

Armstrong Elementary School Handbook 2023-2024

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE:

Welcome to the 2023–2024 school year at Armstrong School!

The information shared in this handout is specific to Armstrong school and serves as a supplement to the 23-24 [Westborough Elementary Schools Parent-Student Handbook](#). Our district website(www.westboroughk12.org) and school website(<https://aes.westboroughk12.org/>) also provide a wealth of information.

Westborough Public Schools is currently transitioning to the Parent Square communication system. Families will be getting district updates for this transition with information and instructions for setting up Parent Square accounts. Parents will also get this information in their paper first day packets. We are very happy to roll out and implement ParentSquare, as it will help us to communicate goals, and simpler to use with the entire school community.

If you do not have access to a computer and cannot receive information electronically and/or if you need information translated, please contact the AES school office at 508-836-7760 as soon as possible.

The Armstrong staff looks forward to making this year a positive and successful one for every child and family!

Kind regards,

Mr. Mendes

Email: mendesj@westboroughk12.org

Phone: 508-836-7760

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT ARMSTRONG SCHOOL:

Information Included:

- Visitor Sign-In/School Security
 - Arrival/Dismissal Information
 - School Attendance
 - Breakfast, Lunch, & Snack Information
 - Safety Protocols
 - Family Communication
 - Birthdays
 - Clothing
 - Parent Guardian Participation
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Visitor Sign-In/School Security:

All school doors will remain locked during the school day. Visitors may enter the building through the main entrance near the office. Visitors should ring the buzzer when they are under the awning. Office staff will remotely unlock the doors for visitors after identification is verified. Visitors should then proceed directly to the lectern in front of the main office to sign in and obtain a visitor badge before going to other parts of the building. Armstrong staff members have been asked to stop any adult they see without a visitor's badge and send them back to the office for proper sign-in. Parents and visitors must sign-out prior to leaving the building.

Arrival/Dismissal Information:

The hours of school are 8:50 to 3:05.

By bus:

Teachers will greet students arriving on buses beginning at 8:30 AM and transition students to the playground. Armstrong staff will help students get organized and escort students to class off of the AES playground.

Parent Drop off:

Staff members are on duty starting at 8:30 AM. **Children cannot be dropped off before 8:30 AM.**

Parents/Guardians dropping off students in the morning will do so on West Street(weather permitting). On wet weather days parents/guardians may drop off at the main entrance. Please follow the directions on the sandwich boards as you drive toward the Armstrong main entrance.

When dropping off in front of the school, you must follow the guidelines below for student safety:

- **Cars should only stop and drop off at the “Student Drop Off” signs;**
- **Parents must remain in the car. Staff can assist with opening the car door if necessary.**
- **Students must get out of the car on the sidewalk side NOT the street side, no exceptions.**

Students arriving after **8:50 AM** are considered **TARDY**. Parents **MUST** accompany the student into the building to the Main office and sign the student in before they can go to class.

Dismissal

- **Transportation Changes** - Changes in transportation for dismissal are not allowed after 2:15 PM. Requests for bus changes for social reasons, private lessons, etc. are not allowed.
- **Parent Pick-Up (walkers)** - Parent pick up begins at 3:00 PM on the West Street side of the school. You must walk to the door and wait in line to sign out your child. Your child will only be released to a parent or a previously assigned designee. Parents who are coming down West Street toward Fisher Street must obey the signs at West and Whitney Street as they relate to traffic during specific hours. **“When School is in Session DO NOT ENTER 8:15 AM to 9:00 AM & 2:45 PM to 3:30 PM”**. Parents, please monitor children closely during this time as West Street can be very congested.
- **Extended Day Program (EDP)** - If your child is registered and signed up for the Extended Day Program (EDP), they will be called down to the Cafeteria at 3:00pm. The EDP staff will sign them in before they continue with their program.

Early Dismissal:

- If a child will be picked up from school **before the end of the day**, the parent/guardian must send a blue note to the teacher in the morning stating that the child will leave school early. The student's parent/guardian must come to the office to sign out his/her child, and the child will be called to the office for dismissal.
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School Attendance:

Attendance Policy:

Regular school attendance and on-time arrival at school are important for your child's education. One of the most important things parents can do is bring their children to school every day on time. All students should plan to arrive at school **before 8:45**. The time between 8:35 and 8:50 is used for morning routines such as unpacking, before school work, attendance, lunch count, breakfast etc. This time enables students to get organized and settle in for the start of school at **8:50**.

As you plan family trips and vacations, we urge you to schedule those trips during times when school is not in session. Extended absences from school are discouraged because they are disruptive to

your child's education. According to school policy, we do not provide homework in advance for students who miss school due to family trips or vacations. All family vacations and family trips that occur when school is in session will be recorded in your child's attendance record as an "unexcused absence." If an extended time away from school is unavoidable, please send in a note or email your child's teacher and include Mrs. Brosnihan at brosnihanm@westboroughk12.org, Mrs. Ritacco at ritaccos@westboroughk12.org, Ms. Dow at dows@westboroughk12.org and Mr. Mendes at mendesj@westboroughk12.org.

Tardiness:

It is important for students to arrive at school on time. **Students arriving after 8:50 are considered tardy** and **MUST** be signed in by a guardian before going to class. We appreciate your support in having your child come to school on time.

