

We hope that you have all had a great summer! The first day of school is August 24<sup>th</sup>, and we would like you to read through the following information so that your children have everything they need for the first day. If you have questions about a topic below, we hope that you will call the contact information provided. Have a wonderful last few weeks of summer, and we will see you soon!

## PLEASE: Make sure your children's immunizations are up to date.

### There are six new immunization requirements!

- Information about these and all health and immunization forms can be found at the new DCPS website, [dcps.dc.gov](http://dcps.dc.gov), or they can be picked up from the registrar at your children's school.
- If your children's immunizations are out of date, schedule an appointment with your physician.
- Schools now accept health certificates for physicals issued any time after August 24, 2008, one year prior to the start of school, instead of 150 days prior to the start of school as in previous years.

## DCPS is beginning a new lunch charge policy this year.

**This year, if a student is eligible for free or reduced priced meals, but has not returned a completed application, parents will be required to pay for his or her meals.** We are introducing an online pre-payment process to make it easier for parents to pay their children's lunch account.

Beginning in the 2009-2010 school year, all elementary and middle school students will be allowed up to five additional meal charges once they run out of lunch money in their accounts. No allowances for regular meal charges will be made for high school students. Once students have run out of money on their lunch accounts or have used up their additional meal charges, they will be provided with a grilled cheese sandwich, two servings of daily fruit or vegetable and a ½ pint of milk.

The only exception to this rule will be during the first two weeks of the school year. During the first two weeks, all students will be allowed one regular meal charge per day from the daily menu selection.

### Meal Prices for 2009-2010 School Year

Grade Level	Eligibility Category	Breakfast	Lunch
Elementary	Paid	FREE	\$1.25
	Reduced		\$ .20
Middle	Paid	FREE	\$1.50
	Reduced		\$ .20
High	Paid	FREE	\$1.50
	Reduced		\$ .20

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## **Special Education: Learn more about inclusive classrooms.**

As the new school year begins, the Office of Special Education will continue to support schools as they strive to build inclusive environments for our students. Together with you, we will work to provide the supports and services our students need to flourish. By meeting each student at their current ability, we can ensure students with special needs, as well as their non-disabled peers, gain access to a broad range of educational services and supports to achieve at the highest levels. However, we will not be moving students to classrooms that do not provide them the necessary support for their success. We encourage you to speak to the staff at your children's school about their efforts to provide a more inclusive environment for your children.

You may also have questions about the law governing special education. The manual, *Caring for Our Students with Disabilities-A Procedural Manual for Parents*, is designed to assist you in understanding your rights and the rights of your children under IDEA, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. You may get a copy of this manual from your neighborhood school or by contacting the Office of Special Education.

We look forward to your support and involvement as we seek to provide inclusive opportunities that broaden the horizons of all DCPS students. Please feel free to contact the Office of Special Education at (202) 442-4800.

## **DC One Cards/ Student IDs**

Middle and high school students who have not yet received a DC One Card to use as a student ID will receive one this school year, provided they are attending a school participating in the DC One Card program. Returning secondary school students should continue using the DC One Card IDs that they were issued in the spring or over the summer, even if they are transferring to another DC public school.

The DC One Card can also be used to take out books at school libraries and access food services in most school cafeterias. Additionally, the DC One Card provides access to DC Parks and Recreation Centers, DC Public Libraries and the WMATA Metrobus and Metrorail system via the SmarTrip feature.

Please contact the DC One Card Customer Service Center at 202-671-CARD if you have any questions about the DC One Card.

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## Volunteer in a School.

We love to have parents, family and community members volunteer in our schools! Talk to your children's teachers or office staff to find opportunities to volunteer your time at school.

### A few documents we need from all of our volunteers

At DCPS we take the health and safety of our students very seriously. Before anyone can volunteer at a DC Public School, they must bring the documents listed below to 825 North Capitol Street, NE, 9th floor.

1. Tuberculosis (TB) Verification
2. Completed DCPS Volunteer Application
3. State issued photo identification

### Volunteer Processing Hours of Operation

Tuesday: 9:00 am- 4:00 pm

Thursday: 9:00 am- Noon

After you have turned in the documents listed above to the volunteer coordinator, you will be asked to complete a **fingerprinting clearance** process on the 6th floor of central office. If we can be of any further assistance to you, please feel free to contact the Volunteer Program at 202-442-5447 or email [dcpsvolunteers@dc.gov](mailto:dcpsvolunteers@dc.gov).

## High School Students Can Track Their Progress: Individual Graduation Portfolios (IGPs)

All high school students should have received IGP login information with their report cards at the end of last school year. If you do not have this information or have any questions regarding your IGP, please contact your school counselor.

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## Learn about the new DCPS discipline code.

We have used feedback from students, families, community members and staff to create a new Student Discipline Policy, otherwise known as Chapter 25. School communities will use this Student Discipline Policy to maximize learning time as well as create positive, respectful relationships among staff and students.

### How does this discipline code work?

The new policy has **5 Tiers** which are outlined below and on the attached Tier breakdown.

