

# Waitsfield Elementary School

3951 Main Street Waitsfield, Vermont 05673

[www.waitsfieldelementary.org](http://www.waitsfieldelementary.org)

## Family Handbook 2009-2010



It is the mission of the Waitsfield Elementary School to support students in the achievement of high academic standards; we believe that all students can master challenging academic material, and we expect them to do so. It is our mission to foster a safe, comfortable, and challenging learning environment. It is our mission to help teach children respect for themselves and others, and teach them to accept responsibility for their actions. It is our mission to enhance global awareness and acceptance of cultural diversity. Finally, it is our mission to make a positive difference in the lives of each of our students.

We hope that you will use this handbook as a source of information about your school, its programs, policies and the people who work here. The entire staff is committed to excellence, dedicated to our children, and committed to working in partnership with all parents. Waitsfield Elementary School is proud of its program and welcomes you to join us as we continue to grow and develop.

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## Staff Directory

Staff Member	Position	Phone Extension	Email
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Cheryl Joslin	Lunch Program Coordinator		<a href="mailto:cjoslin@faystonschool.org">cjolin@faystonschool.org</a>
Lynne Kingsbury	Grades 2 & 3 Teacher	110	<a href="mailto:lkingsbury@gmavt.net">lkingsbury@gmavt.net</a>
Susan Koeplinger	Support Services Teacher	108	<a href="mailto:sekoepplinger@gmail.com">sekoepplinger@gmail.com</a>
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Kay Marcelle	Technology Integration Teacher	117	<a href="mailto:kmarcelle@gmavt.net">kmarcelle@gmavt.net</a>
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Joe Robinson	Head Custodian	109	<a href="mailto:jrobinson@gmavt.net">jrobinson@gmavt.net</a>
Leigh Stockton	Speech-Language Pathologist	107	<a href="mailto:leighstockton@gmail.com">leighstockton@gmail.com</a>
Lee Van Dine	Grades 5 & 6 Teacher	112	<a href="mailto:lvandine@gmavt.net">lvandine@gmavt.net</a>
Arthur Washington	On-Site Lunch Supervisor		
Katie Westhelle	Support Services Assistant Winter Program Coordinator		<a href="mailto:katiwesthelle@yahoo.com">katiwesthelle@yahoo.com</a>
Terry Wilcox	Support Services Teacher	402	<a href="mailto:terrywilcox70@yahoo.com">terrywilcox70@yahoo.com</a>
Roy Yoder	Custodian		
Tom Young	Grade 1 Teacher	103	<a href="mailto:tyoung@gmavt.net">tyoung@gmavt.net</a>

BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS	Term	Email
Melissa Siner Shea, Chair Person	3 year term up in 2010	mswell@madriver.com
Wrenn Compère	3 year term up in 2011	wrenncompere@yahoo.com
Rob Williams	3 year term up in 2012	rob.williams@madriver.com
Sandy Tarburton	3 year term up in 2010	starburton@madriver.com
Elizabeth Cadwell	2 year term up in 2011	11cadwell@gmail.com

PTA OFFICERS	Phone	Email
Mary Simmons, President	496-3503	Bear@gmavt.net
Beth Libby, Vice President	496-2642	Higby5@aol.com
Jenifer Tuck, Treasurer	496-7662	jenifertuck@yahoo.com
Ann Marie Harmon, Secretary	496-5562	annmarie@madriver.com



### **School Hours**

7:40 a.m. – 2:25 p.m.

Students should arrive at school between 7:30 and 7:40.

Students are encouraged not to arrive before 7:30, as there is no supervision available.

Students arriving between 7:30 and 7:40 should report to the library.

### Kindergarten:

7:40 – 11:10 a.m. - Morning program

11:10 - 2:25 p.m. - Afternoon program

### Preschool:

8:00 – 11:20 a.m. (M/W/F for 4 year olds; T/Th for 3 year olds)

## **Home/School/Student Compact**

School is an extension of the learning that begins at home. Successful learning is achieved through cooperation amongst school, home and the child. The Home/School/Student Compact clarifies the steps that parents and staff will make to assure educational success. Thank you for taking the time to review this compact as a family—we encourage you to reach out to the school if you have questions in how we are meeting the expectations outlined herein or for support in achieving the expectations laid out for your child and family. We look forward to working together to make a successful educational experience for your child!

