



NCA Accredited

November 2011

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The staff and parents at Woodland school work cooperatively to develop the whole child in an atmosphere of respect and dignity



## **PRINCIPAL'S CORNER**

Greetings Families!

The leaves are off of the trees, MEAPs are completed and the holidays are coming up quickly. Such is busy November. There are many things to look forward to such as parent-teacher conferences, and various classroom celebrations. As the weather gets colder, please remember to send your child to school with the necessary outer clothing and boots to keep him/her comfortable in the outside elements. We do go outside unless the wind chill is below 0. If you need assistance with providing winter clothing, please let us know. Following are a few happenings and articles of interest. Have a wonderful month.

Sue O'Donnell

## **UPCOMING NO SCHOOL DAYS**

- **Friday, November 4**  
*No School Students* - Teacher Record Day
- **Wednesday, Thursday & Friday,**  
**November 23, 24, & 25**  
*Thanksgiving Break – No School*
- **Monday, November 28 – School Resumes**
- **Winter Break – December 26 through**  
**January 6**

## **PICTURE RETAKE DAY**

### **TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8<sup>TH</sup>**

Picture retakes will occur on Tuesday, Nov. 8th. Students who missed the initial picture day will have photos taken on this date. In addition, parents/guardians who are not pleased with the first photos of their child they received, should send the total picture packet back to school with their child on retake day and their child's photo will be retaken.

Students who have pictures taken on Retake Day will have their photo in class composites which will be delivered in January.

## **2011-12 REPORT CARD SEND HOME DATES**

Report cards will be sent home with students on the following dates:

1<sup>st</sup> Quarter: Monday, November 14<sup>th</sup>

2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter: Friday, February 6<sup>th</sup>

3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter: Friday, April 9<sup>th</sup>

4<sup>th</sup> Quarter: Mailed out from the office on June 6.

## **REPORT CARD INFORMATION**

This year, teachers will not be writing "Narrative comments" on student report cards for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter and the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter. This district decision is due to the fact that parents will be attending face to face conferences with teachers during those two quarters.

**Informational comments about your students and their first quarter achievements will be included in the parent/teacher conference.**

In order to ensure positive parent/teacher/school communication, we value open communication between parents and school staff, any time throughout the school year. Although we send home report cards four times in a school year, our students benefit with consistent communication between school and home. Please feel free to contact your child's teacher/school office with questions!

## **TWO HOUSEHOLD FAMILIES AND CONFERENCING**

Living in a two-household family (shared custody) presents its own share of challenges and learning experiences for students (transporting items from one house to the other, informing both parents of events, etc.). Divorced parents who share legal custody of children have a right to be kept informed of their children's progress and involved in their education, including conferencing with teachers. To insure both parents hear the same information and to serve as positive role models of cooperation for their children, the staff of Woodland Elementary will conference with parents who share legal custody TOGETHER.

Only in extreme situations will separate conferences be held for two-household families. Please note: joint legal custody is assumed unless the school is provided with a court order restricting legal custody of a parent(s).

## **REQUEST TO STAY INDOORS FOR RECESS**

We believe that except on rare occasions, if children are well enough to be in school they are well enough to go outside and enjoy recess. In addition, an adult must always be present to supervise children staying in for recess, which takes away from staff lunch times and office staff duties. Therefore, a note from a physician stating the child is to remain indoors for recess is required for a child to be individually supervised during recess time. Thank you for understanding and cooperation with this matter.

## WOODLAND ELEMENTARY HOMEWORK POLICY:

### STUDENTS ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR FAMILY VACATIONS:

1. Tests may contain information from hands-on lessons or classroom discussions that a student missed while absent.
2. Assignments that can be made up will be given to the students upon his/her return following the vacation.

### STUDENTS ABSENT DUE TO ILLNESS:

1. Tests may contain information from hands-on lessons or classroom discussions that a student missed while absent.
2. Students absent for one day should make up their work upon returning.
3. For extended illness, parents may request the teacher prepare assignments that are possible to make up. We ask that parents allow teacher twenty-four (24) hours to prepare homework packets. Arrangements to pick up work may be made through the school office.

OUR STAFF IS COMMITTED TO PROVIDING QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL OUR STUDENTS. WE APPRECIATE THE TREMENDOUS HELP AND SUPPORT FROM OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY. YOUR UNDERSTANDING IS GREATLY APPRECIATED.



### SNOW DAY NOTIFICATION

When Portage Schools cancels or delays the start of school, the announcement will be made in time to make the 6 a.m. news on local television and radio stations. Parents may also call our "School Closing Hotline" at 323-6800 or check the District web site at [www.portageps.org](http://www.portageps.org) and click on the "Parents & Visitors" link for the WWMT-TV Channel 3 school closing announcements (you will see the link on the upper right, under the weather forecast). Portage Cable Access Channel 20 also carries school closing announcements.

