



Infinite Learning

Parent Handbook

2019-20

Dear Families,

We are thrilled to welcome you to the 2019-20 school year. There are so many ways for us to work together. We hope that this handbook will serve as a guide for your family. Please take a moment to read through and feel free to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,

Yolanda Luna-Mroz & Chelsea Branch

Morning Procedures & Information:

What time can I drop my child off in the morning?

- Early drop off begins at 7:30 am on the playground. If you arrive before 7:30 am, please stay with your child.
- You are welcome to stay with your child on the playground until the bell rings at 7:45 a.m. on the **first day only**. On all other days, due to space limitations associated with construction fencing, parents must vacate the premises at 7:30 a.m.
- Teachers will pick up students at their assigned spots on the playground at 7:45am. (see map 1)
- In the event of rain, heavy snow, or if the temperature is below 40 degrees, students should enter the building through door #1 beginning at 7:30 am.
- Morning supervision begins at 7:30am. You must remain with your child if you arrive before 7:30am.
- All parents must leave the school playground by 7:30 am and all other properties by 7:45 a.m. Unless you've signed in with the main office and are approved to volunteer, please do not come in the fenced playground or surrounding area between 7:30 am-2:40pm.
- **If you are walking your child to the playground, please park legally in the neighborhood. Do not block our neighbor's driveways or park in front of fire hydrants. Parents may not enter the staff parking lot in their vehicles to park or drop off.**

Where can I drop off my child in the morning? What are my options? (see map 1)

- **Kiss & Go:**
 - Begins by the 'Kiss & Go Drop Off' sign on the west side of the street at Estes and the stop sign on Sacramento.
 - Cars must pull up to the drop off lane (heading south) and put the car in park.
 - Children will be greeted by a staff member/volunteer in a vest who will open the door on the passenger side.
 - **Parents should not get out of the car.** Kiss your child goodbye in your vehicle.
 - **Children are to exit on the passenger side of the vehicle only.** Exiting on the driver's side results in the child being exposed to moving vehicles on the street.
 - Once the staff member/volunteer closes the car door, parents can carefully pull away from the drop off lane.
 - Cars may not stay parked in the Kiss & Go lane.
 - **Do not park, pull over, or drop off on Sacramento on either the west or east side (aside from using Kiss & Go on the west side). It causes serious congestion and puts students walking or crossing the street at risk.**

- **Parking:** Families should find legal parking in the neighborhood and walk together to the playground.
 - Parking is not allowed in front of our school or in the parking lot.
 - There is no parking on either side of Sacramento between Lunt & Estes.

- **Busing:** Buses park and drop off students in front of the school on Sacramento. The bus lane is reserved strictly for buses. Do not park in the bus lane. You will be asked to leave and possibly ticketed if you park in this lane.

- Safety is the most important thing. Help us keep one another safe by following the procedures outlined above.

My child(ren) will take the bus to school. What do I need to know?

- All children requiring bus transportation will be assigned pick-up and drop-off sites, bus numbers and times, by the Chicago Board of Education.

- Children will only be allowed to board the bus to which they have been assigned. The bus drivers are not allowed to drop off or pick up children who are not assigned to their routes, nor pick up or drop off at unassigned locations. Please do not make special requests of the drivers, specifically, special pick-up or drop-off sites.
- At dismissal, your child will be picked up in his/her classroom by a staff member and escorted to their assigned bus.
- If you have questions about bus schedules or routes, please email Mr. Murray at jpmurray2@cps.edu. For concerns pertaining to bus vehicles, bus driver behavior, etc. please contact CPS transportation department directly at (773) 553-2860.
- If you have an emergency dismissal change after 12:00pm. Please email and call the main office to ensure the change is received.

Dismissal Procedures:

What do I do if my child needs an early dismissal?

- If you pick up your child before 2:45pm, you must go to the main office and sign your child out of school.
- Students who leave before 1:30pm are considered a half day absent.

Who do I contact if my dismissal plans change?

- Parents should communicate with their classroom teacher by 12:00 pm with any changes related to their child. *This includes changes such as:*
 - Your child is no longer taking the bus home (please cc jpmurray2@cps.edu and mmregalado@cps.edu on that teacher email)
 - Someone other than you is picking up your child from the playground.
 - Your child unexpectedly needs to attend an after school program such as J at school
 - You need your child to walk home

- At the start of the year, teachers will ask you to share your child's schedule as a guide.
- We completely understand that things happen and plans change. We just ask that you communicate proactively with your child's teacher.