- Generally **Tiers 1 and 2** include minor disruptions. These actions will be addressed through school-based policies in the classroom and within the school itself.
- **Tier 3** includes student behaviors that cause significant disruption or harm to self or others. These actions, according to school-based policies, will have in-school responses and may result in either on or off-site suspensions.
- **Tier 4** behaviors include serious actions that include disruptions, destruction of school property or significant harm to self or others. These behaviors will result in off-site suspensions.
- **Tier 5** includes illegal behaviors, disruption of school operation and significant harm to self or others. These actions will result in off-site suspensions or expulsion.

### Where does this discipline code apply?

This discipline policy is effective and applies to situations that occur:

- On school grounds
- When students are participating in any activity sponsored by DCPS
- When transportation is being provided by DCPS to an event
- During before and after-school programs
- When the offense at hand results in significant disruption to the school environment, even when the offense occurs off school grounds or outside regular school hours

### A few more things:

- Individual schools will make their policies around Tiers 1-3 available for students and parents.
- Students have the right to a conference before suspension or expulsion (unless emergency conditions require the immediate removal of student) and the right to appeal. Parents will be notified of suspensions or expulsion and have the right to review their child's disciplinary record.
- Students who are suspended for a short period of time (less than 11 days) have the right to an Education Plan, which will allow them opportunities to make up work missed, and students who are suspended for 11+ days or expelled will have access to an Alternative Education Setting.
- Whenever possible, schools will work with each student to help him or her to reflect on his or her actions, learn from mistakes and participate in prevention, remediation or intervention strategies.

### You can learn more about this policy in the following ways:

- Read the Tier breakdown attached to this packet.
- Read the full policy on the new DCPS Web site.
- Ask your principal or children's teachers any questions you have about school-level policies.

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# Who Can Help You at DCPS

## (and how to reach them)

We know that many occasions arise when students, parents and families have questions or feedback to offer DCPS. We want you to feel welcome talking with our school and central office staff, and we want you to be able to get in touch with us easily. The following is a list of contacts and resources for students, parents and families.

### Call your local school.

Your child's school is the best place to start for getting your questions answered. Feel free to either visit or call your child's school any time. Phone numbers and addresses for all schools can be found in our School Directory online.

### Call a Parent and Family Resource Center.

There are three city-wide Parent and Family Resource Centers in Wards 1, 7 and 8 that exist solely to work with and assist parents of all students in DCPS. These are excellent places to get information and to get involved. Call the center closest to you.

- **Ward 1** (202) 671-5023
- **Ward 7** (202) 645-4374
- **Ward 8** (202) 645-6619

### Call the Instructional Superintendent for your cluster.

If you have tried to find information or resolve an issue at school and have had difficulty, the cluster offices may be the best place to go. These offices directly oversee our schools. They are broken down into six clusters so that each office has a manageable number of schools. If you are unsure which cluster your child's school falls under, check online or ask at your child's school.

- **Cluster 1** Elementary (202) 236-1489
- **Cluster 2** Elementary (202) 729-3290  
or (202) 729-3296
- **Cluster 3** PK-8 and Collaborative  
(202) 442-5763
- **Cluster 4** Middle and Special Education  
(202) 698-0731 or (202) 698-0731
- **Cluster 5** High School (202) 939-2029
- **Cluster 6** Youth Engagement  
(202) 939-3524

### Talk to a person at Central Office.

Most calls are best directed to either the main line or the Critical Response Team. Questions regarding Special Education should generally be directed to the Office of Special Education.

- **Main Line** (202) 442-5885
- **Critical Response Team** (202) 478-5738
- **Office of Special Education** (202) 442-4800

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# How to Help Your Children Succeed

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## Hints for Helping Your Children Excel in School

### Support Education from Home.

#### Let your children know that you think school is important.

Your opinion matters to your children, even if they tell you it doesn't! On the first day of school, ask them to tell you—or to teach you—one thing he or she learned at school. Keep asking every day.

Ask your children's teacher about behavioral expectations in class. Find out how the teacher implements rules and rewards positive behavior. Then, try pieces of that system at home. Consistency will help your children understand what is expected of them both at school and at home.

#### Encourage excellent attendance.

We want to see your children in school every day because we can't teach them if they're not with us! Excellent attendance is key to success in school.

Set a bedtime and try to stick to it! This is part of building a productive routine so that your children will be up in time to get ready for school.

### Healthy Habits and Routines Help Children Grow and Learn.

Make sure that your children get a good night's rest every night. Also, talk to your children's school nurse or doctor about healthy eating habits that can improve learning.

Work some reading time into your children's day. Reading stimulates the brain and helps children be prepared and alert in school.

#### Develop a Productive Routine

A steady, productive routine will help your children maintain a healthy lifestyle and succeed in school. Good routines develop positive expectations for students (and parents).

### Build Healthy Relationships.

Tell your children something positive about who they are and what they do.

Recognize and thank your children for participating in school, religious or community events and for helping others.

### Get Involved!

Attend parent-teacher conferences, PTA and PTO meetings and read notices from school. Recruit other parents to get involved, support school programs and mentor others. Stay in touch with your children's teachers and ask that they be in touch with you.