

Granger Guidelines 2011-2012

ABSENCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

School attendance is very important for students to receive continuity of instruction. While we realize that children do get ill and should stay home on those days, we ask your cooperation in seeing that little else impacts upon attendance. If we feel that absence or tardiness is excessive (10% per semester) personnel who might have information will be consulted. This would include the principal, school nurse, classroom teacher, school adjustment counselor, and school psychologist. Progressive steps would include phone calls from the principal, meetings, visits by school nurse, and notifications to the superintendent and truant officer or DSS.

Children are considered tardy after 8:30AM. We do not consider the student tardy if she or he rides the bus and the bus arrives late. Tardiness often indicates a lack of proper planning on the part of the student or parent and can usually be avoided. In cases of frequent tardiness, the truant officer or principal will contact with the parents will be made about the situation. If indeed a child does arrive late to school s/he is expected to check in at the main office before heading to class.

APPOINTMENTS WITH TEACHERS

Parents are welcomed and encouraged to come to school to talk with teachers. Two conferences will be scheduled throughout the school year for parent /teacher conferences. If you wish to meet with teachers beyond these scheduled times, discussions must coincide with the teacher's teaching and preparation schedule. Teaching time must never be interrupted. Please call the school to schedule a mutually convenient time to speak with your child's teacher.

ASSIGNMENT TO CLASSES

In assigning students to classes, the principal will normally consider a variety of issues to ensure that each child will have a successful school year. Examples of such issues include but are not limited to the following: a fair distribution of sexes, specific health needs, special services required, inter-personal relationships, learning style, and academic and social needs. The principal will place heavy priority on teacher recommendations.

Teachers play a key role in the assignment of students but are asked to make no commitments to parents during conferences or otherwise as the Principal makes the ultimate decisions.

In the spring, parents are asked to fill out a form on their child enabling them to provide information that may be valuable as the school considers placement for the fall,

Each spring, there is considerable discussion about placing students in classes for the next school year. Our highest priority at the Clifford M. Granger School is to honor the learning needs of *all* students. This is not an invitation for you to "choose" a homeroom teacher for your child for next year. In fact, you might consider it just the opposite. As professional educators, we take great pains in the development of homeroom class rosters. We take into account the needs of individual children and the ways they relate to various teacher styles. We know which children work well together and those who do not. Each class is balanced as much as possible with an equal number of boys and girls, with a range of high to lower ability levels, and we are careful not to place too many children with behavioral problems in a single classroom. These decisions are made very carefully by considering the best learning situation for all of our children.

BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT

Each September a Parent's Night is hosted. On that night parents are invited to visit their child's class, meet their new teacher and hear about that grade's educational program.

The schedule is as follows for September 22nd, 2011

6:30-7:15PM Grade 3 and Grade 4
7:30-8:15PM Kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 2

Note: this schedule flip-flops each year.

CHILDREN AND WALKING SAFETY

Children are expected to walk on the sidewalks at the school and cross at protected crossings. Children may ride bicycles to school with parental approval. There is a bicycle rack at school where bikes should be locked. It is important that students obey the standard rules of bicycle safety in commuting to and from school. Immediately upon arriving at the school, bicycles are to be parked for the day, not to be ridden around the parking lots. Following the close of school, bicycle riders are dismissed like a “walker”. Students must wear helmets.

CONFERENCES

There are two regularly scheduled parent/teacher conferences during the year- one after the first report card, usually in early December and again after the second report card in March.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Federal and State regulations protect the right to confidentiality. Teachers do have access to all information contained in the student file of any student they currently teach. However, access is lost when the student leaves the teacher’s class. Discussion, by school personnel, of a student with anyone who does not have legal access to the student’s file is strictly prohibited, unless there is a written release of information provided by the student’s parent(s)/guardian(s) to disclose information to another individual.

There are no exceptions to this policy. Confidentiality may be broken and the appropriate individual or authorities notified if:

- A staff member learns that a student is a danger to himself/herself or someone else.
- A staff member learns that a child has been abused or suspects that they may be abused in the future.
- A staff member is required to divulge records or information by a court. This would typically involve situations concerning the need for hospitalization, child custody and visitation rights, or personal injury lawsuits.

The above situations rarely happen, but it is important to understand the right to privacy and the limits on those rights. For those individuals or families who have been referred for special education evaluations from public school systems, physicians, or agencies, it should be understood that staff members may be asked to provide written and/or verbal feedback in the evaluation process. This information becomes part of the student record.

Questions regarding confidentiality should be directed to the principal.

DISMISSAL FROM SCHOOL - PARENT'S REQUEST

Parents are urged not to request the early dismissal of children from school except for medical or dental reasons. Dismissal for appointments or engagements that can be made outside of school hours is discouraged.

- a) A note or telephone call is required for early dismissal.
- b) Parents must pick up children at the school office and sign them out. Children will not be allowed to leave school alone for early dismissal.

DRESS CODE

Students are encouraged to dress and groom in a manner, which positively reflects the school and community and exhibits good taste. The school will enforce a dress code that complies with state and town ordinances concerning health and safety.

