

GREAT FALLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Whittier Elementary School



STUDENT HANDBOOK

School Year 2016-2017

Dear Parents and Students:

The Whittier School Staff would like to offer a warm and friendly welcome to all students and their parents/guardians. It is our desire to work cooperatively with parents/guardians in an effort to provide the best educational opportunities for each student. We look forward to making this school year a pleasant and worthwhile experience for students, staff and parents. Thanks in advance for being our partners as we strive to provide meaningful and enriching learning experiences.

Important information concerning the school has been assembled in this handbook to foster close communication and cooperation between home and school.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to become familiar with the contents of Whittier Handbook as well as the Great Falls Public Schools Handbook. Please don't hesitate to call your child's teacher or the office (268-7230) with any questions you might have.

Best wishes for a happy and most productive school year!

Ryan Hart, Principal

WHITTIER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STAFF
2016-2017

PRINCIPAL: Ryan Hart
SECRETARY: Willow Loney

KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS:

Melissa Garten
Lori Lind

FIRST GRADE TEACHERS:

Christy Stevens
Cassie Peck

SECOND GRADE TEACHERS:

Erica Hickey
Julie Radonich

THIRD GRADE TEACHERS:

Nikki Davalos
Sheleen Kloppel

FOURTH GRADE TEACHERS:

Eric Bush
Melissa Riphenburg

FIFTH GRADE TEACHERS:

Cara Dunn
TBD

SIXTH GRADE TEACHERS:

Debra Thomas
Samantha Kramer

COUNSELOR:

Ronie Pearsall

STUDENT SUPPORT:

Barbara Butcher / Kaitlin Geer – Title I Math/Literacy
Vicki Selin – Math Tutor

SPECIAL EDUCATION:

Chrissie Jackson – Resource
Chris Masters - Speech

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT ADVOCATE:

Liz Wallen-Pipinich

LIBRARY:

Dean Jardee

MUSIC:

Sarah Schaeffer – Orchestra
Hal Hugg- Band
Renaë Bolton - Vocal

PHYSICAL EDUCATION:

Sheree McKinley
Scott Cooper
David Leitz

EXTENDED CURRICULUM SERVICES:

Holly Kincaid

PSYCHOLOGIST:

Deanna Burd

ENGINEERS:

Jerry Einan – 1st
Troy Blancher – 2nd

Our Whittier Mission

*The Whittier Community
Believes that
All children
Can learn
And
Will learn*

The Whittier Student Pledge

I believe I can be a good student.

I believe I can achieve.

*I believe if I work hard,
I will succeed.*

*Therefore,
I pledge to work hard each day
to do my best.*

*I can learn.
I will learn.*

DAILY SCHEDULE

8:00	STAFF ON DUTY- KIDS ALLOWED ON PLAYGROUND
8:20	1 st BELL (STUDENTS ENTER THE BUILDING)
8:25	TARDY BELL/ANNOUNCEMENTS/BREAKFAST-IN-CLASSROOM INSTRUCTIONAL DAY BEGINS
3:20	DISMISSAL FOR K-6 STUDENTS (MON / TUES / THURS / FRI)
2:40	WEDNESDAY DISMISSAL K-6

APPROPRIATE DRESS AND APPEARANCE: Dress and grooming must be in good taste and appropriate to the school environment. We ask parents to help their child establish good personal hygiene habits so as to develop self-respect and respect for others by keeping clean and neat at all times.

Dress code: Students will be asked to change if wearing bare midriff blouses, halter tops, or spaghetti strap tops. Shorts must reach the end of the fingertips when hands are held straight down at the sides. Tops shall not contain inappropriate messages or drawings in regards to drugs, alcohol, tobacco, sexual references, violence or be gang related. **HATS ARE NOT TO BE WORN IN THE BUILDING EXCEPT ON SPIRIT DAYS.**

ARRIVAL AT SCHOOL: School starts at 8:25. No students are to arrive before 8:00, and they cannot be in the building before the 8:20 bell rings. Please help us with this request. We believe proper supervision is necessary to ensure the safety of all our students. Since teachers are not on duty until 8:00 am, we cannot provide supervision before that time!

