

Watson T. Comly Elementary School
Family Handbook

2021-2022

Comly Pledge

Today I promise to be kind.

I will treat other people the way I want them to treat me.

I will not tease, touch others, or say mean things to them.

*If someone bothers me, I will walk away,
calm down and tell an adult.*

*Today I promise to work hard,
learn all I can and be the best I can be.*

The School District of Philadelphia
Watson T. Comly Elementary School
1001 Byberry Road
Philadelphia, PA 19116

Kate Sylvester
Principal

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Comly students will be empowered, compassionate critical thinkers who make a positive impact on the world.

August 31, 2021

Dear Comly Families,

I would like to welcome you to the 2021-2022 school year! I hope that everyone had a relaxing and enjoyable summer and that your children are ready to learn. We are looking forward to working collaboratively with you to nurture your child's academic, social and emotional growth.

This year we will continue to work to foster open lines of communication between the school and the home to ensure student success. Here are several things you can do at home to help your child have a successful school year.

- Send your child to school every day on time.
- Make sure your child gets eight hours sleep each night.
- Establish a routine for studying. Give your child a quiet corner to read and regular time to do homework.
- Keep in touch with your child's teacher via email, telephone, notes, or letters.
- Attend school-wide events, classroom events, and conferences.
- Celebrate your child's success (giving verbal praise), no matter how small it may seem. This will keep your child enthusiastic about learning and proud of their work.

Throughout this handbook there are checks for you to ensure you have taken the necessary steps to stay informed. There are clear directions in the appendices that will guide you through the process. A copy of this is available on Comly's website. (<https://comly.philasd.org>)

I am confident that this will be an outstanding school year and look forward to working with the staff and community to continue the Comly Elementary School tradition of academic excellence! I look forward to seeing you there!

Sincerely,

Kate Sylvester
Principal

General Information

School Hours

School begins each day at 8:15 A.M. and closes at 2:54 P.M. Kindergarten students must be supervised by a parent/caregiver at all times prior to the school day while in the schoolyard.

Arrival

All students will line up in the school yard. For safety purposes, no parents will be allowed to pass the safety cones with their child. If a parent needs to come in for a legitimate concern they must call the main office to schedule an appointment. Students arriving by 8:05 A.M. may go to the cafeteria for breakfast. Children dropped off on the Kelvin Ave. side of the building must walk around the building to enter. The main entrance will only be open during icy or snowy conditions. The student entrance will remain open until 8:45 A.M. Any students arriving after 8:16 A.M. will be issued a late pass and sent to class. After 8:45 A.M. late students must enter through the front entrance and proceed to the main office for a late pass. Teachers will pick students up from either the schoolyard at 8:15 A.M.

Dismissal

Students are dismissed on a staggered schedule. Kindergarten students will be dismissed at 2:50 P.M. Parents must enter through the designated doors in the schoolyard. They will proceed to their child's classroom to sign out their student. Students in grades 1-5 riding the first trip bus will be dismissed at 2:45 P.M. All walkers will be dismissed to the schoolyard at 2:54 P.M. Teachers will escort the students to the schoolyard. Students riding the 2nd trip bus will wait in the schoolyard or gym (depending on weather). There will be no early dismissals after 2:30 P.M.

Parent Drop-Off/Pick-Up

No vehicles are allowed to drive into the schoolyard off of Byberry Road. Only the 5 designated yellow school buses may drop off and pick up students in the schoolyard. Parents must park and walk their children to the door. Parents are encouraged to walk up the stairs on Stevens St. and walk through the schoolyard. Please do not walk up the driveway on Byberry Rd.

In an effort to protect our children, parents/guardians, and staff, we have worked with our local 7th Police district to create a set of safe and specific procedures for student drop off and pick-up. These procedures will be effective immediately. People who are not able to follow these procedures may be ticketed by the Philadelphia Police.

It is recommended that all students be dropped off on Stevens Road, where students can take the staircase up to the walking path that leads into the back schoolyard.

