

PARENT & STUDENT
HANDBOOK
of
HOMER-CENTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
45 Wildcat Lane
Homer City, Pennsylvania 15748
Where Everybody is Somebody



CONTENTS

Parents as Partners 4

District and Elementary Staff 4

Phone Directory 4

Daily Time Schedule 5

Grade Level Lunch Times 5

Enrollment - *Enrollment Process and Emergency Information*..... 5

Withdrawals 6

Attendance - *Medical Appointments, Excuses, Unexcused Absences, Unlawful Absence, Enforcement* 6

Student Records - *General Information, Dissemination of School Records, Non-Custodial Parents*..... 7

School Cancellation/Early Dismissal/Delay..... 8

Arrival/Dismissal - *Tardiness* 9

Educational Trip Approval..... 9

Health Services - *School Nurse/Health Assistant, Illness or Injury, Immunizations, Medication, Emergency Care Card* 10

Food Service - *Breakfast, Lunch, School Menu, Meal Ticket System, Student Debts*..... 11

Elementary Programs - *Academics, Special Programs*..... 12

Guidance and Counseling - *Elementary Counselor, Elementary Student Assistance Program (eSAP)* 13

Academic Progress - *Promotion/Retention, Report Cards, Marking System, Community Portal, Parent/Teacher Conferences*..... 13

Classroom Policies - *School Provided Materials and Equipment, Homework, Study Skills, Parties, Recess Policies, Rules for Students, Student Service Club*..... 15

School Policies - <i>Homeroom Assignments, Dress Code, Food/Gum/Candy, Bicycles, School Visitation, Sexual Harassment, Smoke/Tobacco Free Environment, Telephone, Valuables, Lost and Found, PTA, Insurance, School Pictures, Substitute Teachers, Student Teachers, Media</i>	16
Infractions/Disciplinary Actions - <i>Suspension, Expulsion</i>	18
School Buses - <i>Bus Conduct, Routes, Operating Policies</i>	19
Emergency Drills - <i>Fire Drills, Lockdown Drills, Tornado Drills, Bomb Threats</i>	20
Special Education Program - <i>Notice to Parents, Identification/Evaluation, IEPs (Individual Educational Plan), Services for Protected Handicapped Students (504Plan), Confidentiality of Student Records</i>	20
Elementary Student Internet/Computer Use Agreement	22

Parents as Partners

This handbook describes the programs and opportunities for you and your child at the Homer-Center Elementary School. It presents our procedures and student expectations. Please read over this book with your children. Keep it handy as a guide during the school year.

Please call the school at 724-479-9077 if you have any questions or need more information.

Information contained in this handbook is subject to change. Please consult the school web site for updates.

Student's Rights and Responsibilities Students have the basic constitutional rights guaranteed to all United States citizens. In exercising these rights, students have a responsibility to respect the fundamental rights of others. Two purposes of school are to encourage the responsible use of these rights and to develop good citizenship within the framework of an educational society.

The school is a community, and the rules of the school are the laws of that community. To enjoy the right of citizenship in the school you must also display the responsibilities that pertain to citizenship. The following are examples of rights that are guaranteed youngsters in a school setting, along with accompanying responsibilities.

Rights/Responsibilities

- Obtain an education at public expense and participate in the school program.
- Attend school daily and be on time.
- Expect schools to be a safe place for all students to gain an education.
- Assist and cooperate with the school faculty, staff, and administrators who are responsible for providing a safe school.
- Assist in making school rules and other decisions affecting the student's life in school.
- Be aware of school and grade level rules and all expectations for positive student behavior. Act in accordance with these expectations.
- Express opinions (verbal or written) in a respectful manner.
- Express opinions in ways which will not offend or slander others.

District and Elementary Staff

Superintendent of Schools	Charles J. Koren, Ed. D
Elementary Principal	Michael A. Stofa
Director of Special Education.....	Bethany Genchur
Guidance Counselor	Jennifer Lieb
Nurse	Patricia Pavolko
Food Services Director	M. Susan McLoughlin

Phone Direct

Superintendent	724-479-8080
Elementary Office	724-479-9077
Elementary Office Fax	724-479-8768
Elementary Guidance	724-479-9077, Ext. 1116
Elementary Nurse	724-479-9077, Ext. 1114

Elementary Cafeteria	724-479-9077, Ext. 1144
Special Education Clerical Office	724-479-9077. Ext. 1811
Director of Special Education	724-479-8080, Ext. 1914
High School Office	724-479-8026
High School Guidance	724-479-2525
High School Nurse	724-479-8026, Ext. 3134

District Website www.homercenter.org

Daily Time Schedule

8:15 A.M.	Teacher Arrival Time
8:32 – 8:42 A.M.	Buses Arrive
8:15 A.M.- 8:45 A.M.	Staff Meetings, Students Conferences, Etc.
8:05 A.M.- 8:55 A.M.	Breakfast Time
8:57 A.M.	Morning Announcements
9:00 A.M. – 3:27 P.M.	Instructional Time
3:27 P.M.	Afternoon Announcements
3:37 P.M.	Buses depart
3:45 P.M.	Teachers’ Dismissal Time

Grade Level Lunch Times

11:25 A.M. – 11:55 A.M.	Kindergarten
11:35 A.M. – 12:05 A.M.	1 st Grade
11:45 A.M. – 12:15 A.M.	2 nd Grade
11:00 A.M. – 11:30 P.M.	3 rd Grade
12:10 A.M. – 12:40 P.M.	4 th Grade
11:50 P.M. – 12:20 P.M.	5 th Grade
12:30 P.M. – 1:00 P.M.	6 th Grade

Enrollment

New Kindergarten students must be five years of age before September 1 of the school year in which they are enrolling. New first grade students must be 6 years of age before September 1. Ages must be verified by a birth certificate and immunization records must be complete before students are enrolled in school. Proof of current Homer-Center School District residency (utility bill, driver’s license, lease) must also be provided at the time of registration.

Parents of students transferring from other schools should register their children at the elementary office. Once the child is registered and a release of academic records (signed by parent/guardian), the previous school may be contacted to ensure timely admission.

