

# Elementary School Handbook

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL'S PLEDGE TO PARENTS

We, as educators and as parents, have a responsibility to provide a clearly defined learning environment for our children. We feel the following statements best express how this responsibility can be met:

1. We have an obligation to provide a learning environment that is business-like, and conducive to learning.
2. We have an obligation to identify clearly for the students what they are to learn, when they are to learn it, how they are to learn it, and whether or not they have learned it.
3. We have an obligation to determine properly student needs and to meet those needs with effective methods and materials.
4. We have an obligation to provide sufficient practice and application of knowledge and skills so students can remember them and use them in their daily lives.
5. We have an obligation to keep parents informed about their child's progress, building programs, and the school.
6. We have an obligation to define clearly the behavior expectations of the school to the students in order that they may achieve at their full potential.

One of the most important aspects of an education that we can provide for children is to expect learning to take place. To meet this goal we need the joint cooperation of the teacher and parents. We look forward to sharing this experience with you.

Sincerely,

Robin Bauer  
Principal, Reed-Custer Intermediate School

Janice Kunz  
Principal, Reed-Custer Primary School

## **REED-CUSTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The elementary staff of Reed-Custer School District 255U believes a quality education creates a foundation for each student to be:

- A) A contributing member of the school community by developing qualities of character.
- B) Successful at next school building level.
- C) A responsible, life long learner.

Accordingly, the elementary schools of Reed-Custer School District will develop the following 21st Century skills in every student:

- Literacy
  - a) Basic literacies of language arts, arithmetic, and technology.
  - b) Cultural and global awareness.
- Reasoning and Thinking Skills
  - a) Creativity, curiosity, and risk taking.
  - b) Problem solving.
  - c) Critical thinking.
- Social Skills
  - a) Interpersonal skills and interactive communication.
  - b) Personal and social responsibility.
- High Productivity
  - a) Prioritizing, planning, and managing for results.
  - b) Relevant, high quality products.

We are committed as a school to fostering these ideas, and we encourage all students to strive to attain their maximum educational potential.

## ATTENDANCE

### PROCEDURES

1. If a student is reported absent by the first period teacher, and the parent has not yet called, the office will call home or work to verify the student's absence with the parent.
2. Absences will be excused for:
  - a. Sudden illness verified by a written excuse or phone call from home.
  - b. Death in the family.
  - c. Critical illness of a near relative (mother, father, brother, sister, grandparents).
  - d. Dental or medical appointments when prior arrangements have been made and these students attend school prior to or after the appointment. **ONLY** in extreme circumstances should a child miss an entire day for a dental or medical appointment.
3. Absences will be unexcused for:
  - a. Trips or visits not due to serious illness or a death in the family unless prior arrangements have been made.
  - b. Absence due to work (babysitting, chores, etc.).
  - c. Absences due to vacationing parents. (These will be excused by the Principal if prior arrangements have been made).
4. A student whose absence was not reported by phone to the office must bring a note from his/her parents when the student returns to school, or the absence will be considered unexcused.
5. Time Guidelines - AM/PM Tardy - Absent:  
2 1/2 hours of instructional time (excluding 30 minutes lunch) = 1/2 day of school.  
5 hours of instructional time (excluding 30 minutes lunch) = 1 full day of attendance.  
A student may come to school anytime before 10:00 a.m. and be considered tardy.  
If he/she arrives after 10:00 a.m. - he/she is considered absent in the morning (1/2 day absent).  
If the student leaves prior to 11:15 a.m. or up to 2:15 p.m. he/she is considered absent in the afternoon.  
If a student leaves at 2:15 p.m. or after, he/she is considered present for the day.

Just one visit to any classroom in our district will impress the visitor with the number and range of activities in progress. The student who is absent, for whatever reason, misses these activities and no amount of effort can ever recreate them. With this in mind, the concerned parent should never allow his or her child to miss school except for the most compelling of reasons. Irregularity in school attendance is one of the major contributing factors to difficulty in school. We expect punctuality and regular attendance.

The Illinois State Board of Education's legal department has interpreted Section 26-3A of the School Code to be: That a student must remain in school for the entire year if he or she turns 16 while school is in session. Hence, students may not drop out of school on their 16th birthday.

