

Kindergarten Registration F.A.Q.

Columbia Elementary School

<i>Frequently Asked Question</i>	<i>Answer</i>
Transportation:	We only have transportation for our LifeSkill students
What is the drop-off procedure in the morning?	The first couple of weeks parents may walk their student to their classroom. Then we ask if they are dropped outside onto the playground where there will be supervision until the bell rings. The teacher will let you know if they are able to come into their class earlier than the bell.
What time can I drop my child off? Where can he/she go before school starts?	There is outside supervision at 7:30 a.m. They may enter the building at that time if they are having a school breakfast or if the teacher allows it.
What is the pick-up procedure in the afternoon?	Students are dismissed at the play shed, access from Walnut St. Teachers ask that you make eye or verbal contact with them before leaving with your child. If you are to pick up your student earlier than dismissal time then you will need to sign them out at the office.
Is there something that tracks my child if they are on the bus?	Bellingham Public Schools issues 'Hamster Passes' to all bus-riding students. This card allows for the transportation office the ability to verify if a child is on the bus, providing the child swipes the card. When swiping, we can verify when a student boards the bus and when they get off the bus.
What if my student leaves their belongings on the bus?	Transportation does not have a 'lost and found.' The items usually remain on the bus for 1 day and then they are taken to the lost and found at the school.
How does my student remember how to get home?	Our students are usually picked up by a parent or someone with parent permission to pick them up. This information needs to be shared with the office. If there is a change the office is notified and a message is given to the teacher and student.
What if my student misses the bus stop or forgets to get off the bus?	If the student does not get off the bus, we activate the 'reconnect plan' which will take the student to the next school site on the route, typically one of our high schools. The parent will be notified and would need to meet their child at the high school.
Will the bus driver drop off my student if an adult is not there to meet them?	Yes. Transportation will drop the student off if no one is there to meet them <i>unless</i> the student tells the driver they're supposed to stay on the bus, or they indicate they feel unsafe. Additionally, if the bus driver recognizes the environment bus stop is unsafe for any reason, the student will remain on the bus.
How do we change the 'going home' plans? Playdates, second homes, etc.	If there is a change then the information needs to be given to the office as soon as possible and they will then notify the teacher and student.
Attendance:	

What is the procedure if my child is late to school?	If you know that your student will be late then we ask that you notify the office before 8:00. You may leave a message on their voicemail if need be. Or you may send the student with a note. If your student is late to school, they must check in at the office and get a note to take to the teacher stating he checked in at the office and excused. Otherwise he will be marked with an unexcused absence.
What is the procedure if my child is absent from school?	Contact the office as soon as you know your child will be absent, whether he is sick or absent for another reason. Otherwise he will be marked with an unexcused absence.
What is the procedure if my child needs to leave school early?	Contact the office by phone or with a note with reason, so we can mark their attendance and let the teacher know.
Health:	
What is the allergy policy? Can I pack nuts in my child's lunchbox?	The teacher will let you know if there are allergies within their classroom. If there are allergies then we ask you to not pack nuts, or other foods that there might be allergies of, for your student.
What is the procedure if my child gets hurt or feels sick at school?	Most often the office will call you if your student gets hurt or sick at school. Sometimes it will be the teacher that calls.
What is procedure if my child has a toileting accident at school?	We ask that kindergarteners have a change of clothes in their backpacks daily in case this happens. If there are no extra clothes then if we have extra clothes in the office we would let them borrow them; or we would call the parent to bring a change of clothes for them.
What does my child need to bring to school with them? Can I pack extra clothes?	A backpack, lunch box/bag (unless they are getting one from school), snack/s, change of clothes and water bottle.
Meals and Snacks	
Can my child eat breakfast at school?	Yes, they may. Breakfast starts at 7:30, so if they are getting breakfast they should come then.
Is there a snack time? Who provides it?	There is a snack in the afternoon. There are exceptions if needed though. Families are to provide it.
How do families pay for school lunch?	You may add money to their lunch account by check, cash, or you may add it online with credit card (there is a fee).
How do I know what choices my child can make for school lunch?	Monthly menus are sent home at the end of the month prior. Or you can view it online.
What happens if my child doesn't finish their lunch?	Sometimes the teacher will allow them to take the rest to class for their snack, or if it hasn't been opened or bitten from then it is donated and given as a choice to another student that might not have a snack
What do I do if my child has food allergies or sensitivities?	It is our goal to ensure that every student in our school is safe. School Nurses work with our school district staff regarding allergy management. Staff are trained on our policy and procedures surrounding allergies and anaphylaxis.

