

Family Handbook 2026-2027



Ridgely Elementary School

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Springfield, Illinois 62702

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<http://www.sps186.org>

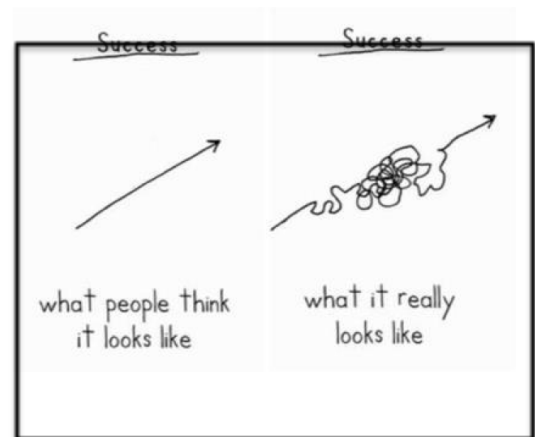


Dear Students:

It is amazing what you can do when you decide to put your mind to something. This handbook is just for you and your grown-ups!

Great things come to those who make smart decisions. At Ridgely, we celebrate good choices by honoring students with awards such as the Book of Pride, Students of the Week, Students of the Month, Kiwanis Terrific Kids, Star Students, Compliment Cards, Student Leaders and other kinds of recognitions and prizes. However, the best reward of all is that feeling you have when you know you are making a positive difference by making good choices. That is what makes us proud of you!

We hope that you will remember that your future is as exciting and rewarding as the choices you make. If you want to be a star at Ridgely, we have the confidence that you will be and we will work with you to help you shine. You can do it!



Have a wonderful year!
Mrs. Butcher

Goals for Life



I CAN be okay, even when others are not okay.



I CAN make good choices even when I am mad.



**I CAN do something even if I don't want to (or if it
is too hard).**

Safe Seat

Come on back
Take a chill
Get yourself together
BUT pay attention still.



Take a Break

1. Sit down and think about your choice.
2. How can you fix it?
3. Come back calm and ready to learn.

IS IT BULLYING?

NOT NICE

When someone says or does something **unintentionally** hurtful and they only do it **once**...

That is **Not Nice**

MEAN

When someone says or does something **intentionally** hurtful and they do it **once**...

That is **Mean**

BULLYING

When someone says or does something **intentionally** hurtful and they **keep doing it**, over a period of time, even when you tell them to stop or show them that you are upset...

That is **Bullying**



Our Ridgely Expectations

Respect Yourself

- ✧ Ignore distractions.
- ✧ Use active listening.
- ✧ Walk at all times.
- ✧ Stop, name your feeling, calm down.



Respect Others

- ✧ Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
- ✧ Follow adult directions the 1st time.
- ✧ Use "Ridgely" language.
- ✧ Use the STEP model to problem solve.



Respect Property

- ✧ Safely use materials and furniture as intended.
- ✧ Clean up after yourself.
- ✧ Treat property with care.
- ✧ Leave toys at home.

Ridgely Classroom Expectations

Respect Yourself

- ✧ Follow classroom expectations.
- ✧ Ask for help when needed.
- ✧ Always give your best effort.



Respect Others

- ✧ Stay in assigned area.
- ✧ Pay attention to the speaker.
- ✧ Encourage classmates.
- ✧ Use empathy and be kind.
- ✧ Appropriate voice level (teacher discretion).

Respect Property

- ✧ Ask permission before you use someone else's items.
- ✧ Keep your space organized.

Ridgely Bus Expectations

Respect Yourself

- ✧ Keep your bottom in your seat and face forward.
- ✧ Enter and exit the bus with walking feet.



Respect Others

- ✧ Report BIG problems to the bus driver.
- ✧ Use Level 1 voice.
- ✧ Use Level 0 voice at a railroad.
- ✧ Follow the bus driver's directions.



Respect Property

- ✧ Save food or drink for home.
- ✧ Keep the aisle clear and use it ONLY when entering or exiting the bus.
- ✧ Keep personal items on your lap, in between your feet, or on the seat.
- ✧ Keep electronic devices in your backpack.