Where do I pick up my child after school? (see map 1)

- All parents picking up their child(ren) must park in the neighborhood.
- Children not in an after school program or who are not riding the bus will be dismissed by their teachers.
- Please meet your child *on the playground* at the following locations:
 - Grades K-3: Middle Door #7
 - Grades 4-6: North Door #8
- Dismissal time is 2:45 p.m. Please allow enough time for travel to the school so that you are not late. If you arrive after 2:45 p.m. and your child is not at their pick up spot, please retrieve them at the main office.
- If you'd like your child to walk home, please communicate with your classroom teacher.
- Because space is limited due to construction, we ask that once your child is picked up, you promptly leave the premises.
- **Important Additional Guidelines for Pick up and Drop Off--Please Read:**
 - Please do not meet your child at the parking lot entrance or in the parking lot.
 - Do not park, pull over, or drop off on Sacramento between Lunt & Estes. It causes serious congestion and puts students walking or crossing the street at risk.
 - **Adults are not permitted on the playground or school property between 7:30am-2:40pm.** Unless you've signed in with the main office and are approved to volunteer, please do not come in the fenced playground or surrounding area between 7:30am-2:40pm.

- Decatur loves animals, just not on school grounds. Due to severe allergies please refrain from bringing your pets onto the playground on school property. This includes drop off and dismissal.
- Remember that we want to be good neighbors in our community. Be considerate and do not park in or block driveways or alleys.

My child is in an after school program. Where do I meet my child for pick up?

- Parents picking up their child(ren) from an after school program should park in the neighborhood and walk to the school.
- Parents may enter the building through the main entrance, door #1.
- Parents should wait in the main lobby area for their child. Students will be brought to parents by the after school provider. Please do not wander the hallway or visit your child's room without permission.

Absences & Tardies:

What should I do if my child is sick?

- If your child is sick, please keep them at home. It is important that students are rested and feeling well enough to learn.
- If your child is absent, please do one of the following:
 - 1) Go online to www.decaturchess.org. Click on 'Report an Absence' and complete the form. (located under 'Parent Resources')

-OR-

 - 2) Email your classroom teacher and Ms. Regalado (mmregalado@cps.edu) your child's name, date, and reason for absence.

Please Note: You do not need to send a note in advance of an absence. It is recommended that you communicate with your teacher if your child will be out for more than one day.

How does my child make up their missed work due to absences?

- The Decatur school administration encourages school attendance and asks that families plan their vacations around established school breaks. Absences that do not meet the criteria outlined in the district policy will be considered unexcused. Students who have unexcused extended absences (5 consecutive days or more) will be allowed to make up assessments and individual classwork upon their return to school. Unfortunately, teachers are not able to share missed work prior to absences. It's also not possible for students to make up the collaborative learning projects they missed. Those assignments will be ungraded. Subject to a teacher's schedule and previous teaching commitments, a teacher may not be able to provide one on one instruction for missed work assignments prior to work being due. Students will have 5 school days or until the end of the quarter, whichever comes first, to turn in their missed work upon return.
- For students who are absent for 4 days or less, they will have the same number of days absent to make up their assignments and can make up collaborative assignments at the discretion of the teacher.

What is a considered tardy?

- Arrival between 8:00 am and 8:59 am is considered an excused tardy.
- Students arriving after 8:00 am should enter through the main entrance door #1. Students must stop and check in with Ms. Regalado in the main office or the Security guard for a tardy. If your child does not check in, the office will not be aware of their arrival and your child will be marked absent.
- Students arriving after 9:00am are considered half day absent and a reason for late arrival must be provided in order for it to be excused.

Communication:

How does Decatur communicate information to the community?

There are many exciting things happening at Decatur. To announce upcoming events, ways to get involved, after school care options, and other information, we communicate in the following ways:

- School website
 - Principal Newsletters (email)
 - Teacher classroom pages (on the website & updated weekly)
 - Decatur Classical Facebook Page, Twitter, & Instagram.
- Make sure to complete the Emergency Contact Form. This helps us ensure our records are accurate and signs you up for communication from teachers, PTA, and our administration.
 - You will need to subscribe to your teacher's classroom page for snapshots of what your child is learning. For specific questions about schedules, classroom expectations, etc please contact your classroom teacher.

What are the communication expectations for Decatur teachers and staff?

- Decatur teachers and staff will communicate with parents regularly and you can expect classroom pages to be updated on a weekly basis. Classroom teachers will communicate directly with families regarding:
 - Field trips
 - Report card conferences
 - Classroom policies
 - What students are learning and doing in their classes
 - Other important announcements
- Decatur teachers and staff try their best to reply quickly to email, but please allow teachers 48 hours to respond.
- We strive to teach our students balance and model that expectation as educators. Unless there is an emergency, teachers and staff are not expected to respond to emails during holiday breaks or weekends. Please respect their time so they can continue to be the very best teachers for your child.
- We will communicate openly and collaboratively with families within the guidelines of student confidentiality.

