

Tarkington Parent Handbook

2008- 2009

ATTENDANCE (call -in procedures)

Regular attendance at school is an essential. If your child is going to miss a day of school, for illness or for other reasons, we ask that you call our Health Office (**520-2776**) before **9:30 AM** to inform us that your child will be absent. As our Health Office has a message retrieval system, feel free to call us at any time. Please provide us with the following information:

1. student's name and homeroom teacher,
2. reason for and length of absence.

If we do not receive such a call, an attempt will be made to call parents at home or at work before noon to verify the absence.

BICYCLES/SKATEBOARDS/ROLLERBLADES/SCOOTERS

Kindergarten students are not permitted to ride bicycles to school; first and second grade students are discouraged from doing the same. Students who do ride their bikes are expected to follow proper safety procedures and lock their bikes to our bike rack using quality chains and locks.

Bicycle riding is not permitted on school grounds between 8:35 AM and 3:45 PM. When students ride their bicycles to school, they are expected to dismount at the edge of school property and walk their bicycle to bike racks.

Bicycle riding to school is a privilege that can be withdrawn should a student not follow the aforementioned procedures or operate his/her bicycle in an unsafe manner.

Scoters may be ridden to school but must be locked up at the bike rack as they are not permitted in the classrooms because of space constraints.

PLEASE NOTE: The use of skateboards or rollerblades on school property has been prohibited by official proclamation of our School Board.

BIRTHDAYS

Classroom teachers will establish specific rules for celebrating birthdays.

In general, students may bring in birthday treats on their birthday or half birthday. Because of allergies please bring in store bought items, which do not require adult assistance. In addition, consider bringing in healthy snacks as an alternative to candy or cupcakes.

Students who have a birthday or half birthday during the school year have their names announced during the morning announcements and receive a Birthday Pencil from the office.

District policy does not allow us to give parents who are interested in organizing a private party access to student addresses or phone numbers. The listing of such information available to parents is the PTA generated Telephone Directory published annually for PTA members. We also request that that party invitations not be passed out at school.

CELL PHONES/ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Due to technology, cell phones have become very popular and useful. Cell phones can interfere with the learning environment. We ask that students do not bring a cell phones to school. If a parent needs to get a hold of their child, please call the office. The office will notify the classroom teacher. If a student needs to reach their parents, they may use the classroom phone at an appropriate time. If circumstances require a student to have a cell phone at school, it is to be kept off during school hours. Students have access to school phones, if their use is required.

Modern technology has reduced the size of personal entertainment devices. While these items have their place, there use at school is prohibited. Students are not to bring radios, tape players, walkmen, or any electronic games to school. These items are expensive and often get lost or broken. They can also interfere with learning.

COMPUTER INSTRUCTION AND USE

Students in grades 1 through 5 receive regular formal instruction in keyboarding, word processing, and spread sheet from our Technology Specialist. Computer instruction and/or art are taught in alternating quarters, although instruction is integrated as much as is possible. All classrooms are equipped with at least one computer and all are networked to our central computer system. In addition to a main computer laboratory, Tarkington has several additional computers in our LMC for students and staff to use before and after school as well as throughout the school day.

CROSSING GUARDS AND PATROLS

Trained adult Crossing Guards, employed by the Wheeling and Buffalo Grove Police Departments, are assigned to three major school crossings: Schoenbeck and Anthony and Scott and Anthony in Wheeling, Cambridge and Anthony in Buffalo Grove Tarkington students are expected to cooperate with and listen to both our Crossing Guards. Students are expected to use sidewalks, where they are available, and are expected to cross streets only at intersections. Students are expected to follow all school behavior rules while going to and from school.

D.A.R.E.

The Wheeling Police Department, in partnership with our staff and PTA, provides Tarkington students with Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) D.A.R.E. is a preventive substance abuse program aimed specifically at fifth graders. A trained uniformed police officer teachers D.A.R.E. weekly to fifth graders. The program is ten weeks in length and culminates with a D.A.R.E. Graduation Ceremony sponsored by our PTA. The D.A.R.E. Officer also acts as a resource to our school and is considered a member of our staff.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The best behaved students are those that typically are taught commonly accepted standards for appropriate behavior by their parents in their home. Whereas Tarkington has long been fortunate to have a well-behaved, hard working, responsible student body, occasions have occurred when discipline has become an issue in a child's development.