Ridgely Arrival Expectations

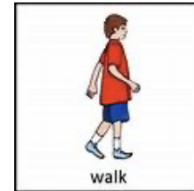
Respect Yourself

- ✧ Enter the building with walking feet.
- ✧ If you're choosing breakfast, eat before going to the gym.
- ✧ Coats and bookbags stay on your body.
- ✧ Read a book.
- ✧ Ask permission to use the restroom and use a pass.



Respect Others

- ✧ Stay in assigned area.
- ✧ Be kind with words and actions.
- ✧ All electronics powered off and in bookbags.
- ✧ Walk to your class line and sit in number order.
- ✧ Greet others kindly.
- ✧ Use Voice level 1.



Respect Property

- ✧ Keep your backpack on your back.
- ✧ Keep cell phones at home or turned off in your backpack.
- ✧ Keep toys at home.

Ridgely Dismissal Expectations

Respect Yourself

- ✧ Be ready at the appropriate time.
- ✧ Listen to and follow your supervisor's instructions.
- ✧ Pack all essential items for home.

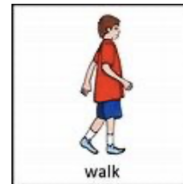
Respect Others

- ✧ Use Voice level 0.
- ✧ Wear or carry your backpack properly.
- ✧ Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.



Respect Property

- ✧ Keep your backpack on your back.
- ✧ Keep hands, backpacks, and feet off the walls.



Ridgely Cafeteria Expectations

Respect Yourself

- ✧ Be ready and select what you need.
- ✧ Eat your own food ONLY. No sharing.
- ✧ Enter the cafeteria in LINE ORDER. Exception-SOTW may be at front w/ their chosen peer (to eat on stage).
- ✧ Raise your hand if you need assistance or to get up.
- ✧ Ask permission to use the restroom and use a pass.



Respect Others

- ✧ Use Level 1 voice.
- ✧ Use Level 0 voice when the lights turn off.
- ✧ Once you are seated, remain seated.

Respect Property

- ✧ Keep all food in the cafeteria.
- ✧ If you touch it, you take it. Only touch items that you are going to eat.
- ✧ Clean up after yourself.
- ✧ Take trays and garbage to the trash can.
- ✧ Use trays appropriately.



Ridgely Restroom Expectations

Respect Myself

- ✧ Stay upright (no crawling on the floor or laying down).
- ✧ Wash and dry your hands.
- ✧ Remain in your own space.
- ✧ Let an adult know if there is a problem.
- ✧ Use the bathroom in a timely manner.
- ✧



Respect Others

- ✧ Flush toilets.
- ✧ Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
- ✧ Respect the privacy of others.
- ✧ Wait your turn.
- ✧ Use Voice level 0.

Respect My Building

- ✧ Use only what you need.
- ✧ Put paper towels in the trash can.
- ✧ Keep walls and floors clean.
- ✧ Clean up after yourself.
- ✧ Flush the toilet.



Ridgely Playground Expectations

Respect Yourself

- ✧ Keep coat on (if applicable)
- ✧ Chasing games are prohibited.
- ✧ Talk to an adult if there is a BIG problem.

Respect Others

- ✧ Share and take turns.
- ✧ Notify adults if another student is hurt.
- ✧ Line up on the class line when the whistle is blown.
- ✧ Show good sportsmanship.
- ✧ Resolve conflicts peacefully.

Respect Property

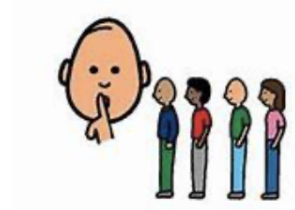
- ✧ Stay in the assigned area if applicable.
- ✧ Report safety concerns to a playground supervisor.
- ✧ Use school equipment safely and for its intended use.



Blue Zone Expectations

Respect Myself

- ✧ Walk on the right side.
- ✧ Take one stair step at a time.
- ✧ Bring a hall pass.
- ✧ Go directly to your destination.



Respect Others

- ✧ Voice level is 0.



Respect Property

- ✧ Enjoy displays with eyes only.
- ✧ Keep hands, feet, and other objects off the walls.
- ✧ Wear the hall pass around your neck.

Ridgely Technology Expectations

Respect Yourself

- ✧ Use approved websites and apps.
- ✧ Stay on assigned site, activity, or app.
- ✧ Use devices only for school activities.



Respect Others

- ✧ Use voice level that is directed by your teacher.
- ✧ Cooperate and share when working with others.
- ✧ Use headphones.
- ✧ Use your device only as directed by your teacher.

