

Sterling Elementary School



Where Falcons Learn to Soar!

FAMILY HANDBOOK 2022-2023

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Welcome to Sterling Elementary!

We are so happy you are here! We hope you have a wonderful experience with our staff, students, and community of Sterling. We encourage you to visit and communicate with us often! Our partnership is the most important thing for your child’s success. This handbook has been prepared to give you an overview of the policies and procedures most frequently asked about by families and specific to Sterling Elementary. Please contact the school if you have any questions (office hours are 8:00 am – 4:00 pm). Let us know if you have questions on additional policies or rules not contained herein. Additional KPBSD policies and regulations are available through the KPBSD Student/Parent handbook, which is available online at <http://www.kpbsd.k12.ak.us/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?ID=30607>

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US IN THE JOY OF LEARNING! WE ARE GLAD YOU ARE PART OF OUR SCHOOL!

School Schedule

School hours are 8:55 am to 3:35 pm. Students may be dropped off at school at 8:15 am. Breakfast is served at 8:35 am. No one is available to supervise students prior to 8:15 a.m. or after 3:45 p.m. Students are to leave campus promptly at dismissal.

Attendance and Tardies

We cannot stress enough how important good attendance is! It is crucial to student success. Please be sure that your child arrives at school every day, on time, except in cases of illness, family emergencies, and other excused absences as listed in the [KPBSD Parent-Student Handbook](#).

Students who are late miss important academic time and disrupt their classroom and other students' learning. Students are marked late and must sign in at the office if they arrive at 9:00 am or later.

Parents are asked to contact the office when their child will not be in school. Students are responsible for making up missed work as directed by their teacher.

If you are planning a trip or have a scheduled absence between 5 and 15 school days, please see the school office for a Prearranged Absence Form to complete prior to the scheduled absence. Students who miss 15 consecutive days or more for any reason must be dropped from our enrollment per KPBSD policy.

Behavior Expectations

Consideration of other people, respect for their feelings, their safety, their privacy and their social rights and privileges form the basic expectation of student behavior at our school.

If you are in the building and you observe our students modeling safe, respectful, and responsible behavior, please compliment them individually or as a class. As a school, we are focused on acknowledging and reinforcing positive behavior. Your compliment has a direct impact on students and classes reaching their behavior goals.

Students who choose hurtful behavior will receive logical and natural consequences to the greatest extent possible. Students will be encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and to consider appropriate behavior alternatives.

Consequences will be progressive in that repeated offenses and dangerous actions will result in more severe consequences, including a parent/student/principal conference. Very serious misconduct may result in suspension.

As students begin to mature, it is natural for them to begin discussing "boyfriend/girlfriend" relationships. Public displays of affection, including, hand holding, hugging, etc., are not allowed on school campus.

When students find themselves in a conflict with another student, we teach that they have a choice in how to handle the situation. We teach the Choice Wheel (see back cover of this document) to encourage prosocial choices in managing conflict. Should a student feel as though they are being hurt or see another student being hurt by someone's words or actions, we teach students to STOP –WALK –TALK. Tell the person to **stop**. **Walk** away from the person. **Talk** to an adult about what happened.

Chewing gum, wearing caps/hats inside, and bringing toys, games, trading cards (such as Pokemon cards), etc. are not permitted, except for special events or at a teacher's discretion (in which case, the items must remain in the classroom). Should students choose to bring items to school that disrupt the learning environment, parents may be contacted and asked to retrieve the item from the office. SEE [KPBSD PARENT/ STUDENT HANDBOOK](#) FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.

Birthdays

Party Invitations: Our staff recognizes the diverse area of our Sterling community and the need of families to invite other children to a birthday party or other activity for their own child.

Staff are NOT responsible for creating, printing or handing out party invitations. We recognize that families may not be able to and may not want to invite all of their child's class to a birthday party. Families are not asked to invite all students. They are asked to comply with the conditions below so that there is the least amount of disruption to the learning environment.

Invitations will be allowed to go home on Mondays in students' red folders ONLY- parents must plan ahead!

- *If invitations are for **all** students in the child's class:*
 - The parent makes an appointment with the teacher to come to school to put them in red folders on the Monday they want them to go home.
- *If invitations are for **selected** students, **not all**, in the child's class:*
 - The parent makes an appointment with the teacher to come to school to put them in red folders on the Monday they want them to go home.
 - Invitations must be in envelopes addressed to the individual students for whom they are intended.

