**Harriet Tubman Elementary School**

**Family Handbook**

**2023-2024**



Vision

Through a united student, staff, and family community, we foster an environment committed to excellence and love where students take pride in making their own choices.

Mission

We value and respect our community allowing us to develop the hearts and minds of our students so that they achieve at their highest levels and are empowered to question, challenge, and change the world.

Attendance: Every Student Every Day!

We need all of our students here, on time every day! We want all of our Tubman Toads to succeed, and an important part of that success is on-time, consistent attendance. Students should be here ready to learn daily by 8:30 am unless they are sick. Students who miss too much school (excused or unexcused) fall behind academically. Studies show students who are chronically absent can fall as much as 3 years behind their grade level peers solely based on attendance in 1 year—chronically absent is missing less than 2 days per month. At Tubman our students start their academic day right at 8:40am so any late arrivals create a gap in a student’s learning. Students will be marked tardy for any arrival after 8:45 am.

Please do the following to help ensure 100% attendance daily:

* Remind students that school is important
* Plan a regular bedtime and wake up so students are well rested
* Schedule enough time to get ready and to travel to school in the morning; if a student is consistently running 20 minutes late, wake up 30 minutes earlier
* Plan on arriving by 8:30 am this leaves enough time for breakfast
* Plan appointments on days when we are not in school or after school
* Bring students back to school before and/or after appoints
* Bring students to school unless they are running a fever or need to see the doctor. If students are sick, they need to stay home to get better, but if they are tired or groggy-they need to come to school

**Attendance Matters:**

* Literacy and math achievement are directly tied to number of days present; Students missing as few as 2 days per month show lower levels of achievement
* Decrease in attendance leads to decreased engagement and enjoyment of school as well as a decreased ability to pay attention, work independently and persevere when things get difficult
* If a student misses 3 days per month-this will equate to nearly 20% of the school year missed; absences add up
* Students have to be in class on time-we start instruction at all grade levels at 8:40—if a student misses this instruction even once per week they fall behind quickly in essential skills
* We teach on early dismissal days and the days before a break-students should be in school. If there is a snow day-it will be announced on the news, otherwise we are in session and there will be teaching and learning

We all have emergencies and we run late, but tardiness and absences should be rare. Of course, there are times when an absence is excused. If a student is sick, we want them to rest and get well! Per DCPS policy, illness, doctor’s appointments, death in the family and religious holidays are excused absences if documentation is provided within 5 days of return. Family vacations, international travel, babysitting, running errands and oversleeping are unexcused and have to be documented as unexcused.

If there is a chronic health issue, please see the nurse because we may be able to assist. If your child is absent due to illness or other excused needs, appropriate documentation will be required for the absence to be excused. A doctor’s note will be required if your student misses' school for two or more consecutive days or after one illness for the month (there is a limit of one parent note for illness per month). If you are unsure if your child is well enough to attend school, please bring your child to school and let the school nurse evaluate the situation. Notes can be brought to the main office, emailed to **adriana.reynoso@k12.dc.gov** **or texted to 202-796-8747.**

DCPS has an automated call system where you will be automatically called upon an absence. You may receive this call if your student is late because if they arrive after attendance has been taken, they may have already been marked absent (we will fix it in the system, but the call is automatic). Other results of unexcused absences include:

* 3 unexcused absences you will receive a warning letter outlining potential next steps
* 5 unexcused absences a parent must attend an attendance meeting with the counselor to action plan about improving attendance
* 10 unexcused absences must be referred to Child and Family Services; student is now considered chronically truant
* If a student misses more than 20% of the school year, they may be retained to make up the time.

Please let us know if there are any issues you face with getting your child to school on time, we have a great support team and we may be able to help. Our students need to be here on time and here every school day. Our goal is to have 98% of our students at school every day on time. All students should be in school from 8:30-3:15 Monday through Friday unless otherwise noted on the school calendar.

