



# PARENT - STUDENT HANDBOOK

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## Foreword

Welcome to Peter M. Gombert Elementary School. We recognize that a successful district is one that has the cooperation of students, parents, and school personnel. This Parent-Student Handbook was prepared to inform students and parents about the school's policies and procedures. Parents will be asked to acknowledge familiarity with the policies and procedures in the handbook.

Please note: you may notice this handbook is much shorter than in previous years. We have removed most sections which already appear in the district Parent-Student Handbook, which may be accessed online at <http://www.ipSD.org/handbook/>

*The information presented in this handbook is considered accurate at the time of printing. However, circumstances and school board policy could change after printing. Parents and students will be notified through the school of any policy changes to the information in this handbook.*

## Philosophy

Every student has the right to a comprehensive, meaningful education and the right to be treated with respect and dignity. Each student is unique, learns at a different rate, and has different needs. As a result, the district offers learning opportunities to meet the needs of all students while developing the knowledge, skills, and experiences that will enable our students to be successful learners.

## Gombert's Mission Statement

In an atmosphere where the values and diversity of our community are celebrated, our mission is to ensure that every learner exemplifies the qualities of independence, innovation, inquisitiveness, confidence and respect.

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## Allergies

If your child suffers from allergies, especially specific food allergies please contact Gombert's nurse.

## Animals

In consideration of allergies and personal safety, Gombert asks students and families to refrain from bringing animals to school or onto school grounds.

## Arrival and Dismissal

Students are admitted to the building upon their arrival between 8:50 and 9:00 a.m. with school starting promptly at 9:05 a.m. Students on school property are expected to enter the building at their assigned door and go directly to their classrooms. For safety reasons, students are NOT to play on the playground equipment before school begins. There is no supervision prior to students' entering the building. **Students should not arrive before 8:50 a.m.**

**EXCEPTION: On Wednesdays, all elementary schools will have a student arrival time of 9:00 a.m., ten minutes later than the other four weekdays.** Teachers participate in a weekly

professional development sessions. This set block of time occurs each Wednesday before school. The start of the school day is adjusted each Wednesday morning to accommodate this program. **School buses will pick up students from their homes 10 minutes later than on the other four school days. The school day will still end at the regular time, 3:35 pm.** School will begin promptly at 9:15. If you require your child to be at school at the regular time (8:50) due to a work conflict, you may contact the main office to make other arrangements.

The neighborhood bus stops are not supervised by school personnel. Your diligence in monitoring your child at the bus stop will help insure the safety and well-being of our students. Thank you for your help and cooperation.

### **Attendance**

Attendance is maintained in the eSchool student information system. Students' absences should be reported to the office by 9:10 a.m. The school office will contact families of a student absence which has not been reported. The administration monitors attendance regularly. The Regional Office Guidelines state that 5% or more is considered truant.

### **Birthdays**

A student's birthday is a special day. Each classroom honors the child in a manner appropriate for the grade level. Due to allergies and other health concerns, **no birthday treats are allowed.** Invitations are allowed to be passed out in school if the entire class is invited or if all the boys or all the girls in the child's homeroom class are invited. Please note: School personnel will not provide names and addresses of students. Thank you for your cooperation!

### **Bicycles, Scooters, "Hover" boards, & Skateboards**

Students who ride bikes, scooters, or skateboards to school must walk once they reach school property: carrying skateboards or pushing bikes and scooters. **"Hover" boards are not permitted on school property (district-wide) at all.** These devices are powered by lithium-ion batteries. There have been many documented cases of them spontaneously igniting and catching fire. As they present a safety hazard, they are not allowed on school grounds or within the building.

### **Building Security**

In order to ensure your children's safety, once school begins all doors are secured. Visitors are always welcome and are asked to check in at the office to receive a visitor's badge. All visitors will be asked to provide identification.

### **Bullying**

Gombert was one of the first schools to pilot the bully prevention program entitled, Stop Walk Talk. We take bullying very seriously. If your child is feeling bullied please alert your child's teacher and or the administration immediately.

### **Electronics**

Unless your student's class is participating in BYOT activities, we kindly ask that all electronic devices in addition to any other distractions be left at home. We find that such devices distract from the daily instruction and successes of our students.

### Field Trips

When a field trip takes the students out of the building over the lunch period the procedures for lunch is as follows: Students who receive a free and reduced lunch will have a brown paper sack lunch provided with their name on it. We ask that all other students bring their lunches in a disposable sack with their name on it also.