	<p>Yes, you can send foods that are common allergens, (tree nuts, peanuts, soy, dairy, wheat, egg, fish/shellfish), to school in your student's lunch. We ask that students not share food at school. Lunchroom staff are trained to assist our students who have life threatening food allergies. Classroom teachers will work with families to manage food that is consumed in the classroom for treats and snacks.</p> <p>If your child has food sensitivities or allergies that require food substitutions please fill out a diet prescription form and return it to your school. If your child has a life-threatening food allergy, please contact your school nurse for information regarding health care plans and required emergency medications for school.</p>
General:	
What can I do to prepare my student for kindergarten?	Bellingham Public Schools strongly believe it is not the child's job to be 'ready' for kindergarten. It is our job to be ready for them. We recommend engaging your child in play-based learning activities that make sense for your family routine and structure. Please visit our website or click here for suggested activities.
Are there before and after school options for childcare?	There is the Y Program that is housed at Columbia for our students and that is after school (they must contact the Y directly). There is also Gabrielle Arts after school program who will pick your child up from school and walk with them to their location. There are enrichment classes (mostly all after school). Those classes will be available to enroll in during the school year.
Do parents get contact information for another child's family?	Columbia Parent Association usually distributes a student directory (for those that approve sharing their info), but otherwise, no - no contact information is shared.
Is there a school lost and found?	Yes. We have a large lost and found for coats and lunch box, and such. And we have a smaller one that is in the office for smaller items, such as a lost earring or glasses.
When is recess? Will my child have to go out if it is rainy or cold?	Recess is before the student's lunch time and again in the afternoon. There is no afternoon recess on Thursday's, which is an early dismissal day. We try to go outside even if it's raining or cold. If it is freezing and stormy, then we will have an indoor recess. Please have your child in appropriate clothing for this reason.
Can my child bring toys to school?	We ask that no toys or personal items are brought from home. The teacher will share information for those special days that they will allow them.
Classroom:	
When will we know who the classroom teacher is?	We will contact families in late August, prior to school starting to set up a date and time for your and your child's meeting with the teacher.
Is there a conference or time to meet my child's teacher prior to school starting?	Yes. Prior to school starting, you will be contacted by school personnel to schedule a 30-minute entry conference.

<p>What does the classroom look like?</p>	<p>Every classroom reflects a play-based, developmentally appropriate environment ready for your student. Each classroom has the following areas: block, home, toy, writing, library, art, quiet corner, whole group and small group learning spaces. Each classroom environment is unique to the classroom teacher and provides opportunities for experimentation, exploration, discovery, inquiry, challenge, and peer interaction.</p>
<p>What does a typical daily schedule look like?</p>	<p>The kindergarten daily schedule is a balanced one that accommodates play-based learning across content areas. Quieter and more active moments are balanced throughout the day. Because schedules vary slightly from school to school and classroom to classroom, your student's teacher will review the daily schedule during the entry conference.</p>
<p>How should I communicate with my child's teacher?</p>	<p>The individual teacher will let you know her preference.</p>
<p>How do I volunteer?</p>	<p>Please contact your student(s) teacher or school for volunteer application and opportunities.</p>
<p>Who do I contact to learn more about PTA?</p>	<p>Columbia's parent association is "CPA and you can find their contact information on Columbia's website under "Families - Columbia's CPA- Contact Us"</p>