### HOME-SCHOOL COMPACT: Roles and Responsibilities

<b>PARENTS</b>	<b>SCHOOLS &amp; TEACHERS</b>	<b>STUDENTS</b>
Know what is expected of each of your children.	Communicate expectations.	Know what you need to do. Ask for help, if needed.
Help students organize time effectively – TV, friends, school work, chores, activities.	Help students be clear about homework.	Bring assignments home. Complete assignments. Return homework when due.
Send children to school ready to learn – child is rested, properly dressed, properly nourished, and arrives at school on time.	Provide a full days education.	Be responsible for going to bed at a reasonable time and getting up on time.
Communicate questions and ideas.	Encourage parents to ask questions and give input.	Bring home notes and messages for parents. Make suggestions in an appropriate manner.
Know how your child is doing in school.	Communicate student progress.	Participate in family conferences. Know how you're doing in school.
Make it a priority to attend school events and meetings relating to your child.	Schedule meetings in such a way that parents can attend.	Encourage parents to come to school events.
Provide the school with useful information about your child and about family values and culture.	Respond to children's and families' interests and needs. Make referrals, as necessary.	Be an enthusiastic learner. Share your interests and skills with others.
Talk to your children. Listen to what they have to say.	Listen to children's ideas and concerns.	Communicate with family and school staff.
Make suggestions for PTA and Focus Forum programs or for workshops.	Make suggestions for PTA and Focus Forum programs or for workshops.	-----
Participate in the creation and implementation of your child's Individual Learning Plan (ILP).	Facilitate and monitor progress on ILP.	Help create and work to meet goals of your learning plan.
Read at home with your child.	Encourage reading and provide books, as needed.	Read regularly.
Discusses with child and be clear about behavioral expectations at home and at school.	Communicate school's behavioral expectations.	Follow behavioral expectations
Expect an appropriate quality education for your child.	Provide a quality education for each child.	Set high goals for yourself and strive to reach your goals.

### Absences/ Attendance

Parents and guardians of students who are absent are responsible for calling the school. Due to increasing concerns about student safety, **we ask that you call the school before 8:00 a.m. if your child is to be absent or tardy that day.** Your notification of the school assures us that your child is safe and not missing. If your child is not in school and you have not called us by 8:00 a.m., we will attempt to contact you to confirm the absence. Any communications from a physician or health agency should be shared with the school nurse.

Vermont law requires regular attendance at school by children between the ages of six and sixteen. Being on time shows respect for the teacher and other students in the class; it is an important part of a student's (and parent's) job. **Please be certain your child is in his or her classroom and ready to join the group by 7:40 a.m. every day.** Missing the group work and sense of belonging and community built through early morning classroom meetings causes disruption both for the individual child and the class as a whole. In addition, **we appreciate your assistance in scheduling appointments outside of school hours.** There is a lot that we work to accomplish within the school day and we simply can't educate a child who is not in the building. If your child will be dismissed early from school, a written note is requested, or a phone call may be made in cases of emergency. Students will only be released to their parents unless permission is granted otherwise.

**Please schedule family vacations during school breaks.** Absences for family vacations are considered unexcused unless prior approval from the principal is given. **Vacations of ten or more days must be approved by the superintendent.**

### Afterschool Program

ASK (After-School Kids) is a non-profit State licensed after-school program that is operated as part of the Open Hearth Community Center (thus, while the program is based at the school building, is not run by the school itself). The program goal is to create a safe, stimulating and responsive environment in afterschool activities for students in grades K-6. The program values children participating in the curriculum development and planning processes based on a responsive classroom model to help them become invested, self-motivated learners. Activities include outdoor play, recreational games, supported homework sessions, and quiet and active activities. Children are supervised at all times. Further information on the program, including a parent handbook and registration form, may be requested at the school or found as a link on the school website.

### Behavioral Expectations & Discipline

*The Waitsfield Ways* describe those pro-social behaviors that our school community lives by. *The Waitsfield Ways* are reviewed with all students and are revisited constantly as we discuss behavior and how we want to treat each other here at school, in the community, and at home. Please join us by discussing *The Waitsfield Ways* with your children. Our goal is to create a more civil and peaceful environment for all.