In order to maintain an orderly and safe environment in a school as large as ours, specific shared expectations for behavior and conduct are necessary. Rules and their enforcement alone, however, will not bring desired results. Students require consistent and clear instruction, limits, and natural consequences both at home and in school. It is vital that significant adults in their lives, both at home and at school, serve as appropriate role models, demonstrating the type of behavior and social interactions expected of them. It is also important that we recognize that some children best learn from the natural consequences that result from of their own use of poor judgment.

The District #21 Board of Education has adopted a well-defined discipline philosophy and program (refer to details in the District portion of this handbook) to which the Tarkington staff adheres. It should be noted that staffs in the individual schools in our district have the license to shape their own school culture to afford students the best opportunities to grow into responsible adolescents. This license includes developing site-based expectations for behavior and natural consequences for poor decisions.

The basis for the Tarkington code of behavior are our Tiger Traits and our Tiger Pledge (please refer to these at the end of this Handbook). Students who demonstrate these traits will encounter few problems, if any, during their tenure at our school. We support these traits through a variety of purposely designed activities (class meetings, school

assemblies, peer support groups and other social services, tailored intervention plans, teaching decision-making and problem-solving skills, etc.).

It is our belief that it is the joint responsibility of parents and staff to redirect students who encounter social and disciplinary problems at school. Responses to issues that arise must be tailored to the personal needs of the individuals involved. These responses could include parent-teacher-student or teacher-student conferences, a variety of logical natural consequences, specially designed remediation plans, involvement of our school social worker and/or other members of our Special Services Team, etc. More dramatic measures such as in or out-of-school suspensions, etc. are also utilized as is necessary.

One response that is absolutely necessary is the cooperative effort of home and school. While there are times when we may disagree with each other's methodologies, parents and school personnel need to understand that each of us has the best interests of our students in common and, accordingly, need to support each other.

DISMISSAL FROM SCHOOL - EARLY DISMISSAL

Unless parents are otherwise notified, dismissal is always at 3:30. Students going home for lunch are dismissed at noon and are expected to be in their class lines awaiting entry into our building at 12:55. At no time should students who go home for lunch return to school before 12:30 PM. On rainy days, students who go home should not return to school earlier than 12:50 PM. Students who arrive after 9:30 AM or leave before 11:30 AM are considered absent for 1/2 day. Likewise, students who arrive after 1:30 PM or leave before 3:00 PM are also considered absent for 1/2 day.

For a student to be dismissed early from school, a note must be sent to his/her teacher so that they can plan their instructional day accordingly. Students will not be called to the office until his/her parents arrive to officially sign them out. No student will be allowed to leave school unless he/she is first signed out in the office. Students going to another student's house for lunch are required to bring a note from a parent stating that they have permission to do so.

DRESS

The Tarkington staff firmly believes that the way our students dress reflects their attitude towards school and affects their performance in school. For these reasons we have set voluntary guidelines for students to follow. Students are asked not to wear threadbare jeans, clothing with inappropriate or suggestive pictures or writing, short shorts, or bare midriff outfits. Students are also asked not to wear hats in school. Intermediate grade students are expected not to wear tank tops or shorts unless the weather is extremely hot, and even then to use good judgment as to the appropriateness of their apparel. Parents will be called to bring a change of clothing to school if we feel a child is not dressed appropriately.

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL SUPERVISION

Tarkington does not provide early morning supervision for students until 8:35 AM. **Accordingly, parents are asked not to drop off their children or allow them to leave for school from home before this time.** On days when the weather is severe, students will be permitted to wait inside after 8:35 AM.

Additionally, the school does not provide supervision outside after the school day. Therefore, students who walk or ride their bike after school are to go immediately home. If a legal guardian is with a student after school then that student may use the playground area. All other students must go home after the 3:30 bell rings.

GUM AND CANDY

Students may not chew gum at school. Candy is not allowed in school with the exception of lunch and special occasions.

HEALTH OFFICE/ILLNESS/NURSE

See **HEALTH SERVICES** in the District portion of the handbook.

HOMEWORK

Homework has tremendous residuals that we cannot take for granted. It is impossible for us to provide students with all of the practice time needed during the course of the school day. Homework affords students the opportunity to fine-tune the skills introduced in school. It also helps students develop positive independent work skills and good study habits.

The home plays an integral part in the success we have utilizing homework as a learning strategy. Parents are asked to provide support to their children when needed and are asked to make certain that their children have a quiet place to work that is free from distractions (including music and TV). Often students need help in budgeting time for homework. Establishing a consistent daily homework time is one powerful strategy parents could employ.