Emergency Information: In case of emergency, each student is required to have the following information on file in the school office:

- Parent(s) or guardian(s) names(s)
- Complete and current Homer-Center School District address

- Preferred contact number and work contact number for each parent/guardian
- Emergency telephone number of a designated person who is close enough to the school and has transportation to respond in an emergency (if parents/guardians cannot be reached)
- Doctor's/Dentist's name and telephone number
- Medical alert information
- Recorded court-ordered custody information/papers (if applicable)

You will be asked to complete an emergency card at the beginning of each school year. Parents are requested to return these cards no later than the first week of school. Parents/guardians of new students will be asked to complete the emergency card during registration.

Withdrawals

The school should be notified in advance if students are moving throughout the school year. This allows teachers and staff to prepare the student's file to be forwarded to his/her next school of enrollment.

Attendance

Regular attendance is essential to a student's success in school. Core subjects are taught daily and in sequence, requiring the understanding of each concept in order of its presentation. Persistent absenteeism creates a genuine hardship for a student and is regarded as a very serious problem. It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to ensure regular student attendance.

The following circumstances are the only recognized excuses for school absence: 1) personal illness, 2) death in the immediate family, and 3) religious holiday.

Doctor/Dentist Appointments: Parents should make every effort to schedule doctor and dentist appointments outside of school hours. Appointments should not be scheduled during state-mandated (PSSA) testing times. Teachers should receive advance notice of these appointments so that they can plan accordingly. A brief note indicating the date, time, and reason for the absence, signed by the parent, is required.

However, when this is not possible, students will be excused and the following will apply: A student will be considered absent for one-half day if

- The student reports to school after 11:42 AM or if
- The student leaves the school prior to 11:42 AM

Upon returning to school after an absence, a student should bring a signed excuse from a doctor, if under a doctor's care, or an excuse signed by a parent or guardian. This excuse should include number of days absent, and a specific reason for the absence. Moreover, such excuses are required by Pennsylvania School Law.

Upon the first unexcused absence, the parents will be notified that an excuse has not been received. If three unexcused absences accumulate, parents will be contacted again. It is school policy that the parents of any student who has missed 8 days of school will receive a letter of notification concerning the importance of regular school attendance. When a student misses 10 days of school another letter documenting these absences will be sent home. At this point, all subsequent absences must be accompanied by a doctor's excuse.

Unlawful Absences Unexcused/illegal absences occur when an excuse is not received within three calendar days or does not include an acceptable reason for an absence. Examples that constitute an unexcused/illegal absence include, but are not limited to oversleeping, educational trip without prior approval, working, missing the bus, needed at home without clarification, shopping, hunting, fishing, or

other domestic activities that are not of an emergency nature and could be scheduled at times when school is not in session.

The building principal will make the final determination in cases where the nature of the absence is questionable.

In accordance with ACT 138 of 2016, parents will be informed in writing (sent US Regular Mail) when students accumulate illegal absences at the following points:

First illegal absence: a courtesy letter will be sent outlining the attendance enforcement policies for students.

Third illegal absence: a required notice will be sent to parents with a copy sent to Children and Youth Services outlining the attendance enforcement procedures for additional illegal absences including a statement that additional illegal absences can result in citations against parents and/or students and can be filed at the local magistrate for violating the truancy laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Fourth illegal absence: A School Attendance Improvement Conference (SAIC) will be held at which time a School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP) will be developed between the school and student. Every reasonable effort will be made to include the parent in the development of the SAIP. The completed SAIP will be provided to parents by Regular US Mail.

Fifth illegal absence: The fifth illegal absence will result in a citation being issued against the parent or student at the local magistrate office.

The sixth illegal and every illegal absence after will again be referred to the magistrate and a referral will be made to Indiana County Children and Youth Services.

Students who miss 10 consecutive school days shall be dropped from the school rolls unless the school is provided with evidence that the excuse is legal or the school is pursuing compulsory attendance prosecution.

Students accumulating 10 non-consecutive days of absence, regardless of excused or unexcused/illegal determination; will be placed on medical evidence requirement. Medical evidence means the only excuse that will be accepted by the school is one that is certified as necessary for the safety or well-being of the student by a physician or psychiatrist or accepted by the building principal for extenuating circumstances such as, but not limited to, a death in the family or court hearing. Once a 10-day medical evidence requirement notice is sent to parents, students who accumulate 10 additional unexcused/illegal absences can be denied academic credit for the courses in which the student is currently enrolled.

Attendance Enforcement: During the enforcement of attendance regulations school officials may involve the services of outside agencies, to include but not limited to, Children and Youth Services, Juvenile Probation, District Magisterial Court, and IU 28.

Student Records

The collection, maintenance, and dissemination of pupil records is a valid, legal, and expected function of any school system. The confidential nature of such records is a matter of fact and is fully recognized by the professional staff in their use of such data. Pupil records are maintained for the following purposes.

- To enable teachers, guidance counselors, nurse, and other professional personnel directly concerned with the pupil to analyze the pupil's progress and development.
- To provide the same professional personnel with a base from which to guide or counsel the pupil regarding educational and child development.
- To enable teachers and other professional personnel to communicate with parents regarding the progress of their children.
- To have available for dissemination, within the constraints hereinafter described, student

information in the case of a transfer or relocation to another school district or setting.

- No information will be collected from students without the prior informed consent of the parents/guardian.
- In all situations where parent/guardian consent for agency records is to be obtained, it shall be in writing.

Records shall be kept under the supervision of designated professionals in accord with statements contained in the Homer-Center School Board Policy.

Students and/or parents may challenge the validity of any information contained in Category A and B by filing a written notice with the professional responsible for the maintenance of that record, or by filing such statement with the principal of the school in which the pupil is enrolled.

All Category A and B Data shall be considered active for a period of two years from the date of graduation or leaving school or other than by transfer to another school. The original records shall be maintained during that period. At the end of the two-year period, all Category A data will be stored at least 100 years.

Classification Category A Data: Initial pupil identification, attendance, and scholastic data

Classification Category B Data: Pertinent academic and personal development data that has been verified.

