

# Big Spring Elementary Schools



## Parent Handbook 2023-2024

### Vision

Shaping the Future, One Student at a Time

### Mission

The Mission of the Big Spring School District is to provide challenging curricular and extracurricular opportunities, within a safe environment, that meet the unique needs of every individual by expanding interests, enhancing abilities, and equipping every student with knowledge, skills, and character essential to become a responsible citizen of our community, our nation, and the world.

Newville Elementary School  
100 Steelstown Road  
Newville, PA 17241-9301  
Tele: (717) 776-2435  
Fax: (717) 776-2038  
Email: [wwonders@bigspring.k12.pa.us](mailto:wwonders@bigspring.k12.pa.us)

Mount Rock Elementary School  
47 Mount Rock Road  
Newville, PA 17241  
Tele: (717) 776-2425  
Fax: (717) 776-2026  
Email: [kward@bigspring.k12.pa.us](mailto:kward@bigspring.k12.pa.us)

Oak Flat Elementary School  
334 Centerville Road  
Newville, PA 17241  
Tele: (717) 776-2445  
Fax: (717) 776-6005  
Email: [skimble@bigspring.k12.pa.us](mailto:skimble@bigspring.k12.pa.us)

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**\*\* Big Spring is an Equal Opportunity Education Institution \*\***

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT

I hereby acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand the Big Spring Elementary handbook and its contents including:

- Internet Access and Usage
- Google Apps Information
- Student Day
- Attendance
- Student Absences
- School Tardiness
- Early Dismissals
- Transportation
- Cameras on Buses
- Emergency Delays and Closings
- Impassable Roads
- Educational Trips
- Illness
- Immunizations
- Medication Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Contacting Teachers
- Custody Situations
- Lunch/Breakfast Program
- Point of Sale
- Café Information
- Parent Involvement
- Visitor Policy
- Party Invitations
- Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtII)
- Services
- Special Education Information
- Summer Success Programs

By signing this receipt, I am also indicating that I have read, explained, and/or conveyed the contents of this handbook with my child. Furthermore, my signature on this page indicates that my child will abide by the internet usage policy and only use this resource in the manner outlined in the internet usage policy (see reverse side for an excerpt of the policy).

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Name of Child

---

Grade/Teacher Name

---

Signature of Parent/Guardian

---

Date



## **Big Spring School District**

### Elementary Internet Access and Usage

The Big Spring School District will provide access to the Internet for students, with their parents' or guardians' consent, teacher aides, teachers, administrative staff, and/or other District employees to locate resources to meet their school-related needs. District staff will work together to help students develop the critical thinking skills necessary to discriminate among information sources, to identify information appropriate to their age and developmental levels, and to evaluate and use information to meet educational goals that are consistent with the District's Strategic Plan. Access to the Internet through District resources is a privilege, not a right, and may be revoked for anyone who uses the resources inappropriately as determined by District authorities.

Because of the nature of the Internet as a global network connecting thousands of computers around the world, inappropriate materials, including pornography and obscenity, can be accessed through the Internet. The District attempts to block inappropriate web sites through the use of an Internet filter. However, due to the evolving nature of the technology that allows the Internet to operate, there is a chance that some inappropriate web sites may be accessible at times. Accessing these and similar types of sources or transmitting such sources will result in suspension and/or other disciplinary measures in accordance with District policies. Through a program of education, the District will educate students, teacher aides, teachers, and administrative staff about their individual responsibility to refrain from engaging in unacceptable uses of the network and about the consequences of their actions if they violate the policy.

The above is an excerpt from the Big Spring School District's Internet Access and Usage Policy. To view this policy in its entirety, please visit the district website at [www.bigspringsd.org](http://www.bigspringsd.org) or visit any school or district office. A signature on the front of this form indicates you have read, understood and explained the district's Internet Access and Usage Policy to your child. In addition, your signature signifies your agreement with the terms of the Internet Access and Usage Policy for your elementary-age child.

### Google Apps Information

Google Apps For Education (GAFE) is a suite of free Google cloud based services that allow teachers and students to collaborate on school projects in a secured environment that is completely separate from public Google offerings and is free from advertising and third-party data mining. Examples of Google services that Big Spring School District has enabled via GAFE include Google Docs, Google Drive, limited Google Email, and Google Classroom. Some teachers will be distributing and collecting assignments through GAFE and the Google Classroom service. Students will be learning digital citizenship skills and cyber safety and information security/privacy through use of GAFE and potentially Google Email in certain grades. To enable Google Apps for Education, the district will be creating district managed Google Apps For Education accounts for each student. Parents are able to opt out of having their students enrolled and using GAFE but this may significantly impact their ability to participate in class learning activities, digital citizenship curriculum, on-line class discussions, and so forth. Opt out forms can be obtained from the Technology Office.