- **No one should be using (on foot or in car) the bus driveway during admission or pickup**
- In the event that you would prefer to drop off on Kelvin Avenue:
 - The school curbside on Kelvin Avenue from Byberry Road to Lindenhurst Street is clearly marked as a **NO PARKING ZONE** during school hours.
 - We are asking that parents follow these clearly posted signs and **do not park in front of the school on Kelvin Avenue from Byberry Road to Lindenhurst Street.**
 - **Park North of the Stop Sign** (located at Kelvin Ave. and Lindenhurst St.- along the Boyle Playground property- not along the school's property or across the street, blocking the neighbors' driveways.
 - **Use the walking path** (located at the end of the fence closest to the corner of Kelvin Avenue and Lindenhurst Street) to access the schoolyard in the back of school. - **No one should be walking through the staff parking lot at any time!**
 - **Cross the street at the stop sign** and not in the middle of the street.
 - **DO NOT MAKE U-TURNS in the middle of the street.**

In addition, the legal speed limit around our school during admission and dismissal is 15 mph. ALL vehicles are required by law to follow these limits. Please control your speed around our school for everyone's safety.

Transportation

Students are encouraged to take the school bus to school. Our buses run two trips each day. Our students are assigned to a bus route. The routes are identified by the name of the bus company and the route number, for example "Class 1 - 0966." In the case that a bus is late, an

all call will be issued via Class Dojo. Every effort is made to be as timely as possible in notifying parents of late buses. Other bus concerns should be directed to the School District of Philadelphia's transportation office at (215) 400-4350.

Breakfast

Research indicates that students who begin school with a healthy breakfast achieve greater academic success. Free breakfast is offered to all students at Comly daily. Students who wish to eat breakfast at school may arrive at 7:50 A.M. and enter the cafeteria to enjoy breakfast. They must arrive by 8:05A.M. to participate in breakfast.

Lunch

All students are entitled to a free school lunch through a grant from the US Department of Agriculture. Comly's kitchen is a full service kitchen so students are offered healthy meals made on the premises. A monthly menu is sent home listing all breakfast and lunch offerings for each day. Students are also welcome to bring lunch from home. Menus can also be found at www.nutrislice.com

Bathroom Policy

Policy 252 states, "Students shall have access to the restroom that corresponds to their gender identity. Any student who has a need or desire for increased privacy, regardless of the underlying reason, should be provided access to a single stall restroom, but no student shall be required to use such a restroom." There will be single-stall gender neutral bathrooms identified throughout the building accessible to all students.

Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds

The Comly Community is a healthy one. Students are exposed to programming that teaches them to make healthy food choices and maintain an active lifestyle. Foods high in sugar and fat will not be allowed in the building, even for birthdays and celebrations.

Chromebooks

Students must bring their School District of Philadelphia issued Chromebook to school every day. Please charge the device at home each night. Families should contact the school if they do not have a Chromebook or if the Chromebook is in need of repair.

Face Masks

Students are required to wear face masks at all times except when eating or outside socially distanced.

Parents, did you...

- Find out what bus route your child is on?
- Complete your child's emergency contact form with the full and correct information on any adult that may pick up your child (including you)?
- Sign up for the Parent Portal and ensure that a current contact phone number and email address is on file?
- Sign up to receive phone, text and email alerts through the Parent Portal?

Attendance Policy

Attendance

Each child's goal is to reach a 95% attendance rate. That means they cannot miss more than 9 days in the school year (excused or unexcused.) We take this very seriously. Comly boasts an average daily attendance rate of 95%. Punctuality and good attendance are two of the basic principles of good work habits and ensure a student's success in school. Poor attendance and lateness becomes a barrier to learning.

In the event of an absence, the caregiver must send Mrs. Wolf (secretary) a Class Dojo message explaining the *dates and reasons for the absence*. Failure to provide a note will mean a child's absence is coded as an unexcused absence. Be advised that an absence note does not excuse a student if a pattern of absences or lateness exists. Children are not excused for attending trips with parents. Being absent from school to go on vacation will not be excused. The parent should notify the school if a child is expected to be absent for an *extended period of time for medical reasons or some other urgent concern*.

If students arrive in school after 10:00 AM without a note or leave before 1:00 PM without a note, they will be marked half a day unexcused absence. The half day unexcused absences will accrue to full days.

Absences of 3 or more consecutive days will require a doctor's note in addition to a parent or caregivers' Class Dojo message.

After the 8th non-doctor's note absence, every subsequent absence must have a doctor's note in order to be excused. It is the parent and/or child's responsibility to check with the teacher about make-up work and/or tests and assignments.

10 unexcused absences, will result in a referral to truancy court/DHS and suspension of student participation in a range of school activities. A student with 10 consecutive unexcused absences will no longer be enrolled in Comly.

