



**Parent Handbook**  
**Ben W. Murch Elementary School**

4810 36<sup>th</sup> Street  
Washington, DC 20008  
Phone, (202) 282-0130 Fax, (202) 282-0132  
**Principal: Christopher Cebzynski**  
**Assistant Principal: Penelope Miller**

Office Hours  
Monday-Friday: 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

## **Murch Faculty and Staff Priorities**

- Academic excellence
- Celebration and recognition of the Murch community's diversity
- The uniqueness of each child
- An authentic and differentiated approach to teaching
- Mutual kindness and respect
- On-going faculty training and development
- Open communications among all stakeholders

## **Important Back-to-School Dates (2015-16)**

- School-Wide Open House/Meet & Greet: Friday, August 21<sup>st</sup>
  - Pre-K Drop In (come during any one of these times): 12-1, 1:30-2:30 or 3:30-4:30
  - Kdg through 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Drop In: 12-1:30
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Drop In: 1:30-3:00
  - All Grades/Flexible Drop In (for Students Who Couldn't Come Earlier or for families with multiple siblings, making 1 time easier): 3:30-5:00
  - All Grades/Flexible Drop In with Resource Teachers, ELL and SpEd Drop In (you are invited to stop by these classrooms anytime to say hello): 12:00-5:00
- First Day of School (K—5<sup>th</sup> grade): Monday, August 24<sup>th</sup>
- Pre-K Conferences: Monday, August 24<sup>th</sup>—Tuesday, August 25<sup>th</sup> (sign up online once you receive your class placement letter at):
  - Garfinkel: [www.SignUpGenius.com/go/8050849A9AA2AA57-beginning1](http://www.SignUpGenius.com/go/8050849A9AA2AA57-beginning1)
  - Hines: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/409094daca62da13-parent9>
  - Landsman: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0d48aeaf2babf58-beginning1>
- Pre-K First Day of School (if last name begins with A-K): Thursday, August 27<sup>th</sup>
- Pre-K First Day of School (if last name begins with L-Z): Friday, August 28<sup>th</sup>
- All Pre-K Students Attend Full Day: Monday, August 31<sup>st</sup>
- Curriculum Fair/Back-to-School Night: Thursday, September 3<sup>rd</sup>
- New Parent Breakfast: Friday, September 4<sup>th</sup>
- Labor Day (No School for Students): Monday, September 7
- International Night: Thursday, September 17<sup>th</sup>
- School Picture Day: Wednesday, September 30<sup>th</sup>

Please check the DCPS website (<http://dcps.dc.gov>) for district-wide calendars for 2015-16, as well as [www.murchschool.org](http://www.murchschool.org) for additional 2015-16 calendar items.

## **Academics**

### **Teaching and Support Teams**

Early Childhood Learning Team (Pre-K & Kindergarten)  
Primary Grades (Grades 1 & 2)

Art Teacher  
Geography Teacher

Intermediate Grades (Grades 3, 4 & 5)  
Reading Intervention Teacher  
Math Specialists  
Science Specialist  
School Wide Enrichment Specialist  
English Language Learner (ELL) Teachers  
Special Education Teachers  
Special Education Coordinator  
Library/Media Specialist  
Music Teacher

Physical Education Teacher  
School Counselor  
School Nurse  
School Social Worker  
School Psychologist  
Speech & Language Pathologist  
Occupational Specialist  
Instructional Coach  
Instructional Aides (Pre-K—5<sup>th</sup>)

### **National Common Core Standards**

DCPS has adopted the National Common Core Standards for kindergarten through grade 5. The National Common Core Standards will:

- Help ensure students are receiving a high-quality education consistently from school-to-school and state-to-state
- Provide a greater opportunity to share experiences and best practices within and across states.

Murch is committed to academic excellence. Teachers will be planning to incorporate rigor in lessons that supports the National Common Core Standards.

### **Differentiated Instruction**

Within the Murch community, we understand that every child does not learn the same and because of this we ensure that differentiated instruction is a part of the planning process of every classroom. Teachers support the ability of students by creating guided reading groups (reading groups based on a student's reading level), and flexible math groups (small groups that focus on the needs of kids based on a mathematical concept). In addition, instruction is planned with the needs of all students in mind. We continue to strive to have every teacher fully implement differentiation strategies in their classrooms in order to meet all students where they are at and provide appropriate instruction to ensure every student meets high standards of learning.

### **Responsive Classroom**

To enable optimal student learning, Murch follows the principles of Responsive Classroom throughout the school. Responsive Classroom is an approach to elementary teaching that emphasizes social, emotional, and academic growth in a strong and safe school community.