In either situation, invitations to students in other classes will require coordination by the parent with those teachers as well. Please plan ahead! Students are not permitted to deliver invitations at all. This is too disruptive to the learning of all students involved.

We are happy to work with families for the success of their children's celebrations. In addition, parents are asked to help their children to understand how to handle life's disappointments, such as not being invited to the birthday party of a classmate.

We strongly encourage everyone to include their contact information on the PTO class phone log so that you are able to make arrangements with families outside of school.

Birthday Treats

Sterling Elementary works to promote wellness for our students. In line with the KPBSD Wellness Policy, Sterling Elementary prefers that birthday treats be more nutritious than sugary, such as frozen all-fruit bars, fruit or veggie trays, crackers and cheese, etc. Please call/email your child's teacher in advance when planning to bring treats for your child's birthday.

Building Security

If you are visiting, please park in the front parking lot and use the front entrance. As a security measure, we are now required to keep all of the front doors locked. When you arrive, please call our office so that we can let you in. All parents and other community members entering the building during the school day are required to sign in and out at the office and will be issued a visitor/volunteer pass. If you are not wearing a pass, expect a staff member to stop you and ask if you checked in at the office. In these instances, expect to be escorted back to the office to check in. Student and staff safety is the most important thing!

Cell Phones and Other Devices

Cell phones and other devices are to be turned off and left in a student's backpack from 8:15 a.m. to 3:35 p.m. Students are not to use their cell phones during the school day, even to contact home. School phones are available should students need to contact a parent. Please

do not call or text your child during the school day. Should you need to contact your child, call our office, and we will make arrangements for you to speak with him/her.

Devices found in possession of a student during the school day (whether on or off) will be confiscated. On the first offense, the student may pick up the device after school and take it home. Additional violations will require the parent or guardian to pick up the device. Only under the teacher's discretion may a device be used to support teaching and learning in the classroom. The student is responsible to care for any device brought. The school is not responsible for stolen, lost or damaged devices.

Contact Information

If you change your address, home or work telephone number or email, please notify the school office immediately. It is critical that we be able to reach a parent or guardian as well as emergency contacts if an emergency arises.

Cold Weather & Outdoor Recess

Students should come to school dressed for the weather and prepared to go outside. All children go outside for recess until the chill factor temperature is negative 10 degrees Fahrenheit. Generally, any child well enough to come to school is well enough to go outside for recess. Even shortened recesses give children a much needed break in routine and fresh air. A child too sick to go outside is too sick to be at school and should be resting and recuperating at home. When special circumstances exist, students may be allowed to remain indoors for recess with a doctor's note. Please contact the school nurse to make arrangements.

Boots are essential for outdoor recess. A pair of shoes should be kept at school to wear inside the building. Sitting with boots on all day is not healthy for feet. Students should have a heavy winter coat, snow pants or a snowsuit, warm hat, and gloves or mittens. Contact the school nurse if you need help securing these items for your child.

Umbrellas are allowed on rainy days as long as they are used appropriately. Any use of an umbrella for something other than to keep rain off the head will result in the umbrella being taken until the end of the day.

Dangerous Objects, Weapons, Alcohol, Smoking, & Drugs

It is illegal to have weapons, alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes, or drugs on school grounds. Weapons or any items connected with safety, health, or unlawful acts will be confiscated. This includes but is not limited to pocket knives, firecrackers, steel marbles, matches, lighters, or water guns. Leave these at home. Disciplinary measures in such cases will be pursuant to KPBSD policy. See the KPBSD policy manual for more information.

Dress Code

Research demonstrates that there is a close relationship between dress and student attitude toward school and personal conduct. Students are to dress and groom themselves neatly in clothes that are suitable for school activities and a pre-K through 6th grade educational, not a social, setting. Clothing or accessories intended to be costumes or that draw undue attention will not be allowed.

The appropriateness of clothing is the judgment of the administrator. T-shirts or other clothing that carry profane, drug/alcohol/tobacco related, sexually suggestive, or otherwise objectionable slogans or pictures are not permitted. Any form of dress which is considered detrimental or disruptive to the educational climate will not be allowed. Students will need to replace the offending item or go home to change if necessary. Repeated violations of the dress

code will result in consequences for insubordination. The following are to provide guidelines for students, parents and staff.