ATTENDANCE: Attendance matters to our school district and community. In order for your child to receive the maximum benefit of our education system they are expected to attend school every day except for illness, medical appointments, or a family emergency. If it is necessary for your child to miss school, please call the school office at 268-7230. If an absence is necessary, parents or guardians must notify the school by 9:00 a.m. on the day of the absence. If parents or guardians do not call the school when a child is absent, a call will be made through our automated attendance system. You will be instructed to contact the school to verify the reason for your child's absence. If no contact is made, your child's absence will be marked as unexcused.

AWARDS

PRINCIPAL'S: To qualify for the Principal's Award, students in grade 4, 5, & 6 must have all A's on core academic subjects and all G's in nonacademic subjects.

HONOR ROLL: To qualify for honor roll, students in grades 3-6 must have A's/B's in all academic subjects and G in reading. Students in grades K, 1 & 2 must have G's in Math, Reading, and Language. (Award will designate Quarter and/or Semester Achievement)

WHITTIER CITIZENSHIP: To qualify for a spirit award, students must have all G's in the citizenship section(s) of the report card.

ATTENDANCE: To qualify for perfect attendance, students must have zero absences with zero tardies.

IMPROVEMENT/EFFORT/TEAMWORK: Given at teacher's discretion for those characteristics.

BEFORE SCHOOL CARE: If you must drop you child off before 8:00, please use the HANDS program. Please contact the HANDS office at 268-6934.

BEHAVIOR: In order to show PRIDE in our school, Whittier students WILL:

1. Arrive, participate and depart in a safe, orderly manner.
2. Follow directions of staff.
3. Use school equipment appropriately.
4. Be polite and treat each other with respect.

General behavior management steps are:

1. Reteach, warning
 2. Tune-up (Additional reteach + loss of privileges such as recess time)
 3. Office Referral (Loss of privileges such as recess and/or detention)
 4. Parent Conference / Behavior Contract
 5. Suspension, (In-school and/or Out of School)
- Definition of Bullying:
 1. Act is intentionally mean and/or cruel
 2. There exists an imbalance of power
 3. It is a repeated event
 4. We track and consequence Bully Behavior for ALL students and show progressive discipline.
 - Severe misbehavior (such as verbal/physical aggression, illegal substances, threats or harassment, sexual harassment, theft, as well as repeated chronic misbehaviors) may result in going directly to a higher level of discipline (steps 4 and 5) and/or contacting the School Resource Officer for possible legal consequences.

BIKE RACKS, ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION : Bicycle racks are available on the playground. Bicycles MUST be locked in the racks during the school day. Students are not to ride bicycles, skateboards, scooters, rollerblades, or heely's on school grounds. All skateboards, scooters, roller blades, and heely wheels must be checked into the office or classroom teacher upon arrival.

BREAKFAST & LUNCH: Breakfast will be in the classroom this year and lunch is served in our gym each day. Menus are sent home monthly and appear in the GF Tribune. Students may receive free breakfast and lunch, or bring their own lunch from home. Students must code in their ID number as they go through the cafeteria line.

Communications:

- Call the Whittier front office at 268-7230 with any questions or if your student must be absent!
- Wednesday envelopes go home every Wednesday and will contain communications from teachers, the school, or the district! Be sure to look though your child's envelope every Wednesday and have them return it ASAP for refilling the following Wednesday.
- The "Wildcat Print" newsletter goes home once a month and will outline upcoming activities at Whittier.
- The Whittier upcoming events bulletin board in Whittier's front hall also lists upcoming events.
- Whittier's marquee in the front of the school will list current activities occurring at Whittier
- You can email your teacher (and keep an eye on your student's grades!) with the GFPS PowerSchool Parent Portal. GFPS will send a letter home about logging on to this site; or you can visit our Family Engagement Advocate in Room 7A to get your student's username and password.