Responsive Classroom encourages students to see their school and classroom as a community of learners made up of unique individuals, each deserving respect.

Key RC principles include:

- Social curriculum is as critical as academic curriculum.
- Children need social skills, such as cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy and self-control, to succeed academically and socially.
- Social interaction is where the greatest cognitive growth takes place.
- Families are key partners in children's education.

Some of the specific RC practices are: Morning Meeting; Rule Creation; Positive Teacher Language; Logical consequences; Academic Choice; Working with Families; and Collaborative Problem Solving. Murch uses Responsive Classroom techniques across age groups — from Pre-K to 5th grade. The involvement of parents and guardians is vital for reinforcing the behaviors and activities that are modeled through RC.

### **Assessments**

From grades Pre-K through five, each student is required to master skills in reading (readiness), mathematics and other content areas. Student records are available for parents to see during conference times with teachers.

- **Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment** - One-on-one, comprehensive assessment to determine independent and instructional reading levels and for determining each child's instruction level for guided reading according to the Fountas & Pinnell A-Z Text Level Gradient™.
- **Interim Assessments (PIA)** - Benchmark assessments given at 6 week intervals in grades 2-5. The assessment covers targeted standards from each unit and shows what knowledge and skills students have mastered, and where instructional time and resources need to be focused. The fifth PIA, administered in June, assesses student mastery of the most essential skills as listed on the DCPS scope and sequence documents.
- **The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)** - Starting in school year 2014-15, students will no longer take the DC CAS and will instead take the PARCC test, which is a new annual test used to measure students' progress in English Language Arts and Math. DCPS is switching to the PARCC tests because they will better measure students' critical-thinking and problem-solving skills, which are essential for college and career success, while also matching to Common Core standards. PARCC will provide schools with vital information about students' progress so that educators can both improve instruction and also provide student support where needed. PARCC will be administered online (computers).

- **GOLD** - A tool used to measure skills development in multiple areas of development for pre-k students.

**\*\*National Assessment Educational Progress (NAEP)**-4<sup>th</sup> graders participate in the national assessment that measures DCPS progress in comparison to others in the nation in the areas of reading and math. This is administered in the spring in designated years. The assessment was last administered in February 2013.

## **Homework**

Research provides strong evidence that, when used appropriately, homework benefits student achievement. Look for your child's homework and encourage its completion. Students usually have homework related to the work that has already been covered in class. Parents should ensure that students have a specific time and quiet place to complete their homework since it is an important reinforcement. As a friendly reminder, please make sure that homework is completed independently by your child. To make sure that homework is appropriate, teachers should follow these guidelines:

- Assign purposeful homework. Legitimate purposes for homework include introducing new content, practicing a skill or process that students can do independently but not fluently, elaborating on information that has been addressed in class to deepen students' knowledge, and providing opportunities for students to explore topics of their own interest.
- Design homework to maximize the chances that students will complete it. For example, ensure that homework is at the appropriate level of difficulty. Students should be able to complete homework assignments independently with relatively high success rates, but they should still find the assignments challenging enough to be interesting.
- Involve parents in appropriate ways (for example, as a sounding board to help students summarize what they learned from the homework) without requiring parents to act as teachers or to police students' homework completion.
- Carefully monitor the amount of homework assigned so that it is appropriate to students' age levels and does not take too much time away from other home activities.

Homework for young children should help them develop good study habits, foster positive attitudes toward school, and communicate to students the idea that learning takes work at home as well as at school.

- For students in *the earliest grades*, it should foster positive attitudes, habits, and character traits; permit appropriate parent involvement; and reinforce learning of simple skills introduced in class.
- For students in *upper elementary grades*, it should play a more direct role in fostering improved school achievement.

The amount of homework assigned varies according to the grade levels of each child. The suggested maximum time limits for student homework and study are:

Pre-k	10 minutes
Kdg.	15 minutes
1 <sup>st</sup> /2 <sup>nd</sup> grades	30 minutes
3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	35 minutes
4 <sup>th</sup> /5 <sup>th</sup> grades	45 minutes

Please reach out to your child's teacher if you need specific information about homework or assignments.

### **Report Cards**

Report cards will be issued approximately 1 week after the close of each advisory. The approximate report card dates are November 6, 2015, January 29, 2016, April 15, 2016 and June 23, 2016. Please make certain that you carefully review the report card and if necessary schedule an appointment with the classroom teacher for any concerns.

### **Grades**

The report card is evidence of the student's mastery of what is being taught. Because of the significance of the report card, Murch teachers are very meticulous in preparing grades. We use the following guideposts to determine report card grades.

- The ability of the student
- Overall record of school performance
- The academic achievements of the student
- The completion of assignments and projects.