### ATTENDANCE PROCEDURE

- A. When a child will be absent from school, parents/guardians should call before or within one hour the the attendance center start time.

Reed-Custer Intermediate 458-2145

call before 9:45 a.m.

Reed-Custer Primary

458-6340

call before 9:45 a.m.

If no phone call is received within an hour of the attendance center's start time, the attendance center must then call the child's home or the parent's/guardian's place of employment to find out why the child is not in school. If the school cannot make phone contact with the parent/guardian, the absence will be considered unexcused. The parent/guardian then has 24 hours to contact the attendance center to explain the absence.

**NOTE: PLEASE MAKE PHONE CONTACT SINCE THE OFFICE MUST VERIFY ANY WRITTEN NOTES BY PHONE ANYWAY.**

- B. When the child returns to school he/she will no longer need to report to the office. The phone contact has already made the school aware of the reason for the absence. Teachers will consider all absences excused unless the student's name appears under the unexcused absence column on the daily attendance sheet.
- C. If your child must leave school early, or arrive late, due to a medical or dental appointment,

please notify the attendance center by phone. This would be the same for any excused partial absence during the day. Try to schedule all appointments that must take place on a school day during study hall, lunch, or P.E. and be sure that a full school day is not wasted as a result of the appointment.

- D. Permission for a prearranged absence should be secured in the office at least three days in advance of the absence. Prearranged absences could include the following:
1. Family vacations
  2. Required court appearances
  3. Religious holiday or retreat
  4. Participation in authorized school sponsored activities (musical contest, field trip)

### **EXCUSED ABSENCES**

An excused absence from school allows the student to receive full credit for the missed work. The student has the number of days he/she was absent to make-up his/her work and tests. (Example: If the student is absent two days, he/she would have two school days to make up his/her works) Failure to do so may result in loss of academic credit. The following circumstances will lead to an excused absence for the student:

1. Personal illness or injury
2. Medical and dental appointments
3. Serious illness or death in the family
4. Court dates are excused absences.

**NOTE: Students who miss an excessive number of days may risk losing academic credit for the classes missed, regardless of whether their absences are excused or unexcused. Sufficient warning will be given to both the student and his/her parents/guardians before this occurs.**

### **UNEXCUSED ABSENCES**

Most other absences, with the exception of those listed above, will be considered unexcused. Unexcused absences may include but are not limited to:

1. Truancy
2. Oversleeping
3. Missing the bus
4. Lack of a ride to school
5. No phone contact with parent

For all unexcused absences, the student may (upon the discretion of the administrator) receive ZERO credit for any work or tests they miss.

After three absences, a student may be required to have a medical note from a doctor in order for the absence to be excused. If no medical excuse is brought to the office, the absence will be unexcused.

**NOTE: Anytime a medical (doctor's) note is provided, that absence will not count against the student in determining their five days.**

The following procedure will be implemented for students who have excessive absenteeism:

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| 4 absences:          | Warning letter to parents   |
| 7 absences:          | Conference with student, assistant principal, counselor (at middle school and high school level)                                    |
| 9 absences:          | Parent conference with administration   |
| 12 absences or more: | Case may be referred to the Tri-County Truancy Alternative Program, and/or the Regional Superintendent's office for further action. |

**NOTE: All student absences are cumulative during the school year.**

### **CONCLUSION**

As was stated earlier, there is a direct relationship between poor attendance and class failure. Students who have good attendance generally achieve higher grades, enjoy school more, and are much more employable after leaving school.

**WE EXPECT STUDENTS TO BE IN SCHOOL EVERYDAY. THERE ARE NO GIVEN DAYS WHERE IT IS OKAY FOR STUDENTS TO MISS SCHOOL. NO MAGIC NUMBER THAT THEY CAN ACCUMULATE BEFORE THEY BEGIN TO WORRY. THEIR PLACE IS TO BE IN SCHOOL!**

## **TRUANCY**

Students who are repeatedly truant will be reported to the Tri-County Truant Program and if truancy continues students will be reported to the Regional Superintendent's Office for further action.