### GIRLS ON THE RUN

Coaches are needed to lead 3 teams for our third through fifth graders during Girls on the Run March 12 through May 24, 2012. This after school program will be offered to 45 girls two afternoons per week for 10 weeks beginning the week of March 12, 2012. Greater Kalamazoo Girls on the Run provides training for coaches who will lead the girls in lessons that are intended to enhance the girls' self-esteem and build appreciation for a healthy lifestyle. Each lesson is accompanied by a running activity and workout designed to enhance the girls' overall physical health as well. You DO NOT have to be a runner to coach Girls on the Run. Please contact Lindsay Wagner (323-6615) or Kitty Broderick (323-6621) if you are interested.

### GAMEBOYS, TECH DECKS, ETC

Students are not to bring electronic toys, such as Game Boys and iPods or other toys such as tech decks devices to school. These can be expensive and the school can not be responsible for items lost. Toys

and games brought from home also create controversy in regards to who may touch or play with the item. We have invested in new playground equipment, balls, sidewalk chalk, etc. and indoor recess games for all students to use and share. Except for special "show and tell" times approved by the teacher, students are not to bring toys or electronic devices to school.

### CELL PHONE POLICY

Cell phones are permitted in school but must be TURNED OFF and stored in the student's backpack. Students are not permitted to use cell phones during school hours.

### LAST MINUTE MESSAGES

Please try to make any last minute arrangements for pick up and after-school plans in the morning before your children leave for school. The office is calling into classrooms in the late afternoon too often. These too frequent interruptions make it very difficult to teach.

With increased pressure on our teachers and students to achieve high academic standards, we must be very protective of our instructional hours and make sure they are as productive as possible.

In an effort to provide the least disruptive learning environment for students and teachers, messages regarding changes in end of the day routines, after school information and/or other communication, will be given to students at 3:30 p.m. each school day. Office staff will not disrupt classes on a case by case basis, but instead will hold messages until 3:30 p.m.

**Parents/guardians are reminded to contact the school office with information that needs to be given to students prior to 3:30 p.m. Attempts to exchange information with students after this time can result in confusion, mistakes and possible unsafe situations for all involved – students, teachers, bus drivers and parents.**

***We ask that parents/guardians take time to review student after school plans with children prior to departure to school and to avoid calling the school office with reminders or changes in routines unless it is an emergency.***

### BIRTHDAY INVITES & DELIVERIES

***The staff of Woodland Elementary School requests that students NOT hand-out party invitations at school.*** Disappointment students may feel about not being invited to a party, causes a disruption to the educational environment. Invitations to parties should be made outside of the school environment.

***We also request deliveries of flowers or balloons NOT be made at school.*** These deliveries to students often turn into a distraction to the learning process. Consequently, balloons and flowers will not be delivered to classrooms and will remain in the office until the end of the school day for the student to pick up.

## WEAPON FREE SCHOOL ZONE

All parents/guardians should be fully aware and review district policy 5360, Weapon Free School Zone, listed on page 17 of the Elementary Handbook. The policy states, “the Board shall permanently expel a student from attending school in the District, if the student possesses a weapon in a weapon free school zone or commits arson in a District building or on District grounds.” Weapons include a firearm, gun, revolver, pistol, dagger, stiletto, knife, pocketknife, iron bar or brass knuckles.

## MEDIA COVERAGE/STUDENT IMAGES IN PUBLICATIONS

From time to time we will invite local media (newspaper and television) in our school to cover events and activities. This is done in an effort to make the public aware of the outstanding learning and positive activities that occur at Woodland. We will also be adding photos of students at work and play to our Woodland website. Please know Portage Public School is very sensitive to pupil privacy and strictly monitors all situations in which any student images are used in publications. In addition, students' images will not be identified on any of the school district websites

## VOLUNTEERS:

### BACKGROUND CHECKS, BADGES AND CONFIDENTIALITY

- All volunteers working directly with children must have a criminal background check. Forms for this to occur are available from Donna Alexander in the office. This background check must be done annually for any regular volunteer working directly with children.
- Volunteers are also reminded that information regarding student behavior or progress observed while volunteering in our school is confidential and should not be shared with outside individuals. Just as you wouldn't want parents discussing your student's behaviors or academics with others, they don't want you discussing theirs.
- Please be assured Woodland teachers are well aware of the needs of the many students in their classrooms. Due to strict confidentiality rules and regulations, teachers are not able to discuss specific interventions that are in place for a child and/or a child's ability/disability with volunteers.