Classification Category C Data: Potentially useful information but not yet been verified. Category C data shall be destroyed as soon as its usefulness is ended.

Dissemination of School Records: The school may, without consent of parents or students, release a student's permanent record:

- To other school officials, including teachers within the district, who have legitimate educational interest.
- To the Secretary of Education
- To officials of other primary and secondary school systems in which the student intends to enroll.

The school, or any school personnel, will not divulge in any form to any person, other than those listed above, any information contained in school records without written consent from the student's parents specifying records to be released. Each matter of request for consent shall be handled separately. No blanket permission for release of data within an extended period of time may be solicited.

Parents must obtain an appointment with the professional responsible for the maintenance of the records to review the records per Homer-Center School District Board Policy on Students Records.

Non-Custodial Parents: If your child lives with another parent/guardian and you wish to receive pertinent information from the school (i.e. copies of interim reports, report cards, parent teacher conference forms, school picture forms) please contact the elementary school office. You will be asked to provide your contact information and your child's name.

It is the responsibility of the parent of a child who is not residing with him/her to inform the Elementary School Counselor and to provide the school with a current recorded court order or custody agreement. If you have any questions or need assistance in establishing communications with your child's teacher, please contact the Elementary School Counselor.

School Cancellation, Early Dismissal, or Delay

Cancellation or delay of school takes place only during extraordinary circumstances such as extreme weather, equipment failure, or public crisis. The administration is aware of the hardship which can be caused by an abrupt cancellation. Therefore, school will not be cancelled unless a significant safety risk has been created.

Parents/Guardians will receive cancellation, delay, or early dismissal via the Sapphire notification system.

Announcements will also be on Radio Station KDKA (1020 AM), local radio stations WDAD in Indiana (1450 AM), WCCS in Homer City (1160 AM), WLCY (106.3 FM) or television stations WTAE-TV (Channel 4), WJAC-TV (Channel 6), WPXI-TV (Channel 11) for school information. The Armstrong-Indiana Intermediate Unit (IU 28) SchoolCast posts school closings and delays at <http://www.iu28.org/SchoolCast/>.

Notification of scheduled early dismissals for teachers' meetings will be reported on the Principal's Newsletter each month and on the school website.

NOTE: Breakfast may be available when the school is operating on a delay.

Arrival/Dismissal

Students should not arrive at school prior to 10:37 A.M. and should not leave for home before 3:27 P.M. unless excused at an earlier time. To secure the building effectively, all elementary building doors will be locked at 4 P.M. and remain locked until the next morning. The back door will be opened at 8:05 A.M. for students to enter the building. The back doors will be locked at 8:57 A.M. Students arriving after 8:57 should report to the elementary office.

Students are not to report to their classrooms until after the first bus arrives. Parents should not go up/down the ramp into classroom areas without obtaining proper approval.

There is no parking in the front drive. Parents delivering or picking up students at school should not block the front or back exit areas between 8 and 9 A.M. or 3 and 4 P.M. They are requested to park in the designated parking area in the rear of the elementary building when waiting for students at the end of the school day. The circle in front of the elementary building is a fire/bus lane which should not be blocked. Students walkers are dismissed at 3:27 P.M. ***PARENTS PICKING UP STUDENTS MUST WAIT OUTSIDE THE BUILDING TO PICK UP STUDENTS AT THE END OF THE SCHOOL DAY.*** All other students are dismissed at 3:37 P.M. and supervised by district staff. Parents are not permitted to enter the building before dismissal.

It is necessary to notify classroom teachers, in advance, if students are to go home in a different way or be dismissed to another's care. A note signed and dated by the parent/guardian is important to insure the safety of the children at the elementary school. Send a note to the teacher if you wish your child to be dismissed with the walkers.

Tardiness: Prompt arrival at school is expected of all students. Late arrival disrupts class and causes loss of instructional time. Any child who arrives at school after 8:57 A.M. (after morning announcements) is considered tardy unless a bus arrives late.

Tardy students should be accompanied and signed in by the parent/guardian at the office before the student reports to the classroom.

Educational Trip Approval

Parents requesting approval to take their children out of school to go on an educational trip must complete Request for Educational Trip form explaining the reason for the request and the duration of the trip. Prior to taking the trip, approval must be granted by the school administration. If prior approval is not granted, the absence will be considered unlawful.

Parents are asked to check the school calendar before requesting to take students out of school. Please consult the school testing calendar (available on the Homer-Center Elementary School web site) when planning educational trips to ensure your child's attendance during state-mandated testing periods

Health Services

School Nurse (Health Assistant): The nurse/health assistant is responsible for the maintenance of health records, routine health checks, parental contact concerning health problems, care of minor injuries, and vision screening. Please be sure to contact the nurse/health assistant if your child has any unusual health problems or if your child is absent from school due to communicable/transferrable disease (e.g., chicken pox, impetigo, lice, etc.). In the event of a communicable/transferrable disease, precautions will be taken to protect other children.

The Health Room is open daily from 8:37 A.M. until 3:27 P.M. Other school health personnel are on call if any emergency should occur at other times during the school day.

Illness or Injury: In case of illness or injury, a child will be cared for temporarily by the school nurse or a member of the school staff. School personnel will render first aid treatment only. If emergency medical treatment is necessary, the parents will be contacted. If parents are not available, the child will be taken to the closest emergency treatment center. Remember, an emergency telephone number where parents can be reached and the name and telephone number of an alternate emergency contact and family doctor must be on file at school.

An ambulance service is available through the school for emergencies. However, the school is not obligated for medical expenses incurred because of accidents that happen in school. Parents are encouraged to purchase the school insurance, offered at the beginning of the school year, if they do not already have coverage for their children.