# Big Spring Elementary Schools

The staff and administration associated with the school believe that every child can learn and is entitled to the best possible education.

Our schools will continue an educational program that reflects the needs of the community. We will utilize the best available talents, practices, and resources available to enhance student learning.

Big Spring Elementary Schools will provide opportunities for the students to: acquire basic skills; achieve competencies that will increase their quality of life; and learn qualities to function as a responsible citizen in today's society.

## Student Day

9:00 - 9:15 Student arrival (**NO STUDENT MAY BE DROPPED OFF AT THE SCHOOL PRIOR TO 9AM**).

9:20 Any student arriving after 9:20 will be marked 'Tardy'

3:50 Student Dismissal

## Attendance

Excellent school attendance is critical to our students' success. While we want our students to be here every day, we understand that there may be times when an absence, tardy, or early release is unavoidable. Please take time to familiarize yourself with the Big Spring Elementary Schools' policies regarding attendance.

## Student Absences

If your child will be absent from school, it is always recommended (not required) that you call the school to inform us of your child's absence that day. After your child is absent, your child has **3 school days to return an excuse** to be considered for an excused absence. If an excuse is NOT returned within 3 school days, the absence will be marked illegal/unexcused. 'Unexcused' absences may also include, but are not limited to, reasons such as "Mary overslept." or "Bobby missed the bus." Parents may be subject to a citation if their child accumulates more than 3 illegal/unexcused absences.

Parents of students missing 10 days will receive a Concern Letter in the mail. Medical Requirement Letters will be sent once a student reaches 13 absences.

## School Tardiness

A pupil is tardy if she/he is not present when the tardy bell rings (9:20 for elementary schools). Pupils who enter the school anytime after the tardy bell must report to the school office with their parent or legal guardian. A tardy excuse will be completed in the office and signed by **the parent or legal guardian**. Tardiness will be classified as 'excused' only if:

1. The student is returning from a medical appointment and presents acceptable written verification of the time the appointment ended; **OR**
2. The parent or legal guardian of the student provides an acceptable reason for the tardiness in writing.

Tardiness to school for any other circumstances will be classified as 'unexcused/unlawful.' When a student misses school as a result of tardiness, the time missed will be accumulated, and when one-half day of time is accumulated, it will be recorded as such on the student's attendance record.

## Early Dismissals

When it is necessary for students to leave school for important appointments that cannot be arranged outside school hours, students should submit a request from their parents or legal guardians indicating the reason for the early dismissal and the time they are to be excused. This request should be presented to the teacher or school office on the day of the appointment (or earlier when possible).

Any student who has an early dismissal will be signed out by their parent/guardian in the school office. The parent/guardian will then complete an 'early dismissal form' in the office for their child. Early dismissals will be classified as 'excused' only if:

1. The student is leaving for a medical appointment (The 'early dismissal form' will be signed by an authorized person at the appointment and the form will be returned to the school office upon the student's return to school.) **OR**
2. The parent or legal guardian of the student provides an acceptable reason for the early dismissal in writing. Early dismissals from school for any other circumstances will be classified as 'unexcused/unlawful.' When a student misses school as a result of early dismissal, the time missed will be accumulated, and when one-half day of time is accumulated, it will be recorded as such on the student's attendance record.

### **Educational Trips**

Students may be granted an excused absence to participate in an educational trip, tour, or activity. The request must be submitted prior to the absence and approved by the building principal. These absences should be limited to 5 days or less and will be approved by principal's discretion. These trips are valuable, but like other absences need to be limited.

### **Transportation**

All students will be expected to be transported from school in their usual manner unless it is communicated otherwise to the office by the parent or guardian. To plan accordingly, all communications to the school office requesting a change in transportation for that day must be done by 1:30 P.M. We understand that there may be emergencies, and exceptions to this deadline will only be granted on an 'emergency' basis.

### **Cameras on Buses**

In the Big Spring School District, we continually strive to ensure the safety and security of our students. For that reason, the District does have surveillance cameras installed on many of our buses. If your child rides a district bus (to/from school, activity buses, field trips, etc.), he/she may be subject to video recording. The ultimate purpose of the recordings is to assist our administration and staff in ensuring the safety of our students. For additional information, please see District Policy 810.1.

