

# Kindergarten Handbook

**Welcome to Kerby Kindergarten!** We are looking forward to a year of learning fun. Our Kindergarten program provides a nurturing, developmentally appropriate environment designed to enhance the cognitive, physical, and social-emotional growth of each child. An integrated curriculum promotes life skills, a sense of responsibility and independence, and a disposition to learn. Self-esteem is strengthened as the child feels a sense of **"Yes, I can!"** Below are explanations of classroom procedures and program highlights. *You may wish to keep this guide for reference during the year.*

**ATTENDANCE**    **ENTRY: 8:20 a.m.**    **MONDAY: 9:05 a.m.**

**DISMISSAL: 3:38 p.m.**

*"Is it O.K. to skip school? It's only kindergarten, right?"*

Kindergarten is the beginning of your child's formal education, and the official start of his or her career as a student! In a good preschool program, children spend much of their time in play and exploration. Exploration and play are also important in kindergarten, but they are usually integrated with skill and concept development. Kindergarten instruction focuses on hundreds of state-mandated "Grade Level Content Expectations". **Please help your child succeed "on the job" with regular attendance and punctuality.** The Kindergarten Instructional Day begins as soon as the Kindergarten line enters the building. Please try to have your child line up a few minutes before the **Entry Bell rings at 8:20 a.m. The entry bell will ring at 9:00 a.m. on Mondays.** (Teachers meet early on Monday mornings for collaborative planning time to focus on student learning, differentiation, and achievement data analysis to improve instruction.) The **Tardy Bell rings at 8:25 or 9:05 on Mondays.** It is much easier emotionally to enter the classroom with the group! The children are greeted in the locker room and we build a sense of community by welcoming back children who have been absent, "noticing" things about each other, like a new hat or umbrella, or sharing a joke or riddle. The children are oriented to the start of their day. Coming in tardy is like missing the first page in the chapter of a book. It's a little bit harder to figure out the story, and if you miss every first page, the whole story doesn't quite make sense!

In keeping with early childhood, educational, and brain research, most of our kindergarten day is spent in "hands-on" learning. If your child is absent, most of the work he or she misses cannot be "sent home". A worksheet represents 10 - 20 minutes of an instructional day. Any worksheets that we do are set aside for your child, and if it is possible to help him make up missed project work, we will. I am happy to send papers home with a sibling or neighbor. Parents can help by **checking the calendar for instructional news and activity suggestions.** **Please try to schedule family vacations during the school's planned vacations, especially if**

**your child needs help reviewing or reinforcing skills and concepts** or has separation anxiety issues.

**BIKING to SCHOOL** - It is also a long-standing Kerby policy that Kindergartners and first semester first graders are **NOT ALLOWED** to BIKE, SKATEBOARD, or ride a SCOOTER to school, even with an accompanying adult. Our goal is to keep the youngest students safe. Walking to school in the congestion is a big enough challenge for young students.

## **HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION**

Cooperative interaction between home and school is an essential ingredient in the success of an educational program. Our program features many avenues for home/school communication, including newsletters, calendars, websites, weekly folders, progress reports, and conference opportunities. Home/school learning activities are promoted to help your child connect his "school learning" to the larger world.

**A Home/School learning calendar** will be sent home each month noting special days, units of study, letters of the week, and suggested support and enrichment activities. It is correlated to the school and district calendars. **A Show and Tell calendar** noting the "Apple of the Day" (Show and Tell person/class leader) and the "Kerby Cougar of the Week" accompanies the learning calendar.

**The Kindernews (class newsletter)** is sent home several times a month in the weekly **Going Home folder**. This folder contains school and class information, and some student work. Notes to parents and supplemental work to strengthen skill areas are also placed in the folder. Some student work will be sent home in backpacks on a daily basis. **The main pocket of your child's backpacks will be checked each day for notes from home.**

On most days I am available to answer a quick question at entry or dismissal times. E-mail response takes about one day, as I am often not able to check e-mails until after school. My e-mail address is [pamela.cronovich@gpschools.org](mailto:pamela.cronovich@gpschools.org). While voice mail is available, it is the least efficient method for teacher contact, so I don't encourage its use. **If there is a change in your child's dismissal routine, please DO NOT leave a voice or e-mail message, as I may not check it until after dismissal. Please ask the secretary to call the classroom and relay the message to me.**

Grosse Pointe Schools schedule Fall and Spring Conferences. A Fall Conference sign-up sheet will be available at Back-to-School Night. It will also be posted outside the office for several days.

Kindergartners experience happy, busy days. Often children will share more information with their families if specific questions are asked ("What did you do during choice time today?"). Time constraints limit phone calls that I can make to parents to share happy news. Please assume that "no news is good news". Minor problems experienced by children are handled in-class using a problem-solving approach. Parents will be contacted by note or a phone call home to make a joint plan to help a child who is experiencing a persistent (three or more times) or unusual problem. Kindergarten children are perfectly wonderful, but not wonderfully perfect!

