



# Together We Thrive 2023-2024

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## COLUMBINE KINDERGARTEN HANDBOOK

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**“ALONE WE CAN DO SO LITTLE; TOGETHER WE CAN DO SO MUCH.”** -HELEN  
KELLER

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## Your Child's Day and Presence

As a kindergartner, your child will have the opportunity to engage in many activities that span from completely child-directed free play to teacher-directed skill practice. We honor the needs of your child and work to balance these activities throughout our days. Some basic strategies include:

**-Creating Classroom Community** (We share responsibilities to care for each other and our space and work to establish collaborative classroom guidelines; We intentionally grow and practice social skills and executive functioning)

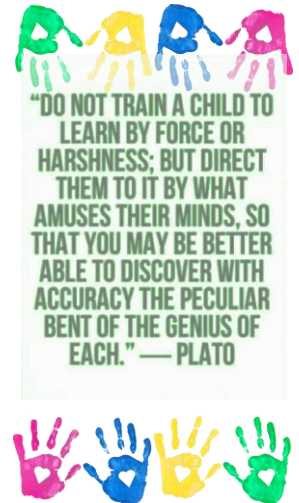
**-Utilizing Research-Based Curriculum** (Into Reading, Eureka Math, Positive Discipline)

**-Play with a Purpose** (Playful practice of skills using games and hands-on materials; Intentional set-up of classroom environment to invite independence and curiosity)

**-Gradual Release of Responsibilities** for new skills (Whole group instruction to small group practice to independent application)

**-Establishing Routine Schedule and Consistent Expected Behaviors** (Daily schedules will be posted and followed as much as possible; Established behavior expectations are consistent throughout the day)

**-Focus Groups** (Retired teachers, specialists and parents volunteers lead small groups designed specifically to practice a skill your child needs)



### ABSENCES

Our days, are full and planned with intention. Being present is best. HOWEVER, your child will most likely have a moment when they are unwell. PLEASE KEEP YOUR CHILD HOME IF:

- Vomit/Diarrhea within 24 hours of the school day
- Fever within 24 hours of the school day
- Symptoms as outlined by our District COVID-19 Policies
- Other reasons as outlined by the School Nurse

**If your child is going to be absent from school, please call the main office at (719) 687-2300.**

### TARDIES

Please have your child to school on time. We begin our classroom practice immediately. Tardiness is disruptive and can interfere with your child's learning and the learning of others.

After the first bell at 7:55, children must enter the building through the front doors. The tardy bell rings at 8:00. You will check your child into the front office and your child will walk to class with a tardy slip.

Tardies are not counted on declared Bad Weather Days.

## Successful Routines and Practice for Home

A positive and open home-school connection is proven to be one of the most powerful things we can give each child. We value you and your family and look forward to building a powerful relationship with you!

### MORNING ROUTINE/TRANSITION TO SCHOOL

It is typical for your child to experience some anxiety about going to school at some point in the school year. **Consistent and positive language** from trusted adults with **predictable morning routines** are the most universal way to support a child in this situation. If you have any questions or concerns, please let us know and together we can ease the transition to kindergarten. (This may extend beyond the first week and come at unexpected times! Keep us in the loop so we can support your child throughout the year!)

### SELF-HELP SKILLS AND INDEPENDENCE

**These skills are critical for helping your child feel successful!**

- ❖ **Bathroom:** Children use the bathroom often throughout the day. We begin by going as a group to establish and practice expected behaviors, but will release them to going independently when ready. Please help your child be INDEPENDENT with this skill! Only the nurse is allowed to help with wiping and accidents.
- ❖ **Coats/Clothing:** Your child should be able to put on/take off their own coat, take care of buttons/snaps/zippers of pants, and belts if chosen to wear. Your child should be beginning to tie shoes. These skills will reduce transition times for the class and build self-confidence!
- ❖ **Be Prepared:** We go outside daily- even in the snow! Please have a coat in your child's backpack just in case. Wear appropriate footwear for exploration and play.
- ❖ **Label Personal Items:** Please be sure to put your child's name on coats, snack supplies, P.E. shoes, backpacks, etc.

### BE INFORMED

- ❖ Your child will need a **backpack and a take-home folder** (see supply list). We will send home a **weekly newsletter** via email (paper can be sent if arranged with the teacher). It is up to you to read these to make sure you know what is happening in your child's classroom and the building.
- ❖ Use the take-home folder to communicate with us, send in paperwork, and receive information and work from school. Encourage your child to be responsible for items in their folders. This is part of building organizational and planning skills.
- ❖ Practice asking questions about your child's day during dinner together or on your way home. Try to ask questions that need more than a one word answer! You can use the newsletter or information in the folder to help you ask more specific questions and to give prompts to your child.

### **LEARNING AT HOME:**

Columbine does not have a formal homework mandate. We honor the time that you have with your child and trust that you will support their growth and learning in every way possible. We will send ideas to supplement and expand on our days, but they will always be optional. If you are ever in doubt of how to support your child's journey, please reach out! We are full of ideas and you can always begin with a book...

Read to your children all of the  
time  
Novels and nursery rhymes  
Autobiographies, even the  
newspaper  
It doesn't mater; it's quality time  
Because once upon a time  
We grew up on stories in the  
voices in which they were told  
We need words to hold us and  
the world to behold us  
For us to truly know our souls  
Taylor Mali

WWW.STORYMATIC.COM

## Start & End Times

### **DROP OFF- 7:45am** (Breakfast in the cafeteria begins at 7:35)

Children may be dropped off via the carpool lane or walking beginning at 7:45 on the Bear Playground. Please be courteous of preschool parents who are dropping off their students earlier. Children will enter class through the corresponding outdoor door. Please wait for a staff member to be present on the playground before dropping off your child.