Students who are absent have the responsibility to see that their work is made up within a reasonable period of time. If students are absent from school for more than a day, parents can request that homework be left for pick-up in the office at the end of the school day. **It is the responsibility of parents to make certain that homework that is requested is picked up. Requests for homework must be made before 9:30 AM.**

INTRAMURAL SPORTS

The intramural program at Tarkington is an outgrowth of regular physical education classes for fourth and fifth grade children. Students should notify their parents in advance as to which days they will be staying after school for intramural activities.

LOST AND FOUND

A Lost and Found is maintained in the multi-purpose room where students eat. It is not unusual for students to find jackets, sweaters, coats and shoes that were somehow misplaced. Items left in the Lost and Found for more than a reasonable period of time are donated to a local charity. One way to prevent the loss of important items (coats, hats, gloves, lunch boxes, etc.) is to put student name tags on them.

LUNCH HOUR

Students have the option of eating at school or going home for lunch. It should be noted that students are encouraged to go home for lunch whenever possible. Because parents often work or are not home at noon, Tarkington provides a hot lunch program. Students are able to purchase a hot lunch each day or just milk if they bring their lunch. The hot lunch program is run by the Chartwell Corporation, which publishes menus monthly. Chartwell presently uses a debit card system. Cost for a hot lunch is **\$1.95** per meal. Milk cost is \$.35 per carton. Students should bring money in a sealed envelope clearly labeled with their name.

Free and reduced price lunches are available to those students who qualify under federal guidelines. A form must be on file for each student who qualifies. Inquiries about the free and reduced price lunches should be directed to our school office.

LUNCH CHARGES

Occasionally students come to school without lunch or money. Provisions will be made for these students to obtain a lunch for that day, either by contacting the parent or allowing them to charge a lunch. Payment for this charge is the responsibility of the parent. Parents should immediately forward payment for a lunch charge the following day. Students will not be permitted to accumulate more than three charges. Instead these students will be given a bag lunch consisting of a cheese sandwich, an apple, and a carton of milk.

LUNCHROOM RULES

To facilitate the eating of lunch in a reasonable, effective, and efficient manner, particularly in a school as large as ours, the following rules will be enforced:

- Students will be expected to follow all instructions set forth by lunchroom supervisors. They may carry on a normal conversations in an orderly manner - screaming, shouting, throwing food and other unacceptable behavior will not be tolerated. Students who cannot conform to our expectations will lose their privilege of eating lunch in school.
- Students will not be permitted to leave the lunchroom without the permission of a lunchroom supervisor.
- Students eating lunch during the first shift will carry their own lunches to the cafeteria. Lunches for students eating during the second shift will be collected in our lunch crates at delivered to assigned tables before their shift begins.
- Students will be supervised by our noontime staff during the outside portion of their lunch hour. As in the lunchroom, students are expected to follow all directions from our supervisors.

Those students who go home for lunch on days with indoor recess are asked not to return to school prior to 12:50 PM. On inclement days students who return early after eating lunch at home are not allowed into our building. Outside supervision is not provided on such days.

MAKE-UP WORK DUE TO ILLNESS

Parents should call the office prior to 9:30 AM to request school work when their child is absent for reason of illness. This request will then be forwarded to the classroom teacher who will assemble work for pickup at 3:35 PM. Parents may prearrange the pick-up of work by another student. Please understand that the office cannot make pick-up arrangements for parents. A student who leaves school during the day, due to illness, may return to the classroom before leaving to gather assignments. If the student is too ill to go back up to class, assignments may be picked up the following day.

MAKE-UP WORK DUE TO VACATION

Please understand that we strongly prefer that parents do not take students on vacations or extended trips during the school year. Extended time away from school can cause significant problems and unwarranted interruptions in the learning process. While airlines continue to make off-season travel enticing, parents often neglect to realize the negative affect missed class time can have on a child and the inconvenience it can cause the classroom teacher.

It is impossible to duplicate what children miss when they are away from school. Therefore, work will not be given in advance when families go on vacation. Work missed may be made up upon the child's return to school and ample time will be given to make this work up.

MESSAGES

Because we at Tarkington value instruction time, the office tries to avoid classroom interruptions except in the case of emergency situations. Messages for children are typically given to teachers during their planning time or are passed on to students at 11:55 AM and 3:25 PM.

Messages for staff will be placed in their voice mail. Calls will be returned at the earliest convenience to staff. Typically staff members will not pick up their voice mail messages until the noon hour or after school.