## **MAKE-UP WORK**

1. It is the student's responsibility to present all make-up work within a time period equal to the number of days absent. Work not completed within that time will be handled according to the policy for homework.
2. Assignments completed after unexcused absences, truancy, or external suspensions will be credited at 80% of the earned credit.
3. Any student who expects to miss classes because of a field trip or other school-sponsored activity must arrange with the teacher of the class to be missed to make up his work in advance of the absence. Sponsors will supply each member of the faculty, office and cafeteria with a list of students to be absent as much in advance as possible of the planned trip.

## **TARDY POLICY**

Students have the responsibility to be on time for all classes. A student will be considered tardy if he arrives to a class after the tardy bell stops ringing. If a student is tardy to class he must report to the Principal's office in order to obtain an admit to class. The accumulation of tardies will result in the following consequence:

1. For every 3 tardies, students will receive a recess detention or after school detention and then these tardies will be incorporated into the building misconduct policy.
2. Tardies will accumulate during each semester but will not be carried over to the next semester.

## **RULES FOR VISITORS**

We encourage all parents and guardians to visit their child's classroom. Rules for visitors are:

1. Visitors must use the main entrance.
2. Visitors must report to the office, sign in and receive a visitor's badge. Visitors will wear badges at all times.
3. Parents are requested to make appointments to visit the classrooms or have a conference with the teacher. There are times during the day when the teacher has time to confer with a parent. Appointments will cause less disruptions to the classroom.
4. If a student needs to leave early, parents must report to the main office. We will call the classroom and have the student come to the office.

## **STUDENT ASSIGNMENT TO A CLASS/TEACHER**

Placement in a classroom with a teacher is at the discretion of the Principal. This decision is made by considering the student's instructional level, learning style in relation to the teacher's instructional style, along with recommendation of the previous teacher.

## **GENERAL BUILDING RULES AND REGULATIONS**

### **DO:**

1. Follow the directions of teachers and other school employees.
2. Respect the rights of fellow students.
3. Use a walking pace in the building at all times.
4. Drink and eat only in designated areas.
5. Talk in normal voices while in the building (no shouting or screaming).
6. Leave the building immediately after school, unless staying for a school function or having previous arrangements made with the teacher.
7. Help keep our school neat and clean; something of which we can be proud.
8. Wear appropriate clothes. Fads or extremes of any type cannot be accepted. (See Dress Code, page 16 of white pages.)

### **DON'T:**

1. Be in the building without adult supervision.
2. Bring permanent markers to school without permission from the teacher.
- \*3. Bring a weapon or instrument capable of inflicting bodily injury.
4. Bring toys or games to school.

5. Bring chewing gum into the building.
6. Throw snowballs at anytime.
7. Loiter around parked vehicles.
- \* **ANY ITEMS WHICH ARE CONSIDERED DISRUPTIVE, HAZARDOUS, OR DANGEROUS WILL BE TAKEN IMMEDIATELY AND WILL NOT BE RETURNED TO THE STUDENT.**

### CLASSROOM STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR

In order to guarantee your child and all the students in our classrooms the excellent educational climate they deserve, we will be utilizing the following discipline plan:

- A. Rules:
- If a Student chooses to break a rule:
- 1st consequence: Name on the board, warning.
- 2nd consequence: One check, spend 1/2 of recess in the classroom.
- 3rd consequence: Two checks, spend all of recess in the classroom.
- 4th consequence: Three checks, after school detention. With every detention, student fills out a "Responsibility Planning Form".
- 5th consequence: Four checks, after school detention, a student, parent, teacher, and Principal conference held.
- Severe Disruption: Sent immediately to Principal.
- B. Students who behave appropriately will be positively rewarded with:  
**PRAISE      POSITIVE NOTES HOME      SPECIAL ASSEMBLIES**
- C. It is in your child's best interest that we work together with regard to his or her schooling. We will keep you informed about your child's progress.