Hats are not to be worn in school.

EARLY RELEASE AND PARENT CONFERENCE DAYS

Throughout the school year we may have an early release for staff professional development (please see district calendar). We also have parent conference days in December and March. These days necessitate an earlier bus schedule. Children are released at 11:45AM and no lunch is served.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES, MONEY AND OTHER VALUABLES AT SCHOOL

When children bring money to school we ask that parents place the money in an envelope, include a note inside stating the reason for the money being sent, and include both the child's name and the teacher's name on the envelope.

We ask that children not bring large amounts of money or other valuable objects to school. We do not allow radios or expensive cameras without specific permission. We cannot assume responsibility for any damage or loss that may occur. Pokémon Cards, electronic equipment, and other objects identified by the Principal as inappropriate for school grounds will be confiscated and brought to the principal's office where parents may pick them up. Toys ought to be kept in locker or front table in classroom, only to be used at recess. Please discourage children from bringing toys to school at all.

FOOD CONCERNS

Because of food excesses, uncertainty of ingredients in baked goods, and diverse religious customs, we request that you not send food in at holiday times; teachers in many grades have food-related activities that relate to events in the curriculum – many times in Pre-School and Kindergarten, less frequent as the children get older. We will, from time to time, have a curriculum-related event, quiet reading time, or a math activity in which the teachers may ask for food items. Teachers need to take into account food allergies as they plan for the event as well as the district's wellness policy (see district parent handbook). We are asking parents to not send in any food or drink without first okaying it with the classroom teacher. These are always at the teacher's discretion and should be respected as such.

HOMEWORK

Homework assignments are used to reinforce, enrich, and to provide the student with the opportunity to prepare subject matter independently. Assignments vary according to grade level, but all students are expected to be responsible for their homework. Teachers will communicate with you their expectations, and frequencies of assigning this work.

Parents and Homework

Parents can help begin to train and develop independence and responsibility in their child or children concerning homework by:

- ** providing a specific place to do homework that is quiet, has enough workspace, and has proper light for good vision
- ** supervising and scheduling specific time for homework to be done
- ** asking to see completed homework
- ** being sure your child brings his/her homework and books back to school each morning

- ** informing the teacher when your child does not understand assignments or cannot do the work
- ** showing interest in your child's homework and other school experiences
- ** talking with, listening to, and doing things with your child
- ** avoid comparing your child with other children
- ** letting your child know you care about his/her success
- ** informing the school that another language other than English is spoken at home

HOMEWORK GUIDELINES

Homework is defined as out-of-class tasks assigned to students as an extension or elaboration of classroom work. There are three types of homework: practice, preparation, and extension.

- Practice assignments reinforce newly acquired skills. For example, students who have just learned a new method of solving a mathematical problem should be given sample problems to complete on their own. Practice means students are engaged in applying new learning, often repeatedly. The goal of practice is for students to get as close to mastery as possible.
- Preparation assignments help students get ready for activities that will occur in the classroom. Students may, for example, be required to do background research on a topic to be discussed later in class.
- Extension assignments are frequently long-term continuing projects that parallel classwork. Students must apply previous learning to complete these assignments, which include science fair projects and reports.

Research on homework indicates that it should be approached not as an afterthought to the school day, but as a focused strategy for increasing understanding. Knowing which of the type of homework is needed helps teachers design appropriate homework assignments. A homework assignment also may be an assignment that doesn't have a written component. It can be as simple as reading for 10 minutes, studying the week's spelling words, memorizing a home phone number or practicing number facts.... ☺

Assigning homework serves various educational needs. It serves as an intellectual discipline, establishes study habits, eases time constraints on the amount of curricular material that can be covered in class, and supplements and reinforces work done in school. In addition, it fosters student initiative, independence, and responsibility and brings home and school closer together.

At the Clifford M. Granger School the following are our *minimum* time requirements for homework by grade level.

K	5 min. X 4 days
1 st	10 min. X 4 days
2 nd	20 min. X 4 days
3 rd	30 min. X 4 days
4 th	40 min. X 5 days

Developed as a cooperative effort by the School Council, March 2011

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT TEAM or IST

Teachers can provide great support for each other. The Instructional Support Team is a problem solving group that provides teachers with ideas for working with students who are experiencing academic and/or behavioral difficulties. It also serves as an avenue for pre-referral to special education.

The ISTeam shall consist of:

- 1) Two regular education teachers
- 2) Principal
- 3) School Adjustment Counselor
- 4) Referring Teacher
- 5) A special education teacher
- 6) A speech pathologist (as needed)
- 7) Chapter 1 and/or reading specialist (as needed)
- 8) Occupational Therapist/Physical Therapist (as needed)
- 9) Nurse (as needed)

LOST AND FOUND

There is a lost and found box located at the back of the cafeteria. Parents are urged to visit the school and check for lost items. It is recommended that name labels be placed on clothing and that lunch boxes and backpacks be clearly marked with the children's names. At the end of the school year, all unclaimed articles are given to charity.