Respect Property

- ✧ Handle device and headphones with care.
- ✧ Charge device when needed.
- ✧ Keep food and drinks away from devices.
- ✧ Use clean hands.
- ✧ Follow District technology guidelines.



ATTENDANCE MATTERS

Missing a day of school here and there may not seem like much, but absences add up!

When a student misses 2 days a month..

They will miss **20 DAYS** a year.

They will miss **30 HOURS** of math over the school year.

They will miss **60 HOURS** of reading & writing over the school year.

They will miss over **1 YEAR** of school by graduation.

When a student misses 4 days a month..

They will miss **40 DAYS** a year.

They will miss **60 HOURS** of math over the school year.

They will miss **120 HOURS** of reading & writing over the school year.

They will miss over **2 YEARS** of school by graduation.

Afternoon Dismissal

Students will always be sent home the way you have indicated on your child's emergency card. Students will not be allowed to go home a different way (ie: ride a different bus, walk home with a friend, get a ride with a friend, etc.) without **written permission or a phone call to the office** from a parent or guardian.

Please make sure your child knows how he/she is getting home before they leave the house in the morning. Waiting to call during the school day causes unnecessary anxiety for children. **Dismissal calls are not taken after 3:00, or 2:00 on Wednesdays.**

Our first priority at dismissal is making sure all children get home safely. Dismissal time is not the time for a quick conversation with the teacher, principal, or secretary. They will be happy to speak with you after the dismissal process is complete. Car riders must be picked up by 3:35 p.m. If you are unable to pick up your children by this time, they will need to be enrolled in the afternoon SCOPE program.

Students will not be released to an individual whose name does not appear on the child's emergency contact list. The person picking up your child is required to show a photo ID. Under no circumstances will a child be released to an individual who is not on the emergency card or to a person who is on the emergency card, but does not have a photo ID. While some may consider this an inconvenience, please understand that this is for your child's safety.

Arriving Late/ Picking Up Early

Classroom learning begins at 9:00 a.m. A student who arrives between 9:00 a.m. and 9:45 a.m. is considered tardy. **If your child is tardy coming to school, an adult is required to sign him/her in for the day.** Please help school staff to ensure that quality learning occurs for *all students*. If your child is late for school, not only has he/she missed learning, but his/her late arrival will interrupt learning for an entire class of students. Students arriving after 9:45 a.m. are considered a half-day absent from school.

Please refrain from picking your child up "just a few minutes early" unless it is an absolute emergency. Again, when early pick ups occur, your child misses out on important learning and his early departure interrupts the learning for the other children in the classroom. If picking up your child early from school is unavoidable, your child will be called down from the classroom when you arrive at school. Please do not ask the office to "have your child waiting for you," as this takes away additional learning time from your child. Students who are picked up from school prior to 2:45 p.m. will be marked a half-day absent from school.

Before School

The school day begins at 9:00 a.m. with regular dismissal at 3:30 p.m. (2:30 p.m. on Wednesdays). **Children should not arrive at school before 8:40 a.m.** We do not have staff members assigned to supervise students until 8:40 a.m. unless your child is enrolled in the SCOPE program.

Bicycles

If a student rides a bike to school, he/she should park the bicycle in the bike rack and securely lock it to the rack. The school is not responsible for any bicycles at school.

Breakfast

A free breakfast is available each morning beginning at 8:40 a.m. in the cafeteria. Any student eating breakfast must do so prior to going to class. **Car riders or walkers should arrive at school by 8:55 a.m. in order to eat breakfast.**

Bus Expectations

Parents/guardians and students should be familiar with the rules and regulations for buses since the safety and welfare of everyone is an important concern. Students who are transported are expected to be courteous to fellow students, the bus monitor, and the bus driver. The bus driver/ monitor or the principal may assign seats on the school bus if necessary for safety or behavioral concerns. Parents/guardians will be held financially responsible for bus vandalism committed by their children.

The bus driver and monitor are in full charge at all times during the bus ride. They are responsible for the safety of all students. Students who show poor behavior on the school bus will receive a bus referral and possible detentions or suspension from the school bus. If your student is suspended from the bus, transportation to and from school is the parent's responsibility.

Only currently enrolled students are allowed on the morning and afternoon bus routes.