## **THE WAITSFIELD WAYS**

- 🍏 Set a good example for yourself and others by helping those in need
- 🍏 Respect each other's body, property, feelings, and differences
- 🍏 Do our best
- 🍏 Keep our school safe, neat, and healthy

### **Consequences for Inappropriate Behavior**

Discipline is a learning opportunity and a process that all students can learn to use independently. The goal of school discipline is to enable students to be valued, contributing members of their community. When a student violates school rules, faculty or staff members will use a set of skills and procedures designed to guide the student quickly and efficiently back to task.

Responses for student misbehavior might include:

- Positive reinforcement for appropriate behavior.
- Supportive guidance for returning to task or choice of appropriate alternative activity.
- Logical consequences for misbehavior (for example, a student writing on desks might be asked to clean desks)
- Time out space in classroom or buddy classroom.
- Problem solving class meeting
- Apology of action, where students develop plan for restitution
- Loss of privileges
- Development of a plan examining behavior in question and exploring future alternatives
- Removal from the class for a short time for behavior or conduct that conflicts with the rules on:
  - the emotional and physical safety of all
  - the respect for others and property
  - taking responsibility for attendance, work completion and cooperation in class.

Not every incident of misconduct warrants parental contact. Staff members will contact parents when changing a student's behavior requires parental support but does not warrant intervention by an administrator. The principal or his/her designee will contact parents when the student's misconduct is severe (see below) or becomes chronic and is not resolved through interventions sought by other staff. Consequences for such behavior may involve in-school or out of school suspension.

Immediate administrative involvement occurs when major misconduct takes place.

These behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Insolence (Flagrant disregard for authority: i.e. total refusal, obscene gestures or words towards staff, etc.)
- Chronic violation of school or class rules
- Verbal or physical aggressions
- Harassment or Bullying (See policy on Harassment and Bullying Prevention Plan)
- Possession or use of alcohol and/or drugs (See policy on Alcohol and Drug Abuse)

- Serious intentional damage to property
- Weapons possession, threat to use, or actual use (See policy on Weapons)

**Bicycles and Skateboards**

Students may ride their bicycles to and from school after written permission is given to the office. We encourage alternative methods of transportation! Children are encouraged to wear helmets when bicycling. Bicycles must be walked onto and off school grounds. Bicycles may not be used during the school day. The Waitsfield Elementary School assumes no responsibility for bicycles brought to school. Skateboards are not permitted at school.

**Building Use**

Community groups and individuals are encouraged to make use of our building facilities. The facilities are available according to our Building and Grounds Use Policy. Request forms are available at the school office and through the school website.

**Bus**

The daily transportation of WES students is a privilege available to each student. Each student is responsible for following the rules on the bus for the safety of all passengers and the driver. Initial infractions against these rules will be handled by the bus driver unless the issue is severe (examples of severe infractions include physical fighting, refusal to listen to a driver). Ongoing issues will be referred to the principal and result in suspension from the bus. Other consequences, as deemed appropriate will be decided by the principal. Malicious damage to the bus will be billed to the responsible student(s).

<b>BUS RULES</b>		
<i>Rule</i>	<i>Looks like . . . .</i>	<i>Sounds like . . . .</i>
Be Safe	Stay in your seat. Hands to yourself. Face forward. Keep all objects or body parts inside the bus. Stay clear of the bus until it has completely stopped. Wait for the driver's signal to cross the road.	Quiet voices. Actively listen to your driver.
Be Respectful	Wait your turn to get on or off the bus. Respect bus equipment. Follow your driver's instructions.	Use kind words. Use friendly tone of voice. Use appropriate language.
Be Helpful	Use friendly body language. Be flexible with where you sit.	Give gentle & friendly reminders for inappropriate behavior. Talk out problems.

Waitsfield School is part of the Washington West Supervisory Union transportation system. WWSU and the Waitsfield Elementary School contract with the First Student Corporation for bus service. Busses carry elementary, middle, and high school students. The bus barn number is 244-6422.

### **Changes in afterschool plans**

**Any child not going home to his or her regular after-school location must have a note indicating where he/she is supposed to go.** This is very important since we cannot permit a child to go to an unscheduled destination without a note. A note is also necessary if you are picking up a child if he/she usually rides the bus. This will help us to assure that your child is ready and waiting for you. Your child's safety is our primary concern. Kindergarten students will not be dropped off unless an adult is present. This is a matter of district policy and procedure.