When to Return to School After an Illness:

Please note: Children should not be sent to school until they have been fever-free (without fever reducing medication) for 24 hours. Students should not be sent to school with these health problems:

- Fever of 100.0° F or greater without fever reducing medication
- Repeated vomiting or diarrhea in the past 12 hours
- Pink Eye: red, itchy eyes with green or yellow discharge but NO allergy symptoms
- Head Lice: active infestations of lice
- ANY illness when the child is not able to function normally in the classroom without pain/discomfort. Such illnesses may include but not limited to: severe sore throat, excessive cough, headache, earache or stomach ache.
- Injuries or surgical procedures that require narcotic medication prior to or during the school day.
- Call your child's physician or the school nurse if there is a question as to whether a student needs medical attention or may attend school with an illness or injury.

Immunization Schedule:

The following minimum immunizations are required for all students entering school

- Diphtheria and Tetanus—Four (4) or more properly spaced doses of DTP, DTaP, Tdd or DT or any 7 combinations of the three with one dose administered on or after the fourth birthday.
- Polio – Three (3) or more properly spaced doses of polio vaccine (IPV or OPV)
- Measles (Rubella) – Two (2) properly spaced does of live attenuated measles containing vaccine (preferably MMR) with the first dose administered at 12 months of age or older, or measles immunity proved by serological evidence determined by the hemagglutination inhibition (HI) test or any comparable test.
- German Measles (Rubella) – One (1) dose of live attenuated rubella containing vaccine (preferably MMR) administered at 12 months of age or older, or rubella immunity proved by serological evidence determined by the hemagglutination inhibition (HI) test or any comparable test.

- Mumps - Two (2) doses of live attenuated mumps containing vaccine (preferably MMR) or a physician diagnosis of mumps disease indicated by written record signed by a physician or his/her designee.
- Hepatitis B – Three (3) properly spaced doses of Hepatitis B vaccine or a history of Hepatitis B immunity proven by laboratory testing.
- Varicella – Two (2) properly spaced doses of Varicella vaccine (chicken pox) or history of disease.

Medication: PRESCRIPTION AND OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICATIONS

If for any reason your child should need to take medication during school hours, please adhere to the following guidelines.

Any student who is to receive prescription or over-the-counter medication must have current written orders from his/her physician. The order must include the diagnosis, the name of medication to be given, possible side effects of medication, dosage, and administrations.

ALL Medication is to be received by the school in the prescription container as it was issued by the pharmacy. Please note: No more than a one-month supply of medication will be accepted. There are no exceptions to this guideline.

A written note is required from the parent requesting that the nurse administer **ANY TYPE OF MEDICATION** (prescription or over-the-counter) to their child.

All over-the-counter medication must be in its original package or container. Medications will not be accepted in plastic bags, envelopes, unmarked bottles, etc.

Most medication schedules can be adjusted to enable the child to receive his/her medication at home. For example, if your child is to receive medication three times a day, they could receive it at home in the morning, before school, in the afternoon after school, and at bedtime. Medications such as antibiotics prescribed to be given three times a day or less **WILL NOT BE GIVEN AT SCHOOL**. Any exception to the rule will require a physician’s written statement for the exception to be considered.

Emergency Care Card: Every student is **REQUIRED** to have on file, in the health office, an Emergency Care Card. This card lists the parent/guardian’s name, address, primary contact number, work or other phone number where the parent can be reached. The card also lists a designated responsible adult to be contacted when a parent/guardian cannot be reached. In the event that a parent/guardian is unable to be reached, the designated responsible adult listed on the emergency card, or the family physician will be consulted. If no adult listed on the card can be reached, the school authorities will take whatever action deemed necessary to provide appropriate care that will promote the health and safety of the student. The Emergency Care Card should be completed by the parent/guardian and returned to the school nurse as soon as possible, and no later than the end of the first week of school.

Food Service

Breakfast is available to all students from 8:05 – 8:57 A.M.

The Homer-Center School District recognizes that student wellness and proper nutrition are related to student’s physical well-being, growth, development and readiness to learn. The Board is committed to providing a school environment that promotes students’ wellness, proper nutrition, nutrition education, and regular physical activity as part of the total learning experience. In a healthy school environment, students will learn about and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices that can improve student achievement.

Lunches are served by grade level, in half-hour sessions. Basic nutritious meals are prepared by trained

cooks working in cooperation with the food service director. Students are encouraged to take advantage of these services.

If students bring their own lunches, parents are asked not to send cans or bottles of soda in students' bags/lunch boxes. A juice drink box is a good alternative if students do not drink milk. Free and reduced meals are available throughout the school year to those who meet financial guidelines. An application will be sent home at the beginning of each school year. You may secure an application at any time during the school year from the elementary office or from the food service director.

School Menu: The daily menu for our school breakfast/lunch programs is determined by our food service director in accordance with governmental regulations for the daily requirements for nutritious meals. The menu is available in the elementary office and posted on the school website.

Parents are encouraged to review the menu posted on the elementary school web site.

Computerized Meal Ticket System: The Food Service department utilizes a computerized meal ticket system in its operation. Students access the system with a personalized identification number (PIN). Students paying reduced or full price for their meals are required to deposit money into their account in the form of a check or money order only. Cash will not be accepted. Deposits may be made in the cafeteria each morning in the deposit box.

When students reach a low balance of \$2.50 or less, a letter will be sent home requesting a deposit be made into the account. Parents are encouraged to view their child's meal account status and meal purchase history at My School Bucks. Parents will need to set up an account using each child's PIN to access fund balances, food/meal purchasing history, etc.

Money may also be deposited directly into student accounts as well through My School Bucks. The My School Bucks system is available as a mobile app for Android, iPhone, and iPad.

Money left in accounts will be credited to the next school year. Refunds will be made only to students leaving the school district.

Student Debts: If a student has incurred outstanding debts (i.e. for lost or damaged library materials or textbooks, etc.), the parent will be notified of the amount of the obligation. Student debts must be cleared as soon as possible. If the outstanding debt is not cleared by the time report cards are issued, the report card will be held in the elementary office and not sent home. The report card will be released only when the debt is paid in full.

Elementary Programs

Academics are the priority at the elementary school. The classroom teacher is the key individual in the student's educational program. The teacher is responsible for instruction in the core areas of reading, mathematics, science and social studies. High expectations are set for all students.