MONEY

If you give your child money for milk, lunch tickets, field trips, PTA activities, etc. please seal it in an envelope marked with your child's name, teacher's name, and the purpose for which the money is being sent.

PTA

Tarkington School is fortunate to be supported by an outstanding, active PTA that serves as a vital link between home and school. Our PTA organizes a variety of informative parent programs and entertaining family activities throughout the year. All parents are encouraged to not only join our PTA and attend as many PTA events as possible, but to volunteer to help work on some of our numerous PTA projects. Parents interested in information about joining our PTA or volunteering to assist with PTA events should contact our PTA President via our school office.

PARKING AND TRAFFIC SAFETY

The Tarkington School parking lot is a busy place. We have just one entrance to our parking lot, an entrance that is shared by cars and school buses. On inclement days it becomes difficult to negotiate movement in our lot; too frequently buses cannot enter school property or leave when ready to do so because of cars parked inappropriately or because of traffic congestion. We need all Tarkington parents to commit themselves to adhering to school expectations for driving and picking up students. We expect our parents to follow the directions given by our crossing guards located both at Anthony & Scott and Anthony & Schoenbeck. Parents are also expected to follow the directions of staff who assist with traffic movement in our parking lot. Those who violate parking regulations risk being ticketed by the Wheeling Police Department.

We encourage students who live within walking distance to walk home.

For those parents who drive their children to school we encourage you to prearrange with your child an alternate pick-up spot. Doing this will help reduce parking lot congestion.

- ◆ If you are dropping your child (ren) off, please do so in the designated area.
- ◆ You may also park in a designated parking space and escort your child to the building.
- ◆ Please do not drop off or pick up your children in our bus drop-off/pick-up areas.
- ◆ Do not double park as this necessitates children walking in between cars, a safety hazard.
- ◆ Never leave your car unattended unless it is appropriately parked in a marked parking space.
- ◆ Remember that pedestrian traffic has the right of way and receives first priority; bus movement in and out of school receives our second priority; car movement our third.
- ◆ The east side of Scott Street is a NO PARKING ZONE; when present, police will ticket violators.
- ◆ Parents are asked not to let their automobiles idle for long periods of time when waiting for their children. Exhaust fumes from cars near our building can be irritating to students and teachers in adjacent classrooms.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASSES

Children in grades one through five receive two thirty-minute instructional lessons weekly with a physical education teacher. Classroom teachers are expected to provide students with structured physical activity on days physical education classes do not meet. It is requested that each child have a pair of gym shoes for these classes. These gym shoes should not have the embedded roller wheels as they may damage the gym floor. Shoes should be marked and kept at school for use as needed.

PLAYGROUND

Tarkington School has a large playground and blacktop surface area for students to use for recreational purposes. Given the number of students that attend Tarkington, it is necessary that we establish rules for their use.

- Playground supervision begins each morning at **8:35 AM**. Prior to this time, there is no outside supervision. Accordingly, please time your child's arrival to school so that they are not here before **8:35 AM**.
- All students will line up in front of our south entrance before entering school in the morning (8:55) and after lunch (12:55).

- Given the congestion on the blacktop, for safety reasons games such as kickball, football, softball, etc. can only be played on the grass areas surrounding school. Roller blades, skates, skateboards, etc. are also not allowed.
- School equipment will be made available for students to share.
- Fighting, disrespect for the property of others, and other inappropriate behavior is not tolerated on the playground. Students who do either will be subject to our school discipline policy and may possibly lose their playground privileges.
- During winter months, students are expected to wear boots and appropriate outdoor clothing. We far prefer to remain outdoors than to have inside recess or AM supervision.

REQUIRED SUPPLIES

The Tarkington staff publishes a list of supplies needed at particular grade levels. These lists are sent home with report cards each year. Extra copies can be picked up in our school office.

SCHOOL SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

School Service opportunities are organized by our Assistant to the Principal and are divided into three main categories.

Safety Patrols: Patrols are selected from our fifth grade on a volunteer basis and serve on a rotating schedule in a variety of capacities throughout the year. Their duties include monitoring student and pedestrian traffic in our school and on our school grounds. They also handle such responsibilities as raising and lowering our school flags, serving as bus monitors, supervising kindergarten children before they enter school, escorting classes to assemblies, etc.

Lunchroom Helpers: Students volunteer to assist the Food Service staff, our custodian, and noon lunch supervisors.

Classroom Helpers: Teachers frequently call on past students to serve as after school assistants. Responsibilities include working with younger children, setting up displays and bulletin boards, helping to grade papers, etc.