PARENT - TEACHER ORGANIZATION

The objective of the Granger School Parent/Teacher Organization is to promote the welfare of all children through a working partnership among parents, educators, and the community at large. The PTO, in cooperation with teachers and administrators, works to provide worthwhile programs for our students such as cultural arts assemblies. It conducts fundraisers in the fall and the spring to support student programs and assemblies. We encourage you to join the PTO in the wonderful work they do for our children by attending their monthly meetings. These meetings are always mentioned on the Granger Gazette calendars which go home near the beginning of each month with your child.

PARTIES IN THE CLASSROOM

Parties are held at the discretion of the classroom teacher on a limited basis and need to be connected with the instructional program.

PARTY INVITATIONS

We ask that children or parents do not distribute invitations to birthday or other parties at school in order to remain sensitive to children not invited to the party. Invitations brought to school for distribution will be returned to the child or parent by the class teacher.

REPORT CARDS

The purpose of report cards is to evaluate and assess children in a manner that communicates to parents and others the child's particular strengths, needs, and achievement level while taking into consideration individual learning styles and the standards and skills for their grade level. Three report cards are sent home each year, one the beginning of December, another late March and a third the last day of school. Conferences are scheduled following the first two report cards.

SCHOOL MATERIALS AND PROPERTY

The School Committee through its professional staff has identified appropriate materials to achieve its educational objectives at each grade level. These materials are provided by the Agawam Public Schools. Since the books and supplies are provided at public expense, it is expected that the children will be responsible for replacement of any materials that are lost or damaged beyond the reasonable ability to use the book or material during another school year.

Reimbursement is also expected in the event of damage to buildings, furniture, or equipment caused by misconduct or an act, which a given child would reasonably be expected to avoid.

SECURITY OF THE BUILDING

When visiting the school please report to the office. If you are dismissing your child please sign him or her out at the office and he or she will be called from the classroom. Please do not go directly to the classroom.

SCHOOL COUNCIL

The Granger School Council is an advisory council formed in response to the Massachusetts School Reform law. It is composed of the principal, two teacher representatives, three parents, and one community member. The Council works together formulating a yearly School Improvement plan articulating goals developed in conjunction with teachers, parents, administrators, and the community. Monthly meetings are held and open to all.

SCHOOL PICTURES

Each fall and spring all students have the opportunity to have their picture taken at the school. Information regarding the particulars is sent home prior to the scheduled sittings.

SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are always needed to carry on activities, work in the library, help teachers, monitor the playground, read aloud, etc. If you are interested and would like to assist, please call the school and find out how to become a school volunteer.

SUGGESTED HELP PROCEDURES FOR PARENTS

If during the course of the school year you have any concerns regarding you child, his or her teacher, or any other aspects of the school, you are requested to follow the suggested procedure. We hope this method of handling problems expedites matters.

As a rule, it is most effective to be direct and clear about your concern with the person who can most immediately meet your request. If it is an issue with a teacher, it is best to discuss it directly with the teacher first. If you need additional resolution, go next to the School Principal. Similarly, the best course of action is usually to allow the Principal an opportunity to resolve your concern, before going on to the Superintendent.

In general, you will find direct communication to the person closest to the situation is the best way to begin to resolve nearly every school related concern.

TARDINESS

Students are expected to be in school on time. If a student arrives at school after 8:30 A.M., he/she must report to the office.

TESTING

At the Clifford M. Granger School students are administered the GRADE or the Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation in the spring and the BAS or Benchmark Assessment System in the fall, winter, and spring. Grades three and four are tested in the spring of each year with the State Administered MCAS in the areas of Reading/English Language Arts and Mathematics.

TELEPHONE USE

We discourage children from using the school phones for personal reasons.

Phone calls from students to parents or from parents directly to students are reserved for emergencies only and must be approved by the main office.

TELEVISION USE

Television use is permissible when used for instruction or of generally “educational” content and in accordance with our district policies. By law, any video that does not include “public performance rights” (something the Agawam Public Schools purchased exclusively for classroom use) must comply with the “fair use” provision of copyright law as outlined in the attachment to this policy statement. This requires that videos:

1. Be used with students in “face-to-face” instruction with the teacher.
2. Be correlated to the Agawam Public Schools Curriculum Guides.
3. Be shown in a normal instructional setting.

The elementary schools may only show “G” rated videos to students in Grades PreK – 4.

VISITORS

Parents are always welcome to visit the school and their children’s classrooms and as a courtesy to the teacher and to be certain that your visit will coincide with an activity that you would like to see, we ask that they contact you, the teacher in advance of their visit.

All visitors to the school must enter through the main entrance and report to the main office to sign in and obtain a visitor’s badge by leaving their keys or license.

From time to time, the school receives requests to allow other visitors who may be cousins or friends from out of town to spend a day or even a week with us. We feel that this creates a tremendous responsibility for the elementary staff members and the administration. Therefore, we do not grant such requests.