### **Complaints**

On occasion, parents and school personnel may experience differences of opinion or concern. The proper channel for complaints involving instruction, discipline, or learning materials is as follows:

- Speak to the adult directly involved. Please talk to the staff member first. Remember, the story you hear at home may not be the full picture. If you feel there isn't a satisfactory solution,
- Ask to have a meeting with the adult and the principal. If you feel there is not a satisfactory solution,
- Ask for a meeting with the superintendent. If you feel there is not a satisfactory solution,
- Bring your concern to the school board.

Although no member of the community shall be denied the right to petition the Board for redress of a grievance, complaints will be referred back through the proper channels for resolution prior investigation or action by the Board. Exceptions are complaints that concern Board actions or Board operations. Handling of complaints is guided by school board policy D8 which can be found on the school website.

### **Conferences**

Parent-teacher conferences take place formally three times within the school year; once before the start of school, once in November and once in March (see the school calendar for specific dates). Report cards are sent home three times a year. Phone calls, notes, homework packets and reading contracts are just some of the ways that parents and teachers communicate regarding student progress. If you feel additional conversation regarding student progress is needed throughout the year, please contact your child's teacher to schedule a meeting.

### **Curriculum**

The curriculum at the Waitsfield School is guided by our "design for education" and structured around Vermont's Grade Expectations. These expectations can be found online at <http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pubs/framework.html>. Curriculum guides

which assure an orderly progression of learning are available at the school and open to the public. For further information on Waitsfield curriculum, Vermont standards, or grade expectations, please speak to your child's teacher, contact the principal or visit the school web site at <http://www.waitsfieldelementary.org>.

### **Emergency Closings**

The School Board authorizes the Superintendent to close school, delay the opening of school or cancel specific bus routes in the event of hazardous weather or other emergencies which present threats to the safety of students, school staff members, or school property. To find out if school is open or closed due to weather, call 496-3643 and enter \*200 at the prompt. Such closings, delays, and cancellations shall also be announced by radio stations serving the district (including WDEV 550 AM and 96.1 FM), on local television (including WCAX Channel 3) and also at <http://corp.sover.net/schoolclosings/index.phtml>. The school will attempt to notify all parents of primary unit students if school is to be dismissed early. If you suspect that weather may cause the cancellation or early closing of school, please listen to the radio for confirmation. Snack, lunch, kindergarten, and preschool occur even on delayed starts.

### **Educational Support Services**

Waitsfield Elementary School uses a variety of supports and services to help meet the needs of all children. These supports and services are designed to help your child grow socially academically, emotionally, and physically.

Our educational support system is rooted in the belief that all children will learn and that those closest to the child are most able to provide appropriate support, accommodations and/or special services. Waitsfield Elementary School is committed to helping every child achieve challenging standards and make the most of each day's learning opportunities.

#### **- EST (Educational Support Team)**

The primary purpose of the E.S.T. is to assist classroom teachers and staff in working together with families to support students' social, physical, intellectual and emotional growth. Upon referral, the E.S.T. will convene to explore student needs and, if specific actions beyond those generally available in the classroom are merited, a plan documenting strategies and action steps will be developed.

Referrals to EST can be made by parents and/or staff members. If you have concerns about your child, you can begin by contacting the teacher. If you feel further action is warranted, ask the teacher or the principal for an EST referral. The EST team is made up of school staff members. Staff who know and work with a child, in addition to the child's family, are also invited to the EST meeting.

#### **- Special Education**

Special Education services are for the purposes of identifying students with disabilities, identifying their educational needs, and providing the necessary remedial services, related

services and accommodations to allow the student the opportunity to access and benefit from public education. A parent may request a special education evaluation for his/her student.

### **Family Involvement/ Volunteering**

There are many ways each and every parent can be involved in school life. A families involvement not only builds a rich learning environment, but also shows a child that you value the work that he or she is engaged in every day. We recognize that work, family, and personal issues may make certain types of involvement difficult. A volunteer survey is sent home at the beginning of each school year outlining some of the ways that you can be involved with the school. Please feel free to contact your child's classroom teacher or the main office if you'd like to discuss how you might be further involved with the school. Please also refer back to the home/school/student compact found at the beginning of this handbook for ideas on the many things you can do, within your own home, to provide tremendous support to the work of your child and the school.

