



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

@ UDC

3373 Van Ness Street, NW

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 communication among all stakeholders

## **Important Back-to-School Dates (2017-18)**

- Pre-K Meet and Greet: Thursday, August 17<sup>th</sup> (5:30-6:30 pm)
- ELL/Sped Open House: Friday, August 18<sup>th</sup>; anytime between 1:30 and 3:30 pm
- K-5<sup>th</sup> Grade Sneak-a-peek: Friday, August 18<sup>th</sup>
  - Drop by your K-5<sup>th</sup> grade classroom anytime between 2:30 and 3:30 pm to sneak a quick peek and to drop off your supplies
- First Day of School (K-5<sup>th</sup> grade): Monday, August 21<sup>st</sup>
- Pre-K Conferences: Monday, August 21<sup>st</sup>—Tuesday, August 22<sup>nd</sup> (sign up online once you receive your class placement letter; links will be posted to Mr. C's blog)
- Pre-K First Day of School (for all pre-k students): Thursday, August 24<sup>th</sup>
- Back-to-School Night: Thursday, August 31<sup>st</sup>
- Labor Day (No School for Students): Monday, September 4<sup>th</sup>
- School Picture Day: Monday, September 18<sup>th</sup>

Please check the DCPS website ( <http://dcps.dc.gov>) for district-wide calendars for 2017-18, as well as [www.murchschool.org](http://www.murchschool.org) for additional 2017-18 calendar items.

## **Academics**

### **Teaching and Support Teams**

Early Childhood Learning Team (Pre-K & K)  
Primary Grades (Grades 1 & 2)  
Intermediate Grades (Grades 3, 4 & 5)  
English Language Learner (ELL) Teachers  
Special Education Teachers  
Instructional Coaches (Math, ELL & Tech)  
School Wide Enrichment Specialist  
Library/Media Specialist  
Instructional Aides (Pre-K through 5<sup>th</sup>)

Art Teacher  
Geography Teacher  
Physical Education Teacher  
School Counselor  
School Nurse  
School Social Worker  
School Psychologist  
Speech & Language Pathologist  
Occupational Specialist

## **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 and Curriculum Tools**

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.

- **Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS)** –The Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) is a research-based screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring tool. Teachers can use PALS to identify students at risk of developing reading difficulties, diagnose students' knowledge of literacy fundamentals, monitor progress, and plan instruction that targets students' needs. PALS measures children's knowledge of several important literacy fundamentals: phonological awareness, alphabet recognition, concept of word, knowledge of letter sounds and spelling. It provides a direct means of matching literacy instruction to specific literacy needs and provides a means for identifying those children who are relatively behind in their acquisition of these fundamental literacy skills.
- **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 switched from DC CAS to 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.

- **Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)** – DIBELS are a set of procedures and measures for assessing the acquisition of early literacy skills from kindergarten through sixth grade. They are designed to be short (one minute) fluency measures used to regularly monitor the development of early literacy and early reading skills. DIBELS are comprised of seven measures to function as indicators of phonemic awareness, alphabetic principle, accuracy and fluency with connected text, reading comprehension, and vocabulary. DIBELS were designed for use in identifying children experiencing difficulty in acquisition of basic early literacy skills in order to provide support early and prevent the occurrence of later reading difficulties.
- **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 spring 2017.

## **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.

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 |
| K                                | 15 minutes |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> /2 <sup>nd</sup> | 30 minutes |

|                                  |            |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| 3 <sup>rd</sup>                  | 35 minutes |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> /5 <sup>th</sup> | 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 2 weeks after the close of each term. The approximate report card dates are November 13, 2017, February 2, 2018, April 20, 2018 and June 20, 2018. 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.

## **Communications**

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 Back to School Night: Thursday, August 31, 2017. 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 Cebrzynski (posted to [www.murchschool.org](http://www.murchschool.org) every Friday and included in the HSA's weekly e-newsletter)
- Weekly teacher updates via teacher websites (available via links on [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 that needs to return to school) 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 2017-18 conference dates are November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017; March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018 and May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2018. 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)

**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) (sign up for the newsletter on the yellow bar that runs horizontal on the page).

**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 Cebrzynski ([Chris.Cebrzynski@dc.gov](mailto:Chris.Cebrzynski@dc.gov))
- Discipline, Assessments and Special Education: Assistant Principal Penelope Miller ([Penelope.Miller@dc.gov](mailto:Penelope.Miller@dc.gov))
- School-wide schedules, special projects, logistics, facilities, etc.: Director of Strategy and Logistics Mary Eckstein ([mary.eckstein@dc.gov](mailto:mary.eckstein@dc.gov))
- School-wide schedules, special projects, logistics, facilities, etc.: Assistant of Strategy and Logistics Rebecca McGraw ([Rebecca.McGraw2@dc.gov](mailto:Rebecca.McGraw2@dc.gov))
- Scheduling principal meetings, notice of absence, attendance issues and enrollment: Registrar Jasmin Coleman ([Jasmin.Coleman@dc.gov](mailto:Jasmin.Coleman@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))
- English Language Learners Program: ELL Teacher Holly Hope ([Holly.Hope@dc.gov](mailto:Holly.Hope@dc.gov))
- Enrichment Specialist Roxanne Bentley ([Roxanne.Bentley@dc.gov](mailto:Roxanne.Bentley@dc.gov))
- Resource teachers, including Art teacher Nichole David ([nichole.david@dc.gov](mailto:nichole.david@dc.gov)), Music teacher Eugene Branch ([Eugene.Branch@dc.gov](mailto:Eugene.Branch@dc.gov)), PE teacher Dan Hayden ([Daniel.Hayden@dc.gov](mailto:Daniel.Hayden@dc.gov)), and World Language (Spanish) teacher Joseph Chasten ([Joseph.Casten@dc.gov](mailto:Joseph.Casten@dc.gov)).