Celebrations- Birthdays, Treats, Invitations, Flowers, Balloons

Please consult with your classroom teacher before sending birthday treats to school. We are asking that families refrain from sending edible items, but suggest sending more of a trinket like items such as pencils, small toys, etc. We have an abundance of food allergies this year and want to keep our students safe!

While recognizing your child's special day is important, do not have balloons, flowers, etc. delivered to school. Classrooms and school buses are not conducive to housing these items.

Party invitations should not be distributed at school, unless your child's entire class is being invited. If that is the case, please let your classroom teacher know the invites are coming so she can find an appropriate time for your child to hand them out. Invitations not intended for the entire class will be sent back home with your student. Gifts for a classmate/ friend are not to be sent to school. Please handle that exchange outside of school hours.

Communication

Our staff can be reached by email, phone/ voicemail and written notes. We are no longer using Remind or Dojo- The District is now utilizing the "Rooms App" through the District App. When corresponding with a teacher, please remember the great majority of their day is spent with students. Teachers are at school 8:40 a.m.- 3:45 p.m., therefore it may be the following day when you receive a response. If a situation is an emergency, please contact the office so they can assist you.

Dismissal- Car Riders

Please remember that safety for children is the number one concern that all of us share. At no time, will safety be compromised to expedite the dismissal process. With this in mind, following a few simple rules will help ensure that even the busiest traffic times are safe times for our children. Remember, saving a few seconds of your time is never more important than the safety of everyone's children.

- All car riders/walkers are dismissed out of the 8th Street Entrance from their class lines.
- Parents can remain in your car if they are within eyesight of their student.
- Parents can walk to the fence/up to the building to pick up their student.
- If you need to enter the building, parents must walk around to the 9th street entrance.
- Never beckon your child to come to you if you are parked on the West side of 8th Street heading South. **We will NEVER send a student across the street to a car.** Please use the cross walk to come pick up your student.
- Percy Avenue is a **No Parking** zone to ensure there is enough room for school buses and other vehicles to travel safely in both directions. Keeping this area clear helps maintain a safe and efficient traffic flow for everyone.
- When leaving in your car, watch for other students who are walking to ensure safety of all.

Electronic Devices- Personal Cell Phones, Watches, Etc.

Students are allowed to bring cell phones to school provided they are turned off and kept in a student's book bag. Cell phones that are turned on, or are out of a student's bookbag,

between 8:40 a.m.- 3:30 p.m. (2:30 p.m. on Wednesdays) may be kept in the office and returned only to an adult.

Smart watches are best left at home! Should a student wear one to school, it must be turned off between 8:40 a.m.- 3:30 p.m. (2:30 p.m. on Wednesdays). If turned on, it may be kept in the office and returned only to an adult.

At no time should an electronic device be used to record others, photograph others or to cheat.

When you visit, please finish your cell phone conversation before you enter the school. If you receive a cell phone call while you are visiting, please step outside to hold your conversation. An elementary school is not conducive to personal phone conversations.

Emergency Contact Information

It is necessary that we have current emergency information on file for each student. This information is of great value to your child in the event he/she becomes ill or is injured at school. Your child's emergency information must contain more than one phone number of responsible adults in the event a parent cannot be reached. This should contain current home/cell and work phone numbers for several people. *People who are not listed in your child's emergency information will not be allowed to pick up your child from school.* Please keep your child's emergency information current all year long by letting the office know immediately when information changes. This includes physical address, e-mail address, phone numbers, authorized pick up persons, etc.

Field Trips

When our students have the opportunity to attend a field trip (performance, zoo, historical, etc.) parents may be asked to chaperone. Please communicate with your child's teacher if you are interested.

Should a student have shown unsafe or unsavory behaviors leading up to a field trip, a parent may be required to attend with their student.

Fire, Disaster, Lockdown Drills

Fire, disaster, and lockdown drills are held periodically to prepare children for emergencies. Your child's teacher will review and practice the different types of drills and assist students in carrying them out properly and safely. The entire school will also practice these drills on a regular schedule.

Illness/ Injuries

If a student is ill or receives an injury at school, he/she should notify the teacher or the office immediately. If either is of a serious nature, the parent/guardian will be notified.