We will have some days that are “Bad Weather” days as determined by the school district. Be informed about these 2 hour delays and school cancellations by enrolling for notification at the front office.

### **PICK UP-3:00pm**

Kindergarten students are dismissed at around 3:00 pm. Older siblings may meet you at your car. You must let us know your child’s typical schedule for pick up.

*Carpool:* You must use the carpool lane (little loop- please refer to the one in the Columbine Handbook) and stay in your car to pick up your child unless walking. A teacher will bring your child to you in the car. Please follow these carpool guidelines to ease the process for all. Walker will meet outside of the Bear Playground.

*Bus/Childcare:* An adult will bring your child to the appropriate place at the end of the school day based on the information you provide.

**\*\*\*If there is any change in schedule, you MUST call the office (719) 687-2300 or email the teacher 24 hours in advance. Parent/Guardian communication and approval of pick-up changes is REQUIRED!**

No children are ever allowed to cross the street or parking lot unescorted by an adult. We appreciate your cooperation with these safety precautions.

**If you are late picking up your child (after 3:10pm), you will be able to park and pick up your child in the main office. Teachers often have after school obligations they need to attend. The office closes at 3:20.**

## Food

### ALLERGIES

Please be sure to share your child's allergies with the School Nurse AND us! We will do our best to accommodate your child's food needs for special events that may include food. This may be nut-free, egg-free or other! You will be notified if the classroom is impacted by an allergy.

### SNACKS

**Each day your child will need to bring 1 small nutritious snack to eat.** Please label your child's snack and keep in a SMALL container or bag separate from lunch boxes. We will eat a flexible morning snack. Please help your child stay focused and energetic by giving them the snack fuel they need. Often times, items such as fruit snacks, cookies, fruit roll-ups, and donuts are full of bad sugar energy. We see children with these snacks become distracted and hyper, then crash quickly. These are also foods that process quickly and do not keep your child full. This impacts their success in the classroom and our success as a group!

Below are some ideas for snacks that may fill up your child while providing his/her body the energy needed to focus and learn. I would also like to encourage you to reach out to each other for more ideas. You can also have your child help you shop/pack. Your child can share his/her likes and dislikes and you can help them learn about healthy food choices. Please also be mindful of classroom allergies that you have been notified about.

Here is a list to help you get started:

#### Best Ideas:

|                 |  |                                    |
|-----------------|--|------------------------------------|
|                 | Trail mix (watch the chocolate!)                         | Energy balls                       |
| Fresh fruit     |  | Crackers                           |
| Fresh veggies   | Granola bars (KIND bars or other low sugar alternatives) | Hummus (with veggies/crackers...)  |
| Nuts            | Cheese/peanut butter                                     |                                    |
| Cheese          | crackers   | Peanut butter (with crackers/fruit |
| Hard boiled egg | Pretzels   |                                    |

### LUNCH AND RECESS(12:30-1:15)

Your child may have a sack lunch from home or take advantage of the lunch program this year. To add money to your child's lunch account, you can put a check with your child's name in the memo in the wooden collection box by the library. There is also a way to pay through Infinite Campus; please contact the office for more information (719) 687-2300.

## Special Events

### BIRTHDAYS

We will celebrate your child's birthday with special acknowledgement during class time on their birthday. You may send in a store-bought treat OR have your student pick a special day to celebrate their birthday. If your student chooses a special day it needs to be approved by the teacher.

### SHOW AND TELL

We will have special days to bring in an item from home to share with the class. You will be informed about these days via email or in a newsletter along with any guidelines.

**\*\*\*Please leave toys/personal books/stuffed animals/etc. at home all other days.**

### SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

We may also have a few **field trips** during the school year. You can expect more information about these off-site activities as they approach. In years past, we have enjoyed the pumpkin patch and Mueller State Park. We often have limited volunteer opportunities for these activities.

We have **only two fundraising events** throughout the entire school year- Walk-A-Thon and Read-A-Thon. The monies raised from these two events allows us to continue to support your child's education through creating smaller group sizes during focus groups with retired teachers, creating a rich classroom library in each classroom, and much more! Please keep an eye out for information regarding these two activities.



## **Volunteers as Possible**

We love to have parent volunteers. Our school community includes YOU!

### **IN CLASS**

We will have many opportunities to help in class. We will have regular times every day as well as special event days. We will have short email training about volunteering in our classroom before we start having you come in to help. You will also be expected to complete any volunteer requirements at the building level. You can expect more information from us soon as it becomes possible.

### **OUT OF CLASS**

If you cannot help in the classroom and want to do something at home, just let us know. We can send prep work home for cutting/stapling/etc. We also utilize SlyReply as a way to bring in special items through the month that will help enhance the classroom experience. These items may be art supplies, or a special themed experience for science. These are both ways for your child to see you connected to school!

### **KINDERGARTEN PARENT REPRESENTATIVES**

We are in need of a Head Room Parent for each room AND a Kindergarten Liaison. Room parents may be helping us coordinate special events, and special emails. Plan to communicate with the teacher about more details. This tends to be a flexible position. The Liaison will be the “voice” for our grade level at school-wide parent meetings like Parent-Principal Teas. Please let us know if you’re interested!

**If you have any questions about anything else, please let us know. We value a connection with you!**

**Looking forward to a wonderful year together,**

**Your Kindergarten Team**