***Volunteers are greatly appreciated and a valuable resource to the Woodland Elementary School community! Your assistance is greatly appreciated by both students and staff! Thank you for being willing to so generously give of your time!***



## WHO CAN STUDENT INFORMATION

### BE SHARED WITH?

The confidentiality of student information is of high importance at Woodland Elementary School. All schools across the country are mandated to follow the guidelines of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Outlined below is a quick review of information parents/guardians should know regarding FERPA rules and regulations.

- ★ School districts must give full rights with regard to pupil records to either parent unless there is a court order or other legally binding document relating to custody that specifically revokes these rights.
- ★ A parent who does not have physical custody will be assumed to have retained legal custody unless a court order is provided to the school showing that legal custody has been revoked.
- ★ A parent with legal custody maintains a right to meet with and discuss student progress with school staff.
- ★ A stepparent or grandparent has no legal independent rights to student records unless the stepparent or grandparent is the legal guardian. ***Teachers will not be able to share verbally or in writing student progress information with a stepparent or grandparent unless a release of information is signed annually and placed in the student's records.***
- ★ A parent with legal custody may release student records to a stepparent via a release of information form. This allows school staff to have direct contact with the stepparent regarding student progress.
- ★ A parent/guardian with legal custody must sign a release of information for any school staff member to complete forms regarding or to discuss student progress with any outside agency. ***Teachers will not be able to share information regarding student progress with tutors, counselors, doctors, etc. unless a release of information is signed annually and placed in the student's records.***

### PTO ~ CHUCK E CHEESE

Woodland and Chuck E Cheese are teaming up for a fun event! Thursday, November 10 is Woodland Night at Chuck E Cheese.

Chuck E Cheese will donate a percentage of the sales to Woodland. Invite your family and friends! More information will be going home soon.

### BATTLE OF THE BOOKS

Does your 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> grader LOVE to read? If so, then Battle of the Books might be an exciting challenge for him/her to join.

Information went home with fourth and fifth grade students last week concerning this great after school opportunity. We also need coaches. Please take a few minutes to check out the information that was sent home in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grader's backpacks.

## PARENT'S GUIDE FOR HELPING CHILDREN SUCCEED IN SCHOOL

From: *loveandlogic.com*

- ✓ Love and Logic parents remember that parents can't teach for teachers and teachers can't parent for parents. Remember that teachers and parents can't learn for kids no matter how much we love them.
- ✓ Show the same amount of love for your children regardless of their success in school. Show sadness rather than anger when they have trouble at school.
- ✓ Expect your children to do their share of the chores at home.
- ✓ Spend some time each day talking with excitement about your work and your day. They will want to imitate you and will soon begin to talk about school and their day with excitement.
- ✓ Take turns reading to each other every day.
- ✓ Have your children teach you something they have learned at school. Do this once per week.
- ✓ Encourage your children to do things that "charge their batteries." Encourage them to try many different activities as a way of discovering interests and talents.

Remind them that they will build their careers around their talents, not around their weaknesses.

- ✓ Provide a time and place for homework. Expect that they will study. Allow them to study either by writing the assignments or thinking hard about them for a reasonable amount of time.
- ✓ Support the teacher: Don't fight with children over the homework. Don't fight with the teachers over the grade or consequence. Tell your children that you will love them regardless of their grades or the number of years it takes to complete each grade.
- ✓ Don't pay your children for good grades and don't punish for bad grades. Be excited about the good grades and sad for the children about their bad grades.
- ✓ Have your children bring home papers. Look at the right answers instead of the wrong ones. Don't correct the wrong answers—leave this for the teacher.

## “SCHOOL MANNERS”

Ask most teachers...and most parents...and they'll tell you that rudeness in school is becoming a bigger problem each year. In fact, nine out of 10 parents think that children need to practice better manners when they're in school.

Kids today see example after example of bad manners in actions. Adults yell at store clerks. They make rude gestures when driving. And athletes? There's a story of rude behavior nearly every day.

Most parents want their children to learn and practice respectful behavior. Here are guidelines for the “school manners” you should be teaching your child:

- **Don't check your manners** at the school door. If your child says “please” and “thank you” at home, remind her to use the same words at school.
- **Pay attention.** At home, help your child listen to instructions and focus on what you are saying.
- **Do as the teachers say.** Your child may not always want to follow instructions, but she needs to know that the teacher is in charge.
- **Put things away.** This is a task she may work on at home, but it will also help the teacher at school.
- **Come on time.** Promptness is a skill your child will need for the rest of her life.

Source: Peggy Post and Cindy Post Senning, *Emily Post's The Gift of Good Manners: A Parent's Guide to Raising Respectful, Kind, Considerate Children*, ISBN: 0-060-18549 X (Harper Collins, 1-800-242-7737, [www.harpercollins.com/hc](http://www.harpercollins.com/hc)).