### **Promotion**

To be promoted from one grade to the next, students must meet the guidelines of the District of Columbia Standards Based Curriculum. Parents will be notified at each benchmark about their child's progress. There is no retention without parental notification and conferencing.

## **Communication**

The administration and staff has multiple communications strategies to ensure you receive the information you need. They include the following:

- Opportunities to Meet with Principal Cebzynski, Assistant Principal Miller and our teachers at Curriculum/Back to School Night: Thursday, September 3, 2015. Staff email lists will be available at Back to School Night and via the Staff Page of our website.

- Winter and Spring “Coffees with Mr. C,” which provide opportunities to ask questions and receive the latest news (co-sponsored by the Murch HSA)
- Weekly Updates from Principal Cebzynski (posted to [www.murchschool.org](http://www.murchschool.org) every Friday and included in the HSA’s weekly e-News)
- Weekly teacher updates via teacher websites (posted to [www.murchschool.org](http://www.murchschool.org))
- Friday Folders, which go home at the end of every week and include important information regarding school events, field trips, and classroom activities and assignments. Folders (and any paperwork) should be returned to your child’s teacher by Monday.
- Regular updates via twitter about school events, news and activities (follow us on twitter @murchschool)
- Parent-teacher conferences, per the DCPS calendar. The 2015-16 conference dates are October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015, February 22, 2016 and May 23, 2016. Please plan to attend and, when the time approaches, sign-up for a convenient time to discuss your student’s progress.
- Regular parent evenings (on topics such as PARCC)
- Thrice-yearly after-school activities roster (hard copies will come home in Friday folders and will also be posted to [www.murchschool.org](http://www.murchschool.org))

\*\*Fall after-school activities will begin the week of September 21<sup>st</sup>. A roster will go home on Friday, September 11<sup>th</sup>, with more details regarding registration.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE REGARDING A PAPERLESS MURCH:** Our goal is to be a green, paperless school. All information from the administration will be posted to the website and/or in the weekly e-newsletter, which you can subscribe to at [www.murchschool.org](http://www.murchschool.org) (scroll down and enter your email address on the right side where it says “Sign Up for the Murch Newsletter”).

In the first Friday folder of the year, you will have the option to opt-in to receiving the weekly e-News via paper, but we strongly encourage you to consider receiving your news electronically so we can conserve school resources and staff time.

**TEACHERS FIRST:** As a general rule, all contact regarding academics or classroom dynamics should be initiated with and/or include your child’s classroom teacher.

**Who’s Who?** Although the teacher should still be included in emails and conversations to every extent possible, these faculty members can provide direct assistance:

- School Policy, school vision and goals, master schedule, programmatic questions, and general expectations: Principal Chris Cebzynski ([Chris.Cebzynski@dc.gov](mailto:Chris.Cebzynski@dc.gov))
- Discipline and Assessments: Assistant Principal Penelope Miller ([Penelope.Miller@dc.gov](mailto:Penelope.Miller@dc.gov))
- Facilities and reimbursements: Business Manager Dyvor Gibson ([Dyvor.Gibson@dc.gov](mailto:Dyvor.Gibson@dc.gov))
- School-wide calendar, special projects, Volunteers in the Classroom, after-school activity coordination: Project Manager Mary Eckstein ([mary.eckstein@dc.gov](mailto:mary.eckstein@dc.gov))
- Scheduling principal meetings, notice of absence, attendance issues and enrollment: Clerk Jasmin Coleman ([Jasmin.Coleman@dc.gov](mailto:Jasmin.Coleman@dc.gov))