An absence message must be sent to Mrs. Wolf within three days of an absence or the absence will be coded unexcused.

Late Policy

Punctuality sets the tone for the school day. Students who are constantly late disrupt the instructional program and quickly fall behind in school. Students arriving at school after 8:15 A.M. are considered late and must enter through the front doors and obtain a late note from the front desk. *Chronic lateness will be investigated.*

Early Dismissal

It is imperative that your child remains in school the entire day in order to maximize the benefits of instruction. Instructional time is valuable and cannot be recouped once it is lost. Children with numerous early dismissals quickly fall behind in school so it is vital that parents schedule medical appointments after school and/or during school closures. If your child must be dismissed early, he or she must bring in a written note signed by the parents stating the time and reason for the early dismissal. Parents will then report to the office and sign the child out in the "Sign-Out Book." *All adults must show ID* to verify they are on the list of adults approved to remove a child for an early dismissal as indicated on the emergency contact sheet. The child will then be called to the office. For the safety and security of your child, no child will be dismissed without an identified adult (21 and over) to accompany him or her. There are no early dismissals after 2:30 P.M.

Emergency School Closing

When school is closed due to extreme weather conditions, an announcement will be made over KYW RADIO 1060 and television stations early in the morning. The announcement "ALL PHILADELPHIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS ARE CLOSED" will be posted on the School District's website. When it is necessary to close school during the school day, television and radio stations will also make announcements. It will be announced as, "ALL PHILADELPHIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS WILL CLOSE AT (time)." In the event of an emergency closing at Comly Elementary School, parents will be notified by telephone messenger and School District website. It is imperative that we have current home information, emergency contact numbers, and work numbers on file. It is important to review with your child the instructions for what to do in the event that you are not at home when he or she arrives home from school.

Parents, did you...

- Did you sign-up for Class Dojo?

School Safety & Security

EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE!

Safety Drills

The safety of your child and all children in our schools as well as the safety of the school staff and support personnel is very important to us. In order to maintain a safe environment for our children to study and learn, it is necessary that we practice our emergency and crisis response plans by having drills designed to exercise our procedures. We will be conducting various drills throughout the school year.

FIRE DRILLS - The school will conduct a “fire drill” each month that school is in session. This is a Fire Code requirement. We want each student to understand and be aware of the importance of this drill and not be afraid when the fire alarm is sounded. By practicing they will know what to do and how to do it.

LOCKDOWN DRILLS - The school will conduct one “Lockdown Drill” each semester of the school year. This type of drill will secure the school building and safely shelter all students, staff and visitors inside the building. The purpose of this drill is to keep the students safe from any danger outside or inside the building. During a “lockdown drill” all of the perimeter doors to the school building will be locked and will remain locked until the danger or issue outside or inside the building is removed. To enable everyone to remain safe, no one will be allowed to enter the building or leave the building until the authorities authorize such a release.

SHELTER-IN-PLACE DRILLS - The “Shelter-in-Place” drill will be conducted 1 time a semester each school year. The purpose of this drill is to be prepared to move to a safe location within the building in case of severe weather or tornadoes.

Visitors

For the safety and security of staff and students, all visitors are required to sign-in and show identification at the front desk and obtain a visitor’s pass before gaining access to any part of the building. They must also sign-out prior to exiting the building. It is imperative to maintain an accurate record of who is in the building at all times. Visitors are not permitted to enter the building through school yard doors.

Special Release

The safety of your children is paramount. School district employees are required to follow strict guidelines for releasing students from school. Please read the letter and policy from the district at the end of this handbook. Children will only be released to an adult with proper photo identification that is also listed on the child’s emergency contact form. Thank you for your cooperation in keeping Comly safe.

Volunteer Clearances

The Pennsylvania Department of Education requires volunteers to obtain the following clearances:

- Report of criminal history from the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP); and
- Child Abuse History clearance from the Department of Human Services (Child Abuse)

Additionally, the School District of Philadelphia requires volunteers to complete the following:

- Volunteer Code of Conduct
- Volunteer Affirmation or FBI Background Check (if volunteer has lived outside of PA in the past 10 years)
- Volunteer Orientation (online or in-person)
- <https://www.philasd.org/face/volunteer/>

Copies of the volunteer packet must be on file in Comly’s office. ***You must complete these steps in order to chaperone field trips.***

Parents, did you...