- Clothing must cover areas from one armpit across to the other armpit, down to approximately 3-4 inches in length on the upper thigh. Tops must have shoulder straps. All undergarments must be covered.
- Shoes must be worn at all times and should be safe for the school environment.
- Sunglasses, hats and hoods may not be worn in the building except on designated school spirit days.

Emergency Situations

In the event of a natural disaster or emergency, Sterling Elementary will implement its Emergency Action Plan. Be assured that a complete care plan is in place at school, and the staff is trained to care for students until they can be safely released to their parents. Please do NOT call the school as this ties up emergency lines and critical personnel. Keep your phone line open so that we can contact you. Tune to local radio stations for emergency information. We will post updates of any situation as we can through School Messenger calls/texts, Facebook and Minga, our school communication app. Do not proceed to school to pick up your child until it is safe, and you are instructed to do so.

IMPORTANT! Please maintain up-to-date contact information for your child, specifically telephone/text numbers and email addresses. The KPBSD website will post additional pertinent information if an emergency situation exists. Please go to <http://www.kpbsd.k12.ak.us/>

Field Trips and Parent Drivers

Teachers are in charge of field trips. Students are required to bring a permission slip signed by a parent in order to participate. Field trips are a privilege. Students with chronic absences, who fail to behave appropriately, or who are not in good academic standing may be excluded from field trips.

All adults accompanying classes on field trips must complete the KPBSD volunteer screening process on the KPBSD website and a volunteer indemnification form. In addition, drivers are required to provide a copy of their valid driver's license, insurance information, and vehicle registration. All forms are available through your child's teacher or at the school office.

Parent drivers are to follow only the itinerary of the field trip. Making stops at any other location with children during a field trip is not allowed. Parents are only allowed to drive their own children unless all of the required paperwork is in place with the teacher for that field trip.

Children who are not part of the group participating in the trip, including younger siblings, may not accompany parents when parents serve as chaperones.

Friends of Sterling Elementary (PTO)

Sterling's active PTO has been very supportive and involved in many projects beneficial to our students. We encourage parents to join. Sterling is always looking for enthusiastic parents and community members to share expertise with our staff and students. Throughout the school year, the PTO sponsors special activities including Falcon Fun Nights and school fundraisers. We always need help for these activities! You may contact any of the PTO officers by leaving a message at the office.

Getting To and From School

KPBSD provides transportation to students who meet transportation guidelines and from specific stop locations set up through First Student Bus Company. Student safety is the primary concern in the operation of student transportation services. KPBSD Board Policy states that misconduct on the bus may be cause to suspend or deny transportation services to the student as determined by the administration. All students need to be safe so all students can arrive to school and home safely! Face coverings worn on the school bus is optional at this time.

Changes to the usual bus routine for a child requires a written note and must include the following information: student name, teacher's name, date, physical destination, phone number at physical destination, bus number (if known), and parent/guardian signature. If a student does not have a written note, he/she will be required to follow his/her usual procedure going home.

In the fall and spring, when snow, ice, and darkness are not hazards, students who reside close to the school may ride their bike or walk to school at their parents' discretion. Walkers and bikers should exercise extreme caution at all times. Trails should be used when available. Students on bikes are **required** to wear their helmet. Students who do not arrive with their helmet on in the morning will not be allowed to ride their bike home that day unless a parent brings the helmet to school to be worn afterschool. The school does not assume responsibility for lost or stolen bikes. Teach your students how to cross the highway safely when walking or bike riding. We try to have a staff member available to help students at the highway, however, it is not always possible.

Living in Sterling, there are many ways to arrive at school. Students are not allowed to drive their own 4-wheelers or other motorized vehicle to school. If a student is being picked up by a horse or with other animals, the animal must remain off school grounds. If you are picking your child up in this manner, please stay on the ATV trail, and we can help get your child to you.

Health Procedures

A health record for each child is kept on file in the nurse's office. All students must present proof of an up-to-date immunization record in accordance with Alaska state law. Our school conducts various required health screenings throughout the school year.

Prescribed or over the counter medication (Tylenol, Tums, cough drops, etc.) you wish your child to take during school hours must be in the original container with a medication request form, available in the nurse's office, filled out by the parent or guardian.

In order to protect your child's health as well as the health of other children, keep your child at home for at least 24 hours AFTER any of the following symptoms have subsided: a temperature of 100 degrees or higher, diarrhea, vomiting, or a persistent cough. Please refer to the [KPBSD Symptom Free Protocol](#).