- Enrollment: Registrar Rebecca McGraw ([Rebecca.McGraw2@dc.gov](mailto:Rebecca.McGraw2@dc.gov))
- Social/Emotional Support for Students: Social Worker Deb Meisel ([Deborah.Meisel@dc.gov](mailto:Deborah.Meisel@dc.gov)), School Counselor Lauren Miller ([Lauren.Miller@dc.gov](mailto:Lauren.Miller@dc.gov)) and Psychologist Joe Conlon ([Joe.Conlon@dc.gov](mailto:Joe.Conlon@dc.gov))
- Student Health: Nurse JoAnna Jackson ([JoJackso@cnmc.org](mailto:JoJackso@cnmc.org))
- Special Education Coordinator: Dan Hayden ([Daniel.Hayden@dc.gov](mailto:Daniel.Hayden@dc.gov))
- English Language Learners Program: ELL Teacher Holly Hope ([Holly.Hope@dc.gov](mailto:Holly.Hope@dc.gov))
- Specialists, including Reading Specialist Charmaine Young ([Cyoung7155@aol.com](mailto:Cyoung7155@aol.com)), Reading Intervention Teacher Gina Stephens ([gina@tesgs.com](mailto:gina@tesgs.com)), Science Specialist Tashima Hawkins ([Tashima.Hawkins@dc.gov](mailto:Tashima.Hawkins@dc.gov)), and Math Specialist Tara Pendleton ([Lataura.pendleton@dc.gov](mailto:Lataura.pendleton@dc.gov)).
- Resource teachers, including Art teacher Nichole David ([nichole.david@dc.gov](mailto:nichole.david@dc.gov)), Music teacher Catherine Pruett ([Catherine.Pruett@dc.gov](mailto:Catherine.Pruett@dc.gov)), PE teacher Tim Johnson ([Timothy.Johnson@dc.gov](mailto:Timothy.Johnson@dc.gov)), Media Center Specialist Regina Bell ([regina.bell@dc.gov](mailto:regina.bell@dc.gov)), World Geography teacher Lauren Reed ([Lauren.Reed@dc.gov](mailto:Lauren.Reed@dc.gov)), and World Language (Spanish) teacher Joseph Chasten.

\*\*A full staff email list will be posted at Back-to-School Night.

### **DCPS Website and Murch Website**

A good source of information for parents is the DCPS website. DCPS maintains an official website containing information on policies, curriculum, personnel and programs. Weather related announcements and the school lunch menu are also available. The web address is <http://www.dcps.dc.gov>

Our school website is <http://www.murchschool.org>. Our school website provides school announcements, important dates and events, messages from Mr. C. and all the great news about students and teachers.

## **Attending Murch/Enrollment**

### **In-Boundary or General Enrollment**

Students who live within the Murch boundary are guaranteed placement in grades K through 5. If you have not done so already, please come into the main office as soon as possible and enroll your child at Murch. The earlier we have your enrollment forms, the better our classroom planning can be. Please note: current students must re-enroll each year.

Enrollment for Pre-K is determined by the DCPS lottery process that begins in January for those students who reach age 4 before September 30<sup>th</sup> of the entry year.



## **Out of Boundary Special Permissions**

Students who reside in Washington, D.C., but do not live in Murch's boundary, must receive special permission to attend by winning a seat in the lottery process.

Special permission for out-of-boundary students is granted yearly. Policies and procedures state the attendance, test scores, appropriate behavior, and parental cooperation must be in place in order for out-of-boundary students to return to Murch Elementary School. The local school determines entry for an out-of-boundary student in accordance with the lottery procedures where seats are available. Please log onto [www.dcps.dc.gov](http://www.dcps.dc.gov) for more information regarding the lottery process and out-of-boundary policies.

## **Attendance Policies for Murch Students**

### **Attendance**

The Compulsory Attendance Requirement Laws of the District of Columbia Public Schools are enforced in accordance with the provision of the Code of Laws provided by the D.C. Board of Education. Each student enrolled in the D.C. Public Schools is to attend school regularly and on time. Also, the Mayor and the Council of the District of Columbia approved the Police Truancy Enforcement Amendment Act of 1994, granting the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) direct statutory authority to detain juveniles out of compliance between 8:45 a.m. and 3:15 p.m.

Daily attendance is vital for success and promotion. As the parent, help your children achieve success by:

1. Sending children to school every day unless they are ill or there is a serious family emergency.
2. If your child will be absent, email the school clerk Jasmin Coleman at [jasmin.coleman@dc.gov](mailto:jasmin.coleman@dc.gov) stating that your child will be absent, along with the reason for the absence. **Letting the front office know** your child will be absent **is a priority**; you may also cc your child's teacher so they are aware.
3. Getting children up on time to eat breakfast (home or school) and helping them take care of personal hygiene, dress appropriately and gather school materials.

### **Unexcused Absences**

When students are absent without explanation, parents can expect a telephone call that is automatically generated by our STARS System and/or a call from the school. A student who is

absent without cause is considered truant. Parents are legally responsible for their children's attendance and , therefore, may have an attendance investigation if any problems arise.

### **Tardy Procedures**

Morning meeting begins at 8:45 a.m. Those students reporting to school late will report to the main office. A late slip will be issued that the student will present to the teacher. Habitual tardiness will affect the student's academic progress. You can expect a call from the office when your child is consistently tardy.

Students who are chronically tardy 4 times in one calendar month will receive a letter from the school requesting a meeting with the guidance counselor to identify ways to prevent future tardies.