What are the expectations for parents?

- Contacting your teacher is the first step in getting answers to your questions. Questions or concerns about your child, school events, classwork, conflicts with peers, social or academic needs should be first directed to your classroom teacher. Teachers will help connect you with the right person if they cannot answer a question.
- Unless it is a true emergency, consider waiting 24 hours before sending an email to a teacher/staff to express frustration. This will allow for reflection and compassionate communication. Remember, there is another human being at the receiving end of your emails and/or phone calls.
- Even if parents and teachers do not always agree, having respectful and compassionate discussions are of the utmost importance. In the event that respect and appropriateness are not present, we will pause our conversation and try again at a later time.
- Decatur's social media is a platform to showcase all the fabulous programming, events, and accomplishments of our students and teachers. Teachers do not communicate directly to individual parents via Facebook or Facebook Messenger.
- We respect the wishes of some of our families to not have their Decatur student included on social media. *Before posting a photo or identifying details of other children on your personal social media, please ask their parents for permission.* Due to privacy concerns, please do not tag students or other school community members on social media. Please be sure to not post pictures of students on class Facebook pages or other social media platforms.

What are the grading expectations at Decatur and how can parents support learning?

- Teachers will outline their grading practices at the beginning of the year and it will also be posted on their classroom page.
- At Decatur we do not have homework in grades K-3rd. 4th-6th graders use a portfolio based assessment plan.
- We ask you to support utilizing grades to foster learning. Unfortunately, schools across America have transformed grades into a goal itself. Grades without

feedback does not bring much value to learning. Grades are meant to help teachers and students gauge learning progress. Grades reflect areas in which a student has had success and areas in which a student needs to grow. We teach students not to focus exclusively on the final product, but rather to learn through their mistakes, make learning an on-going process and use reflection to optimize learning. Being able to assess learning is an important skill that students will be able to use throughout the advancement of their education and career.

Allow your child to take an active role in their learning by teaching them to advocate for themselves. It is not appropriate for parents to ask teachers to promise, guarantee, or help their child earn a certain grade. Nor is it ethical for a teacher to agree to do so. Contacting teachers to ask what it will take for them to get an 'A' removes your child from their own learning process and sends the message that grades are more important than the actual learning. Children make mistakes and learn and grow from them. Current research indicates that 'kids are happier, less anxious and depressed, and more fulfilled to work towards agency in their own lives' when schools and parents encourage autonomy in learning.'

Be a part of this process by praising your child's efforts rather than just the outcomes. Be their biggest supporter and show them you value the efforts and energy that resulted in their learning. Work with your teacher to use strategies that celebrate your child's learning process.

I'm interested in volunteering, what do I do next?

- Parents Elin Beard and Jeanne Strong are our volunteer coordinators. Please reach out to them by email at decaturvolynteer@gmail.com for more information regarding volunteer opportunities.
- ALL **new** volunteers, including parents coming to help with classroom parties, field trips, and events, need to complete the volunteer form via the CPS website below.
- If you were approved prior to the 2019-2020 school year, you will need to be re-approved for this year. Please log into your account to make sure the name and birthdate on your ID **exactly** matches the name and birthdate on your application. If it does not, please update your application. You will then be re-approved by the school.
- The process for becoming a volunteer at Decatur begins with completing the online application:

Step 1: Please [click here](#) to apply or to update your application. The name and birthdate on your application must match the name and birthdate on your State ID. You choose which level volunteer you would like to apply for. If you are already a level 2 and would like to be level 1, please email Mrs. Regalado at mmregalado@cps.edu so she may forward your name to Volunteer Services and they will change your volunteer status from Level II to Level I. This will involve a more extensive background check including fingerprinting and TB test. *For the majority of parents, level 2 is the most appropriate level to choose.*

NEW THIS YEAR: *If you would like to chaperone any field trips, you must be a Level 1 volunteer.*

Step 2: After you complete your application and submit it, email [Mrs. Regalado](#) a photocopy of your ID or come to the main office with your ID so we can keep a photocopy on record.

Step 3: You will receive an email from CPS with next steps.

- Level 1 volunteers will receive instructions on how to move forward with fingerprinting and TB testing (this can take several weeks).
- Level 2 volunteers will receive an email when they are eligible to volunteer (approx 48 hours from submitting ID).

Other Important Information:

When does my child have recess?

- Students will have recess everyday outside, unless it is below 22 degrees or raining (wind chill is factored in). Please make sure your child is dressed for the weather!
- During recess, students will be supervised and will have access to gym equipment.
- In the event it is too cold or raining, students will have indoor recess in a safe space where they can choose to participate in games, movement activities, or read silently.