**Arrival and Dismissal**

Arrival begins at 8:30 when the doors open. There is no supervision outside before 8:30

**Arrival Entrances**

* + PreK, K, Grades 1 and 2 & students on busses or in self-contained programs will enter through the front doors (B).
	+ Grades 3-5 will enter at the back door off Kenyon (F)
	+ Families of students in PreK or K may walk their students to class
	+ Families of all other students may walk them in the building and wave goodbye at the end of the hall. **No parents are permitted upstairs unless on a scheduled visit or parent event.**

**Late Arrival**

* + Students arriving after 8:45 will come in the front door; all other entrances are closed
	+ Students arriving after 8:45 will be marked tardy and must sign in and get a sticker at the front desk or in the office; they will not be accepted into class without their sticker
	+ Families are not permitted to walk students to class if they are late and must say goodbye at the security desk

**Phones**

* + Students in grades 3-5 will turn phones in the morning and get them back at dismissal
	+ No phones are permitted for any student use during school hours
	+ Phones seen during the school day will be taken and only returned to adult family members
	+ Students in PK-2 bringing phones will need to keep them in their bags or make arrangements with the classroom teachers but they may not have it on them or use them during the school day

**Dismissal**

* + Pick up is at 3:15 daily for all students.
	+ If you need to pick up early you must arrive by 2:30; there is no late pick up allowed after 2:30 when the front doors are locked until 3:15. This is for everyone’s safety during transition to dismissal.
	+ Prek and K families will enter the building and pick their child up in the classroom.
	+ Grades 1-5 will pick up from the playground at 3:15.
	+ Students in self-contained programming will be picked up from the front doors.
	+ If there is inclement weather, we will dismiss grades 1-3 from the cafeteria and 4-5 from the main hall. Parents in grades 1-3 will go to the cafeteria side doors on Kenyon for a rainy pick up and grades 4-5 can enter via the front door.
		- * Please note we will be outside unless it is extremely bad weather so please don’t be late
	+ Walkers will be dismissed at 3:10 from the library door, Door C
	+ The Library is the sibling reunification area; siblings walking will meet up there
		- Kinder-2nd grade students walking with a sibling will be walked to the library to meet their family
	+ Only people on the pick-up list you provided will be permitted to pick up your student. Anyone picking up a child will be asked for ID if they are not recognized before we release a student
	+ Please note, no one under the age of 14 is permitted to pick up a PreK student under any circumstances
	+ Students not enrolled in Tubman aftercare must be picked up by 3:15pm. There is no staff to stay with students, creating a safety concern if students are not picked up on time. Since we cannot supervise students, we will have to call Child and Family Services for all late pick-ups after 3:45pm, staff are to call parents before taking students to the late pick-up area. Please reach out if you need support for after-care options.

**SUPER IMPORTANT**

* + Families cannot have extensive conversations with teachers at drop off or dismissal. Please call or email them with concerns and to set up a time for bigger conversations.
	+ Families that do not have a PreK or K student are not permitted in the building at dismissal unless you are going to the office or in the case of indoor dismissal.

**Early Pick Up**

* + If a parent comes early, you will be buzzed in and need to give their name in the office. You will wait in the office for them to come down. Please note early dismissal stops at 2:30 as doors are secured for school wide dismissal.

**Before and After Care**

Before Care is provided by Champions. See bit.ly/tubmanchampions for more information. This service is provided on a sliding scale and also accepts vouchers.

Tubman is happy to offer many After Care programs that range from sports to tutoring. These programs take place on different days throughout the week and year. Please stop by the main office for more information.

Tubman also has its own tutoring program that will be ran by Tubman teachers.

The Fishing School will be offering 100 free spots in after care this year for Tubman students in grades 1-5. These spots will be prioritized for students that are in need and not eligible for vouchers and opened for other students' spots pending; enrollment is based on need first and not on a first come, first served basis. Attendance is required daily until 5:30 for Fishing School participation.

Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays are special and we love to celebrate with students. However, due to instructional demands birthday treats can only be shared during the lunch period. Birthday treats must meet the requirements of the Healthy Schools Act. This means NO cakes, cupcakes, cookies, candies, chips, pizza. Do not bring balloons and other large items that can distract from instruction—these items cannot go into the classrooms. Please check with the teacher about allergies (some classes are peanut-free) before sharing any treats. Treats can only be shared if there are enough for all students in the homeroom. Only students in the homeroom class will be given a treat-we cannot pick and choose other students and we cannot have siblings join the school celebration.

Breakfast and Lunch

Tubman provides breakfast and lunch for all of our students daily. Food is in accordance with the Healthy Schools Act. Any and all food provided by the school will be in compliance with this DC law meaning no unhealthy treats. There is a vegetarian option offered daily. If you child has any food allergies and/or any dietary needs, please fill out the dietary needs form (the nurse has copies, the front desk has copies and we have copies on our parent website) Please ensure the nurse, the office and the teacher(s) know so we can make any and all accommodations. Only Tubman students are allowed to take breakfast and lunch. Due to allergies and other needs, Tubman has a strict policy of no food sharing between students. We ask all parents to adhere to the Healthy Schools Act as well and send only foods that are nutritious. Please do not send chips, soda, cookies and candies.

**Bullying Policy**

Bullying has become a significant issue with young people nationwide. It affects students at every level, from elementary to high school. To proactively address the issue of bullying the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) has created a [Bullying Prevention Policy](https://dcps.dc.gov/node/910682). The policy clearly outlines the definition of bullying and the steps required by schools to address it.

The definition for bullying in DCPS is:

“Bullying,” means any severe, pervasive, or persistent act or conduct, whether physical, electronic, or verbal that:

* May be based on a person's actual or perceived race, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, intellectual ability, familial status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, genetic information, disability, source of income, status as a victim of an intrafamily offense, place of residence or business, or any other distinguishing characteristic, or on a youth’s association with a person, or group with any person, with one or more of the actual or perceived foregoing characteristics; and
* Shall be reasonably predicted to:
* Place a student in reasonable fear of physical harm to his or her person or property.
* Cause a substantial detrimental effect on the student’s physical or mental health.
* Substantially interfere with the student’s academic performance or attendance; or
* Substantially interfere with the student’s ability to participate in or benefit from school activities or services; or
* Materially and disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying also occurs when a student or group of students organizes a campaign against another student or when a student or group of students maliciously spread rumors about another student.

### **Parental Involvement**: DCPS is committed to making every school a safe and welcome space for your child. Families are critical players in these efforts.

One of the most proactive measures families can take to shield their children from bullying is to talk to them early and openly about what it means to bully or to be bullied. Doing so not only ensures open lines of communication, but also reinforces the importance of speaking up about problems at school.

If a parent suspects their child may be experiencing bullying at school, they should ask about it explicitly. Make sure to tell your child that you are there to help and you believe what he or she has to say.

If you think your child is bullying others, it is important to discuss the behavior and make it clear that bullying is taken very seriously. At the same time, you may want to work with your child to understand some of the reasons behind the bullying.

### **Cyber-Bullying**: If you witness cyber-bullying (use of the Internet and related technologies to bully) that includes threats of violence, child pornography or sexually explicit materials, and stalking or hate crimes, you should consider reporting the incident to law enforcement. Cyber-bullying also can create classroom disruptions and lead to in-person bullying

Cell Phones, Electronic Devices, iPods, iPads, Kindles, Toys

Students in grades 3-5 are required to turn their cellphones which will be locked away during the school day. They will be returned at the end of the school day. These items are not permitted in the classrooms, at recess, in bathrooms or throughout the school under any circumstances and will be confiscated. They cause distractions to the learning environment and can easily be lost or stolen. If a teacher sees a cell phone or other electronic device, they are required to take it and hand it into the office. A parent or guardian will have to come and pick the device up; devices will not be returned to students if they are taken away. Tubman is not responsible for lost or stolen electronic items that are not allowed at school. We have phones in the office in case of emergency 202.673.7285.