### BUILDING MISCONDUCT

Incidents of misbehavior outside of the classroom (in the halls, restrooms, cafeteria, on the school ground, etc.) will be considered building misconduct. Such offenses will result in building detentions. The accumulation of detentions will provide the following consequences:

- |               |   |  |
|---------------|---|--|
| 3 detentions  | - | Warning letter sent home.  |
| 5 detentions  | - | 1 day in-school suspension-mandatory parent conference with optional behavior contract.  |
| 7 detentions  | - | 2 days in-school suspension-mandatory parent conference with optional behavior contract. |
| 9 detentions  | - | 3 days in-school suspension-mandatory parent conference with optional behavior contract. |
| 12 detentions | - | 4 days out-of-school suspension.   |
| 14 detentions | - | 5 days out-of-school suspension.   |
| 16 detentions | - | 10 days out-of-school and referral to the Superintendent.                                |

### BUILDING POLICY FOR OUTSIDE RECESS

Elementary students are allowed to have outside recess under the following conditions:

1. Outside temperature is not below 20 F.
2. Wind chill factor is not below 0 F.
3. Rain or heavy snow is not occurring.

If temperature is slightly above 20 F., and wind chill slightly above 0 F. children are required to have head coverings and gloves for outside recess.

Depending on the condition of the playground, children may be required to wear boots at recess time. Teachers may regulate the need for the children to wear coats or jackets at other times during outside recess.

- NOTE:** For each recess there will be at least one teacher on duty outside and one teacher on duty inside. The teacher outside is responsible for supervising activities on the playground. The teacher on duty inside supervises children who are unable to go outside for one reason or another. Children may have to stay in for the following:
1. To complete work assignments.

2. For discipline problems.
3. By special request of parents due to recuperation from illness or other reasons approved by the Principal.
4. For not having proper winter attire.

### PLAYGROUND RULES AND CONSEQUENCES

#### **RULES:**

1. Listen and follow the directions of the teacher on duty.
2. Be courteous to other students.
3. No fighting, gang-on activities or roughhousing.
4. Do not throw rocks, sticks, or snowballs.
5. Do not climb fences.
6. No toy guns or dangerous objects allowed.

#### **CONSEQUENCES**

- 1st step - Warning (verbal).  
 2nd step - Student sits on bench for remainder of recess.  
 3rd step - Recess detention - student will write playground rules.  
 4th step - Recess detention - the parents will be contacted and a discipline form sent home.  
 \* 5th step - Student will be referred to the Principal.

- \* Severe Clause - In the event that a student displays gross misconduct as cited in the Discipline Regulations section of this handbook, the student will be immediately sent to the Principal.

### LUNCH ROOM BEHAVIOR

Students are expected to abide by the following rules during the time they are in the lunchroom:

1. Follow the instruction of the lunchroom supervisors.
2. Be courteous to fellow students.
3. Refrain from pushing or shoving in lunch line.
4. Refrain from shouting or yelling.
5. Refrain from throwing food or other items.

Students are to go to the lunch tables from the lunch lines. They are to remain seated unless they have permission to leave their seats.

Those students failing to obey the supervisors and rules will be directed to a special table called the "Quiet Table", where they must eat their lunch without talking. Three times at the "Quiet Table" during a semester will result in an after school detention.

### HOMEWORK

Every child should have his or her own quiet place at home and a regular time for reading and studying. Parents should talk about school with their children each day, check on homework assignments, discuss the assignment and later check to see that it has been completed. Parents should never do homework assignments for their children, but after discussing the assignment should allow the child to complete the assignment independently.

1. Homework assignments are to be turned in the following day or at the time designated by the teacher.
2. If the homework assignment is not turned in on time, the student will serve a detention the following day. A homework detention slip is sent home, describing the assignment. The parent(s) must sign and return. If the student does not return the detention slip, the parent is called and verbal confirmation is obtained for the detention.

If the assignment is not completed by the end of the day, a detention will be written and;

- a. If the assignment is turned in prior to class beginning the following day, the teacher will nullify the detention. Not turning the assignment in by class time the following day will result in five (5) points being deducted and another detention being written.
- b. This process will continue through recess and evening detentions until either the assignment is completed or five school days have elapsed. Each day a total of five points

will be deducted and each day a detention will be served. After the fifth school day, a zero will be entered in the grade book.