CROSSING 9th STREET: Students walking to school or discharged from cars on 9th Street should walk to the crosswalk on the corner of 4th Avenue and 9th Street where the crossing guard is on duty before and after school. Students are asked to cross at the 4th Avenue location only. This is important for their safety due to the increasing amount of traffic on 9th Street.

EARLY CHECKOUT: A student leaving during the school day must be signed out in the office by the person picking him/her up. The office should be informed of any special circumstances.

ENROLLMENT/WITHDRAWAL OF STUDENTS: When a student enters school during the school year, the student and parent should make immediate contact with the office. Once the registration process has been completed, tentative placement will be made based on the information available. Final placement will take place after the principal has had the opportunity to review the student's records.

When a student withdraws from Whittier, the procedures are as follows:

1. Inform the teacher or office of the last date the student will attend.
2. Inform the school of the new address of the student.
3. Ask the new school to contact Whittier so records will be forwarded.
4. Turn in library books and textbooks, paying fees if owed to school.

EVACUATION: In the event of a school evacuation (Gas, Water, Fire, Etc...), Whittier Elementary School staff and students will evacuate to an alternate site. We will be in contact with families from that location for student pick-up.

HOMEWORK POLICY: We believe that homework is an important part in each child's education. The purpose is to provide practice and reinforcement of skills taught in the classroom. Homework will be given on Monday through Thursday night. Please check daily to stay informed of your child's required work.

KINDERGARTEN:

Homework in the kindergarten will correlate with the social development and academic tasks which are expected of kindergarten children. A weekly assignment will be sent home.

GRADE ONE:

First Grade teachers will use homework to reinforce classroom instruction in the basic academic skills. It will, for the most part, be assigned on a weekly basis and will be due each Friday. Homework shouldn't exceed fifteen minutes per night if spread out across the week.

GRADE TWO:

Second grade students will have homework to reinforce classroom instruction. Students will be assigned homework for approximately 20-30 minutes per evening. Students' homework assignments will also include practice with handwriting, weekly spelling words, flashcards for reading and math, calendar skills, and all other assignments deemed necessary for skill mastery.

GRADES THREE, FOUR, FIVE, and SIX:

The purpose of homework in grades three, four, five, and six is to reinforce classroom instruction. Students will learn to be responsible for homework and for material and texts that go with the homework. Homework will be an appropriate extension of class work. The students will have the responsibility of completing each homework assignment.

Outlines or descriptions of requirements and dates due will be provided for projects and extension assignments.

Parents can expect the following amounts of homework:

Grade 3	about 20-30 minutes per night
Grade 4, 5, 6	about 30-60 minutes per night

INCLEMENT WEATHER: GFPS Schools operate throughout most inclement weather. Students should come to school prepared to be outside unless there is very rainy, snowy, or icy weather and/or the temperature drops below zero degrees.

INSTRUCTION: Students are assigned to classes on heterogeneous basis so that there is appropriate distribution of pupils by race, gender, and ability.

LATE ARRIVAL: All students arriving at school after 8:25 shall report to the school office and check in with the school secretary. Then students should report to the homeroom teacher. In this way, we can be sure our attendance records are correct. Should tardiness become a problem, corrective procedures will be implemented.

LOST AND FOUND: Students may check in the lost and found and with the school secretary for “lost and found” items. Items not claimed are given to charity at the end of each month. It is the responsibility of the student to claim their lost items.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT: Parents are the cornerstone of their children’s education. The most important parental involvement is making sure your students are rested, fed, clothed properly, on time for school and providing a safe, quiet place to do homework or study.

COMMUNICATION: Parent - school communication is very important to your child's success in school. Whittier has several ways that you can communicate with us regularly.

1. Wednesday envelopes – Parent communication folders are sent home each Wednesday during the school year. Please look for this communication each week and feel free to send any responses or comments back in those folders.
2. GFPS PowerSchool Parent Portal is located at <http://ps.gfps.k12.mt.us> This password protected portal allows parents to view their students grades, assignments and attendance information from any computer connected to the internet. Whittier will have regular computer lab hours with assistance available for the Parent Portal.
3. Parent/Teacher conferences – Formal conferences are held twice a year. A parent/teacher conference helps to communicate to parents the areas their children are excelling in and to give them specific ideas of how to improve upon their child’s performance in school. Parent/teacher conferences are used as a way to increase the academic success and be a stepping stone to foster improvement within each child.