### Grading Scale/Report Cards/Progress Reports

Grades are an evaluation of current achievement of grade level objectives, not potential, or social performance. Effort attitude, cooperation, behavior, etc. are also noted on report cards and are often commented upon by teachers. Teachers use frequent and ongoing assessment in determining grades. Components of these grades will reflect numerous and varied age appropriate opportunities for students to succeed and demonstrate learning. Components of grades include: Tests and quizzes, daily work, special projects, assignments, class participation and discussion. The following grading scales have been established for all District 204 students:

Grades 1&2	Grades 3, 4, & 5	Effort
S+ demonstrates strength	A 91-100	O outstanding
S satisfactory progress	B 81-90	S satisfactory
U unsatisfactory progress	C 71-80	U unsatisfactory
I showing improvement	D 65-70	NA not applicable
N needs to improve	F 64 and below	

### Heat Plan for Non-Air-Conditioned Buildings

The district monitors internal/room temperatures in non-air-conditioned schools throughout hot days. When the temperature exceeds the recommended guidelines of safety, which is when the Effective Temperature calculation (ET) reaches 85 degrees, we recommend the following early dismissal plan for students be implemented at the non-air-conditioned buildings.

Two examples of the Effective Temperature calculation (ET) follow:

- when the inside temperature is 92 °F with 70% relative humidity which results in an ET of 85°F
- when the inside temperature is 100°F with 30% relative humidity which results in an ET of 85°F.

The decision to have early dismissal will be made by the superintendent by 12 noon.

- It will apply to all non-air-conditioned buildings.
- Parents will be notified via the Connect ED emergency phone system.
- Dismissal will be at 1 p.m.

Principals will maintain a routine for relief on hot days that includes rotating classes through air conditioned rooms, utilizing the gym for second floor classes, and moving outside when appropriate.

### Homework

During the course of the 2008-2009 school year, the District #204 elementary school principals conducted an in-depth study on the topic of homework in order to guarantee that the district was current with best practices. Several interesting results were found. They included:

- The focus on the purpose of homework should be student learning not compliance. Teachers know that certain learning skills require practice to perfect, and often homework is used for practice. Research confirms that mastering a skill requires focused practice (Marzano et. al, 2001.)
- Research does seem to verify that a small amount of homework may be good for learning, but too much homework may be bad for learning. Up to a point, homework appears positive, but past the optimal amount, achievement either remains flat or declines. Curiously, the research about the appropriate amount of homework for different grade levels is already consistent with an informal guideline that many teachers already practice – the “ten minute” rule (Cooper, 2007.)
- All homework can be used to check for understanding if we convince students not to be threatened by grades. Grades are not necessary for learning to take place. Grades on homework often get in the way of learning, demotivate students, and create power struggles between students and teachers and between students and parents (Guskey, 2003).
- The goal of assessment of learning should be to keep failure at a minimum and to maintain learner’s confidence – the opposite occurs when homework is graded. The most important question to ask about grading homework is “What is the effect on future learning?” (Stiggins, 2007.) Priority must be given to tasks that do not cause students to give up.
- All homework should receive feedback. Moving from grading to feedback encourages student ownership of learning. Allowing students to take control of their learning makes learning personal (Guskey and Anderson, 2008.)

As a result of these findings, the principals with input from the teachers revised the District #204 homework statement in order to confirm that reasonable time-limited homework, which provides feedback to our students, is still important to the learning process. Although homework will not be graded, the practice it provides is key to the learning process. Generally, most students will not receive good grades if they do not practice.

### *Homework Tips for Parents*

Facilitating the learning of your child is the primary focus of the District #204 elementary staff. As a result, we understand the importance of an on-going partnership with our parents and students as they attempt school work at home. The following guidelines and tips are offered to assist you and your child to be successful. Parents are encouraged to .....

- Ask your child what they are studying in school.
- Ask your child to show you homework assignments.
- Assist your child in organizing homework materials.
- Help your child formulate a plan for completing homework.
- Provide an appropriate space for your child to do homework.
- Parents may if they wish.....
- Help your child interpret assignment directions.
- Proof read your child’s work, pointing out errors.
- Read aloud required reading to your child.

- Give practice quizzes to your child to help prepare for tests.
- Help your child brainstorm ideas for papers or projects.
- Praise your child for completing homework.
- Parents should not.....
- Attempt to teach your child concepts or skills the child is unfamiliar with.
- Complete assignments for your child.
- Allow your child to sacrifice sleep to complete homework.

Contact the teacher if.....

- Your child refuses to do their assignment
- Instructions are unclear
- Your child can't seem to get organized to finish assignments
- You can't provide the needed supplies or materials
- Neither you nor your child understand the purpose of the assignments (Vatterot, 2009) (Pandu, 2005)

## **Illness**

### ***WHEN TO KEEP YOUR CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL***

Parents sometimes have difficulty deciding whether their child is too ill to attend school. In no way are we saying that children should be kept home for every complaint, but there are some definite symptoms that warrant staying home from school. Your child is too ill to go to school if he or she has any of the following symptoms:

1. Vomiting and/or diarrhea within the past 24 hours
2. Fever-if your child has a temperature of 100° (or higher) now or in the past 24 hours he/she may not attend school. Children are to be fever-free for 24 hours, without the use of fever reducing medication, before returning to school.
3. Shortness of breath or wheezing (not controlled with an inhaler if he/she has asthma)
4. A cough that interrupts his/her normal activity, sleep, or wakes other family members at night
5. Rash
6. Drainage from the eye
7. Severe sore throat

## **Item Drop Off**

If your child forgot something at school and you need to bring it for him or her please make sure your child's name and his or her teacher's name is on the item and drop it off at the office.

