

# **Cunniff Elementary School Pre-K & Kindergarten New Family Survival Guide**

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## **School Schedule**

### **Calendar**

A copy of the school calendar can be found on the main Watertown Public School webpage:

<http://www.watertown.k12.ma.us/>

The last day of school is not fixed at the start of the year. State law requires 180 days of instruction, and also requires that any snow days be made-up before June 30<sup>th</sup>. The yearly school calendar includes 5 snow days (185 days). The exact last day of school is determined by how many snow days are used during the year to reach 180 days.

### **Snow Closings and Delayed Openings**

They are broadcast on all major Boston local news outlets. You can sign up to receive free text or email alerts from some of these news stations as well:

WBZ- Boston (CBS) <http://boston.cbslocal.com/closings/>

WCVB – Boston (ABC) <http://www.wcvb.com/weather/closings>

WHDH – Boston (NBC) <http://whdh.com/school-closings>

FOX – Boston <http://www.fox25boston.com/weather/schoolclosings>

On delayed opening days (usually 2 hour delay) lunch is served at the usual times and dismissal is at the standard 2:30pm.

### **Spring Kindergarten Screening**

Each spring the next year's class of incoming Kindergarten students undergoes "screening days". This is a two-day event usually in early June. On these days, there are no Pre-K or Kindergarten classes since teachers are meeting the next year's students. This event is town wide, not just a Cuniff School event. The exact date of these days is usually determined in late spring by the town administration. Warning: there is generally only about 1 month of notice of which exact days that there will be no Pre-K or Kindergarten classes.

## **School Arrival and Dismissal Procedures**

### **School Hours**

Arrival at 8:15 a.m. and dismissal at 2:30 p.m.

### **Morning Drop-Off**

Pre-K and Kindergarten students line up outside their classroom door in the courtyard. Teachers monitor the students beginning at 8:05am, and parents are not required to wait in the courtyard after that time. At 8:15am students enter the building without their parents. If you arrive after the doors close you must enter through the main door in the front of the school.

In case of rain or extreme cold, students do not line up outside. On these days students enter the building anytime between 8:05 and 8:15 at the 1<sup>st</sup> grade entrance side door. This door is just past the courtyard towards the back of the school.

The cafeteria opens at 7:45 a.m. for breakfast. Parents are invited to join children for breakfast any day (no registration required). Students who are not participating in the breakfast program with family should not arrive prior to 8:05 a.m., as there is no supervision by staff outside until that time. Free and reduced breakfasts are available to qualifying students. Applications can be found at <https://sites.google.com/a/watertown.k12.ma.us/dept/food> and are also located on the wall just inside the main doors of the school on a shelf under the office window.

### **Dismissal**

Dismissal, regardless of weather, is at the student's classroom door in the courtyard at 2:30. On early dismissal days (teacher conference days, holidays) dismissal is at 12:15 in the same location. Pre-K and Kindergarten teachers will ensure that each child is picked up by a parent or other adult. If someone else will be picking up your child, it's helpful to send a note or email to the teacher to let them know.

If you need to have your child released from school early, you must send a note to the classroom teacher or call the office. An authorized adult, after reporting to the school office, must pick up your child. No child will be allowed to leave the school grounds without the authorization of a parent or legal guardian. The adult responsible for the student must sign the child out in the log at the school office.

### **Parking on Warren Street**

The lane in front of the school is for rolling pick-up and drop-off only. If you are planning to walk your child to/from the courtyard, you may park on Warren Street in front of the cemetery, on the opposite side of Warren Street, or one of the side streets. Please do not block any driveways. The parking lot is for school staff only, and should not be used for student drop-off or pick up.



## **School Absence and Illness**

### **Absences**

If your child is marked absent from school, you will receive an automated phone call letting you know that your child is absent. If your child is absent, no further action is needed. If you receive a call on a day your child is in school, call the office.

If you know in advance that your child will be absent, you may email your child's teacher to coordinate any plans for make-up work. In the case of illness or other unplanned absence, you may also want to email your child's teacher. You do not need to call the office, or report the absence.

### **Illness**

If your child becomes ill during the day, s/he will be sent to the school nurse. The nurse can provide basic first aid, and will assess whether or not a child is well enough to remain in class for the day. If the nurse determines that a child should not remain in class, parents will be called to come in for an early pickup.

Parents of students with allergies or other ongoing health conditions requiring the involvement of school staff should contact the nurse, Ms. Debbie Nolan at 617-926-9748.

## **Before School and Extended Day Programs**

Cunniff Extended Day Program (CEDP) has both before school and after school programs open for student enrollment 2, 3, 4, or 5 days per week.