### **Arrival Procedures**

- **Drop Off:** When dropping off students, please escort students through the side gate located next to the portable classroom. We want to ensure that students and parents do not walk through the parking lot. The parking lot will not be used for drop off, due to the limited space. If dropping students off in a vehicle, please consider the drop off on Ellicott Street instead of Davenport Street in order to limit the traffic congestion that can occur in front of the parking lot entrance.
- Students should arrive by 8:35 a.m. and line-up in their respective grade-level lines. Students in grades K-5 line up on the blue-top. We are aware that the kindergarten transition can be difficult for some students, therefore, kindergarten students can be escorted to the classrooms by their parents during the 1<sup>st</sup> week of school. Students in Pre-K should be escorted by their parent/guardian to their classrooms. Parents, please say good-bye at the doors and allow your child to enter with his/her teacher and classmates. If you need to see the school nurse or cafeteria staff, please feel free to do so. Any parents moving beyond these points, must sign-in at the security desk. If you need to communicate with your child's teacher, please send an e-mail or call for an appointment.
- If your Pre-K student arrives late, please report to the main office and obtain a tardy slip for your child to enter class.
- Students participating in the breakfast program may report to the breakfast line at 8:15 a.m. Students will eat breakfast at the tables in the hallway. Once students complete their meals, they can join their classes on the blue-top (grades 1-5) or in their classrooms (Pre-K & Kindergarten).

## **Dismissal Procedures**

- **Pick-Up:** When picking-up students in the afternoon, please walk through the side gate located next to the portable classroom. We want to ensure that students and parents do not walk through the parking lot. The parking lot should not be used for pick-up, due to the limited space. If picking students up in a vehicle, please pick-up on Ellicott Street to limit the traffic congestion on Davenport Street.
- Students are dismissed at 3:15 p.m. Grades K through 5 are escorted by their teachers to their line spaces on the blue top. Pre-K is dismissed from the Pre-K playground. Students must be picked up by an adult or older sibling. Students that are not picked up by an older sibling or adult will be escorted to the office by their teacher or substitute to make a phone call to their parents.
- Students that attend X-Day will meet in the gym and they will be escorted to St. Paul's by an X-Day employee.
- **New for 2015-16:** Students attending after-school activities will be dismissed to the following locations for the 15 minutes after school lets out:
  - To Classrooms where Activity Is Meeting/At Class Start Time (Pre-K)
  - Media Center (K-2)
  - Gym (3-5)

Supervision will be provided from 3:15-3:30. No later than 3:30, students will be picked up by their after-school activity leader and taken to their respective classrooms for their activity.

- **If students and/or parents need to re-enter the classrooms, please check with the Security Guard and notify the office of your need for assistance.**

## **Inclement Weather/Indoor Arrival & Dismissal Procedures (when raining, snowing or bitterly cold)**

- **Indoor Arrival (when raining, snowing or bitterly cold):**
  - If we are following the indoor arrival plan, a flag will be out by the corner of the music Ben (Ben 13), which is the Ben closest to the Murch main office. Please look for the flag to know whether we are following the indoor arrival plan.
  - If it is an indoor arrival morning, students in grades Pre-K through 3rd grade may enter the building and report to their classrooms. Doors to classrooms for Pre-K through 3<sup>rd</sup> graders open at 8:30.

- Students in grades 4 & 5 may enter the building and report to the gym at 8:30. Homeroom teachers will pick students up at 8:35.
- Please do not report to your assigned location until 8:30 or later, as adult supervision will not be provided until then.
- **Indoor Dismissal (when raining, snowing or bitterly cold):**
  - If we are following the indoor dismissal plan, a flag will be out by the corner of the music Ben (Ben 13), which is the Ben closest to the Murch main office. Please look for the flag to know whether we are following the indoor dismissal plan.
  - Afternoon dismissal will be outside, regardless of the temperature, unless there is steady/heavy rain or heavy snow.
  - If it is raining or snowing heavily, all students will be dismissed from their classrooms at 3:15 pm.

**Please note: If it is snowing, students should come to school with snow attire (boots, hats, gloves, etc.).**

### **Early Dismissal Procedures**

- Parents must sign-out children leaving early. Parents/guardians must go to the office and sign the Early Checkout Notebook. They can pick their children up from the office, as students will be called from their classes by the front office staff. Parents cannot pick children up from their classroom.
- If a party other than the designated parents or guardians is to pick up their child or children, the school must be notified and proper identification must be rendered at pick-up time.

## **Health & Safety**

It is very important that we have current information on all students, especially emergency contact persons and their current telephone numbers. If there is an accident or illness, parents and/or guardians will be notified immediately. Parents can make emergency notifications easy by correctly completing all forms sent home and returning them promptly. Please notify the office of all changes during the school year.

We will make every attempt to contact parents in the event of an emergency. The DC Fire Department Emergency Unit, if students need medical attention will transport students to Children's Hospital or to the nearest hospital providing pediatric care.