## **KINDERGARTEN INDIVIDUAL SNACKS**

The kindergartners will be asked to bring in INDIVIDUAL SNACKS for our snack time. We will often enjoy our snacks during story time, so to help make this an easy procedure, please follow these guidelines:

- 1.) Place the **snack in a LABELED zip-lock baggie** or reusable container.  
(If the snack is already individually packaged, please open one end before placing it in the baggie or container.)
- 2.) Snacks should be **healthy and non-messy**. To safeguard everyone's health, please follow these exclusion guidelines:  
**NO PEANUT or NUT products**  
**NO SMALL ROUND or CYLINDRICAL items (choking hazard).**  
**NO CANDY, COOKIES, CHIPS, or items requiring a SPOON or SPREADER.**
- 3.) **SUGGESTED SNACK MENU**
  - **CRACKERS**
  - **PRETZELS**
  - **FUN FRUIT SNACKS or FRUIT LEATHER**
  - **FRUIT CHIPS or FRUIT CRISPS**
  - **FRESH FRUIT**
  - **CEREAL or GRANOLA BARS**
  - **RAISIN or CINAMMON BREAD**

**FOOD ALLERGIES** If your child has a **FOOD ALLERGY**, please see me right away so that I can plan for his/her safety. The school has a form for you to complete.

**SPARE SNACKS** **PRETZELS** will be available for students who forget their snacks or become hungry at other times of the day. Please see me right away if you do not want your child to be given pretzels.

**BIRTHDAY TREATS will be NON-FOOD ITEMS.** Students will be assigned a Birthday Celebration Day on or close to their birthday as part of the Show and Tell calendar. Students are asked to bring in small items to share such as pencils, stickers, or small toys,

such as those found in birthday treat bags. Students will receive a birthday crown from the teacher and a small surprise from the principal and office staff.

## **SHOW and TELL CALENDAR / APPLE of the DAY**

A SHOW and TELL CALENDAR will be sent home each month with the learning calendar, noting the "Apple of the Day" (Show and Tell person and Class Leader) and the weekly "Kerby Cougar". The calendar is created by first assigning birthdays and "Kerby Cougar" days. The rest of the open days are assigned by going down the class list. By the end of the year, all students will have had one "Kerby Cougar" week, one Birthday Celebration Day, and many chance not to be the "Apple". Each student will be the Birthday Apple on or near his/her birthday. Summer birthdays will be celebrated the last two weeks of school. If your child is absent on his/her assigned "Apple Day", he /she may bring a Show and Tell item on the first day back. If you know ahead of time that your child will not be in school on an assigned day, you may trade dates with another family and just notify me about the change.

## **KERBY COUGAR WEEK**

Each child will be assigned a "Letter Week" during the year to shine as our "Kerby Cougar". (Our first Kerby Cougars are children of veteran families.) Our Kerby Cougars receive special attention and provide the focus for many of our learning activities. The Kerby Cougar program is designed to boost self-esteem, speaking skills, and keep our program meaningful to children. Each day, the Kerby Cougar student has a special job:

**MONDAY** Bring in a **TIMELINE POSTER** with 10 photos and pictures, **All About YOU!**

**TUESDAY** Bring in a **COLLECTION** of similar items (**limit of 10**)

**WEDNESDAY** Bring in a **FAVORITE BOOK** to share at storytime. You may invite a **Grown up GUEST READER** to share your book with the class. Guest readers will usually share the story at the end of the day before class dismissal. The sharing day or time can be adjusted to meet individual needs.

**THURSDAY** Decorate and bring in a **MYSTERY BOX or BAG** containing a "secret item". Have 3 clues ready to share with the class.

**FRIDAY** Bring in a Show and Tell item, a bag of pretzel rods to add to our class supply jar, and napkins.  
*You are the APPLE and the Cougar on this last day!*

Please note: We can usually be flexible on the learning sequences for these days, so please see me if you need to make an adjustment. Have fun with this special week!

## **SHOW and TELL**

"Show and Tell" is a special event in Kindergarten. This traditional learning activity helps integrate home/school learning, and promotes language arts and math skills. It helps students work on the Language Arts objectives for Public Discourse or Speaking.

Each month, students receive a learning calendar and a snack calendar. ALL-CLASS Show and Tell Days are theme-related and will be noted on the learning calendar. Students take turns being the person/leader of the day, known as the "APPLE". Students may bring **ONE toy** or item of interest to share on their assigned days. Toy weapons are NOT allowed. If your child is sick and misses the assigned day, he or she may bring a "Show and Tell item" on the first day back. Students may bring "special event" items or science discovery items at any time, with a **limit of one per week**.

Please remind your child to LEAVE OTHER TOYS AT HOME to enjoy after school.