Special Programs

Art: The elementary art program is a multifaceted program designed to provide experiences for children which promote individual creativity and allow students to examine the aesthetic merit and quality of many forms of human expression. Students are encouraged to explore the full depth of their potentiality and interests through a variety of activities and projects.

Library Media/Technology Education: The library is available on a daily basis for students, teachers, and staff. The library is supervised by a district employee. Summer lending library hours are available. Library and technology skills are integrated in all grades K-6. Students may use the library to borrow books for recreational reading as well as access computers and online resources for assigned projects and

Accelerated Reader. There is no fine for overdue books, but students are charged for lost or damaged books.

Music: The music program provides opportunities for children to develop music skills and have a better understanding and enjoyment of music. The basic elements of music are presented to students through various experiences involving singing, listening, movement, vocal expression, and music reading. In addition to general music instruction, instrumental music instruction is offered to students in grades 4 – 6. Band and Chorus are available for all students in grades 4 - 6.

Physical Education: Physical education is an important part of the educational experience. The development and maintenance of a healthy body is essential for physical well-being and good mental health. Physical education classes provide an opportunity for the development of leadership, sportsmanship and congeniality through our physical education program. Adaptive physical education classes are provided for students with special needs. All students should wear tennis shoes and play clothes appropriate for physical activity on gym days.

Title I: A school wide program is a comprehensive reform strategy designed to upgrade the entire educational program in a Title I school. Its primary goal is to ensure that all students have access to reading and math interventions throughout the school year. All students are eligible for Title I services, and all teachers are certified as Title I teachers.

Guidance and Counseling

The elementary counselor acts as the liaison between students, teachers, parents, administrators, and outside agencies when needed and appropriate. Guidance services available to our students include individual and group counseling. The school counseling also provides resource information to the school community.

The guidance counselor may meet with your child anytime throughout the school year without prior parent knowledge or consent. Students are encouraged to seek support from the counselor if they are experiencing difficulties— academically, socially or emotionally. There may be times when small group lessons are being conducted by the counselor. In this instance, letters of invitation are sent home with the students for parents to peruse and sign, along with student consent.

The ethical standards for school counselors state that "each person has the right to privacy and thereby the right to expect the counselor-student relationship to comply with all laws, policies and ethical standards pertaining to confidentiality in the school setting. Unless the child were to divulge information that indicates they are a harm to themselves or others, or someone is doing harm to them, confidentiality is maintained.

Elementary Student Assistance Program (eSAP) eSAP is a program that helps students overcome barriers to learning in order that they may achieve, remain in school, and advance. eSAP is CONFIDENTIAL and not DISCIPLINARY. The Elementary Student Assistance Program (eSAP) is a trained team of concerned teachers, counselors, and administrators who work with parents, teachers, students, and agencies to support students who are referred to the eSAP Team. Anyone can refer a student to eSAP for student assistance. The process is confidential.

Academic Progress

Promotion/Retention: It is the intent of the Homer-Center School District to insure the success of each student through proper grade placement. Students that are successful will be promoted based upon a continuous pattern of achievement and growth. If a student fails to reach the expected levels of achievement, and performance is below average or failing, retention may be considered utilizing the

following criteria:

Kindergarten - Grade 3: Overall performance in every subject (with an emphasis in reading).

Grades 4 – 6: Language Arts, plus one or more additional areas of study (i.e. mathematics, social sciences, Language Arts).

If a student is considered for retention purposes, a parent/teacher conference will be held by early spring. In addition, a team will be convened to evaluate the child's school record, which will include but not be limited to: standardized test data, attendance, social and emotional development, chronological age, etc. If the retention involves a special education student, the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) will be reviewed.

Retention decisions are made with the best interest of the student and the student's future academic success in mind. The administration (Principal) makes the final determination regarding retention.

Report Cards: Report cards are issued following the completion of each nine-week grading period. Please review your child's progress carefully and contact your child's teacher if you have questions regarding grades. Interim report forms will be sent to the parents/guardians of students who are earning deficient grades at the mid-point of the nine-week period.

Marking System: The numerical value for grades may be computed as follows:

A - 94 - 100%

D - 65 - 74%

O - Outstanding

B - 86 - 93%

F - 0 - 64%

S - Satisfactory

C - 75 - 85%

N - Needs Improvement

Students in third, fourth, fifth and sixth grade will be considered as making the honor roll if they earn all A's and B's in core subjects during the grading period. A student cannot make the Honor Roll if one grade is a C or lower. The elementary school does not base the Honor Roll on a student's grade point average (GPA).

Community Portal: (Online student academic progress and attendance information) The Homer-Center School District has implemented a Community Portal to permit you and your child(ren) to access important information concerning progress reports, grades and attendance. By using the username, password and pin number provided to each student, you will be able to view this information from any computer that has Internet access. Please treat this information as confidential.

To access this information, please find the Sapphire Community Portal link on the Elementary Web Page on the Home-Center Web site @ www.homercenter.org If you do not have your child's Username, Password and PIN Number for the Community Parent Portal, either contact the Elementary Office at 724-479-9077 or email elportal@homercenter.org.

Parent/Teacher Conferences: School initiated parent-teacher conferences occur once each semester (usually in October and February) of the school year. Parents are asked to make an appointment with each of their children's teachers. These conference times can be very valuable to the overall educational program. If the need arises, additional conferences may be scheduled. Communication between home and school is encouraged.

Classroom Policies

School Provided Materials and Equipment: Textbooks and basic paper/pencil supplies are provided by the school. If a textbook, library book, other equipment is lost, misused, or damaged beyond reasonable wear, a student debt is incurred. The parent/guardian is responsible for all student-incurred debt.

Homework: Homework is important. It is an extension of the learning that takes place in school. Homework can provide practice that reinforces classroom learning and skills presented by the teacher. Homework is an opportunity for parents/guardians to know what their child is learning. Parents can help their children by arranging a quiet, comfortable place for them to work and by seeing that assignments are completed. The amount of homework assigned varies and increases as the student progresses through the grade levels. Homework assignments in Kindergarten are established to foster home- school interactions periodically throughout the school year. Parents are reminded that the times established by teachers for assigned tasks may vary from child to child and from class to class. All children learn and complete assignments at different rates.