VOLUNTEERING: Whittier actively seeks assistance from our parents and the community.

1. Whittier maintains a Volunteer Connections board which displays volunteering needs at our school and has space for parents to advertise if they have time to volunteer or have a special talent that they would like to share.

2. PTA – Whittier Elementary has an active PTA whose involvement increases benefits for all of our students. Please join and become actively involved in our PTA.
3. You can contact your child's teacher about volunteering in their classroom.

ACTIVITIES: Whittier holds several school-wide as well as classroom activities each school year in which parents are invited and encouraged to attend. Keep an eye out for information in your Wednesday envelope about our special assemblies, events and concerts

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT ADVOCATE: Whittier has a staff member who serves as a liaison between the school and home and is happy to meet and chat with all of our parents. If you have any questions about school policies or need any assistance with community resources, feel free to contact Whittier's Family Engagement Advocate at 268-7241.

PARENT PICK-UP and DROP-OFF ZONES: Passenger cars are asked to discharge and/or pick up students at three locations: the PARENT PICK-UP and DROP-OFF ZONE on the 3rd Avenue side (Primary), in front of the school in the passenger zone, and on the 4th Avenue side near the north playground (Intermediate). If students are dropped off in front of the school prior to 8:00 am, the kids will be asked to walk around the building to the playground rather than through the building. PLEASE DO NOT PARK IN THE BUS ZONE ON 8th STREET!

SCHOOL COUNSELOR: A counselor is assigned to Whittier to provide on-site services. Although the counselor does not provide individual therapy, assistance is given with social skills, conflict resolution, personal safety, friendship skills, and class lessons. Students may refer themselves to the counselor or parents may call for assistance on behalf of their child.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES: Students all receive a supplies list which is useful for all grades. Remember that at some point in the year supplies should be replenished.

SCHOOL TELEPHONES: Students may use the school phones in cases of emergency. **Parents need to make sure transportation arrangements are made prior to the school day.** Calls made to the office after 2:00 pm are not guaranteed to reach the child's homeroom in time for dismissal.

VISITATION POLICY: Parents are welcome to visit the school campus. We ask that you observe the following procedures whenever you arrive.

1. Check in at the office and let us know why you're here. ☺
2. If you would like to visit a classroom, please make arrangements with the classroom teacher ahead of time so as not to disrupt instruction.

WE ASK THAT NO ONE GO DIRECTLY TO THE CLASSROOMS FOR SAFETY AND SECURITY OF STUDENTS AND THE STAFF.

WHITTIER WILDCATS
BEHAVIOR ON THE PLAYGROUND

1. When I bring a coat out to recess, I must either wear it or tie it around my waist. I can not go back into the building to get my coat if I did not choose to take it out at the beginning of recess.
2. I respect and fully follow instructions given by the staff.
3. I DO NOT
 - Sit on top of the monkey bars.
 - Go down the slide with anyone else.
4. I DO
 - Go down the slide feet first.
 - Take turns on the equipment.
 - Show good sportsmanship, which includes being considerate whether winning or losing.
5. **Rough play is NOT allowed, such as wrestling, hitting, tackling, pushing, pretend fighting, and kicking.**
6. I DO NOT throw rocks or snowballs.
7. I stay in appropriate areas on the playground.
 - Red Zones are off limits because of safety reasons.
 - Stay in sight of teachers, teacher aides, and supervisors.
8. I will not leave the playground for any reason without permission. I will ask for a pass if I need to go inside.
9. When I hear the bell ring at the end of recess time, I stop what I'm doing and immediately line up (face forward, hands at my side). As I enter the building, I am walking and following **FLOW** in the hallways of Whittier. I will **F** file to the right, **L** lower my voice, **O** open a pathway, and **W** walk.