### **Emergency Delays and Closings**

Please follow the guidance that is given via our Blackboard Connect System either the night before or the morning of a delay or closing. This information will also go out via: The District web page at [www.bigspringsd.org](http://www.bigspringsd.org) or local radio and television stations.

### **Impassable Roads**

The Big Spring School District encompasses almost 200 square miles; therefore, it is not unusual to have various geographic areas of the District affected differently by the weather. For this reason, when roads are impassable, as verified by the District's bus drivers, parents are permitted to have their children remain at home. Such absences will be designated as excused provided parents submit an excuse for absence for impassable roads (submitted within 3 school days as with other excuses).

### **Illness**

When a child needs to be sent home due to illness, the parent will be called to get the child. In the event that a parent cannot be reached, the individual whose name appears on the emergency card will be notified. Therefore, it is important to provide the school with up-to-date information regarding emergency contacts.

### **Immunizations**

Private or school dental exams are required by the state in first and third grades. Upon school entry, either kindergarten, first grade, or from a school outside of Pennsylvania, a physical exam is required as well as the following immunizations:

- DPT - 4 doses (4<sup>th</sup> dose on or before 4<sup>th</sup> birthday)
- OPV - 3 doses
- MMR - 2 doses
- HBV - (Hepatitis B) - complete series
- Varicella - (Chickenpox) - two doses required for K-12 students

### **Medication Policy**

Parents or students who bring prescription or non-prescription medications to school must hand the medication upon entrance to the school in its original, labeled container to the office designee or to the school nurse.

A prescription must be accompanied by a written request from the child's physician on the appropriate school district form. The written request must include: the purpose of the medication, the dosage, the time at which the medication is to be taken, the length of time for which the medication is prescribed, and the possible side effects of the medication.

A note from the parent must accompany a non-prescription medication request. The note must include the dosage and the time the medication is to be given.

The student must report to the nurse to take the medication. Questions concerning this policy should be directed to the school nurse.

### **Code of Conduct**

Appropriate student conduct is an important part of an effective school program. A safe school environment permits students to reach their full potential. The Big Spring Elementary Schools' code of conduct includes rules that govern student behavior and consequences for infractions.

### **General Rules:**

**Be ready and responsible.**

**Be respectful.**

**Be safe.**

#### **Classroom Rules:**

- Voice Level 0-2 (silent, whisper, speaking)
- Have materials ready
- Participate actively
- Follow directions
- Speak nicely to teachers and peers
- Work cooperatively
- Care for all property
- Maintain personal space
- Always walk
- Use materials appropriately

#### **Bus Rules:**

- Voice Level 2 (speaking voice)
- Keep all belongings with you
- Follow bus driver's directions
- Maintain personal space
- Use kind words
- Sit bottom to bottom, back to back in the seat
- Stay in your assigned seat
- Keep aisle clear
- Walk to and from bus

#### **Hallway Rules:**

- Voice Level 0 (silent)
- Eyes forward
- Go straight to and from your destination
- Walk on the right side of the hall and face forward
- Wait your turn
- Maintain personal space
- Get a drink quickly
- Always walk in single file line
- Keep hands and feet to yourself
- Use one step at a time on the stairs

#### **Cafeteria Rules:**

- Voice Level 1-2 (whisper or speaking)
- Use a pass when leaving the cafeteria
- Tell an adult if there is a problem
- Take the food you ordered
- Get all lunch supplies when going through line
- Take care of the cafeteria
- Wait for an adult to give permission to empty your tray
- Eat your own food
- Maintain personal space
- Use kind words
- Always walk



**Bathroom Rules:**

Voice Level 0 (silent)  
 Use the bathroom in a timely manner  
 Tell an adult if there is a problem  
 Wash hands when finished  
 Take care of the bathroom  
 Maintain personal space  
 Respect others' privacy  
 Always walk  
 Keep hands and feet to yourself

**Play Ground Rules:**

Voice Level 3 (outside voice)  
 Line up quickly and quietly at signal  
 Tell an adult if there is a problem  
 Bring in what you brought out  
 Play fairly  
 Use kind words and actions  
 Use equipment safely  
 Stay within the playground boundaries  
 Use hands and feet appropriately