Study Skills: A parent can help his/her child practice skills and techniques which make learning easier. The following are student guidelines for achieving good study habits:

1. Come to class prepared with pencil, paper, and other necessary materials.
2. Be an active participant in class. Listen well and take part in class.
3. Ask questions to clarify problems.
4. Plan your day and schedule time for homework.
5. Use what is learned and apply it to new situations.
6. Strive to do the very best work possible.

Parties/Snacks: There will be four parties held each school term: October, December, February and the last day of school. Snacks, refreshments, and activities will be provided by homeroom parents in cooperation with the classroom teachers. Homeroom parents are reminded that preschoolers are not to be brought to the parties. Please consider this policy when volunteering to help with the school parties. Since the students will receive snacks and refreshments on party days, additional food items should not be sent to school at these times. Birthday parties are a special time for children, but can be a difficult time for the food-allergic child. We are progressively becoming a more allergy aware and allergy friendly building. Snacks and birthday treats that are meant to be shared with others must arrive to school in the original, sealed, store -bought, and ingredient labeled bag or container. (Keep in mind that healthy snacks/treats are suggested. Nonedible treats such as small toys/pencils/erasers, etc. are a safer and healthier option.) All rooms and offices outside of the cafeteria are designated nut-free classrooms. Home packed lunches will remain closed in the classroom. Open exposure of the nut allergens will only be permitted in the cafeteria during lunches. Nut free and allergy aware tables will be properly cleaned and available in the cafeteria. Any student who consumes a nut allergen for lunch will be reminded to wash his/her hands before leaving the cafeteria. Faculty and staff will take and pass the annual food allergy and EpiPen training course.

Invitations to Personal Parties: When personal party invitations are distributed in school, every student in the classroom must receive an invitation.

Recess Policies

Weather permitting; students in most grade levels have a 30-minute recess every day. Decisions to conduct outside recess during cold weather depend upon the temperature and the wind chill factor. Shorter outside times are scheduled on very cold days. Always dress your child for outside recess. Students will have supervised free time in the classroom on days when inclement weather prevents outside recess. Quiet games and talking with friends, etc. are usually permitted by the teachers in charge. Students are encouraged to be active during recess. Only students with medical excuses or assigned to work room will

be allowed to remain in the building during scheduled outside breaks. School staff will supervise indoor and outdoor recess periods.

The following rules apply to outdoor recess:

1. Treat others courteously.
2. Use playground equipment properly.
3. Do not throw objects (i.e., rocks or snowballs) at others.
4. Do not fight, push, or play rough (i.e. tackle football) on the playground.

The playground is not supervised after school and students are expected to leave for home immediately following dismissal.

General Rules for Students

1. Come to school regularly and on time.
2. Complete all assignments on time.
3. Come prepared for class.
4. Make up work missed during absences.
5. Avoid using disrespectful words or actions.
6. Be polite and kind to other children and adults.
7. Talk and walk in school in a manner appropriate for a school activity.
8. Treat the property of others with care.
9. Reserve running and throwing actions for the gym class or outside recess period.
10. Treat others as you would like to be treated.

Discipline Note to Students: The Homer-Center Elementary School is your school and you share in the responsibility to make it a better place to learn. The behavior expected from you at school is a combination of common courtesy and safety considerations. School is a pleasant place to learn when all students work together.

Student Service Club: The Homer-Center Elementary School has a Student Service Club composed of sixth graders. The purpose of this group is to assist teachers and students with projects, as well as assist schoolwide and community events.

School Policies

Homeroom Assignments: Homeroom assignments are at the sole discretion of the school administrator. These assignments will be posted in mid-August on the front entrance doors to the elementary school.

Pets: Students are NOT permitted to bring pets to school. Only service animals are permitted in school and at school functions.

Dress Code: Students generally conduct themselves in a manner similar to the way in which they dress and groom. They should wear clothing appropriate for a school setting and outdoor recess. Any type of dress or grooming which is disruptive will not be permitted. Shorts of modest length are permitted. Halter/tank tops are not permitted in grades 4-6. Shirts with inappropriate slogans or advertising are not permitted in grades K-6. Flip-flops and backless shoes are not permitted due to safety concerns.

Food/Gum/Candy: Students are not permitted to chew gum while in school for health and custodial reasons.

Bicycles: Bike racks are available for student convenience; however, the school assumes no responsibility for bicycles. It is suggested that students chain their bikes to the bike racks for safety purposes. Bicycles are not to be ridden on school grounds except as transportation to and from school.

School Visitation: All parents/visitors must report directly to the elementary office to pick up their

children for appointments, to deliver birthday snacks, etc. At no time should parents report directly to a classroom. In order to minimize classroom interruptions, children will be called to the office.

Parents/guardians must sign-out children who need to leave the building during school hours. Signing children in and out is necessary to insure the safety of your children.

Back-to-School Night, parent-teacher conferences, school programs, and classroom visitations during American- Education Week are a few options available to parents to acquaint them with the school facility and the instructional program. If parents/guardians want to visit the classroom, during a regular school day, they must contact the elementary principal.

Sexual Harassment: The Homer-Center School District is committed to maintaining an educational environment for all its students which is free from any type of sexual harassment by staff, employees, or other students of the district.

Students who feel victimized or threatened by sexual harassment in any form or nature should report it immediately to the building principal, counselor, nurse, or teacher of their choice.

Smoke/Tobacco Free Environment: No one, at any time, may smoke or use tobacco in any of the buildings or on any property operated by the Homer- Center School District. This includes, but is not limited to, cleaning and lavatory areas, conference and meeting rooms, classrooms, lounges, auditoriums, gymnasiums, and athletic areas.

Telephone: The office telephone is a business telephone and is not to be used by students, except in an emergency. Students are not allowed to use the telephone to make personal arrangements such as requesting permission to go to another child's home after school.

Valuables: School personnel cannot be responsible for valuables which students bring to school. It is recommended that students leave all valuables at home. If circumstances make it necessary for a student to bring money (i.e., lunch money) or other important possessions to school, students are responsible for these items.