## **DCPS Emergency Response Plan/Teams**

As a part of our effort to create and sustain peaceable school environments, it is necessary that the District of Columbia Public Schools adopt a proactive stance by providing schools with procedures for school-based emergency-response plans and teams. In order to determine the effectiveness of these plans, fire and response drills are practiced frequently.

Please be advised that our site in the event of an emergency will be St Paul's Church across the street from the Kaufman building.

## **Health**

Parents are responsible for informing the school nurse and/or Administration of any special medical problem(s) that your child may have. IN the event of a nurse's absence, proper procedures must be followed for the care and safety of the child. Selected staff has completed training and give medications and first aid in the absence of the nurse.

## **Medication**

If it becomes necessary for your child to take a form of medication at school, parents must see the school nurse and fill out the appropriate forms.

## **Lice Guidelines**

There is a new policy (implemented in 2014-15) as it relates to lice. The DC Department of Health has revised the DC Municipal Regulations, updating the requirements concerning Communicable Diseases Contracted by Students. The revisions were needed to update and align some of the treatment and school exclusion practices with current medical guidelines.

If a child is known to have head lice, and this is discovered in school, the following will happen:

- School nurse will contact the parents, so treatment can begin that afternoon/evening.
- School nurse will communicate this information to the teacher of the student.
- School designee will send home an email/letter to the rest of the students in that class.
- Students diagnosed with lice may now remain in class for the remainder of that day, and treatment should commence at the conclusion of that school day.
- The child may return to school upon submitting to the school nurse a parent or guardian note attesting to the fact that the student is undergoing treatment, as well as the type of treatment being administered. This allows the school nurse to track the effectiveness of various treatment methods.
- A student with only Nits (eggs) shall not be excluded from school, however, the school nurse, principal or designee shall send a note to the parents or guardians advising them to monitor the child for re-infestation.

If a child is known to have head lice, and this is discovered outside of school, the following should happen:

- Parents, upon arrival at school after treatment is given, will submit a note to the school nurse attesting to the fact that the student is undergoing treatment. In the note, parents should specify the type of treatment being administered. This allows the school nurse to track the effectiveness of various treatment methods.
- Once this note is received, the student will be given approval by the school nurse to re-enter class.
- School nurse will communicate this information to the teacher of the student.
- School designee will send home an email/letter to the rest of the students in that class.

### **School Closing**

The District of Columbia Public Schools may close when severe weather conditions exist, making travel difficult and dangerous. Parents and students should listen to the radio and/or television broadcast for school closing announcements or consults the DCPS Website for up-to-date information.

When weather conditions are such that parents feel travel would endanger the safety and welfare of your child, please call and let the school know that your child will not be attending. If you feel that it is wise to pick up your child before the end of the day due to inclement weather, please sign him/her out in the main office.

### **Visitors and Volunteers**

We invite you to be an active member of your child's learning process through volunteering in and beyond the classroom. Opportunities to volunteer will be posted to our website and available via hard copy by the first week of school. Please sign up to help or contact Mary Eckstein, Project Manager, for more information.

All visitors and volunteers must sign in and out. All parents that enter the building after 8:45 a.m. must sign the security book. If our child forgets something, you will need to sign in at the Security desk and then proceed to the office for assistance. This is for the safety and welfare of all students. We thank you for cooperating.

We encourage classroom visitations for the purpose of observing your children during the instructional program; however, these must be pre-scheduled via telephone or written communication with the teacher. All classroom observations must be approved by the principal. When arriving at the school, you must sign in at the Security Officer's desk and show proper identification, and receive a visitor's pass.

Please remember, you must schedule one-on-one conferences with the teacher before or after the instructional day so that the teacher may properly instruct and supervise the students in his/her classroom.

## **Student Extracurriculars**

In addition to classroom instruction, students have opportunities to learn, grow and achieve through other standards-based programs and activities.

### **Library and Media Center**

Our library and tech center ensure that we meet the vision of Murch Elementary School. Expectations of the library and media center includes respecting the materials in the space, sharing materials, demonstrating appropriate behavior, and respecting all those working in the space. We encourage, monitored computer use outside of the school. Please talk with teachers to discuss the types of online programs used at school so you are informed about the technology that your student(s) use. Please note that the library is open every morning from 8:05-8:35 AM.

### **Extended Curricular Offerings**

Murch has many talented teachers and parents and there are several activities occurring after school. Many of these activities have no cost associated, thanks to a partnership between DCPS & the HSA. If you have an idea for an after-school activity, please contact Principal Cebzynski. An after-school activities roster will be sent home in advance of our fall, winter and spring semesters. Fall after-school activities will begin the week of September 21<sup>st</sup>. A roster will go home on Friday, September 11<sup>th</sup>, with more details regarding registration.