- Review the drills with your child and explain that we practice them to keep everyone safe?
- Complete your volunteer registration packet?

School Uniforms

School Uniform

- Light yellow or navy blue shirt (short or long sleeves), this can be a tshirt or a shirt with a collar
- Navy blue sweaters (cardigans or pullover for colder weather)
- Navy blue bottoms

Gym Uniform

- Navy blue Comly gym shirt (order forms will be sent home)
- Navy blue sweatpants or gym shorts
- Sneakers

Masks

- Students must wear face masks at all times except for when eating or outside socially-distanced.

For safety reasons students are not permitted to wear open-toe shoes.

Parents, did you...

- Purchase enough uniforms for each week?
- Purchase a Comly gym shirt?

Communication

Class Dojo

The administration sends important information through the School Story on Class Dojo.

Parent Portal

The Parent Portal is accessible through the School District of Philadelphia's homepage (<https://www.philasd.org/face/fr/parent-and-family-portal/>). Through this portal you are able to access the Student Information System (SIS) to check your child's grades and absences. If you need a parent portal code you can send Mrs. Wolf a message on Class Dojo.

Student Portal

Students have access to the Student Portal where they can access online programs and resources. Students access this using their student ID number.

School Messenger

Comly will send important messages via all-calls, text messages and emails. These messages will be sent to the phone number and email addresses on file. If you are not receiving these messages, please log into the Parent Portal to ensure the correct information is on file.

Friends of Comly

The Comly School is proud to be forming a Friends of Comly group. All parents are invited to join and participate in all activities. These activities are an important way to show children the connection between the home and school.

School Advisory Council

SACs are peer-elected, collaborative teams composed of family members, the school principal, teachers or other school-based staff, and community members. SACs champion the work for improved student achievement, effective teaching in the classroom, parent and community engagement in the educational process, and communication and support between home and school. SAC meetings must be held at least every other month, and SACs must have data-driven, strategic conversations that center on the three primary focus areas for SACs.

Translation & Sign Language Interpretation Services

Translation and sign language interpretation services are available. Please inform the teacher or main office to take advantage of these services.

Parents, did you...

- Provide updated and accurate phone numbers and email addresses to the school?
- Sign up for messages via the Parent Portal?
- Join the Friend of Comly group?

Academics

Comly teachers will provide your child with a rigorous standardized curriculum in a student-centered learning environment. Students' interests, and learning styles will be assessed in order to meet the needs of individual learners and motivate students. Our teachers participate in ongoing professional development that will enhance their professional practice.

The core subject areas of Reading, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies will be taught daily, with many of the content areas being woven in through thematic units based on the Common Core State Standards. These standards increase the focus on critical thinking in reading and writing and authentic problem solving and conceptual understanding in math. In science and social studies, students will learn like the experts in these areas.

Students will also have Physical Education, Art, Music and Computers as special classes.

Report Card Conference Dates

The full academic calendar is available in the back of this handbook and on the School District of Philadelphia's website. Students are dismissed at 12:00PM on report card conference days.

1st Marking Period - November 22, 23, and 24, 2021

2nd Marking Period - February 2, 3 and 4, 2022

3rd Marking Period - March 30, 31 and April 1, 2022

Final report cards will be available on the Parent Portal at the end of the year.

Parents, did you...

- Mark your calendar with important dates such as days off, half days and report card conferences?

Academic Support Programs

MTSS

Students who are at-risk either academically and/or behaviorally will be referred to Tier II of MTSS, Multi-Tiered System of Support. Parents will be informed of the process and are invited to be active participants. Children in MTSS receive research-based intervention programs. These include:

English Language Arts

**iReady Reading*

Reading Mastery

Corrective Reading

Leveled Literacy Intervention

Math

**iReady Math*

Corrective Math

Connecting Math Concepts

*Denotes a program that can be accessed at home via the Student Portal.

Special Education

As a parent, you are uniquely qualified to know your child's learning strengths and weaknesses. If it is determined that your child is eligible for special education services, school professionals will utilize your knowledge in designing a special education program for your child's benefit. Your child may be eligible for special education if your child:

1. Has an intellectual disability, emotional disturbance, an orthopedic impairment, deafness, a speech or language impairment, a visual impairment (including blindness), autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairment, a specific learning disability, deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities *and*
2. Needs special education, as determined by an evaluation team.