Lost and Found: All clothing and miscellaneous articles found in the school are placed in containers located adjacent to the gymnasium. Money, jewelry, and other small articles of value may be turned into the elementary office. Students may claim them after proper identification.

In order to avoid having students' personal items lost, parents are encouraged to identify and mark clearly lunchboxes and outerwear with the student's name.

Insurance: Student accident insurance will be offered at the beginning of each school year. The cost is minimal compared to the potential cost of medical care and parents are encouraged to investigate the service. Please note that this school insurance provides limited coverage. The school is not obligated to pay medical expenses for accidents that occur at school.

P.T.A.: The Homer-Center P.T.A. (Parent Teacher Association) has been highly involved in improving our school and providing assemblies for our students. All parents are urged to become members and actively participate. Four to six evening meetings are scheduled throughout the year. Advance notice of the program date and time are sent home to all parents in the elementary school.

School Pictures: Individual student pictures will be offered and taken near the beginning of the school year. A make-up day for absentees occurs at a later date. The purchase of student pictures is optional, but all students are photographed. ***Substitute Teachers:*** Every student will periodically be taught by a substitute teacher. The most common reason for using a substitute teacher is when the regular teacher is ill or engaged in professional training. Students are expected to be extra courteous to substitute teachers. All substitute teachers are Pennsylvania certified teachers.

Student teachers: Student teachers and pre-student teachers from local colleges and universities may be assigned to your child's classroom during the school term. This student teaching program is a cooperative effort between the Homer-Center School District and post-secondary schools. The overall instructional program and supervision of the student teacher is the responsibility of the classroom teacher.

Media Coverage: The Homer-Center Elementary encourages media coverage of special events. Students may have their pictures taken and published as part of a school project or event. A form is provided annually for parents to indicate their wishes regarding the display of their child's picture by the media.

Infractions

There are several types of conduct which are never permissible at the elementary school. These include: 1) Fighting or striking other students, 2) Defiance of school staff, 3) The use of profanity, 4) Possession of weapons or other dangerous objects, 5) Possession or use of tobacco, and 6) Possession or use of any controlled substance.

A severe infraction usually results in school suspension.

Bullying: The Homer-Center Elementary School strives to maintain an educational setting that is safe, secure, and free from repetitive student harassment, also known as bullying. The school will not tolerate unlawful harassment of any type. A pattern of repeated misconduct toward another student or staff member constitutes bullying.

Students are made aware of our "No Bullying" rules through lessons conducted yearly in grades Kindergarten through six. Students are taught the procedure to follow when reporting bullying incidents. Students may report their concerns to any adult in the elementary building, including administrators, teachers, support staff, as well as to their bus driver.

Students may submit in writing any concern and place it in a container located in the Guidance Office. This container is checked on a daily basis. Rules and consequences are reviewed throughout the school year. Parents will be notified of repeated occurrences.

Rules for Bully Proofing Our School

1. We will not bully other students.
2. We will help others who are being bullied by speaking out and getting help.
3. We will use extra effort to include "ALL students" in activities at our school.

Consequences of Bullying

1. Verbal warning to the student(s)
2. Written warning
3. Parent conference
4. Student is suspended

Cheating: Cheating is a serious compromise of a student's integrity and will not be tolerated. If cheating is discovered, disciplinary action will be taken by school personnel. Parents will be notified of any major offenses that occur.

Fighting: Fighting is strictly forbidden on school property. Breaking this rule will result in disciplinary action by school personnel. Repeated occurrences or a severe infraction will result in a school suspension. A parent conference will be necessary before a child is reinstated in school.

Litter Policy: Our school grounds are attractive and should be kept free of litter. If you are visiting the school, or if you are a student, please put litter in its place. Receptacles are available behind the school and in the playground area.

Soliciting: Students are not permitted to bring items to school for selling, trading, or ordering purposes unless it is a fundraising activity sponsored by the school.

Vandalism: Our school and school equipment are public property. Willfully damaging or destroying this property is cause for immediate disciplinary action, which may include suspension. The parent is responsible for any damage caused by student vandalism.

If a student accidentally causes damage, he or she should report it to the classroom teacher or principal so that the damage is not misconstrued as vandalism.

Weapons: As required by the Gun-Free School Act, "Any student who is determined to have brought a weapon onto any school property, any school-sponsored activity, or any conveyance providing transportation to a school or school-sponsored activity" may be expelled for one year. The definition of a weapon as contained in the act includes, but is not limited to "any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nunchaker, firearm, shotgun, rifle, and any other tool, instrument or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury."

Disciplinary Actions

Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken if students fail to observe the rules of the elementary school. The action taken will depend upon the severity of the infraction and surrounding circumstances. The following actions will be taken at the discretion and judgment of the teacher and/or principal:

1. Verbal reprimand
2. Loss of recess
3. Written and/or verbal apology
4. Loss of privileges (i.e., exclusion from assemblies, special activities, or class trips)
5. Written or telephoned report to parents from principal, teacher, or student
6. Suspension

Suspension/Expulsion: Suspensions from school are assigned by the principal for serious infractions of school rules, procedures, and policies. If your child is suspended you are required to meet with the principal before reinstatement can take place. Suspensions are assigned only as a last resort. It signifies that the child's behavior has been so disruptive or severe that the only reasonable way to deal with the situation is to remove the child from the school environment. Expulsion is an extreme measure which may occur after a formal hearing before the Superintendent and Board of School Directors.

School Buses

If there is a need for a student to ride a different bus other than his/her regular bus home from school, a written request must be submitted to the elementary office by the parent/guardian on that date. This request must include student's name, date they need to ride a different bus, bus number they need to ride, and the name of the temporary bus stop. Upon receipt of the written request, the office staff will issue the student a bus pass to board the other bus. Only when an unforeseen situation occurs, or for daycare/babysitting purposes, will a student be permitted to ride a different bus. This permission will be granted on a limited basis.

Bus Conduct: Riding a school bus is a privilege. Bus privileges can be revoked if students do not cooperate with bus drivers. Rules/regulations for bus conduct are put into effect in order to insure the safety of all children.