Below is a sample of some of last year's activities:

Knitting Club	Peer Mediation	Guitar Club
Yoga for Kids	Writing Club	Chess
Animal Safari	Basketball	Minecraft
Science Fair	Track Team	Cross-Country Team
Art Club	Safety Patrol	Girls on the Run
Student Council	Show Choir	Hands-On-Science
Outstanding Oceans Club	Student Newspaper	Cooking Club
Murch Talent Show	International Night/Art Show	Lip Sync
School Musical		

## **Field Trips**

The educational program is often supplemented with field trips and other experiences outside the classroom. Murch, in partnership with the HSA, is committed to ensuring that students are provided with opportunities outside of the classroom to enhance their learning experience. The HSA provides funding to grade levels for field trips.

Parents must sign the appropriate field trip permission slip to indicate approval for the child's participation. Parents have the choice to chaperone and you are always welcomed. Please be advised that refunds will not be issued after tickets and buses have been purchased.

## **Playground/Recess Safety**

Safety of all students is a high priority. Students are supervised at all times and are not permitted to leave the school premises without being accompanied by a parent or a designated adult. If students will be signed-out early and they are at recess on the playground, they must be signed-out in the office.

### **Recess Rules**

- Take Turns
- Use Respectful Language (Be Nice)
- Slide Down the Slide Only (Not Up)
- Treat the Equipment Appropriately & Gently
- Practice safety at all times.
- Rocks, sticks, dirt, snow, etc. should remain on the ground at all times.
- No leaving the playground without permission.
- Keep hands and all other objects to yourself.
- Bikes and scooters must be walked on the blue top before and after school.

## **Schedules**

### **Breakfast and Lunch Schedules**

Free breakfast is served daily, beginning at 8 a.m.

Children eat their lunches in their classrooms. They either bring their lunch from home or purchase lunches at school through Chartwells. If you are interested in purchasing lunches for the school year, please see the front office or visit [www.mylunchmoney.com](http://www.mylunchmoney.com) or call 800-479-3531 to set up an account.



Pre-K classes follow a class-specific schedule for recess (twice per day), lunch and resource. Check with your child's teacher for their particular schedule.

The following schedule will be followed for K-5 lunches in 2015-16:

K:	11:30-12:00
1 <sup>st</sup> :	11:30-12:00
2 <sup>nd</sup> :	12:15-12:45
3 <sup>rd</sup> :	12:15-12:45
4 <sup>th</sup> :	12:40-1:10
5 <sup>th</sup> :	12:50-1:20

For grades K-2<sup>nd</sup>, students have a snack break mid-morning. Parents should pack an extra snack for their child for snack time.

As a result of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (which went into effect during the 2014-15 school year), all snack foods & beverages sold at school during the school day will need to meet nutrition standards set by the USDA. These efforts are a critical element for promoting a healthy school environment. We request your support here at Murch and request that you pack snack and lunch items with nutrition guidelines in mind. For a USDA fact sheet about the effort, visit: [http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/allfoods\\_flyer.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/allfoods_flyer.pdf).

### **Recess Schedules**

The following schedule will be followed for K-5 recess:

K:	11:00-11:30 & 2:55-3:15 (free choice play, which is often inside)
1 <sup>st</sup> :	11:00-11:30 & 1:15-1:35
2 <sup>nd</sup> :	11:45-12:15
3 <sup>rd</sup> :	11:45-12:15
4 <sup>th</sup> :	12:10-12:40
5 <sup>th</sup> :	12:20-12:50

### **Resource Schedules**

Students in grades K-5<sup>th</sup> rotate through our resources (art, music, PE, geography and world languages). Monthly resource schedules will be posted to [www.murchschool.org](http://www.murchschool.org) in advance of the upcoming month. If we have a snow day, the resource schedule "slides" a day. This ensures that students do not miss a resource as part of their rotation.

Library will not be on the resource rotation for 2015-16. Teachers will schedule visits to the library for their class.

Pre-K students have a dedicated resource teacher who works with them in an integrated way and meets with each pre-k classroom once a day. Check with your child's Pre-K teacher for their resource time.

The following K-5 resource schedule will be followed in 2015-16:

K:	12:30-1:15
1 <sup>st</sup> :	1:35-2:20
2 <sup>nd</sup> :	10:10-10:55
3 <sup>rd</sup> :	11:00-11:45
4 <sup>th</sup> :	9:10-9:55
5 <sup>th</sup> :	2:30-3:15

## **STUDENT-RELATED INFORMATION & POLICIES**

### **Dress Code**

Students should wear appropriate attire that will ensure a positive, distraction-free learning environment. Wearing clothing that contains derogatory pictures and/or statements is prohibited. Rubber-soled shoes are preferred for physical education and general play.