### **Field Trips**

Parental permission for field trips will be obtained at the beginning of the year for school-sponsored trips. These permission forms will be kept on file at the school. Notes will be sent home informing parents of trips.

### **Food Service**

Hot lunches cost \$2.85 per day. Snacks are \$.50, and breakfast is \$1.75. Students bringing bag lunches may purchase milk for \$.35. Please pay by check and place the check in an envelope with the child's name on it. It will be easier for both you and the food service liaison person to keep track of payments if you follow these guidelines. Payment for the week is requested on Monday, or you may pay by the month if you prefer. Credit is not available. Applications for federal aid are available from the office and sent home at the beginning of each school year.

### **Harassment**

Waitsfield Elementary School is committed to providing all students with a safe and supportive school environment in which all members of the school community are treated with respect. Harassment is a form of unlawful discrimination as well as disrespectful behavior that will not be tolerated.

“Harassment” means an incident or incidents of verbal, written, visual or physical conduct based on or motivated by a student's or student's family member's actual or perceived race, creed, color, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, or disability that has the purpose or effect of objectively and substantially undermining and detracting from or interfering with a student's educational performance or access to school resources or creating an objectively intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment. A student who believes that s/he has been harassed, or who witnesses conduct that s/he believes might constitute harassment, should report the conduct to a school employee. The principal and school counselor are designated to receive and investigate allegations of harassment; any reported harassment issues will be responded to by these individuals using the procedures established in school policy (F6) (All

policies can be found on the school website or main office). These procedures, including an investigation, have been established to maintain confidentiality and promptly address such matters.

## **Health**

### **School Entry Medical Requirements**

Health History: A health history needs to be completed, by a child's parent or guardian, for all students upon entering Waitsfield Elementary School. Forms are included in registration packets given out by the office.

Immunizations: The Vermont Immunization Law requires all students in grades preschool-12<sup>th</sup> grade be adequately immunized for school attendance unless exempted for medical, religious, or moral reasons. Questions regarding your child's immunization status should be directed to the school nurse.

Medical Exam All kindergarten students and new students entering the Waitsfield Elementary School must have had a medical exam within a period of one year. Documentation must be provided by the child's healthcare provider; forms are available from the school nurse or may be provided by the healthcare provider.

### **Health Screenings**

Annual health screenings are done according to state mandated schedules. Health screenings include but are not limited to hearing, vision, height, weight, and blood pressure. Screenings in school should not be considered diagnostic. The school nurse will contact families of students whose screening results fall outside of normal limits.

### **Illness / First Aid**

It is often a problem for parent when their child becomes ill. Although it can present a difficult situation, parents need to locate alternate care for their children when ill, rather than sending them to school. Moderately ill children who come to school not only spread the illness to others, but also do not receive enough rest to fully recuperate. As a result, illness may linger unnecessarily. Please refer to the school website for guidelines on when to keep your child home as a result of illness.

Parent or guardians will be called when it is apparent that a student should not be at school due to illness. If a parent or guardian can't be reached, emergency contacts will be notified.

First aid provided at school is generally limited to care of injuries and sudden illnesses occurring during the school day or during any school sponsored activity. In case of accident or injury occurring at school, first aid will be given by the school nurse or her designee.

## **Medications**

It is desirable for medication to be given in the home. However, if under exceptional circumstances a child is required to take medication during school hours and the parent or guardian cannot be at school to administer the medication, only the school nurse or a designee will administer the medication in compliance with the regulations that follow.

### Prescription Medications

- 1) **Written orders** from a physician detailing the name of the drug, dosage and time interval the medication is to be taken, and diagnosis and/or reason for giving the medication.
- 2) **Written permission** from the parent or guardian requesting the school district comply with the physician's order.
- 3) Medication brought to school in a container appropriately labeled by the pharmacy or physician.
- 4) **Delivery of all medications to the school is the responsibility of the parent/guardian or any other designated adult.** Students should not transport medications to and from elementary schools.

### Non-Prescription Medications

- 1) **Written permission** from a parent or guardian detailing the name of the medication, dosage and time to be administered, and the reason for giving the medication.
- 2) **Delivery of all medications to elementary schools is the responsibility of the parent/guardian or any other designated adult.** Students should not transport medications to and from elementary schools.
- 3) The medication should be transported in its original container.