**Dress Code:**

1) No 'high' heels 2) Sneakers only for P.E. 3) No short shorts 4) No midriff or revealing shirts 5) No suggestive logos or tobacco/alcohol advertisements 6) No hats 7) No strapless dresses

**Students will be expected to obey District policies that include, but are not limited to:**

- Terrorist threats
- Tobacco
- Drug & Alcohol
- Harassment
- Weapons

**Consequences:** (Depending on Infraction)

- Time out
- Loss of recess
- Time out at the school office
- Lunch detention
- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension
- Loss of bus privileges

**Contacting Teachers**

Parents who wish to speak with a teacher should make that request known at the school office rather than going directly to the classroom. The secretary will contact the teacher to determine their availability. (This applies before, during and after school hours.)

Telephone messages for teachers will be given to them as soon as possible, and return calls will be made when the teacher has available time.

Teachers may be contacted via email. It is recommended, however, that parents TELEPHONE the office to relay IMPORTANT messages to a teacher rather than relying on email.

**Custody Situations**

If there is a custody situation that dictates or restricts student access with regards to school in ANY way, please furnish a copy of that updated stipulation to the school. The school can and will only act in accordance with the most up-to-date paperwork that you have provided for the student's file.

## Lunch/Breakfast Program

The Big Spring School District participates in the National School Lunch/Breakfast Program. Families that receive food stamps will be eligible for free meals. These families will be notified of their child's eligibility and do not need to complete an application. During the first week of school, free and reduced meal applications will be sent home to each family. However, free and reduced applications can be completed at any time during the school year. Students whose family income meets the federal requirements may qualify for either free meals or reduced-price meals. These applications are audited for accuracy, and misinformation given to the district could result in legal action if anyone provides misinformation intentionally.

### Point of Sale

The District uses the Nutrikids Point of Sale (POS) system to account for meal purchases. This system allows students to put money on their account which allows for quicker service during the daily lunch period. This account is used for both breakfast and lunch orders. To provide a better experience for all, we urge you to:

1. Make the deposit online using [www.mySchoolBucks.com](http://www.mySchoolBucks.com) **OR**
2. Use a check that covers a month or several weeks, bring it in an envelope and give it to the classroom teacher. All checks should be made payable to the Big Spring School District. It is acceptable to send in cash for lunch purchases.
3. When a student forgets or loses their lunch money, prompt repayment is expected.

With mySchoolBucks, parents are able to register for an account and view information for free. Parents are able to see account balances and recent cafeteria purchases, add money to their student's account, and set up low balance alerts. It may take a few days for your account to be updated so deposits might not register immediately. The convenience fee per transaction is \$2.95.

Refunds from the Point of Sale System will only be made if a child withdraws from school. Year end balances, including negative ones, will be transferred to the next school year. Once money has been deposited to a student's account it can only be used for cafeteria sales. All students withdrawing from the Big Spring School District are required to contact the Administration Office at (717)776-2000 for settlement of his/her account.

The district is not responsible for controlling student lunch and breakfast purchases. The point of sales system can offer you a means to limit your student's daily purchases. We encourage you to discuss with your student his/her purchase limits. If this fails, contact us and we will assist you as best as we can.

### CAFÉ Information

To view school menus, a la carte pricing, and other general café information, please visit [www.bigspringsd.org](http://www.bigspringsd.org). Click the Departments tab and go to Food Services. The menu is also posted on the elementary school web site. An 'Alternate' to the main course is available on a daily basis by notifying the cafeteria PRIOR to lunch. **If you would like your child to purchase à la carte items, parental approval is required.** **Please visit your school's webpage to obtain the À La Carte Approval Form.**

## **Parent Involvement**

We believe our parents make the difference between a good year and a GREAT year for our students!

**Parents are encouraged to be involved by:**

1. encouraging your child to read every day  
(model it too!)
2. checking your child's backpack for important information from school
3. monitoring your child's homework
4. contacting your child's teacher when concerns arise
5. joining our PTO
6. volunteering in your child's classroom
7. participating in PTO activities
8. joining your child for lunch
9. attending Parent/Teacher Conferences

## **Visitor Policy**

Please realize that parents are always welcome at our school. When coming to the school, it is important to bring your driver's license for clearance in our Raptor System. Should you need to drop something off for a child, you will need to communicate with the secretaries through the intercom system and leave their items in the vestibule. If you are simply picking up or dropping off your student, please inform a secretary of your intent. If you are picking up your child, the secretary will call the classroom and inform your child's teacher of your arrival. For security reasons, parents are not permitted to pick up their child at their classroom.

