

**W.L. Miller
Elementary School
2015-16**

Parent Handbook



Dear Parents/Guardians,

I'd like to take the opportunity to welcome you to the 2015-16 school year at W.L. Miller Elementary School. Our staff and faculty have been working hard to prepare for the new year and we are looking forward to working with your family.

We have developed this booklet as a resource for you to answer some frequently asked questions about the day-to-day procedures at W.L. Miller Elementary School. We hope you find it helpful. As always, please let us know if there are any additional questions we can answer.

Sincerely,

Patricia White
Principal

Warren L. Miller Elementary

“Inspire wonder, limitless achievement”

Our vision:

In our vision, Warren L. Miller Elementary will inspire a learning community where students and adults wonder, learn and acquire a measurable education based on an interdisciplinary approach. A learners’ progress will be evaluated through ongoing assessment showing clear evidence of movement toward positive growth. Students will extend and transfer learning to their home and communities in the quest of developing intrinsically motivated learners.

Our Inspiration:

“Inspire wonder, limitless achievement”

Our Goals:

- Curriculum: A curriculum model that applies information from more than one discipline to examine a central theme, topic, issue or problem.
- Communication: To develop public awareness and strengthen relationships with families and community through a reciprocal relationship.
- School Safety: To create a safe, responsible and respectful environment which enables students to grow and achieve.

What are the school hours?

8:00 Doors open for students
8:20 School begins
2:55 K-1 walkers are dismissed
3:02 All other walkers dismissed
3:05 First bus group dismissed
3:10 Second bus group dismissed

****The doors are unlocked at 8:00 a.m. and students can then go to homeroom or get breakfast. We ask that parents not drop students off before this time.**

Where can I drop my child off in the morning?

Our first priority is your child's safety and the safety of others. If you drive your child to school in the morning, please enter through Dorsett Drive and follow the arrows to let student out at the crosswalk. If you are walking your child into the building, please park in the church parking lot. **The bus loop is reserved for buses from 7:55-8:20. Please do not park in the bus loop during this time, even if there are no buses in the loop.** We have several buses that provide special transportation that arrive late.

How are students dismissed?

Students in multiage (k-1) who do not ride the bus are dismissed to a parent/adult at the front lobby by a teacher. All other students who do not ride a bus are dismissed at the east end of the building by Holy Child Church. If you will be picking up your child, you can meet them in the front lobby, the church parking lot or along Dorsett Drive. **The bus loop is not to be used from 3:00-3:20 p.m.**

What if I need to change my child's dismissal plan?

Changes to dismissal plans should be sent in via a note to the office in the morning. Students riding a bus other than their regular bus will be required to get a bus pass. Please note that some of our buses are full and we may be unable to accommodate additional riders. Last minute changes to dismissal plans, while sometimes necessary, are stressful to students and disrupt the school day. We ask that you please limit dismissal changes to those that are absolutely necessary. **We are also requesting that changes to dismissal plans do not occur after 2:30 p.m. to allow time for the message to get to your child.**

How are absences/late arrivals handled?

Regular school attendance is a vital component of your child's success in school and is mandated by Pennsylvania law. The only acceptable reasons for absence according to the law are illness, serious illness or death in the immediate family, religious holidays, impassable roads and family trips for which the building principal has given prior written approval.

Any student arriving after 8:20 a.m. will be marked tardy. Students arriving to school late must be signed in at the office by an adult. Your student will not be marked tardy if arrival by school provided transportation is later than 8:20 a.m.

Tardy = Missing a block of up to one hour anytime during the day

Partial absence = Missing more than one hour, but less than two hours

½ day absence = Missing more than two hours, but not a full school day

Full day absence = Missing the entire school day

All students must provide a written excuse the day he/she returns to school describing the reason for the absence to avoid the absence being labeled as unlawful. A doctor's note may be required for each absence exceeding three consecutive days and will be required for each absence after fifteen days.

Once a student has exceeded ten absences, a parent contact will be made to determine the need for the exceptional amount of absences. Once a student has exceeded fifteen absences, parents will be notified that a doctor's note will be required for each day's absence thereafter.

