

GREENFIELD SCHOOLS

ELEMENTARY HANDBOOK INFORMATION

THE DISCOVERY SCHOOL AT FOUR CORNERS

August 15, 2011

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Welcome to a new school year. We are posting selected handbook information online for our parents.

SCHOOL HISTORY:

Four Corners was built in the 1950's. Additions were put on in 1991. In 2007, due to budget concerns, a decision was made to close this school. In the spring of 2009, under the leadership of Dr. Susan Hollins, the newly-appointed Superintendent of Schools, Four Corners was reopened by five (5) senior classroom teachers. The Superintendent and these 5 teachers shared a vision for a small, child-centered school and were interested in becoming an Innovation School. In the spring of 2011 the Greenfield School Committee approved Four Corners as an Innovation School with a new name, The Discovery School at Four Corners.

Innovation School Definition

An Innovation School is a public school established for the purpose of improving school performance and student achievement through increased autonomy and flexibility. The innovations are:

- Uninterrupted instructional day through the morning with specials (art, music, computer etc.) in the afternoon to insure uninterrupted learning time.
- School-wide, themes that bring the whole school together for learning.
- Elongated school year for teachers to allow for fluid curriculum planning.
- Environmental Studies and gardens as a signature program, using the school's nine (9) acre school site for gardens, vernal pool and woodland studies,
- Individual Learning Plans for all students.
- Additional weekly school-wide planning time for teachers.
- Cross-grade level and cross-generation opportunities for learning.

Thematic Learning Definition

Thematic school instruction is organized around large-scale themes. This instruction integrates basic subjects like reading, math, art, music, and science with the exploration of a broad topic (theme). Thematic instruction is based on the theory that children learn best when they are able to make a connection between the content they are learning and the real world, giving the children opportunities to apply the knowledge they gain to their own lives. Our school has new themes each year—three themes a year.

ARRIVAL, 8:00 A.M.

When dropping your child off in the morning, take the driveway down to the front door and pull up as far as you can along the front of the building.

Children should only exit on the school side of the car between the orange cones onto the sidewalk.

8:00-8:25 **Breakfast** in the cafeteria.

You are welcome to come in and sit with your child during breakfast. To help with morning transitions, please say good-bye before your child goes outside or to class.

8:15-8:30 Supervised morning recess

8:15-8:30 **No Breakfast.** Children coming to school who are not having breakfast should arrive at 8:15. Our greeter will make sure children get to classrooms or the playground safely.

Early drop off option: Families who travel to work may request an earlier drop-off time, but no earlier than 7:30 a.m. There may be a charge for coverage.

DISMISSAL, 2:55 P.M.

Pick up

Our school buses have school-to-school schedules to keep. Please follow these guidelines if you pick up your child.

Four Corners Elementary

Please park on Ferrante Ave and walk to school to pick up your child. Be mindful of No Parking signs on one side of the street and private driveways.

We can only dismiss a child with an adult who is registered by the parent as someone authorized to take the child from school. If someone other than a parent is picking up your child, provide written authorization. We want to make sure your children are safe.

VOLUNTEERING

We welcome parent volunteers in our schools. If you are interested in spending time in your child's class, please pick up volunteer paperwork in the school office.

LUNCH AND BREAKFAST

Breakfast is free every day for every child in our K-7 program.

Lunch has a cost. \$2.35 (full price) \$0.40 (reduced cost) \$0.00 (free)

Milk. \$0.60

APPLICATION FOR FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH

We encourage all our parents to file a confidential application for free or reduced meals. The application is posted online at www.gpsk12.org, it can be picked up in every school office, or it can be picked up at the food services office at 141 Davis Street.

PAYMENT FOR LUNCH

Payments can be made in advance by cash or check on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. It is best to pay in advance so children's lunches are always covered. We will give children something to eat if they run out of money but the children would like to have the regular lunch. When sending in lunch money please use a sealed envelope with the child's name, grade, and classroom teacher on the front of the envelope. Lunch money is collected by the classroom teacher and sent unopened directly to the cafeteria.

PAYING FOR LUNCH ONLINE

Lunch payments may also be made online through a program titled "Nutrikids" on the website www.mytrikids.com Each parent must register to set up an account, using the zip code 01301 (for Greenfield). You will need to provide your child's name and student identification number. Please call Greenfield Food Services at 772.1334 to set up an account.

CLOTHING FOR SCHOOL: What should your child wear to school?

Your child should be dressed comfortably and appropriately for school and the weather. Hats and hoods should be removed before entering the school.

Warm Weather Months:

- Shoes:
Wear sneakers or sandals attached to the foot with ties or back straps.

Flip-flop shoes can cause slips and falls. If a child has on flip-flops they will not be able to participate in gym class that day and will be required to stay on the blacktop during recess.

- Clothing
Simple, easy clothing is best.