If you are coming to have lunch with your student, please call the office prior to arriving to make sure the class is eating in the cafeteria that day. Also, please remember that there should be no outside food (McDonald's, pizza, Chick-fil-A, Subway, etc.) brought into the cafeteria with you.

## **Party Invitations**

To avoid hurting students' feelings, party invitations may NOT be issued at school. Please arrange to have invitations issued outside of school.

## **Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtII)**

Our elementary schools are committed to meeting the needs of all students. The Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtII) literacy framework is a tiered approach which allows all students to receive high quality instruction. The framework also provides researched based intervention programs for some students based on their specific needs.

	Focus of Instruction	Instruction Provided By	Grouping	Time	Assessment
Tier 1	All students receive instruction in the PA Core Standards using researched based strategies.	Classroom Teacher	Whole group and flexible small groups	90 minutes daily	Universal Benchmark Assessments -MAP -AIMSweb
Tier 2	Students at academic risk and who have not responded well to Tier 1 instruction.  Researched based intervention programs are used for instruction.	Reading Specialist	Small groups of students with similar abilities and needs	30 minutes daily in addition to Tier 1	Monitor student progress on target skill twice a month
Tier 3	Students performing significantly below grade level and who have not responded well to Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction.  Researched based intervention programs and/or researched based strategies are used for instruction.	Reading Specialist	Individual or very small groups of students with similar abilities and needs	15-30 minutes, three to five days per week, in addition to Tier 1 and Tier 2  *Time is determined using data and needs of student.	Monitor student progress on target skill week

## Services

Big Spring elementary schools provide a wide range of services to meet the needs of our students.

1. **Parent Volunteers**
2. **Reading Support Volunteer Program**
3. **Classroom Aides**
4. **RTII-Instructional Coach**
5. **Title I Reading**
6. **Special and Gifted Education**
7. **Pupil Personnel Services**
  - a. Guidance Counselor
  - b. Home and School Visitor
  - c. School Psychologist
8. **Health**
  - a. Certified School Nurse
  - b. Health Room Aide (Associate R.N. or L.P.N.)

## Special Education Information

Big Spring School District, along with other public agencies in the Commonwealth, must establish and implement procedures to identify, locate and evaluate all children who need special education programs or Protected Handicapped services because of the child's disability as well as programming for students who are eligible for Gifted Services. The information below is designed to help find these children, to offer assistance to parents, and to describe the parent's rights with regards to confidentiality of information that will be obtained during this process. The information below is presented in abbreviated format. A more detailed version of this notice can be found on the Elementary web page.

Big Spring School District provides free parent training on special education topics at least 4 times per school year through a joint effort with several of our neighboring School Districts. Updated information on topics, locations and times for these trainings can be found on the District web page by clicking Departments/Special Ed. on the home page.

The District's 504/Chapter 15 Coordinator is Dr. Abigail Leonard, Director of Student Services. Dr. Leonard can be contacted at: 45 Mount Rock Road, Newville, PA 17241 or 717-776-2000 x2411.

References:

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEIA) - 34 CFR Part 300
- Americans with Disabilities Act
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Chapter 14 "Special Education" - 22 PA School Code
- Chapter 15 "Protected Handicapped" - 22 PA School Code
- Chapter 16 "Gifted Education" - 22 PA School Code

### **Notice of Non-Discrimination**

1. The Big Spring School District ("District"), as required by Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 and its corresponding regulations ("Title IX"), does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its education programs and activities.
2. All questions regarding Title IX may be referred to the District's Title IX Coordinator or to the United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights ("OCR").
3. The District's Title IX Coordinator is Dr. Nadine Sanders, the District's Assistant Superintendent. Mrs. Sanders may be contacted at:

45 Mt. Rock Road  
Newville, PA 17241  
717-776-2000 ext. 2409  
[nsanders@bigspring.k12.pa.us](mailto:nsanders@bigspring.k12.pa.us)

### **Summer Success Programs**

The Big Spring School District provides **Summer Success Programs** for primary grade students. This program provides opportunities for students to be engaged in reading and writing. Various students are invited to these sessions based on student need.

### **Global Connect Calls**

If your child is not present by 11am you will receive an automated call to let you know your child is absent from school.

### **Thank you for your support!**

Thank you for your support and interest in the education of your child. We look forward to the opportunity to work with you throughout this school year.