### LIBRARY

The library services students and teachers in both elementary schools. It will be open to students at 8:15 a.m. and will close at 3:45 p.m. each school day. Students may come individually or with their class. Students using the library will be expected to use the same good behavior used in their classrooms. Gum chewing, eating, drinking, and noisy conversation will not be allowed in the library.

Students are responsible for all library materials which they borrow. Most materials are checked-out for a two week loan period, and may be renewed for another two weeks. Students having overdue materials receive up to three notices from the librarian. Letters to parents may also be necessary. After the second notice, students may not check-out additional materials until the overdue matter is settled. Students will be expected to pay for lost or damaged items.

### BICYCLES

Bicycles are to be parked in the bike rack upon arrival at school and are not to be used until the end of the school day. Bicycles should be equipped with a locking device.

The following rules should be observed:

1. Always ride on the right hand side of the road in single file.
2. Ride only one person to a bicycle.
3. Always use hand signals when turning.
4. Obey all traffic signals.

Failure to follow rules will result in a student not being allowed to ride his/her bicycle to school.

**NOTE: Scooter, rollerblades and skateboards are not allowed at school.**

### UTILITY EMERGENCIES

Whether or not the school can continue to operate when faced with sudden and prolonged loss of one or more utilities depends on the threat to health and safety and degree of inconvenience to the school and community. In the event that it has been decided to close school early, a reasonable effort will be made to contact parents to alert them of the situation.

### BOMB THREAT

In the case of a bomb threat, the building will be evacuated and the local police or Will County Sheriff's Department will be contacted.

### FIRE

In the event that a fire is detected or is suspected, the building will be evacuated immediately and the fire department called.

### TORNADO

In the event of a tornado warning alarm students have assigned areas in the building away from windows. During a tornado alert, when children are in a "duck and cover" position, bus routes will not be run and if parents or someone designated by a parent wishes to take a child, that parent or designee must sign the student out in the Principal's office.

### NUCLEAR DISASTER

In the event of a nuclear disaster the ventilation (incoming air) of the building will be shutdown and all elementary students will be evacuated to Joliet Junior College or to Kankakee Jr. High School. Parents will be notified of which site and may pick their children up at that site only.

### HEALTH RECORDS

Parents are reminded of the necessity to inform the school of any special health problem such as diabetes, epilepsy, allergies, etc. so that the school is able to perform efficiently any needed

procedures relevant to the problem.

Parents must send the prescription container or a note from the doctor for any medicine a child must take during the school day.

The school nurse is responsible to see that health records are up-to-date, to make home visits, to hold conferences and to coordinate vision and hearing tests which are conducted in selected grades.

### **FIELD TRIP GUIDELINES**

Field trips are an extension of the classroom experience. They are meant to be a learning situation with the same behavior expectations for students. Field trips usually require additional supervision provided by parents as chaperones. In order for the field trip to be rewarding the following guidelines are expected of chaperones;

- Students not attending the field trip are expected to attend school. Parents should send a note and the child will be assigned another class for the day.
- As a chaperone full attention needs to be focused on the students being supervised which necessitates no younger or older brothers or sisters accompanying chaperones on the field trip.
- Students and chaperones are expected to ride the bus. A limited number of chaperones per class is usually required (due to space on the bus). Parents not chaperoning may drive, pay the entrance fee, and join their child's group. The assigned chaperone is still in charge of the group. Each child must remain with the chaperone. However, a student may ride home with his/her parent (non-chaperone) by providing the teacher with a note of intent before the trip.
- Chaperones are responsible for the safety of their students. At no time should chaperones allow the students to wander out of sight. If a student goes to the restroom, please stay outside of the restroom until the student comes out or if possible stay in the restroom.
- A time and meeting place is usually set for the entire group to meet before leaving the field trip. Chaperones should wear a watch, and be aware of the meeting time. The buses are on a strict time schedule.
- Smoking and alcohol are prohibited on school grounds, therefore, prohibited on field trips.
- It may be necessary under unusual circumstances for a chaperone to purchase something for a student. The circumstances could be: loss of lunch or drink money. If this occurs please tell the classroom teacher and the chaperone will be reimbursed. At no time should chaperones purchase treats or souvenirs or pay entrance fees to special shows or exhibitions for students. Students are informed before the field trip if they may or are required to bring money.
- Any exceptions to the field trip guidelines should be referred to the building principal.