How do I update my contact information?

Any changes to your contact information or the information of the contacts listed in case you are unavailable should be updated in the office. Please keep this information up-to-date so that you can be contacted in case of emergency.

How does the school lunch program work?

Our lunch program is outsourced to Nutrition, Inc. Free and reduced lunch applications are sent home at the beginning of the school year but applications can be completed any time. Applications can also be completed online at <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/>

Payments for school lunch can be made online at <https://www.myschoolbucks.com> or by sending money in a labeled envelope to your child's homeroom teacher. If using the online system you will be alerted to low balances and can monitor what your child purchases. There is a fee for the online payment option.

Lunch Price:

Paid: \$2.20

Reduced: \$0.40

Breakfast Price:

Paid: \$1.25

Reduced: \$.30

Please direct any questions regarding school lunches to Tammy Stough, Food Service Director, Nutrition Inc. 570-638-2183 ext. 315 or nutrition@southerntioga.org.

Volunteers

Our school is enriched and our students' experiences enhanced through our partnerships with families and community members. We place a high value on those partnerships and have many opportunities for families and community members to get involved in our programs.

Volunteers must have current clearances and be approved by the Southern Tioga School Board. Information regarding the application process to become a volunteer is located on the STSD website (southerntioga.org) under the heading, "Parent Resources". This process does take time, so if you are interested in volunteering, you are encouraged to complete the application as soon as possible.

How are school health services utilized?

Food Allergies/Intolerances

If your child has food allergies or intolerances, dietary modifications can be provided. Please request a Dietary Medical form from the school nurse to take to your health care provider for completion.

Medical Concerns

It is important that you notify the school nurse of any medical problems or concerns that your child may have, including allergies to foods, medications and/or insects.

Body Mass Index (BMI)

The child's Body Mass Index (BMI) will be calculated from your child's height and weight measurements and you will be notified. This BMI notification is a mandatory requirement by the state. BMI is used as a screening tool to identify possible weight problems for children. CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommend the use of the BMI to screen for weight problems in children.

Dental Examinations

Dental examinations are required in Kindergarten and 3rd grade. School dental screenings are provided, free of charge, by the certified school dental hygienist. In lieu of the school screening, a private dental report may be submitted to meet this mandate.

Medical Examinations

Pennsylvania Public School Code requires physical examinations in first and sixth grades. Physicals done by a family physician within one year prior to entry into the grade where an examination is required and recorded on a state form is acceptable by state regulations. Forms may be obtained through the school nurse.

Examinations will be given, free of charge, by a Laurel Health physician's assistant during the school year. Parents/guardians who choose to have their child examined in the school by the school provider will be notified of the time and date of the examination.

Over The Counter Medications

The nurse may administer the following over the counter medications: Tylenol, Benadryl, ibuprofen, and antacids. The medication must be provided by the parent with consent. Medications must be in the original package and clearly labeled with your child's name. The medication should not be sent to school with the child. The form can be found on the district website at

http://southerntioga.org/parent_resources/f_o_r_m_s.

Prescription Medications

Any prescription medications that need to be given at school require a written order from the health care provider who prescribed the medication as well as a signature from the parent or guardian. These forms are available from the nurse. Medications must be in the original, labeled, prescription bottle, and may not be sent with the student. The form can be found on the district website at

http://southerntioga.org/parent_resources/f_o_r_m_s.

Screenings

The Pennsylvania Department of Health mandates that every child of school age be weighed, measured and have a vision screening annually. In addition, hearing screenings are given in grades, K, 1, 2, and 3. Also, sixth graders are evaluated for scoliosis.

If you receive a referral form after any school screening, it means that the screening detected a possible concern. Further evaluation by a professional health care provider is recommended. Please have your private health care provider, dentist, or eye doctor complete the form after evaluating your child. Return the completed form to the school nurse. The form can be found on the district website at http://southerntioga.org/parent_resources/f_o_r_m_s.