Cold Weather Months:

- We advise that your child wears gloves, a hat, winter jacket, snow boots, and snow pants.
- A child without snow boots and/or snow pants will be required to stay on the blacktop during recess if there is snow on the ground. This will help children stay dry.
- Children should have an extra pair of shoes with them so they do not have to wear snow boots all day.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL

Our school wants parents to know what is happening at school. We support open communication and problem-solving. We have personal and electronic ways to keep parents informed.

TEACHER CONTACT/CONFERENCE

There can be no substitute for first-hand student/parent/teacher communication. Teachers will send home information in October and March but welcome your input at any time.

ConnectEd PHONE CALLS

ConnectEd is a phone call program that calls all parents at the same time with a recorded message.

We call parents using ConnectEd for school closings and important events/reminders.

Please make sure your parent phone numbers (and email addresses) are updated in our school office whenever your phone, email or contact information changes.

NO SCHOOL ANNOUNCEMENTS

In the event of extremely bad weather, or when it becomes necessary to call off school or to delay a school opening, school closing announcements are made by:

*ConnectEd phone call

*radio and television: WHAI (98.3 FM), WRSI (95.3 FM), WHMP (1240 AM), WPVQ (93.9 FM), WHYN (93.1 FM), WYRY (104.9 FM), WWLP-TV

Channel 22, and WGGB-TV Channel 40.

POWERSCHOOL

PowerSchool is an on-line program that every parent or student can access in school or from home. The Power School program allows families to monitor grades and attendance, day by day.

PowerSchool can be accessed through the school district web-site at www.gpsk12.org. We will provide information to parents after the school year begins.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is the best way to assure success in school. With 95% attendance, students have the best chance of earning a diploma and graduating. Attendance habits start in elementary school.

Regular attendance gives students the most exposure to academic content, the most instructional time, the most opportunities to apply new concepts and skills, and the most opportunities to ask questions and seek assistance to assure they understand what they are learning in school.

We ask our parents to support our expectation of 95% attendance at school. Parents influence attendance by making sure children go to bed early and have adequate rest.

ABSENCE NOTICE

If a student will be absent, parents must call the school before 9:00 a.m. Please state the reason and estimated length of absence. Elementary Phones:

Discovery School @ Four Corners: 772.1375

With young children, we MUST know why a child is not in school.

ATTENDANCE AWARDS & ABSENCE WAIVERS

We give awards for perfect, 100%, attendance each month. A student missing class is considered absent, unless a waiver is authorized by the Principal. A student trying for 100% perfect attendance can make up the time for up to 2 excused absences.

HEALTH SERVICES: INFORMATION AND PROCEDURES

The Nurse's Office is staffed by a registered nurse who is available during school hours in case of accidents or illness, to meet with students who have health-related or other problems. Parents are encouraged to call the School Nurse at any time.

Discovery School @ Four Corners: 772.1375

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

It is extremely important that our school has Emergency Contact Information for each child that is accurate and kept up-to-date. We must be able to reach parents promptly should illness or accident occur. Provide names of alternates so if you cannot be reached we have someone else to contact. Make sure the person you name is willing and able to serve in this capacity.

BULLYING, PREVENTION OF

In 2010, Massachusetts passed the Anti-Bullying law, requiring each school system to have guidelines in place to prevent bullying. Greenfield's complete anti-bullying plan is posted on the Greenfield Schools website at www.gpsk12.org.

(excerpt from the GPS Statement of Purpose)

The Greenfield Public Schools are committed to providing students with equal education opportunities and a safe learning environment free from harassment, bullying, discrimination, and hate crimes, where all student community members treat each other with respect. This Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan ("Plan") is an integral part of the Greenfield Public Schools comprehensive efforts to promote learning; eliminate all forms of violent, harmful, and disruptive behavior; and enable students to achieve their personal,

academic, and citizenship potential in our increasingly diverse society.

Greenfield Public Schools will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of harassment, bullying, cyberbullying, discrimination, retaliation, or hate crimes in our schools or at school-related activities. Greenfield Public Schools will promptly investigate all reports and complaints of harassment, bullying, discrimination, and hate crimes and take prompt action to end that behavior and prevent its reoccurrence. Action will include, where appropriate, referral to a law enforcement agency. Greenfield Public Schools will support this Plan in all aspects of its activities, including its curricula, instructional programs, staff development, technology programs, extracurricular activities, and parental involvement.

For any concern, students and, or families should notify their teacher or principal. Every principal will assure that any incident in their school is investigated. A parent may also notify Susan Hollins, Superintendent of Schools.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Since 1975, Massachusetts has had comprehensive law requiring a free and appropriate education for any student, including students with a disability for whom services are needed beyond what the general education program can provide. To implement state and federal law, Greenfield Public Schools have qualified evaluators, teachers, and support personnel assigned to each school and program.

If a parent suspects a child may have a disability, the parent has a right to request a school-sponsored evaluation and to have a response to this request within five school days. The complete guide to special education is available at any school administration office.

Each building has an assigned, licensed special education coordinator. Any parent may also contact the district administrator for student services, Kathleen Titus (413.772.1320 kattit1@gpsk12.org).