

Dear Polaris Families,

Welcome to the 2017-18 School Year! We have a fabulous year ahead of us, and I'm writing now to provide you with some initial information to help the first days go smoothly.

We are in the midst of transitioning to a new website. I'm hoping it will be up and running on August 14. Please be sure to take a look at the resources for families so that you can better familiarize yourself with procedures like drop off and pick up, lunch procedures, etc...

Electives

I am pleased to welcome Ms. Deb Aruca to our team. As our new electives coordinator, she brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to her role. We want to quickly get started with electives but need teachers and helpers. You will be receiving a communication from Ms. Aruca, and I hope you will please strongly consider volunteering. This wonderful feature of our school is only made possible through your participation.

Registration

Sometimes things change over the summer for families. Polaris and DPS need confirmation that you will be attending Polaris as planned. Thanks to the wonderful world of technology in which we live, all functions of registration can be completed on line at your convenience. Please login to Parent Portal and complete your online verification (registration) before August 11th. The process only takes a few minutes. If you have forgotten how to log in, or need a new account, please see the Parent Portal page on <https://myportal.dpsk12.org>. You will need your student's 6-digit school ID. If you do not confirm your registration online by August 11, then you will need to make an appointment with our secretaries to complete paper forms before August 18th. As you can imagine, with so many students, this takes a great deal more time in person than online. We appreciate your assistance with getting this task done.

Office Hours

The office will be available for phone calls only from August 1-4. Beginning the 7th, the office will be open for face-to-face business by appointment. Teachers will be attending professional learning sessions and planning meetings from August 14-18. Once school begins, face to face office hours are from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

Back to School Meet and Greet

We look forward to seeing you and our students at the Back to School Meet and Greet on August 18th from 4:00 to 5:00. We plan to have class assignments available on Parent Portal on August 18 for you to check before you arrive. The Back to School Meet and Greet will be a chance to say "Hi" to your child's teacher(s) and see the classroom.

First Day

The first day of school is Monday, August 21st. School begins at 8:40 a.m. when students will gather on the blacktop with their classes for a few brief words to kick off the year. They will then be dismissed to classrooms. Teachers will hold large signs so that students are able to find them and stand with the proper class. Teachers without homeroom responsibilities will be available to help each student get to the right place. Students and teachers will be dismissed to their classrooms at about 8:50. Parents are welcome to join us for the kick-off on the blacktop. Please park only in public street parking, not on the east side of

Glenarm or the west side of Tremont. Those areas need to be left clear for buses and parents dropping students off.

Drop Off and Pick Up Logistics

Students riding buses enter through the gates on Tremont and students riding in cars enter school through the doors on Glenarm. Students should never be dropped off prior to 8:30 unless they are eating breakfast, attending an enrichment class or are enrolled in Discovery Link. Breakfast is available free of charge at 8:15 daily. Upon arrival, students either eat breakfast or play on the playground. The playground is supervised by teachers and paraprofessionals between 8:30-8:40. During breakfast, the dining room is supervised by kitchen staff. Students arriving between 8:15 and 8:30 must stay in the dining room eating breakfast until 8:30. Between 8:30 and 8:40 all students (with or without parents) must be either in the dining room or on the playground. Thank you for giving our staff this important time to prepare for the day ahead! Classroom teachers come to the playground at 8:40 to pick up their students. Parents are welcome to park in designated parking areas and join their students for breakfast or on the playground. School ends at 3:30. Please be sure that you arrange transportation home or to the next event. Students riding the bus are escorted to the Tremont gate. Staff are outside on Glenarm to supervise students between 3:30 and 3:40 for parent pick-up. After 3:40 any students remaining are brought into the office and parents must park and come in to collect students. At this time, office staff will begin calling parents and emergency numbers to arrange pick up. No student should ever be left unattended, so please do not ask your child to meet you anywhere other than the pickup area on Glenarm.

While we are on the subject of parking... Being an urban school presents us with many blessings; however, parking can present challenges. The school side of the block on both Tremont and Glenarm Streets are for loading and unloading only. The west side of Glenarm is available for parking and the east side (nearest the school) is for quick hug and drop only. If you are using the hug and drop, please be a good citizen by pulling away as quickly as possible so that others may hug and drop after you. Please do not leave your vehicle, even if only for a short time. The west side of the street on Tremont (nearest the school) is for bus loading and unloading only. There is also a handicapped parking place on that side. If you are dropping your child off or picking your child up, please do so on Glenarm. We also ask that parents do not use cell phones or make u-turns on Glenarm during drop off and pick up times. Student safety is the number one priority; therefore, we provide a crossing guard at Glenarm and 22nd during drop off and pick up. Our students are safest using the intersection, rather than crossing mid-block. A few more steps is good for us all anyway, right? Please help ensure student and parent safety by using the crosswalk. Parents, you are free to stay with your car and watch your child walk to the crosswalk. We can do the rest!

Eclipse Information

This year, the first day of school is a bit unique in that we have a rare eclipse. To ensure the safety of students while viewing the eclipse, the school will provide NASA certified eclipse glasses. Our glasses are made by American Paper Optics, one of the five manufacturers that have certified their glasses to meet ISO 12312-2 international standards. Additionally, we will ensure supervision by scheduling each student to view the eclipse outside for fifteen minutes between 10:45 and 1:00. Every three students will be accompanied by an adult. To allow children to learn about eclipses even when they are not outside viewing it, teachers will plan lessons and activities that teach about eclipses and space.

Bus Information

All transportation routing and information is through the DPS transportation department at <http://transportation.dpsk12.org/>. Click on "Bus Route and Shuttle Info." We do not have routing information at the school, so you should continue to check your child's Parent Portal for current information. This information could change, so please keep checking!

Curriculum Night

Please plan to join us again on Thursday, August 31 at 6:00 for Curriculum Night (adults only), where you will learn all the nuts and bolts about your child's classroom. To accommodate families with more than one child, we will have two sessions: 6-6:30 and 6:30-7:00. Both presentations will be the same.

I know this communication contains massive amounts of information. In the future, communications from me will be shorter, but I felt it important that you have this information right away. Thanks for bearing with me!

I am proud to be a part of this great school, and I'm looking forward to either meeting you or reconnecting with those of you who returning. Please feel free to call the office or email with any questions.

Sincerely,

Anne Sterrett, Principal
Polaris Elementary School