All school helpers are taken on an annual outing in the late spring as an expression of thanks for their services during the year. This reward trip is paid for by the Tarkington PTA.

STUDENT HANDBOOK

Each Tarkington student receives a Student Handbook. It is important that students read and review this handbook periodically with their parents. Being informed and aware of what is expected helps provide students with the security they require. Parents are asked to sign a form in the handbook acknowledging that they reviewed the School Handbook with their child.

TELEPHONE

With the installation of individual classroom telephones, the need to use the office telephone has been reduced. The office telephone is available for students to use on an emergency or high priority basis (i.e. to inform parents of detention, to get permission to stay after school with a teacher). Requests for use of our phone for personal reasons (i.e. to stay for intramural activities, to go to a friend's house, to go to scouts, etc.) are typically denied, depending on the traffic conditions in the office. Instead, students may use our pay phone located in the hall by the office to make "non-essential" type calls. If the student does not have money, calls can be made collect to the home.

Many parents call to talk to their child or to leave messages for them. Unfortunately it is not possible to immediately pass on all of these messages, nor is it productive to allow parents to interrupt instruction in order for them to see their child. We do not interrupt classes and disturb the education of children in order to pass along these messages. Minimally, we do attempt to get messages to students by 11:55 and 3:25. We discourage the practice of calling school and leaving messages unless in the case of emergencies.

TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks are provided by the school. All textbooks should be properly covered. Textbooks will be checked out to students by the teacher. Those students who lose or have their textbooks damaged will pay for repair or replacement costs.

TIME SCHEDULE FOR SCHOOLS

Kindergarten: 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. or
 1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Grades 1-5: 9:00 – 12:00 Noon
 12:50 – 3:30 p.m.

When children come to school late, they lose valuable time, interrupt the class and may miss important explanations of the work to be done. Punctuality is part of good citizenship, so help your child be on time. **If on occasion your child must be late for school, please write a note of explanation to the teacher.**

TRANSPORTATION

Unless being transported to Tarkington for a special education or bilingual program, all Tarkington students are considered to be *walkers* because they live within close proximity of school. Students within legal walking distance of school are not provided with transportation. Students who ride the bus to Tarkington are expected to meet all school behavioral expectations. The privileged of riding a bus can be suspended if student behavior is less than acceptable.

VISITS TO SCHOOL

Visitors are welcome at Tarkington School. In compliance with legal codes and school district regulations, **visitors are required to stop at the school office, identify themselves and pick up a visitor's pass.** Please return the pass to the office at the completion of your visit.

Classroom teachers are not to be interrupted at any time. An appointment must be made in advance whenever a parent needs to meet with a teacher to discuss their child's progress. Our office will gladly assist you in scheduling such a meeting. If you wish to observe a class in session, please make arrangements with the classroom teacher as well as stop by the office to receive a visitor's pass before going to the classroom. Parents are always invited to visit our classrooms in session.

VOLUNTEERS

We are extremely proud of our Volunteer Program. Tarkington parents help us in a number of different capacities. The services our volunteers provide are invaluable and we are most appreciative of any assistance we can get. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, simply phone our school office and leave your name, area of interest and time available.

WEATHER RELATED INDOOR RECESS

It is our policy to have our children go outside as much as possible during lunch time and daily recess, even during the winter months. While the final judgment regarding outside recess remains in the hands our lunch time supervisors and classroom teachers, we are assisted by questions such as the following:

- Is it raining?
- What is the temperature?
- What is the wind-chill factor (there must be little danger of frostbite).

Whenever we are in doubt, we call the National Weather Service for information. Typically, unless the wind-chill is below 0, recess will be held outside. Parents are asked to dress their children in suitable outerwear.

WEATHER RELATED SCHOOL CLOSING

Should inclement weather or natural disaster close District 21 schools, announcements will be handled through the Superintendent's office. School closings are announced on **WGN radio, WGN-TV, WBBM-AM radio, and Channels 2, 5, 7, 9, 32 and CLTV on your television.** The district web site <http://www.d21.k12.il.us> also has a direct link to the agency. **Please do not call the school office.** In addition, the Tarkington PTA will operate a phone calling tree. If school is going to be closed, Dr. Arduino will set this tree in motion by calling out PTA President, who in turn will let room mothers know that they should call their parents. If you leave for work early, you may want to provide room mothers with alternative phone numbers to reach you.

ONCE A TIGER

ALWAYS A TIGER!!!