The Before School Program begins the first day of school. Your child may be brought to the Program starting at 7:15 AM. There will be quiet activities, crafts and games as well as homework time as needed. Children will be escorted to the appropriate lines for the start of the school day.

The Extended Day Program begins right at school dismissal (normally 2:30pm). On special early dismissal days, CEDP begins at 12:15 with one exception: there is never CEDP the Wednesday before Thanksgiving Recess in November. This is always a 12:15 dismissal day with no after school care. Be prepared!

All information, including contacts and registration forms, can be found at the CEDP websites:

<https://sites.google.com/a/watertown.k12.ma.us/dept/extended-day-programs/cunniff>

Applications are also located on the wall just inside the front main doors of the school on a shelf under the office window. You can also speak directly with the Extended Day Coordinator at school any day starting at 2pm.

### **School Lunch and Morning Snack**

Each student brings a morning snack from home. This snack is eaten in the classroom. This snack must be “nut free”.

Students can either bring a lunch from home or purchase lunch in the cafeteria. Packed lunches may contain peanuts and/or tree nuts (only classroom morning snack is “nut free”). The school menu and prices can be found on the food menus link on the right of the Watertown Public School web page: <http://www.watertown.k12.ma.us/>

Free and reduced lunches are available to qualifying students. Applications can be found at the above link and are also located on the wall just inside the main doors of the school on a shelf under the office window. All information is kept confidential.

Students can pay cash for their meal or use the debit system. Every student is given a unique 4 digit PIN when they start school. When a student purchases lunch, they enter their PIN at checkout and their account is debited the cost of their items. The system automatically adjusts prices for qualifying students when they enter their PIN. Don't worry - teachers have a list of each student's PIN information and help the younger students until they become familiar with the system and memorize their number.

Money can be added by sending a check in your child's school folder made out to “Watertown Food Services” (teachers will pass it along to the cafeteria staff). You may also bring the check, in person, to the cafeteria between 7:45 and 8:15 a.m. A minimum \$10 starting balance is required.

### **Instructional Specials**

Students will have ‘specials’ each day throughout the week. Teachers will notify families of their class schedule at the beginning of the school year. Gym is held two days per week, and students must wear (or bring) sneakers on these days. Music, Art, and Library/Computer Technology each meet one day per week. Students are able to check out a library book each week. Books should be put in your child's backpack for return on library day the following week. Students who do not bring their books back will not be able to check out additional books until the overdue book is returned.

**Lost and Found**

Any items left in your child's classroom will be kept by the teacher or put into their cubby in the hallway for students. Any items found elsewhere (hallway, playground, gym, cafeteria, etc.) will be placed in the Lost and Found box. Students or parents may look for items in the Lost and Found box before and after school. Currently the box resides in the cafeteria. By the end of winter this box is a treasure trove of single mittens, sweatshirts, hats, snow pants and boots.

## **Volunteering at School – CORI**

There are many opportunities to volunteer during the year in both your child's class (guest reader, adult helper for holiday parties, etc) and in the main school building (cafeteria helper, field day activities, etc). Massachusetts requires any adult working inside the school obtain a local police background check to ensure the safety of all students and staff. This process is called CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information). Stop by the main office at any time and bring your driver's license. The secretary will make a copy of your license and submit the necessary paperwork. Your CORI must be renewed every 3 years.

## **PTO**

Cunniff Elementary School Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is a parent lead group that works directly with the principal and Cunniff faculty to improve and enhance the academic and social experience of the students at our school. Money raised by the PTO helps fund field trips for every grade. It pays for enrichment programs like hands-on science exhibits, authors-in-residence, and special music guests. The PTO has purchased needed school supplies for teachers, a Smart Board for upper grade classroom use, and incubators for the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade chick hatching projects. The PTO also sponsors annual Halloween haunted house party and Field Day events. Participation in all PTO fundraisers is completely optional but support is always needed and appreciated.

The PTO officially meets for one hour once per month and open to anyone that wants to attend. Class representatives from each Kindergarten class are needed as well. These representatives are responsible for passing along information to the rest of the families and helping to get volunteers for various events. Class reps do not do all the volunteering – just help to solicit volunteers and get parents involved!

PTO meetings are a great opportunity to hear from Principal Ms. Ciarlone, and to learn more about upcoming programs, facilities improvements, and more. Also watch for notices in your child's backpack for ~monthly coffee sessions with the principal, typically held on Friday mornings at 8:30. These sessions are a way to hear from Ms. Ciarlone about what is happening in the school, as well as meet teacher specialists and support teams.

To get information on upcoming events or to volunteer, visit the PTO webpage at [www.cunniffpto.com](http://www.cunniffpto.com).