Your child must meet both qualifications in order to be eligible for special education. In Pennsylvania, all children eligible for special education have the right to a free, appropriate, public education (FAPE).

Students who have been identified with special needs will receive special education services in the Least Restrictive Environment as indicated in the Evaluation Report and Notice of Recommended Educational Program and as delivered by the Individualized Education Plan. In some cases, the Least Restrictive Environment will mean services must be provided at another location. Please see the resources section of this handbook for additional resources.

English to Students of Other Languages

Students in grades 1 through 5 whose primary language is not English will receive language instruction from an ESOL teacher.

504 Plans

Section 504 service agreements also known as 504 plans are formal documents that schools develop to give students with disabilities the supports they need. These plans prevent discrimination and protect the rights of students with disabilities in school. Students are covered under the Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, which is a civil rights law, that protects individuals from discrimination based on disability. Under this law, individuals with disabilities may not be excluded from or denied the opportunity from certain programs. If you believe your child is in need of a 504 Plan please reach out to the school nurse and/or school counselor.

Parents, did you...

- Notify your child's teacher of any of the above supports that he or she should be receiving?

Student Behavior Expectations

It is the responsibility of the school stakeholders to provide a safe and secure environment. Routine and structure is a key element for the safety of all our children. Clear expectations keep students accountable through active engagement. Good habits and appropriate behavior are learned early in a child's development. It is also at this time, when parental involvement is at its highest, that it is important for school staff and parents to work together to achieve and maintain a school atmosphere conducive to learning.

At Comly we take a restorative approach to resolving conflict and preventing harm. Restorative practices are the procedures of proactively building healthy relationships and a sense of community to prevent and address conflict and wrongdoing. One method of resolving conflict with student voices is through peer mediation. Another restorative practice utilized at Comly is community conferencing which is a practice that provides students and educators with effective ways to prevent and respond to school conflict.

Parents, as an important part of the Comly team, can assist by teaching their children appropriate and proper behavior, respect and responsibility. It is a continuous process. What your child learns at home, can and will be carried into the school day. All students are expected to behave in an acceptable and responsible manner while at school, on field trips, riding the bus, in the school yard, lunchroom and other school related situations. Positive behavior, courtesy and cooperation are essential to learning.

Comly takes reports of bullying and/or harassment very seriously. In an effort to be as responsive as possible the School District of Philadelphia has created a centralized reporting form. This system ensures a consistent, immediate response and allows for collection of data to further inform our decision making. This procedure starts by filling out the Bullying and Harassment Reporting and Investigation form which can be found on the school district website. Schools are required to investigate all reports within two (2) school days after receipt of the form.

Often parents and children use the term bullying to describe all types of conflicts between students. The correct definition of bullying is as follows:

- It is aggressive behavior or intentional actions that result in harm
- It is carried out repeatedly over time
- It occurs within an interpersonal relationship where there is an imbalance of power (e.g., one person is physically larger, stronger, mentally quicker, or socially more powerful)

Bullying, as defined in the policy, refers to direct or indirect action, which may include but is not limited to:

- *Physical:* hitting, kicking, pushing, shoving, getting another person to hurt someone
- *Verbal:* racial slurs, name-calling, teasing, taunting, verbal sexual harassment, gossiping, spreading rumors
- *Non-Verbal:* threatening, obscene gestures, isolation, exclusion, stalking, cyber-bullying (bullying that occurs by use of electronic or communication devices through means of email, instant messaging, text messages, blogs, photo and video sharing, chat rooms, bash boards, or websites)

There are clear expectations for student behavior in the cafeteria. Please review these with your child.

1. Enter quietly and sit in your seat
2. Remain seated at all times
3. Line up quietly to get your lunch when you are told.
4. Eat your lunch with appropriate table manners.
5. Speak in a calm and quiet voice at your table.
6. Clean up the area around you.
7. Wait until you are told to throw out your trash.
8. Raise your hand if you need help.
9. Line up quietly to exit the cafeteria.

The School District of Philadelphia's Code of Conduct can be found here: <https://www.philasd.org/studentrights/>

The School District of Philadelphia's Policy 249: Bullying & Cyberbullying can be found here:

https://www.philasd.org/studentrights/wp-content/uploads/sites/67/2020/05/249_Bullying_Cyberbullying_Procedures_January-61.pdf

Parents, did you...

- Review the Code of Conduct with your child?