If a student is ill and cannot attend school, please call the school (217-525-3259) as early in the morning as possible. If a student's parents do not call the school, attempts will be made to reach the student's guardian to determine the reason for the absence. Students will be allowed to make up the missed school work if the absence is excused. (For each excused absence, a student will be given two days to complete the make-up work.) If a student is absent for any portion of the school day, that child may not participate in any school- sponsored nighttime activities that occur on the same date.

Students should be *symptom-free* for 24 hours before returning to school. This means that it should be 24 hours since the last time the child had a fever, vomited, or had diarrhea. Out of respect for other students and staff, your cooperation with this policy is appreciated.

Leaving/Returning during the school day

Dental and doctor appointments during school hours are discouraged. However, it is understood that these appointments are sometimes difficult to schedule outside the school day. Parents or the designated responsible party, must pick up your child from the office and sign the child out of school. If a child misses more than 45 minutes of instruction, the student is marked absent for a half day.

In order to minimize the loss of instructional time, **students will not be called down to the office prior to the parent's arrival.** Under no circumstances, will a child be released to a person who is not listed as the child's emergency contact. Although this occasionally is perceived as an inconvenience, please understand that this is for the safety of your child. When returning, the student must be brought back into the office by the adult and signed back into school.

Lost and Found

The lost and found is located inside the 8th Street doors. Lost hats, books, bookbags, gloves, etc. will be turned in there. Valuable items (such as keys, eyeglasses, wallets, etc.) are kept in the office. Please remember to label all of your child's belongings. All unclaimed lost and found items are donated to charity during winter break and summer vacation.

Lunch/Recess

The lunch/recess period is 45 minutes long for all students. Students may get a free "hot" lunch from the cafeteria or bring a "cold" lunch from home. When choosing to have a

“hot” lunch, items from home should not be brought to eat with it (cookies, chips, candy). When packing a “cold” lunch, due to the mess they make, please do not include soda or carbonated drinks.

Students who must remain inside the school during lunch recess due to illness or other reason, will remain seated at a cafeteria table for the duration of the lunch period. **No student will be allowed to stay inside without a written note from his/her parents. Any student needing to stay in for more than one day must secure a note from his/her doctor.** It is the philosophy of the school that children need outside recess periods for active playing and socializing. Students are expected to be dressed appropriately for the weather regardless of the time of year.

If the weather does not permit outside activities during the lunch period, students will have recess in the gym or library (movie and game time). Adult supervisors will monitor these areas and help students engage in fun activities.

Medication/ Physical Exams/ Allergies

No medicine will be given to a student until the medication form is completed and signed by the prescribing physician and by the parent/guardian. The first dose of any new medication will not be given at school, due to the possibility of an allergic reaction.

Administering antibiotics, cough medicines, analgesics, and over-the-counter (OTC) medications (including cough drops, eye drops) is discouraged at school. However, when ordered in writing by the physician and parent, OTC medications will be given if brought in with the manufacturer’s original label with the ingredients listed and the child’s name affixed to the container. It is the responsibility of the parent to furnish the school with an adequate amount of medication in a timely manner. Any changes in dose, time, or directions, must be in writing from the parent and the physician.

There is a full-time nurse assigned to Ridgely School. All conversations regarding the administration of medications shall occur exclusively between the parent and the nurse assigned to Ridgely. Other staff members will not be expected to forward information regarding medication to the school nurse on the parents’ behalf. Medications will not be sent home with students, an adult must pick up medications when needed.

Students entering kindergarten and students new to District #186 must present evidence of required immunizations and an Illinois physical exam. All students who have not recorded verification of health requirements must have such evidence by the first day of school. Students who have not presented proof of required immunizations and an Illinois physical exam by the required date will be excluded from school until they are in compliance.

If your child has allergies, they should be noted on their registration information and documented by a doctor. All medical documentation needs to be sent to our nurse prior

to school starting. Proper documentation of allergies allows our cafeteria to offer alternate food choices to your student, while making staff aware of the allergy.

Ridgely is a fish free school this year due to a student having an airborne allergy. Fish will not be served in the cafeteria and we ask that fish not be brought in lunches from home.

Morning Arrival

Bus riders are dropped off along the curb/sidewalk on the 9th Street side, and enter the front doors. Walkers and bike riders walk on the sidewalk, and enter the west, 8th street doors. Please do NOT park your vehicle on Percy. Car riders are dropped off in a car lane on 8th Street as well. If a parent needs to come into the office, please park in the parking lot and enter the 9th street doors. Parking along the curb is not allowed as it blocks traffic.

