safe havens in which all students may interact in an environment and climate, which fosters learning and strongly discourages potential acts of violence. Any student found with a weapon will be subject to automatic suspension and transfer to another Philadelphia Public School or disciplinary school. Depending on the age of the student and severity of the situation, the student may be arrested.

### **PROGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT PLAN**

We are confident that Bethune Elementary students will attend daily to learn, be productive, and adhere to Student Code of Conduct for Philadelphia School District Students experiencing difficulty adhering to the Student Code of Conduct will follow the process described below:

Minor behavioral issues will be handled by the teacher (classroom, or specialist). They will use their discretion when they believe the classroom behavior requires a referral. The following is a sampling of the consequences teachers may use:

- Redirection
- Removal to a “time out” area within the classroom
- Written referral
- Conference with student
- Note to parent
- Phone call to parent
- Teacher detention (morning or afternoon)
- Removal to another setting (no longer than 30 minutes)

Major offenses will be handled by an administrator. Each child is an individual whose needs will be considered when determining the consequence. The following is a sampling of the consequences administrators may use:

- Natural consequence (clean desk that student wrote on, letter of apology, etc.)
- Parent phone call
- Referral to Discipline Team to develop a behavior improvement plan
- Alternative recess (only used when issue takes place during recess)

- Detention (morning/afternoon/lunch)
- Suspension (out of school)
- Referral for further consequence.

**\*\*Level II violations will follow the EH-21 Process**

**\*\* Serious incidents may require immediate suspension**

### **DETENTION**

In an attempt to stress constructive citizenship and improve academics, your child may be required to remain after school for short periods of time during the school year.

If improper behavior or uniform non-compliance is observed, your child will be given 24-hour notice prior to serving detention.

### **FIGHTING**

Fighting will not be tolerated. Students involved in fighting will be disciplined in accordance with the Philadelphia School District's Student Code of Conduct.

### **BULLYING**

There is zero tolerance for any type of bullying. Students who engage in any type of bullying, either physical, verbal or cyber bullying will be disciplined in accordance with the Philadelphia School District's Code of Conduct.

### **ACT 26-WEAPONS**

The Pennsylvania General Assembly has enacted legislation (Act 26) which requires all public schools to take a mandatory course of action in dealing with students who are found in possession of weapons. The law defines a weapon to include, but not limited to, any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, firearm, shotgun, rifle and any other tool or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury. There is no requirement that the student use or try to use the weapon; and possession for self protection is not a defense. Parents are encouraged not to send tools or supplies such as metal or pointed scissors to school with your children unless you receive a written request from the teacher. Students found with weapons of any kind or any article used as a weapon are in violation of the law and subject to arrest and expulsion from the school district for at least one year.

## **SUPPORTIVE STAFF**

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION LIAISON**

The special education liaison, (SEL) is the contact point for the special education department at Bethune. She processes all requests for evaluations and oversees the evaluation process. If you would like to request an evaluation for your child, a letter of request should be written and submitted to the SEL. Please note that the first step in the process is to have a parent meeting. A request does not guarantee an evaluation will be conducted or that an IEP will be issued.

### **COUNSELOR**

The Counselor is an important link between the students and the school. A student may visit the Counselor's Office for assistance in many areas including personal concerns, social issues, etc. If an appointment is needed, please feel free to contact the Counselor at 215.400-3890. Our

counselor is also our attendance designee and will be working with students who have attendance challenges.

### **NURSE**

Bethune Elementary School has a full time nurse. She is available if a student has been injured or is ill. A student must receive a permission slip from their teacher to see the nurse. Any student who is sick will not be sent home unless accompanied by a parent or an adult authorized on the child's Emergency Contact Form.

The school nurse provides student services aimed at the identification and assessment of student health problems. Through ongoing communication and contacts with students, parents, and staff, the school nurse acquires first-hand knowledge of health problems and the availability and accessibility of services.

As an advocate for children, the school nurse communicates daily with students to ensure optimum health for academic success.

### ***A. Contact***

The school nurse and the staff of the Bethune Elementary depend on the cooperation and partnership between the home and the school with the assistance of the following:

- Emergency cards and forms need to be completed and returned promptly. Any changes in telephone numbers, addresses, emergency contacts, or employment must be reported to the school nurse and office.
- Updated immunizations, communicable diseases, surgery, or special medical conditions should be reported, in writing by the physician, to the school nurse. Also, inform your child's teacher of any specific health-related conditions.
- Please keep students out of school if they experience a temperature above 100 degrees, vomiting or diarrhea within the last 24-hour period pre-school start.

### ***B. Physical Examinations***

The Pennsylvania School Health Act (Section 1402) requires each pupil to have a health examination upon admission to school in sixth and ninth grades. This is required for all public schools. Remind your physician that vision, hearing screenings and updates of immunizations are important components of a physical and must be completed as designated on the physical form. Physical forms can be obtained in the school nurse's office or the main office.

**NEW RULE: State immunization requirements for the 2017-2018 school year have changed. If your child isn't up-to-date when school starts, you will have 5 days to get the next dose of the vaccine that they need, and provide a medical plan to get up-to-date. Failure to have all required vaccines may result in your child being excluded from school.**

### ***C. Administration of Medication***

Ideally, the administration of medication or utilization of equipment should take place at home. However, students with health problems may require medication (administered at prescribed intervals) or suction, oxygen, or other types of equipment in order to permit them to function at as close to a normal level as possible in the classroom. The School District of Philadelphia does not diagnose student conditions or prescribe medication/treatment. (No medication/treatment will



be administered in school without a completed and approved request for administration of medication or use of suction, oxygen, or other equipment in school). All approved requests will expire on June 30th of each year. The procedure must be carried out in its entirety every year. The certified School Nurse will contact the prescribing provider for clarification, when necessary.

- All medication must be prescribed by a qualified healthcare provider on the appropriate form.
- The prescription must be approved by the Certified School Nurse or a School Nurse Supervisor.
- The parent will supply the medication, properly labeled and packaged.
- The school only will retain medication if it has been packaged and labeled by a Registered Pharmacist according to accepted pharmaceutical standards. The medication label must include: Patient name, pharmacy name, address and telephone number, prescription number, prescription date (must be current), name of medication-dosage-form and expiration date, instructions for administration, name of prescribing health care provider.
- All medication must be packaged with a Safe-T closure Cap.
- Equipment and machinery must be prescribed by a qualified healthcare provider on the appropriate form.
- Children may not carry medication on their person, in their lunch bag or schoolbag.

Please contact the Certified School Nurse if you have any questions or concerns.