### **Murch Spirit Wear**

As a reflection of our school spirit, many families often ask about Murch spirit wear. If you wish to purchase Murch t-shirts or other apparel, visit our website ([www.murchschool.org](http://www.murchschool.org)) where the school has set up a link to purchase apparel. Items are printed to order & are shipped directly to you.

Please note: Blue and Gold are the school colors. The "Murch" Mustang represents a spirit of determination to complete any journey that comes our way. We are confident that as a school, we will work together to ensure that students are successful, academically and socially.

### **Student Discipline**

Good citizenship is stressed and expected of all students. Each student has the right to learn, work and play in a cooperative school environment. Students also have the responsibility to respect others, adhere to school rules and contribute to the maintenance of a positive, school atmosphere.

Murch has a tiered behavior system. Tier 1 behaviors are those that are insubordinate or disrupt the academic environment, with accompanying consequences that are given at the classroom level or that could be elevated to administrative response if necessary. Tier 1

consequences can include, but are not limited to the following; behavior plan/contract, warnings, breaks, visit to assistant principal or principal. As misbehaviors escalate up to and including tier 3, consequences become more intensified. We will notify you if your child's behavior is not corrected at the classroom level and we will also conference with you.

### **Personal Items**

Students are not allowed to bring personal items to school. All video games and electronics are not allowed. The school will not be responsible for lost, stolen or damaged items. Students should not have access to cell phones while in the classroom or school. Any cell phones that are visible and are being used during the instructional hours will be taken by a member of the teaching staff, turned in to the main office and parents will be called for retrieval of the item.

Coats and other allowable items should be stored in the appropriate place. Students are responsible for maintaining the care of their personal belongings. Early childhood learners are discouraged from bringing any toys or play items to school unless the class teacher, as part of the curricular program, specifically requests them.

### **Lost and Found**

Valuable items found in and around the school should be turned in at the main office. Other items that are found at school go in the main lost and found area, which is just outside the 5<sup>th</sup> grade Bens in the front courtyard. If left unclaimed, items will be donated periodically to charity.

Please label all belongings, especially jackets and coats, backpacks and lunchboxes. Students should not bring expensive items to school as there is no locked storage.

### **Student Telephone Use**

The use of the school telephones is limited to school business and emergencies. If you have an urgent message, call the front office. Your message will be delivered to your student's teacher and/or child. In an urgent situation, a student may return your call or come to the telephone. We ask that you not promote the use of student cell phones during the school day.

### **Class Assignments**

Student class assignments will be available at the beginning of August and will be mailed to you. Students are assigned to classes based on student learning styles, class size and grade level team recommendations. These factors maximize educational opportunities for each child. All Murch teachers and administrators are certified and professionally qualified to

interact with and teach all students that attend Ben W. Murch Elementary School. We will not entertain changes & will follow procedures stated earlier.

### **Supply Lists**

Students in grades Pre-K-5<sup>th</sup> are asked to bring specific school supplies with them by the first day of class. These supply lists have been updated for 2015-16 and are posted to our website at <http://www.murchschool.org/supply-lists-for-2015-16>. Please note that there are supply lists for grades AND for art resource.

## **School Resources**

### **Home & School Association**

The **Ben W. Murch Home & School Association/PTA, Inc.** — also known as the “HSA”— facilitates parent participation at the school and provides opportunities for parents to be meaningfully involved in their child’s education.

### **Governance**

The HSA Executive Board is composed of: officers who are elected annually by the membership; a teacher representative elected by the teachers; the principal; the immediate past president; and four committee chairs appointed by the co-presidents.

### **Membership**

Membership is open to all Murch families and staff. Annual dues are \$15 per family. You can pay dues at the same time you contribute to the Support-Our-School (SOS) campaign. (More details about the SOS campaign will be provided at the beginning of the school year.)

### **Murch Extended Day**

Murch Extended Day is a before-school and after-school recreation center for students at Murch Elementary School. “Murch Extended Day strives to provide a social atmosphere that is fun, safe and supportive. We are a big program with a homey tone.”

While this program is utilized by Murch students, the Extended Day program is held at St. Paul’s church and managed by Brenda, the director and the church board. If you have questions in regard to your student attending the Murch Extended Day program, please contact their office at 202-537-1642.



We are excited about the new school year! We are confident that teacher and parent collaboration within the school community will provide the necessary platform that is essential for student success!