Pets

Dogs, cats, and other pets must be kept at home to avoid possible allergic reactions and danger to students. Pets should not be on school property before school or during the dismissal process.

PTA

Our PTA is a group of parents who want the best education for their children; teachers who strive to provide the highest level of education; friends, families and members of the community who recognize the importance of quality schools.

All parents are members, and everyone is invited to our monthly meetings.

Rain, Snow and Windchill

Please remember to send your child dressed appropriately during cold weather. A warm coat, gloves, and a hat are very important. Children will be outside for recess unless the temperature, or wind chill, is 20 degrees Fahrenheit or below.

School Closures

Occasionally inclement weather will result in school being closed for the day. In the event school will be closed, the superintendent will make a decision by early morning. Broadcasts on local television and radio stations will begin at 6:00 a.m. Additionally, District #186 will use our communication system to deliver a phone/text message to the homes of all students. Please make sure your current phone number is always on file with the school!

School will not be dismissed early due to extreme weather. It is the belief of District #186, that many students would be returned to an empty or locked house, as many parents would not be able to meet their children at home.

School Spirit Days

Every Wednesday is AVID Wear Wednesday. We encourage students to wear shirts showing where they may go when they graduate high school. This includes: college, military or trade school. Teachers wear shirts to share various paths and careers with students. Students are also encouraged to wear Ridgely shirts on Wednesdays.

Student Dress Code

- Dress and grooming shall not be contrary to curriculum goals and/or educational objectives or advertise, promote or picture alcoholic beverages, tobacco, illegal drugs or illegal or violent behavior
- Dress and grooming, including accessories, shall not display lewd, vulgar, obscene or plainly-offensive language or symbols, including gang symbols
- Hats, caps, bandanas, hoods of any type, sweatbands, sunglasses, pajama pants, slippers, or shoes with wheels attached to the bottom shall not be worn in the buildings
- Pierced jewelry, other than earrings worn in the ear, shall not be worn in the buildings. Nose piercing (high school only) shall be limited to clear (spacers) or small studs (no bigger than a spacer). Spiked apparel and accessories or chains that can be used as weapons are prohibited
- Shoe laces shall be tied
- Coats and jackets shall **not** be worn in the building without principal permission
- Clothing with holes or clothes made of transparent or fishnet fabric, or clothing that exposes the chest, abdomen, genital area or buttocks, undergarments or the legs above mid-thigh, shall not be worn in the buildings
- School appropriate clothing is to be worn. Pants, shorts or skirts must be worn at the waist — sagging is prohibited

Supplies/Items from home

A list of supplies your child will need is available on our website, or in the school office. It is the parents' responsibility to see that their child has the necessary supplies to be successful in school. Please check with your child periodically to see if replacements are

needed. Supplies do run out, get accidentally thrown away, misplaced, borrowed, or broken.

Some items should ***not*** be brought to school. This includes all toys, sports balls and equipment, trading cards, personal items, electronic devices, valuables, and any items made of glass. **The school assumes no responsibility for items brought to school in violation of this policy. Items brought to school in violation of this policy may be kept in the office and returned only to a parent/guardian.**

We are NOT allowing water bottles to be brought in from home this year. We have breaks within the day when students can use the water fountain or have water in their classrooms.

Volunteers/Visitors

Volunteers are an extremely valuable asset to our educational program. All parents/guardians and other interested adults are encouraged to volunteer at school. Please contact the office for directions on where to complete a background check prior to volunteering.

Parents are welcome to visit their children's classrooms! Please contact the classroom teacher to set up a day/time to visit. During your visit, it is important the teacher and students are not interrupted during instructional time. Teachers will have an observation seating area for your visit. Please follow the teacher's direction so instruction can continue normally. If you have questions or want to speak with the teacher, please schedule an appointment outside their student contact time.

All visitors and volunteers are required to report to the office upon their arrival at school, where they should sign in and request a visitor's pass. Permission may then be given to visit a classroom or other area of the building. This applies even if you are just staying for a minute or are a very familiar face. This is for the safety of all children in the building.

The district 186 Student and Family Handbook may be found by visiting www.sps186.org, and searching for Student and Family Handbook under "School Support".