Emergency Drills

Your child's safety is our first priority and being prepared for an emergency is vital to ensuring that students remain safe if a situation presents itself. We practice different emergency drills throughout the school year including fire drills, severe weather drills and a lock down drill. Our staff is sensitive to the emotional impact the drills can have on young students and do our best to prepare the students for the drills in an age-appropriate manner.

Dress Code

HEAD

Hats, caps, bandanas and/or hoods are not to be worn in the building. Administrative permission may be given under special circumstances.

FEET

Students are active during the day. Please make sure footwear is appropriate for recess/gym. **Flip-flops should not be worn to school.** They are unsafe on the playground and frequently break leaving student with no shoes to wear during the day.



SHORTS/SKIRTS/DRESSES

All shorts, skirts and dresses must be an appropriate length (fingertip).

SHIRTS

All shirts must be long enough to cover the midriff. No tank tops, muscle shirts or spaghetti straps are permitted.

How will the school communicate with me?

Communicating with parents and families is a high priority for the faculty and staff at WLM. While we have several methods of sharing information with you, we recognize that communication requires a means for sharing and collaborating. We encourage you to join our Parent Teacher Organization, volunteer in your child's classroom or other places throughout the school community. We also encourage you to contact us when you have concerns/questions/feedback.

We have many avenues to try to assure that you stay informed. School-wide methods are listed below, but each teacher or grade-level will have additional modes of communication that will be shared with you as well.

Facebook/Twitter

You can follow our school on both Facebook and Twitter. Upcoming events, cancellations, and exciting happenings will be posted on these pages. At this time, this is a one-way method of communication. If you have questions about anything you see on Facebook/Twitter, please email Mrs. White at pwhite@southerntioga.org to ensure that your questions get answered. Look for us on Facebook at Warren L. Miller Elementary and on Twitter @WLM_Elem.

Remind

Remind is another tool that allows a text to be sent directly to your phone. This is a great tool to have for reminders of early dismissal days, late starts due to weather, school events, etc. Follow the link to sign up! <http://tinyurl.com/plofpvh>

Monthly Newsletters

Newsletters are posted monthly on the school's website. Follow the link under "Schools" from southerntioga.org. In order to conserve resources, the newsletter is not printed. If you do not have access to the internet, you may request a hard copy from the office.

Notes Home

Notes are sometimes sent home from the office and more frequently from teachers. Please make sure that you check your child's folder daily.

Email/Phone Calls

Using email/phone calls is a great way for you to communicate with us. Please keep in mind that teachers' ability to access these tools is limited during the school day when they are teaching, so it may take a little time for them to get back to you. Employee emails follow this format: John Jones = jjones@southerntioga.org

Sapphire

Southern Tioga School District is in the process of transitioning to a new student data management system called Sapphire. This system will replace several different software programs including e-schoolbooks. You will be able to access your child's grades and communicate with teachers using this program. More information regarding access as well as training opportunities will be coming shortly.

What are the expectations of behavior?

W.L. Miller utilizes School Wide Positive Behavior Support. Like academic skills, we believe that behavioral expectations must be taught. Most students meet the expectations easily and others need additional supports in order to be successful. We have three expectations for all students in all settings: Be Safe, Be Responsible & Be Respectful. These expectations are taught to every child in each area and practiced the first week of school and repeated as necessary. Positive behavior is rewarded using Tiger Bucks and through our W.L.M. School Store. A behavior matrix is attached to this document.

Social and Emotional Learning

While we believe having common language and behavioral expectations throughout the school community is important, and rewards have their place, we also know that intrinsic motivation is the key to student success. **Caring School Community** (<https://www.collaborativeclassroom.org/caring-school-community>) is the curriculum we use to promote Social and Emotional Learning. We recognize that students experience greater academic success when they are an integral part of a supportive community that respects differences. Short lessons are taught in the format of class meetings. The core principles of this program include:

- **Actively creating and supporting an inclusive, caring, and safe learning community.**
- **The integration of social and emotional learning into academic instruction.**
- **Lessons that build on and support students' intrinsic motivation.**
- **Learning situations that center on students' thinking and action.**

Here is a great resource for parents regarding social and emotional learning:

<http://tinyurl.com/k8lkqah>