Attendance Call-In System:

A call-in system for absent students has been established. If your child is going to be absent from school, you **must** call and leave a message on the attendance answering machine. You can call the main office at (508) 836-7760. If you know in advance that your child will be absent or late, you may send in a note the day before. The machine is also on between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. You should leave your name, your child's name, the teacher's name and a **brief reason for the absence**. Parents/guardians can still call school after 8:00 and report their child as absent. If you choose to contact the classroom teacher directly, please be sure to carbon copy one of our school secretaries at the following email addresses: Mrs. Brosnihan at brosnihanm@westboroughk12.org, or Mrs. Ritacco at ritaccos@westboroughk12.org

In the morning, the office staff will compare the names on the absentee list with the names on the answering machine. If your child is marked absent by his or her classroom teacher and we do NOT receive a call or email from you, you will receive a phone call and email at approximately 10:00 AM stating that your child is not in school today.

Blue Change of Plan Forms:

All Kindergarten and new families received a pad of blue "Change of Plans" forms in their first day packet. Please use these forms whenever you need to make a change in how or when your child is being dismissed. If you must have your child dismissed to someone other than yourself or another legal guardian, that person will be asked to present identification. Please let us know if you need a new blue pad. Send the form to school in the morning with your child when:

- You are going to dismiss your child early from school.
 - There is a change in how your child typically gets home (bus, parent pick-up)
 - There is a change in your child's Extended Day Program schedule
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Breakfast/Lunch/Snack Information:

- **School breakfast and lunch is free to all students.**

Breakfast:

- Students have the *option* of eating breakfast at home or at school. If your child will be eating breakfast at school they will go to the Cafeteria upon arrival to eat their breakfast before heading to class. The first day of school is a full day and breakfast will be served.

Lunch:

- Your child may bring their lunch or choose school lunch. Again, all school lunches and breakfast is free. Students will still be required to enter their pin number to get lunch. Teachers will help students learn their pin numbers at the beginning of the year. You may find the lunch menu on the website (<https://westboroughk12.nutrislice.com/menus-eula>). The first day of school is a full day and lunch will be served.

- Lunch periods are 25 minutes long. When sending in lunch, you are encouraged to pack nutritious lunches your child can eat in this brief amount of time. Students eat lunch and have recess at the times listed below.

Armstrong Lunch / Recess Schedule

Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3
Lunch 11:20 - 11:45 Recess 11:50- 12:15 2:35-2:55 Afternoon Snack	Morning Snack Lunch: 12:20-12:45 Recess 12:45-1:10	Morning Snack Recess 11:20 -11:43 Lunch 11:48-12:15	Morning Snack Recess 12:20 - 12:42 Lunch 12:45 - 1:10

Snack:

- All students have a snack period every day. Please send in a healthy snack and a drink everyday. It is important to make sure your child knows which items are for snack and which are for lunch. We have several Armstrong students with life-threatening food allergies; therefore, all classes have special snack precautions that must be taken. Mr. Mendes and our nurse, Mrs. Beauregard will notify classroom families regarding allergies in a letter sent home. Please call Mrs. Beauregard at school (508-836-7760) or ask your child's teacher if you have any questions regarding safe snacks.

Safety Protocols:

At the beginning of the school year, all staff members are trained in the Armstrong safety protocols. These include our evacuation, missing student, and safety drills. The procedures are practiced throughout the school year with all students. The Armstrong Health and Safety Team is composed of the principal, administrative assistant, school counselor, school nurse, and our School Resource Officer. This team meets regularly to assess and update the procedures as necessary.

Family Communication:

As the school year begins, families often have questions. You may always call our school office as well at 508-836-7760 and we are happy to help!

Weekly News and Notes:

- The school principal will send a weekly newsletter to families every Friday afternoon titled, "**Weekly News and Notes.**" on the *Parent Square communication system*. Please view and read the updates every week as it will provide important information for you and your family about Armstrong and the town of Westborough. The **News and Notes** updates communicate essential information and give you a lens into our school!

Online First Day Packets:

- **During the first week of school parents will be asked to complete online paperwork. Please read the online information very carefully and complete the tasks by the appropriate deadlines. This ensures a smooth start to our school year.**

Birthdays:

Unfortunately, no food may be sent into school to celebrate your child's birthday. You may provide a token gift for each child (ex: pencil) or a craft, if you wish. **Please discuss your ideas with the teacher in advance.**

Clothing:

Please remember to label all clothing and belongings with your child's name to help us get it back to you in the event it is lost. Students must wear sneakers on the days that they have Physical Education class and to play. Be sure to help your child dress appropriately for the weather. If snow should come our way and students want to play in the snow they need to wear snow pants and boots. Students should remove hats while indoors unless we are celebrating a special "Hat Day". There are no cell phones or SMART watches allowed at AES. This is the same policy at all 3 elementary schools in Westborough.

Parent/Guardian Participation:

Volunteer Opportunities

- We will share more information regarding volunteer opportunities as we move further into the school year. Thank you in advance for any help you are able to provide!

Armstrong Parent Group

- **The Armstrong Parent Group serves as an active parent group for communication, parent involvement, and service within Armstrong School. The parent group is an organization of parents dedicated to enhancing the school life of our children. The parent group sponsors a variety of activities and functions to benefit our students throughout the school year. If you would like more information, please join us at our monthly meetings, which will be held the first Thursday of each month. More information about meeting dates is coming soon. All parents/guardians are welcomed and encouraged to attend!**