### **PARTIES**

1. Three class parties a year will be scheduled. These parties are Halloween, Christmas and Valentine's Day.
2. On their birthdays students may bring a treat to share with all members of the class.
3. If you are having a party at your home, unless all members of the class are invited, do not pass out invitations at the school.

### **SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FOR PROMOTION AND RETENTION AT THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

The elementary schools are dedicated to providing the best educational opportunity possible for every student who attends our schools. We realize that education is a developmental process and that certain skills need to be acquired as a student moves up the educational ladder. As a result, we have found a need to provide this policy on promotion and retention as a general guide for the criteria involved in decisions of promotion or retention. (Policy on page 21 - District Section, white pages)

#### **Kindergarten**

Kindergarten, for most children, is the first experience they have in an organized, structured educational environment. We are committed to making this experience productive and beneficial. We feel that a child's progress in later years of schooling is influenced greatly by his early experiences with school. Therefore, our programs are designed to provide encounters with high

degrees of success for the children.

The teachers, after a considerable amount of contact with the students, become aware of certain strengths and weaknesses of each child. Through various methods, the teachers strive to further develop the strengths as they constantly seek to improve on a child's weaknesses.

By the end of the kindergarten program, certain fundamentals should be learned. These fundamentals comprise the main areas cited on the progress reports. The progress reports are a list of basic skills which should be attained at the completion of the kindergarten program. In the event that the kindergarten teachers evaluate a child's progress and conclude that the basic skills from the progress reports are not attained, a conference will be scheduled between the teachers, parents, Principal, and other staff members who would have input for the discussion. From this conference, recommendations will be made to the parent concerning what measures can be taken to best benefit the child.

### **Grades 1 Through 5**

Grades 1 through 5 have a graded system for performance. Grade 1 uses "meets, does not meet, and exceeds expectations" and grades 3 through 5 use the traditional grading system of A, B, C, D, F. The evaluation of a student's progress and his or her ability to cope with a higher level is developed through analyzing the total picture of the student

1. academic achievement
2. social adjustment
3. emotional adjustment

In academic achievement, the child is evaluated on his or her performance and ability in each subject area. Because of the emphasis placed on language arts a failing mark as the yearly average would place a child in the position to be considered for retention. Also, failing marks in math, social studies, and science would place a child in the same position. To complete the total academic profile of a student, his or her performance in physical education, music, and art would supplement the evaluation process.

A student's social and emotional maturity levels are the other considerations for promotion or retention. Special attention is paid to the impact of promotion or retention on a child's social and emotional behavior. When a child is recommended to be retained, a group evaluation involving the teachers, parents and the Principal will occur to discuss the impact of such a recommendation. From the results of the group meeting and the recommendations and evaluations of the teachers concerning academic matters, the decision to promote or retain a child will rest with the Principal. The decision will be reviewed by the Superintendent at his discretion. The parents of the child in question may appeal the decision to the Superintendent and the Board of Education. The decision of the Board of Education is final.

### **PARENT-TEACHER COOPERATION**

The elementary staff feels that continuous parent-teacher contact is most beneficial in understanding and solving many of a child's problems. Therefore, we encourage parents to call or visit the school to keep informed of any problems which exist at home which could influence the child's educational process.

Reed-Custer Elementary Schools have parent-teacher organizations that act as liaisons between the parents and teachers of their particular buildings.

### **MAINTAINING A SAFE AND PEACEFUL SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT**

The Board of Education, administration, faculty and staff of the Reed-Custer Elementary Schools are totally committed to doing everything possible to provide a safe and peaceful learning environment. The elementary schools have implemented a Second Step Violence Prevention Curriculum which trains students in dealing with anger management, self-control and empathy.

Using any form or type of aggressive behavior that does physical or psychological harm to someone else and/or urging other students to engage in such conduct is prohibited. Prohibited aggressive behavior includes, without limitation, the use of violence, force, noise, coercion, threats, intimidation, fear, bullying, or other comparable conduct.

Any instances that disrupt the safe and peaceful environment of the school will be addressed by the staff and the building administrator and appropriate action will be taken.