Students should report any injury or illness immediately to the school nurse, the teacher, or the office.

Homework

Homework is an extension of activities that students engage in at school. Homework should be able to be completed independently, although parental support of home academic activities is encouraged. Ten (10) minutes per grade level is considered an acceptable amount of time to spend on homework. If children are spending an exceptional amount of time completing homework assignments, please contact the teacher immediately so adjustments can be made.

Information about Students

Information about students may be released to the newspaper and other organizations (awards, honor roll, etc.). A form is sent home at the beginning of each school year offering parents the opportunity to exclude their children from such announcements. Please advise us if you do not want your child's name released. These forms are also available online.

Lice

The management of head lice in the school setting should not impede the educational process. If live lice or nits are found, the nurse or designee will inform the parent/guardian by the end of the school day, providing education and required information. Parents are expected to treat their child and remove all lice and nits. Students will be checked upon their return to school. If treatment was successful, they will return to class; if not, they will be sent home for further treatment.

Nurse will examine siblings and other students found to have had head-to-head contact with the child. The nurse will not check entire classes of students nor will communication be sent home to all families in that class or the school. Reminders will be sent home periodically to check your own children for lice as a matter of routine.

Parent & Guardian Communication

Parents and guardians are encouraged to call or email their child's teacher on a regular basis. Frequent communication with teachers is one way families can support their child's efforts to be successful in school. Asking questions about classroom expectations, sharing insights regarding your child, getting regular updates about your child's progress, and bringing any concerns directly to the teacher in a timely manner are important things the school hopes parents will do. When contacting our staff, please be kind. Teachers and staff are people too and unkind, accusatory or hurtful words are counterproductive to our joint mission of student success.

Sterling Elementary communicates through the Mingo app. This is a text messaging app that allows for our school to post announcements and for two-way communication between the school and families.

Every child is given a red folder that is sent home at the beginning of the week with newsletters, notices, homework, and completed student work. The folder should be returned to school the following day.

We also post information on our school website <http://bit.ly/SterlingElementary>, Facebook and Instagram pages. A weekly (or biweekly) email of events and updates takes the place of our school newsletter. Please be sure you have an email address on file with our office.

Power School keeps parents and students informed of progress in school. Access codes for parents are sent home in early September, and replacement access codes can be requested through the school's office at any time. Students log into Power School using their regular school computer number and password. Power School can be accessed from any computer with internet access at <https://ps.kpbsd.k12.ak.us/public/home.html>

Parent Pick-Up

All students must remain on school grounds during school hours. Students may leave school only with permission from their parents and approval by the office. Students must check in and out of school at the office. For student safety, children are not released from class without authorization from the office, and parents may not go to the classroom to retrieve their child.

Students will be released only to parents and those authorized by parents as listed on their registration form. It is very important that this information remain current and updated. **Anyone who picks up children at Sterling Elementary may be asked to show identification.** Please notify the school office if your information changes.

At the end of the school day, parents picking up students must follow the signs in the parking lot to the side of the building and remain in their vehicles. Parent pick up students are released at the first bell, 3:30 pm.

Pets and Other Animals

Animals are not allowed on school grounds except when they are part of a classroom learning activity and prior permission has been given by the teacher and administrator. Animals must be in a cage or on a leash. They must be transported by parents/guardians and are not allowed on the school bus. All animals must be supervised by the parent/guardian during the visit to school. Animals with any history of aggressive behavior are not permitted at school for any reason. More information is available in this [district document](#).

Placement of Students

Students are placed in classes by the principal, in cooperation with teachers. Every effort is made to place each child in a class where he/she will have the greatest educational opportunity.

After school begins, room change requests are very carefully screened. Great care is taken to maintain stability and balance in all classrooms. Transfer requests from one room to another will not be considered until a class change request form is completed with a possible conference with teachers, parents, and the principal taking place.

Reporting Student Progress

Report cards are prepared quarterly. Parent conferences are held twice each school year. Communication between parents and teachers is vital to student success. We will be happy to schedule individual conferences as needed throughout the year. Please call the school if you have concerns or desire a meeting with your child's teacher.