## **Lunch**

Our food service operation is located in the multi-purpose room. Students may purchase a variety of hot and cold entrée menu choices. All schools have a debit card system. This system gives students and parents the opportunity to pay for their meals in advance. This can be done by making a payment at the school or online using a credit card or debit card. Once the payment is completed, the student will be able to use their lunch cards to pay for their meals. Parents and students will be able to view their balance via the Internet. Students may also bring their own lunch. Aramark is our meal service provider. MealpayPlus is the online payment plan.

We will have a thirty-five minute lunch/recess period for grades K-5. Kindergarten students will be given a slightly longer lunchtime until they become comfortable with the schedule and are not rushed while eating. More detailed information is available in the school office or on the District 204 Web site at [www.ipds.org](http://www.ipds.org). Good manners are essential. Please review the following rules.

1. Walk in the lunchroom.
2. Remain in your seat until you have permission to leave.
3. Talk at a low, conversational level.
4. Raise your hand to ask for assistance.
5. Never throw food.
6. Do not exchange food with other students.
7. Clear the tables and floor.
8. Discard all garbage and recyclables into the proper containers.

### **Money**

Occasionally your child may need to bring money to school to pay for a school related fee. It is requested that school activities, for example a field trip, and or school items, such as a field day shirt, are paid for with a check. The school will not be held responsible for money that is lost in school.

### **Nutritional Snack**

It is important that your child can concentrate while at school. Please provide your child with a healthy daily snack.

### **Open House & Curriculum Night**

We love having visitors and there are many opportunities for families to visit Gombert. We do ask that curriculum night be for parents only. Open House takes place in February and is open to both students and families. For all other evening events please check the invitation for specific details.

### **Parent–Teacher Conferences**

Parent –Teacher conferences are scheduled during the course of the year. Parents may also contact the school of their child's teacher if they feel a special conference is necessary.

### **Recess/Playground**

All students are expected to go out for recess unless a doctor's excuse is on file. Doctor's notes excusing physical activity will apply to both PE and recess. Be sure that your child is dressed appropriately for the weather. Students will go outside unless the actual temperature or the wind chill temperature is **5 degrees**. Temperature and wind chill data are obtained from WeatherBug.com. Students are expected to dress appropriately for winter weather recess with hats, gloves, boots and winter coats. Snow pants are required in the winter to play in the snow. Students are asked to leave toys and sports equipment (e.g. balls, ropes) at home as the school will not be responsible for loss or damage. Gombert provides equipment for many activities during recess.



Bad weather and black top conditions dictate the frequency of indoor recesses, and we typically have several.

Recess is provided to allow students some well-needed exercise after their academic morning. Recess supervision is provided by hired, trained recess supervisors.

### **School Closings**

Please monitor local television stations for school closing. Please be aware that while closing information is given to radio stations as quickly as possible, it is at the discretion of each station to decide when and whether it airs the notifications. **Parents may find out about their child's specific school by calling the Emergency Closing Center Hotline at 1-847-238-1234.** Begin by dialing the Hotline number, then enter the school's main phone number, beginning with the area code. Information for additional schools can be obtained by staying on the line and entering the area code and the main number of the school.

Parents can also check the Emergency Closing Center's web site at:

<http://www.emergencyclosings.com>.

School closing notices will also go out via the Connect ED telephone system.

### **Sign In/Sign Out**

For the safety of our students we ask that when you take your child out of class please be sure to sign them out in the office and resign them in if he or she returns to the building. Signing a child out within the last fifteen minutes of school interrupts their education and is a safety concern due to the traffic patterns around the school building.

### **Valuables**

Students are cautioned not to bring large amounts of money, cameras, or other valuables to school or on field trips. The school is not responsible for articles that are lost or stolen. Students should not leave valuables at school, in the gym, or in lockers.

### **Visitors to School Buildings**

Parents are encouraged to visit schools; however, unless a visit is in response to a general invitation or a special event, such visits should be scheduled in advance with your child's teacher or the building principal. We ask for your cooperation in presenting your valid Illinois ID or Driver's License when entering a school. Visitors' IDs will be returned when they leave the building. The school staff will physically hold all visitors' IDs, so in an emergency, first responders can quickly know who is in the building. If you are attending a school event during school hours, please arrive a few minutes early in order to allow for time to have your ID scanned and an ID badge printed.