### Communicable Disease Control

School health services assist in efforts to prevent and control communicable diseases in cooperation with health departments, physicians, and parents. Parents are asked to notify the school nurse directly if their child has a reportable communicable disease as diagnosed by a physician. Some selected diseases/conditions have a high communicable rate, and exclusion from school may be necessary until appropriate treatment measures are taken. If exclusion is necessary, students may return to school following consultation between the parent/guardian and school nurse.

### **Homework**

At Waitsfield Elementary School, we believe it is valuable to extend learning beyond school hours. Goals of homework include:

- 1) To encourage independence
- 2) Build time management skills
- 3) Foster independent, responsible learners
- 4) Enhance home-school communication by engaging families in school-based projects

In cases where a student is often frustrated by the assigned homework, the parent should contact the teacher to discuss strategies for relieving the tension over homework.

Homework should not be a dreaded time at home. Let us help problem solve if this is an issue.

### **Primary Unit Home Learning Extensions**

#### A. Recommendations:

- 1) Schedule regular time for your learner (15-30 minutes depending on age of your child)
- 2) Provide the space and materials necessary
- 3) Give your learner feedback but do not take responsibility for the work

#### B. Suggestions for activities when nothing specific has been assigned:

- 1) Reading
- 2) Journal, creative writing, letter writing, handwriting
- 3) Practice math facts
- 4) Music practice or appreciation; art project

### **Intermediate Unit:**

As the child progresses through the grades, there will be increasing expectations that he or she will do specifically assigned homework. In grades 4-6, students may be expected to do the following amounts of work on Monday through Thursday nights:

#### A. Time:

- 1) Grade four: 40 minutes a night
- 2) Grade five: 50 minutes a night
- 3) Grade six: 60 minutes a night

Intermediate students need to plan their time so that they can finish long-term projects in a timely manner

#### B. Recommendations:

- 1) Provide a place where your child can work, equip place with needed materials
- 2) Limit interruptions while your child is working
- 3) Help your child get started or give feedback if you wish after work has begun, but do not do your child's work

### **Lost & Found**

Lost and found items are stored in labeled bins under the benches in the hallway. Items are displayed at conference time. Anything not picked up by the end of June will be donated to Good Will or to the Salvation Army.

### **Newsletter**

The Waitsfield newsletter "It's Elementary" will be published weekly on Thursdays. The purpose of the newsletter is to communicate the activities and events of the school. It is available in both a print and electronic (<http://www.waitsfieldelementary.org>) format. The newsletter is an important way to hear about school events. Thank you for reading it to stay informed! Announcements in the newsletter will be restricted to school events

and other announcements that are of interest to children and their families as approved by the principal.

### **Physical Education**

All excuses from physical education must be in writing. All children are expected to participate in the gym program since physical education is an important part of their growth and development. Extended excuses must be accompanied by a doctor's note. Under special circumstances, a temporary alternative plan may be developed.

### **Placement, Promotion And Retention**

Placement, promotion or retention decisions shall be made in the best interests of the student after a careful evaluation of all the factors relating to the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative. Placement is completed in accordance with school policy F29 which can be found on the school website.

In evaluating retention or promotion of a pupil, consideration will include not only the child's academic achievement and needs, but also the child's age, social and emotional maturity, and the needs and the wishes of the child's parents. Final authority for placement, promotion, and retention rests with the principal.

Placement, from year to year is the result of a thoughtful process. We are committed to having balanced classrooms. We know from experience and research that diverse and balanced classroom benefit all students. Parents will have the opportunity to have input by filling out a placement survey. However, requests for specific teachers cannot be accommodated.

Parents disagreeing with the school's placement decision may file an appeal with the principal. Placement changes will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The principal may request a meeting with parents to explore their rationale and reason for the request. Parents will be notified of their child's placement prior to the end of the school year (usually in late May or early June) by mail.

### **Playground**

The public is invited to use the playground at times when school is not in session. It is expected that those using the playground will treat the equipment and grounds with respect and care.

### **Parent Teacher Association (PTA)**

The Waitsfield PTA is a vital and important part of our school. It sponsors informational meetings for parents and staff and raises funds for many special activities and equipment. Their support enables children to participate in many enrichment activities including field trips and artist residencies. You are strongly encouraged to support the PTA. The PTA has a section on the web site (<http://www.waitsfieldelementary.org>) and posts their meeting schedule and minutes there.