Toys are not permitted at school. Toys should be left at home. They are not needed for class or recess. Please keep toys at home.

Communication

A monthly parent newsletter will come from the principal and cover topics schoolwide. This newsletter will come via Remind-please make sure you have the app and are receiving Remind messages. If you are not, reach out to the office so we can make sure we have you set up in Remind. Each classroom also sends a monthly newsletter with updates and information more specific information for that grade level. We will communicate via phone, email, text-whatever is best for you-because we believe that communication is vital to our partnership and collaboration. Please let teachers, administration, and any other staff member know if you have questions or concerns and please make sure all phone numbers and emails are up to date and any changes given to the office. By having an open communication policy, we are able to problem solve and use our effort effectively to promote student learning. You can see us in person, call, text and email us.

DCPS Half Days

Scheduled early dismissal days can be found on the DCPS calendar. We will also note these in the parent newsletter. These days end at 12:15pm for all students. There will be no after care on early dismissal days.

Emergencies

All staff are trained for emergency situations. We practice and review as staff members and with our students. We don’t foresee an emergency and hopefully will never need these procedures, but we want to be as safe as possible. Parents will be informed in advance lock down drills that could cause stress to students so that you can talk about it with your scholar. Please note that in an emergency, we are first and foremost under the direction of District authorities and will be enforcing their guidelines and following their direction. We will be in communication with families as soon as it is safe to send an update.

Family Engagement

We are proud to be district leader in family engagement! We believe that relationships with our families are crucial to student achievement and student success. We want to genuinely know our students’ families. **We do home visits focused on building relationships with families and learning about each student.** We are committed to ongoing positive communication and communicating information to parents in a consistent and clear way including parent newsletters, phone calls and emails. The Tubman team will host weekly parent breakfasts as well to hear feedback and action plan for the success of our school. We are an Academic Parent Teacher Team (APTT) school meaning we do an alternate parent teacher conference where parents are empowered by their student’s data and get real strategies and activities to practice at home. APTT meetings will continue this year combined with one traditional parent teacher conference day. Please know that the door is always open to let us know what is working for you and your child, as well as in what areas you think we can improve.

Teachers will use the Remind Program to facilitate communication with parents on your smartphone. Please make sure your phone number and email are up to date in ASPEN so we can communicate via Remind. This will send you updates and reminders and make ongoing communication easier for everyone! If you are not receiving Remind notification, please let the office know.

Field Trips

Tubman believes experiential learning experiences are an important part of the student experience. You will be informed of trips in advance. All parents are required to fill out sign and return a permission slip (verbal and text permissions not accepted) **no later than three school days before the tri**p. You will be informed about the mode of transportation; we utilize the metro, public buses, private contracted buses, and walking for field trips. In most cases, we attend field trips in all weather conditions. Depending on the transportation situation, parents may be permitted to attend field trips; however, **siblings are not ever allowed to attend trips due to liability issues.** Note that any adult attending a field trip must be cleared through the DCPS volunteer clearance process. Unless otherwise noted, students must be in uniform—a yellow shirt to attend field trips. Parents are encouraged to let their children attend trips; they are purposeful and contribute positively to student learning.

Healthy Schools Act

Tubman ES is proud to announce that we are a Healthy School. At Tubman we believe that every scholar can benefit academically and physically from eating healthy nutritious foods every day. We are committed to providing 100% FREE access to healthy and delicious breakfast and lunch. We know that making healthy food choices can be hard at times, so we are going to do our part to simplify things.