\*\*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](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 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—including attendance and appropriate behavior—must be followed 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 absence email line at [MurchAbsence4810@gmail.com](mailto:MurchAbsence4810@gmail.com) 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:** Please see the UDC-specific FAQ's for more specific arrival procedures
- Students should arrive by 8:35 a.m. and line-up in their respective grade-level lines (K-3 in front mulch, 4 & 5 to bubble). Adult supervision will be provided starting at 8:20 AM. Students in Pre-K go directly to their classrooms. If riding the bus, adults assist with offloading and taking pre-k students to their classrooms.
- After 8:45 AM, any parents moving beyond the main entrance point must sign-in at the security desk at the Murch @ UDC front office. All visitors must be announced before receiving a visitor badge. If you need to communicate with your child's teacher, please send an e-mail or call for an appointment.
- If your Pre-K-5<sup>th</sup> grade student arrives late, please report to the main office and obtain a tardy slip for your child to enter class.

### **Dismissal Procedures**

- **Pick-Up:** Please see the UDC-specific FAQ's for more specific dismissal procedures
- Students are dismissed at 3:15 p.m. Students must be picked up by an adult or older sibling (if written permission is given). 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.
- If your child's dismissal plan will change for a given day, please notify your child's teacher via email by at least noon of the day of the change. If it is after noon, call the Murch main office. This is to ensure that the teacher gets the message in time.
- Students that attend X-Day or language will dismiss to the front mulch where X-Day and language staff will take attendance before boarding their bus to St. Paul's.
- Students that attend Flex Academies (our after-school program) will be dismissed to the UDC bubble/cafeteria where the on-site coordinator will take attendance.
- **For Flex Students:** Supervision will be provided from 3:15-3:30. No later than 3:30, Flex students will be picked up by their after-school activity leader and taken to their respective classrooms for their activity.
- **Early Dismissal Procedures:** Parents must sign-out children leaving early. Parents/guardians must go to the office and sign the Early Checkout Notebook.

Students will be called from their classes by the front office and parents can pick their children up from the office. Parents cannot pick children up from their classroom. This is to ensure that we know where students are at all hours of the school day.

- 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. If students need medical attention, the DC Fire Department Emergency Unit 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 evacuation will be the UDC gym.

### **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 to give medications and first aid in the absence of the nurse.

### **Nut-Free Murch**

Murch will be peanut-free and tree-nut free this year. These policies are being put in place to better protect our nut-allergic children so that all children can safely attend school. More information will come via our website and at Back-to-School Night.

## **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**

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 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 by the first week of school.

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 and be announced before receiving a visitor badge. If your child forgets something, you will need to sign in at the Security desk in the front 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 in the front office, 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.

Murch has many talented teachers and there are several activities occurring after school. We are continuing a partnership with Flex Academies ([www.flexacademies.com](http://www.flexacademies.com)) for 2017-18 to offer after-school programs through outside vendors. Scholarships are available upon request. Please contact social worker Deb Meisel for confidential information regarding scholarships.

An after-school activities roster will be shared in advance of our fall, winter and spring semesters. Below is a schedule for the year:

| <b>Registration Opens</b>            | <b>Classes Begin</b>               |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| (Fall): By August 25 <sup>th</sup>   | Week of September 25 <sup>th</sup> |
| (Winter): By January 5 <sup>th</sup> | Week of January 22 <sup>nd</sup>   |
| (Spring): By March 19 <sup>th</sup>  | Week of April 2 <sup>nd</sup>      |

### **Field Trips**

The educational program is often supplemented with field trips and other experiences outside the classroom. While at UDC, we anticipate taking advantage of our proximity to metro. We will utilize DC-One cards (issued to every student) to utilize public transportation. When public transportation is not available or not practical, parents may be asked to contribute towards the cost of transportation, as well as any ticket fees.

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 sidewalks in front of Murch before and after school.

## **Schedules**

### **Breakfast and Lunch Schedules**

Free breakfast is served daily, beginning at 8:15 a.m.

3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade students eat their lunches in the UDC bubble/cafeteria (Pre-K through 2<sup>nd</sup> eat in classrooms). Please check with your child's teacher for your child's scheduled lunch time.

Pre-K classes follow a class-specific schedule for recess (twice per day), lunch and resource.

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

Students either bring their nut-free lunch from home or purchase lunches at school through the DCPS-provided outside vendor. If you are interested in purchasing lunches for the school year, please visit [www.mylunchmoney.com](http://www.mylunchmoney.com) or call 800-479-3531 to set up an account.

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 ask 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).

### **Resource Schedules**

Students in grades K-5<sup>th</sup> rotate through our resources (art, music, PE, 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.

Teachers will schedule visits to the library for their class.

## **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, visits to the 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 by the Art Alcove. 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 2017-18 and are posted to our website at <http://murchschool.org/2017-18-supply-lists/>.

# **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.

## **Murch X-Day**

Murch Extended Day is a before-school and after-school recreation center for students at Murch Elementary School.

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!