The following rules have been established in order to insure the safety of all students who ride the buses:

1. Use only the bus and bus stop assigned.
2. Orderly behavior is required at the bus stop.

3. Remain seated, facing front, when the bus is in motion.
4. Talk quietly and make no unnecessary noise.
5. Do not talk to the driver unless it is necessary.
6. Keep head and arms inside the bus.
7. Do not litter the inside of the bus or throw anything out the windows.
8. Pets are not permitted on the bus.
9. No toys are to be brought to school on the bus or brought to school.
10. Students should not cross a street to board a school bus before the bus stops and the red lights are flashing.

Infractions of the above rules will be brought to the attention of parents by letter. Continual abuse of bus privileges will result in the denial of transportation.

Bus Routes/Operating Policies: Bus routes and stops are established prior to the beginning of each school year. Safety, economy, efficiency, and allocation of resources are some of the considerations which must be evaluated in determining bus operation policies.

Parents who have questions concerning bus routes, time schedules, or bus stops should contact the Superintendent's Office 724.479.8080. Requests for changes in bus routes or bus stops should also be referred to this office.

Emergency Drills

The school staff, teachers, and administrators are well prepared for a variety of emergency situations. Parents should feel confident concerning all emergency procedures at the school.

Fire Drills: Fire drills are conducted once each month in compliance with Pennsylvania School Law. Escape plans are posted in each classroom. Each class has an escape route to an outside area a safe distance from the building. Children are directed to these designated areas as fast as possible in a safe, quiet, and orderly manner.

Lockdown Drills: Lockdown drills are scheduled and conducted semi-annually. Due to the possibility of unforeseen circumstances, our students must be prepared for a variety of situations that warrant lockdown or shelter in place.

Tornado Drills: Tornado drills may be conducted during the school year. During tornado drills, each classroom goes to a designated area within the building. All children sit or kneel with heads covered and faces down and away from windows.

Bomb Threats: A bomb threat is an extremely rare occurrence. Nevertheless, the school is prepared for this type of emergency. Immediate evacuation of the building and notification of authorities are the standard procedures.

Special Education Programs

The Homer-Center School District provides a continuum of special education services for eligible students. Programs K-6 support children who exhibit cognitive impairment, learning disabilities, intellectual gifted abilities, social/emotional disturbance, visual impairment, hearing impairment, and physical impairment. Services are provided to students in the least restrictive environment as determined by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team.

If your child is having academic or other difficulties, the classroom teacher, the principal, and/or the guidance counselor can assist you by answering questions and providing information on the special education screening and referral process. If a referral results, the district has established a Child Resource

(CREST) Team, a multidisciplinary team of qualified professionals that will work with the parent through the evaluation process.

NOTICE TO PARENTS

Services for School Age-Exceptional Students

For a copy of the Annual Public Notice of Special Education Services and Programs, see the district website or, you may obtain a copy in the elementary office

The district engages in identification procedures to ensure that all students receive an appropriate educational program. These programs consist of special education and related services which are individualized to meet the educational needs of the student, and are reasonably calculated to yield meaningful educational benefits and student progress, at no cost to the parents and in compliance with state and federal law.

Various screening activities are conducted on an ongoing basis to identify students who may be eligible for special education programs, gifted education support, and other services. These include: review data (cumulative records, enrollment records, health records, report cards, ability and achievement test scores); hearing, vision, physical and speech/language screening; and review by a building-level child resource team, when appropriate.

When screening results suggest that a student might be exceptional, the district seeks parental consent to conduct a multidisciplinary evaluation. Parents who suspect that their child is exceptional may request a multidisciplinary evaluation of their child at any time through a request to the school principal.

Services designed to meet the needs of exceptional students include the annual development of an Individualized Education Program (IEP), periodic multidisciplinary reevaluation, supportive intervention in the regular class or in a special education resource program, and placement in a part-time or full-time special education class outside of the regular school. The extent of special education services and the location for the delivery of such services are determined by the IEP team and are based on the student's identified needs and abilities, chronological age and the level of intensity of the specified intervention. Parents will be directly involved in the development of their child's Individualized Educational Program (IEP).

Services for Protected Handicapped Students (504 Plan): Federal Law Section 504 PA School Code Chapter 15 In compliance with state and federal law, Homer-Center School District will provide to each protected handicapped student, without discrimination or cost to the student or family, those related aids, services or accommodations which are needed to provide equal opportunity to participate in the extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the student's abilities. In order to qualify as a protected handicapped student the child must be of school age with a physical or intellectual disability which substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school age program. Services and protections for protected handicapped students are distinct from those applicable to all eligible or exceptional students enrolled or seeking enrollment in special education programs. For further information about the evaluation procedures and provisions of services to protected handicapped students, contact the school principal.

Confidentiality of Student Records: The District protects the confidentiality of personally identifiable information regarding exceptional and protected handicapped students in accordance with state and federal law and the District Student Records Policy. Parental rights regarding student records are available at any

school office.

Homer-Center Elementary School Student Internet/Computer Use Agreement

I, _____, pledge to obey the following rules while using computers in the Homer-Center Elementary School.

- I will never give out personal information such as my home address, telephone number, or the name and location of my school without my teacher's permission.
- I will tell my teacher right away if I come across any information that makes me feel uncomfortable.
- I will never send a person a picture or anything else without first checking with my teacher.
- I will always treat people online with respect.
 - I will not reply to any messages that are mean or in any way make me feel uncomfortable. It is not my fault if I get a message like that. If I do, I will tell my teacher right away.
 - I will not access any sites that are inappropriate for student usage. If I accidentally access an inappropriate site I will immediately leave the site and tell my teacher.
- I will not buy or sell anything over the Internet.
- I will not copy or print material without permission from my teacher.

I understand that if I violate any of the Internet usage rules that my access privileges will be revoked. I understand that I am also bound by all regulations within the Homer-Center School District Computer/Internet Use Agreement.

Date _____

Student Signature _____

Parent Signature _____

06/16/99
Handbook Revised:
8/1/2017
8/2/2018
6/12/2019