School Closures and Delays

Should severe weather conditions exist, an announcement of either school closure or a two hour delay in school opening will be made over local radio stations prior to regular bus service beginning for the day. Please tune to a local radio station and wait for instructions. This information will also be posted on the on the KPBSD Facebook page, KPBSD app, and [KPBSD website](#).

On days where we have a two-hour delayed start, our pre-k class is canceled.

School Nutrition

To ensure that all students have access to healthy school meals and to be good financial stewards, KPBSD Student Nutrition has instituted a charge policy. This policy has as its guiding principle the belief that every student deserves a nutritious meal but that ultimately it is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to provide one unless the family qualifies for the free lunch program. To that end, the charge policy is as follows:

Student Nutrition department will extend credit to students without lunch or meal money. Parents will be notified with information regarding meal account balance as early as possible.

No a la carte items or second meals may be charged. A la carte purchases may not be made with cash until the negative balance is repaid.

- Collection Procedures: Charges will be applied to a special meal account at each school. Money received from a parent/student with an outstanding charge will be applied toward the meal account first and the balance remaining will be applied to the student's account. Remaining funds and outstanding charges will be carried over to the following school year.
- It is ultimately the parent/guardian responsibility to monitor their student's account and be proactive in replenishing funds as needed.

Student Nutrition encourages parents to prepay for meals and put money on their child's account at <https://kpbsd.revtrak.net/Food-Service/> Money will be accepted at the school office or kitchen, preferably in the morning, to allow funds to be applied to the student's account before the meal period.

Students may bring a sack lunch from home. Parents are asked to support the district wellness policy by providing nutritious, well balanced lunches containing limited amounts of sugar. No soda or energy drinks are allowed in the lunchroom. There are limited microwaves and adult help in the lunchroom. Please take that into consideration when preparing lunches to send to school.

Site Council

A school based advisory team comprised of parents, teachers, support staff, community members and the principal meets quarterly. Meetings are open to the public. If you have an item or a concern you would like to present, please contact any council member or Mrs. Kelly. If you would like to participate in our school's site council team, please contact Mrs. Kelly.

Technology

Sterling Elementary uses computers to support education and research consistent with the educational objectives of the KPBSD. Sterling is part of the KPBSD internet system which students may access with teacher approval and parental permission. Inappropriate use of these resources may result in cancellation of these privileges. Please contact the school office if you do not want your child to use the internet at school.

Telephone Use

Students are allowed to use the classroom telephone, with teacher permission, to call home for school related purposes or for emergencies. Please help us keep student use of the phone to a minimum.

Students should make all lunch and after school arrangements PRIOR to coming to school. Students are not allowed to use the telephone for social purposes.

Toys, Balls and Sleds at School

Toys are not allowed at school except on special spirit days or other special in class days, like show and tell, etc.

For recess, students may bring Nerf-type balls (soft foam) or air filled balls, such as soccer balls, basketballs, footballs, and playground balls. Students also may bring soft or flexible Frisbees to play with at recess. Hard items such as boomerangs, baseballs, softballs, and hard Frisbees are not allowed.

During the winter, students are allowed to sled on our sledding hill. Sterling Elementary provides sleds to students, but if students wish to bring their own, only flexible roll up or soft sleds are allowed at school.

The school is not responsible for stolen, lost or damaged items.

Visitors

Parents are invited to visit classrooms. In order to create the least interruption of the teaching process, visits must be scheduled in advance with the teacher and at times, principal. Students may not bring visitors to school unless prior arrangements have been made with the teacher and principal. Visitors who visit more than once are expected to complete the district's background check as a volunteer. All visitors to the school must check in at the office and wear a visitor pass for the duration of their visit.

Volunteers

All volunteers in KPBSD schools are required to pass a criminal background check before volunteering in schools. The background check is free and is conducted by the Human Resources Department of the KPBSD. No information from the background check is provided to principals or teachers, however, school staff is informed once a volunteer is cleared by the Human Resources Department. The volunteer application form must be completed annually after July 1st, and it can be found at www.kpbsd.k12.ak.us/students_parents.aspx under the section titled "Volunteer Screening Process" or by visiting the District's employment openings page and clicking on the posting for "Volunteer." Volunteers for field trips must complete additional paperwork and may not bring children along who are not enrolled in the class going on the field trip, in accordance with Board Policy 6153.

Choice Wheel



It's your choice!



If it worked,
Let it Go!



If it didn't,
Walk Away!



If it continues,
Talk to an Adult!