## **LUNCH      11:36 - 12:24; Mondays 11:56 - 12:25**

Kindergarten students may bring their lunch to school or buy a hot lunch. **Each morning at Entry Time's Backpack Check, students will be asked if they have a Cold Lunch from home or if they will be buying a Hot Lunch.**

**COLD (LUNCHBOX) LUNCH** - Many students bring lunches from home. Please LABEL your child's lunchbox or paper bag. Food that is not consumed by your child at lunch will be sent home in the lunchbox to help you gauge the amount and type of food that your child is eating. Please note that the lunchroom does NOT HAVE a MICROWAVE for heating food.

**DRINKS** - White or chocolate milk or bottled water may be purchased for \$0.50. Money should just be placed in the lunchbox.

**HOT LUNCH** - Money for a hot lunch should be sent in a LABELED zip-lock baggie. The cost of lunch is \$2.50, which includes white or chocolate milk. Bottled water is NOT an option, but may be purchased for an additional \$0.50. Pizza is sold on Wednesdays, and the cost for an extra slice of pizza is \$1.25. Parents may place money on their student's account by sending a check to school made out to "GPPS" (Grosse Pointe Public School System). The school lunch program is run by the SODEXHO company. A monthly FOOD SELECTION CALENDAR will be available on the Kerby website.

**FORGOTTEN LUNCH** - If your child does not come to school with a lunch or lunch money, the office will try to contact you. If we are unable to reach a parent, your child may borrow money for a hot lunch one time. The school and SODEXHO ask that the borrowed money be repaid promptly so that it will be available for future "emergencies". If a student does not have a lunch, we cannot reach you, and lunch money has been borrowed and not repaid, he/she will be offered a lunch of Cheerios and milk.

**LUNCH SUPERVISION and SUPPORT** - The All Day Kindergarten classes will have a special lunchroom supervisor assigned to them along with designated service helpers. Support and encouragement will be provided for lunchroom procedures, opening food, etc. Good manners, safety procedures, and appropriate lunchroom behavior will be taught and reinforced. The students will also have extra adult and service helper supervision and support on the playground following lunch.

**LUNCH OFF SCHOOL PROPERTY** - Occasionally students go home or out to lunch. If your child will not be eating lunch at school, please SEND A NOTE. We will drop your child and the note off at the office on our way to the lunch room (gym). Parents will be responsible for their child's safety and well being until the lunch period ends. Returning students should line up on the Kindergarten Wall at 12:24. We strongly encourage parents to allow their children to remain at school for lunch during the first month so that students have a chance to learn lunchtime procedures and socialize with other students to help form early friendships.

## **SCHOOL CLOTHING**

Your child will be most comfortable in washable clothing made for play that he or she can independently manipulate. Our classroom tends to be warm, so the "layered approach" works well, even on cold days. Tennis shoes are required for gym class, and are safest for outdoor play. If your child does not know how to tie shoes, please consider Velcro or slip-on tennis shoes. School policy mandates that socks must be worn with all types of footwear, including sandals. Jewelry can be very distracting during circle time (group) instruction, so students are often asked to put jewelry in their lockers until play time, or to save it for dress up time at home.

Please note that parents are *not allowed* in the classroom to assist with dressing skills. The teacher and service helpers will provide assistance and instruction as needed. Parent instruction and practice time at home in a less hectic environment can often help a motivated kindergartner learn dressing skills.

Please LABEL all outerwear with permanent marker or laundry labels.

## **COLOR TEAMS**

Children are divided into "Color Teams" in the classroom to promote friendships and social skills. Color teams assist with classroom management. They are **not** ability groups. Each month, students select a different learning buddy, and I combine the buddies into color teams. Color teams work together during Center or Table times. There are opportunities each day for the children to interact with all classmates.

## **LIBRARY**

Kindergartners visit the library each week for early literacy and library instruction. They select and sign out books. Library books are put right into backpacks upon our return from the library and are never taken out in class. This eliminates missing book problems. Please help your child choose a safe spot at home for library books, and return library books on Mondays. Children will receive a library card that may be used at all public libraries. They do not need to bring the card back to Kerby, as we have the information.

## **BLOCK SCHEDULING**

Our day is a wonderful combination of large and small group activities, with opportunities for individual and learning buddy work. Music, movement, and art activities are woven throughout our curriculum and our daily routine. Math and language arts instruction are offered on a planned basis each day, are woven into all curricular areas, and are offered on an exploratory basis at centers.

Classes with specialized teachers are offered in music, physical education, library, and art on a rotating four day "block" - A, B, C, and D Days. Students always have the same class on the same letter day, but the day of the week may vary as the block rotation is only four days long. "Special" classes are always offered at the same time, and are 45 minutes long.

All students visit the computer lab each week with half of the class at a time for small group instruction. When the class has successfully completed the computer orientation program, the classroom computers are opened. (This is usually in late October.)

Kerby sends a "Block Class" schedule home each month. However to eliminate confusion:

- Return library books on **MONDAYS**.
- Wear gym shoes to school each day!

# Kindergarten Handbook

Welcome to Kerby School!

*Please save this guide for reference during the year.*