What are our options for lunch?

- School lunch is free for all Decatur students. The school will offer vegetarian and dairy free options daily. To view monthly menus, click on the link found towards the bottom of our school website.
- Except for rare occasions, students will eat lunch in the cafeteria/multi-purpose room.
- Families can pack a homemade lunch for their child.
- CPS does not allow for classrooms to have refrigerators or microwaves. Please consider this when packing your child's lunch and snacks.
- If your child has an allergy or dietary restrictions, please contact the office.
- If you forget to pack a lunch, your child will always be given the option to eat a school lunch for no charge. We discourage parents from routinely dropping off lunch for their children. Our staff is small and cannot always personally deliver items to your child. Please work with your child to create a system where they remember to bring a lunch.

What happens if my child gets hurt?

- In the event of a serious injury, we will contact you immediately. Please make sure we have your current contact information by completing the digital emergency contact form. If the situation warrants it, we will contact 911.
- Anytime a child hits his/her head, it is our protocol to call or email home.
- For minor injuries (small cuts, scrapes, etc.) we will only call home if necessary or your child wants to talk to you. Remember, students will have recess and gym every day. They may get hurt from time to time, but kids are resilient and more often than not, kids just want to keep playing!

What are the school rules?

- At Decatur we ask our students to endure challenges, be present, and take care of each other.
- Our staff and teachers will work with students to understand and model these expectations.
- We do not have a dress code, but expect that students come dressed for the learning environment and weather. Hats are not allowed to be worn in the building.

Is my child allowed to bring personal technology to school?

- Decatur is able to provide all students with access to technology at school. Your child is not required to bring any technology from home.
- While we understand that students may need cell phones for safety reasons, they are not needed during the instructional day. If there is an emergency, please call the school.
- Our cell phone and electronic device policy is as follows:
 - Students who wish to bring a cell phone or other outside devices (iPads, Kindles, electronic games, etc.) to school must have a parent complete the cell phone/electronic device consent form online. This form will be shared with you via your classroom teacher.
 - Students must shut off and turn in their private technology to their classroom teacher. Technology may not be taken out during the school day. This includes recess times, field trips, special events, and any activities taking place during the school day.
 - Decatur is not responsible for lost or stolen items. If you elect to allow your child to bring their own device, do so at your own risk.
 - If a student is caught with a phone or electronic device during the day
 - The phone or device will be taken away and the student will come to the office to retrieve the device at the end of the school day. Parents will be notified. Decatur reserves the right to limit or remove cell phone/electronic privileges and will follow the student code of conduct for repeated violations.

Where do I go when I visit the school?

- All guests, parents, and visitors should enter our building through the main office door #1.
- Our front desk will give you a visitor's pass, answer your questions and direct you.
- In order to keep our students safe, please refrain from using other entrances besides the main door and always check in with someone in the office.
- Outside of visiting the main office or counselor's office, adults must be approved to be anywhere on school property where children are present. This includes areas such as the playground, MPR, and library during the school day from 7:30-2:40pm. **Adults are not permitted on the playground or school property between 7:30am-2:40pm.** Unless you've signed in with the main office and are approved to volunteer, please do not come in the fenced playground or surrounding area between 7:30am-2:40pm.
 - The school property extends from the JCC field on the north side of the school to Lerner Park on the south side. School property extends beyond the fenced-in area all the way to the trees that are the northern border of Lerner Park. School property also extends from Sacramento Avenue on the east side to the building complex on the west side.

Besides the general education classes, what other programming is offered?

- Students will take Latin, physical education, music, art, makerspace, dance, and yoga as part of a child-centered and balanced instructional day.
- We believe that all learning opportunities are equally valuable and therefore refer to these classes as 'Essentials'.

Do Decatur students participate in safety drills throughout the school year?

- As part of CPS efforts to ensure schools remain safe, Decatur and all CPS schools conduct several safety drills throughout the school year. This includes evacuation and lockdown drills. Please know that our trained and caring staff works diligently to prepare students for all the drills.

Important Contact Information:

Main Office Number: 773-534-2200

Ms. Regalado: mmregalado@cps.edu

Attendance, school forms, contacting other staff members, general school information.

Mr. Murray: jpmurray2@cps.edu

Case management, bus facilitator, changes in dismissal/pick up routines, student medication

Ms. Branch: clbranch@cps.edu

After school programming, JCC facilitator, arts education, Restorative Practices

MAP 1: 2019-2020 MORNING LINE-UP & DISMISSAL LOCATIONS DURING PHASE 1 CONSTRUCTION