D.C. has passed the Healthy Schools Act and we are happy to support our students in making healthy choices. **Tubman has restricted specific types of unhealthy food and beverages from the building. Candy, sodas, sugary drinks and other unhealthy food are not allowed.** Please see a list of examples below of what is allowed in the building and thank you for your understanding and cooperation. **We will take food that is not allowed from students and give it back at the end of the day but it is much easier to not send it**. Teachers are not permitted to give candy or unhealthy snacks to students (for example, only students getting the answer correct get a treat=not allowed). We also have a policy of not sharing food to make sure all students with food allergies are safe.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Tubman Scholars **SHOULD** bring water, 100% Fruit Juice, Milk or Water: * Vitamin Water
* Sparkling/Carbonated Water
* Bottled water

100% Fruit Juice * Honest Kids Juice Naked Juice, Minute Maid Juice
* Tropicana , Veryfine 100% Juices
* V8 VFusion 100% Juice
* Simply 100% Juice (Orange, Apple)

Fruit and vegetables, Fruit snacks (Welchs), granola bars, baked chips, baked crackers (Whole grain gold fish), pretzels, whole grain foods and treats, healthy popcorn such as skinny or smart pop, low sodium pickles, Sunchips | Tubman Scholars **SHOULD NOT** bring sodas, candy, sugary drinks, chipsNo Sodas* Pepsi, Coke, Mountain Dew, 7-Up, etc

No Sweetened Teas * Arizona Sweet Teas
* Lipton Brisk Tea

No Energy Drinks* Monster, Redbull, Starbucks

No Candy No Chips , Cheetos, Hot Cheetos, Taki’s, etc |

Home Reading and Homework

Research tells us that students’ reading growth is maximized when they read or are read to for at least 20-30 minutes per day. Students are allowed to check out books from the library. We ask that they be returned in a timely manner and in the same condition.

Research also tells us homework is only useful if it is purposeful and not in excess. Students in K-5 will have weekly homework packet in addition to their at home reading. Parents should practice APTT activities, fluency work and or math flashcards at home.

Inclement Weather Cancellation

If weather requires an early dismissal, cancellation of school or delay to the start of school, parents will be notified via media, including TV and radio in addition to social media (be sure to like/follow DCPS and Tubman on social media). We will send Remind messages when possible. Please ensure we have a working, up-to-date phone number and email address.

Inclement Weather Dismissal

If the windchill is below 10 degrees or it is raining very hard, we will have indoor dismissal. This is only when there is inclement weather. See the plan above under arrival and dismissal.

Interruptions to Instruction

Students cannot be pulled out of class unless there is an emergency. If you have a message for your child, we can ensure they receive the message. If you want to bring them lunch, it must be done during their lunch period and dropped off at the front door.

Intervention

Tubman works to ensure all students get what they need. We have a full array of interventions to support students in areas where they may be struggling. We also offer enrichment for students that need additional challenges. Parents will be informed if your child is getting any of these additional supports. Students significantly behind will move through our Multi-Tiered Systems of Support process to ensure we can support them in building the skills they need. This process can result in referral for additional assessment to see if there are additional learning needs that Special Education may support and/or in the retention of a student if a student would benefit from additional time at a grade level. Parents are part of this process including invitations to attend parent meetings and all information will be shared.

Library Procedures and Policies

PreK and Kindergarten students will attend the library at least weekly. Students will check out books when they attend. Students in grades 1-5 will attend the library at least monthly. Book selection will also take place at that time.

Medication

If your child needs any kind of medication, it MUST go through the nurse. There are forms to fill out and multiple regulations around any and all medication including both prescription and over the counter medicines. **Do not send any medication with your child at any time.** Please see the nurse for more details and information. Students cannot have any kind of medication—it must go through the nurse. Students and teachers cannot hold any kind of medication. The nurse and teachers need to be aware of student allergies, food allergies, and dietary needs as soon as possible.

Nurse, Minor Accidents, Illness

When minor injuries occur at school, the school nurse or school staff will administer first aid. In the event of a serious accident, paramedics will be called and parents will be contacted immediately. **Keeping your phone number and your emergency number current is extremely important in the case of an emergency.** Parents will be called to pick up a child who has a fever or is ill; please make arrangements to pick them up. If your child has any existing medical problems or allergies, please notify the school. If necessary, an “emergency medical plan” should be on file (such as if a child is asthmatic, allergic to bee stings, allergic to peanuts, etc.).

Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

All families are encouraged to and welcome to join the PTO. All parents and guardians are also encouraged to run for the PTO’s Executive Board because all voices are valued. This year, the PTO will hold monthly meetings alternating monthly between the morning and evening. The PTO partners with Tubman supporting the mission and vision of the school and supporting all our Tubman Toads. Look for announcements and information soon about joining our PTO-there are no dues we just want you to be a part of the PTO!

Parking

There is no parent parking at the school. The lot is reserved for Tubman staff. Parents cannot park in front of the building before or after school as this is a pickup spot for students needing transportation. Parking here may result in a ticket or towing from DC Parking Enforcement. Do not block the Tubman parking lot.

PATHS

We will be using a social-emotional curriculum called PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) with all students at Tubman. This research-based program is designed to promote student wellbeing and independence in problem solving. It covers everything from resolving conflicts to organizing yourself for success. Our goal is to ensure all students are prepared with life skills that will lead to success in addition to traditional academic skills.

Playground Usage

The playground will be closed to the public from 8:00am-6:00 pm during school days. This is to ensure everyone’s safety. The playground will open at 6:00 pm for public use. It is for school use 8:00 am-6:00 pm.

Recess

Students have recess daily. Students go outside unless it is raining, an air quality alert day or the wind chill is below 20 degrees. Please make sure your student has appropriate clothing for cold weather days. All students are encouraged to play. Removing recess from a student is not used as a consequence because all of us need to move!

**Technology**

The DCPS Acceptable Use Policy is an addendum to our handbook. Please review, sign and submit the student responsible use agreement to Tubman.

Up to Date Phone Numbers and Information

It is essential that we have up-to-date contact information for all families, including a good working phone number that we can use if we ever need it in the event of an emergency. If any of your contact information changes, please update the office and classroom teacher(s) right away. We will use Fresh Schools for communication, please let us know if your number changes, so we can keep you up to date in the system.

Uniforms

Tubman is a uniform school. Students should wear their uniform daily. This allows students to focus on school and also to prepare themselves mentally for school. The uniform consists of a yellow shirt. Any school appropriate bottoms are fine.

Visitors

**The security officer doesn’t open the door; the office does**. This means all people entering must buzz in by pushing the door button and entering through Door 3. There will be 100% ID check for all people entering the building. All visitors will sign in and go directly to the office. Visitors going to classes or hallways will need a visitor’s pass that is to be worn at all times. Parents are welcome to visit and/or observe as along as procedures and norms are followed. If parents are not cleared through the DCPS clearance process, they will be escorted and supervised at all times by a Tubman staff member~~.~~

**Our visitor norms are as follows:**

* All visitors must show their ID and sign in at the security desk
* A visitor's pass will be issued that must be worn at all times
* Visitors cannot talk to or about other children at all-even if it is a neighbor or niece—adults can only speak with and interact with their child
* The teacher cannot stop instruction to meet—teachers are required to keep teaching. Feel free to email them for further communication
* If observing a class, please find a spot off to the side or in the back of the room. This will ensure that visitors do not interrupt instructions
* Please avoid bringing younger children into the classroom for your observation as this can disrupt instruction
* Please silence cell phones and visit with other adults
* Please maintain an appropriate volume and use only appropriate language while on school property.

Additionally, we follow all DCPS polices around visitors: <https://dcps.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dcps/publication/attachments/Expectations%20for%20School%20Visitors%20%288-4-2023%29.pdf>

**Volunteering**

If you want to volunteer in the school or chaperone a field trip, you must complete the volunteer clearance process found on the DCPS website and bring your approval letter to the front office. School volunteers will have volunteer badges and be given assignments based on scheduling and preferences. Note, all volunteers must go through the DCPS volunteer application process.