### **Recess**

We have outdoor recess unless it is raining or the temperature/wind chill is below 10 degrees. Students need to bring clothing that is appropriate for the season (i.e. jackets, boots, hats, raincoats) and shoes for running and playing outdoors. Please also make sure that students have shoes to change into in school so they don't have to wear boots all day.

The healthiest place for most students is outdoors, and students' afternoon school participation is greatly helped by midday physical activity and fresh air. A note from a physician is required when a child needs to stay indoors for recess.

### **Report Cards**

Report cards are issued three times per year. The November and March cards are provided to parents with a parent/student conference. Report cards are standards-based and indicate student progress relative to Vermont's Framework of Learning Opportunities and Grade Expectations.

### **School Board**

The Waitsfield Board of School Directors meets at 7:45 am on the second Tuesday of every month at the Washington West Supervisory Union offices (in the Small Dog complex). Public attendance is welcomed. Meeting agendas will be published in the school newsletter and available at the school website, where minutes of school meetings can also be found.

One of the primary functions of the Waitsfield School Board is to set policy that guides the business of the school. A full listing of all school policy is available on our school website or through our main office.

### **Smoking**

State law prohibits smoking throughout school facilities or on school grounds at any time.

### **Student Safety**

The safety of every student is a matter of serious concern at all times. To assure the safety of children while attending school or under school supervision:

- 1) School buildings and equipment, including buses, will be regularly inspected for health, fire and safety hazards.
- 2) Children will be supervised in class, on the playground, during recess and lunch time, and during activities sponsored by the school.
- 3) Rules will be made to prevent accidents in the building and on the playground.
- 4) Reasonable precautions will be taken to assure children's safety on the way to school and on the way home from school. The school, however, cannot assume responsibility for students other than on the school buses or on school property during school hours. Students who wish to use the playground after school may do so, but they must first leave the school grounds. When they return, they are no longer the school's responsibility.
- 5) The Board will maintain a confidential safety plan that addresses a range of potential risks. This plan will be reviewed with staff on an annual basis.

### **Technology**

A variety of technology tools are used to support academic goals throughout the school curricula. It is expected that students will have the support needed to gain proficiency in using IT skills to solve problems and express creativity. In addition, within the upper unit, students are provided specific instruction in media literacy.

As part of the school's Internet Acceptable Use Policy (see school policy found on the school website or at the front office), students and their families are asked to complete an acceptable use agreement outlining the expectations for use of the internet. Families should be aware that some material accessible via the internet may contain items that are illegal, inaccurate or offensive. Even though student use of the Internet will be carefully structured and supervised, it cannot be guaranteed that undesirable sites will never be viewed.

### **Telephone**

Each classroom has a telephone. All teachers and administrators have extensions and voice mail. We have purposely designed the system so you will speak to a "live person" when you call during school hours. If you receive voice mail it is because all lines are busy. In this case we will get back to you as soon as possible. Extensions for voice mail appear in the index of this handbook. When the message begins you may enter an extension and you be forwarded to that person or their voice mail. Teachers are not available to take calls during instructional periods. If you have an emergency, please contact the main office so we may address your need.

The staff will use their judgment about how often to allow students to use the telephone to ask parents to bring forgotten items to school. Students who frequently forget items may not be allowed to use the phones; we believe that responsibility and planning ahead are better learned when students experience the logical consequence of a day without an item.

The school telephone is not to be used to make social arrangements for after school time. Students must make these arrangements at home and bring in a written note stating where they will be going after school. It is important that your child be clear on where he or she is going after school. If there is an emergency change in plans, please call the school as soon as possible.

### **Visitors**

Visitors are always welcome. Visitors must notify the principal or school secretary of their presence in the building and sign the guest book. Having a record of visitors is a matter of security and we appreciate your cooperation. When appropriate, please notify the school in advance.

Parents picking up a child early from school should also check in at the office upon arrival. Signing in is not necessary at drop off and dismissal times.

### **Weapons**

No weapons are permitted in the school or on school grounds. Vermont adopted legislation in the 1994-1995 session requiring local schools to adopt and implement its weapons policy. This policy defines significant consequences. The principal is responsible for the strict adherence to and implementation of this policy that can be found online or at the school main office.