

PARENT – STUDENT HANDBOOK 2008 - 2009



MEEHAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
1401 East Sixth Street
Belvidere, IL 61008

Jody J. Dahlseng, Principal
Rachel Braun, Lead Teacher

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Meehan Elementary School

Vision Statement

It is our vision to provide an educational program that will encourage students to become life-long learners and problem solvers who have respect for self and community and are able to adapt to an ever-changing society.



Meehan Elementary School

Jody Dahlseng, Principal

Dear Students and Parents,

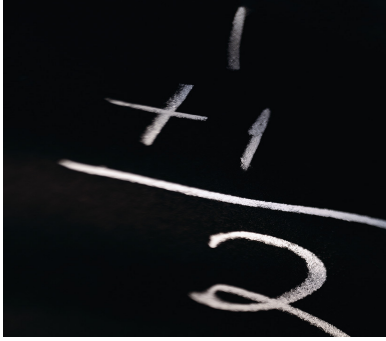
Welcome to Meehan School! I want to extend a warm welcome to the new and returning students at Meehan. We think that you will enjoy the learning atmosphere that has been established here. We encourage you to become involved by communicating with the teachers and staff, supporting the programs provided and sharing your own gifts and talents as you see fit.

One of our emphases for the coming year will be literacy. Meehan is a meeting place – **where books and children meet!** Our teachers will be sharing their personal “reading stories” with us, books will be highlighted by all of the staff and opportunities to read to the principal will be available. A monthly BEAR (Be Excited About Reading) Program is offered for parents to read with their children and take delight in the variety of reading materials. The Meehan staff desires every student to LOVE to read, not just be able to read! We look forward to working together to achieve this literacy goal.

The Meehan staff has a reputation for working hard to ensure the success of each student in our building. We have high expectations for academic and behavior. Communication is of utmost importance for this to take place. Your support and involvement is essential.

Please know that my door is open. I value honest communication and the opportunity to discuss the educational process. Respect becomes an important element of this communication. I look forward to this new year of learning together.

Sincerely,
Jody J. Dahlseng, Meehan Principal



Meehan Elementary School

Rachel Braun, Lead Teacher

Dear Students and Parents,

Welcome to Meehan and an exciting new school year. Here at Meehan, we are eager to begin another year of academic excellence. Our goal is to provide a safe and welcoming environment in which the academic needs of all our students are met.

This will be my second year at Meehan, and I personally am delighted to see students and families once again! My role at the school has changed somewhat from last year in ways that may impact both students and parents, so I'd like to take a moment to introduce a new position at Meehan called Lead Teacher.

As the lead teacher at Meehan, many of my responsibilities involve communicating with the family members of our students. Part of the position involves supporting and working with the noon aides and helping with bus duty. I will also be communicating with families about minor discipline problems and positive behaviors that the staff observes throughout the year. Please consider me an additional resource within the school building; do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions, comments, or concerns.

In addition to these duties, I will continue in my previous role as a TBE PT/TPI instructor for half of each school day. The TBE PT/TPI program provides support to our students who are learning English as a second language. Students who participate in this program work with me in small groups several times a week. While together, we focus on further developing vocabulary, reading, and writing skills. Should you wish to learn more about this program, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I look forward to the opportunity to get to know more Meehan families and students in the 2008 – 2009 school year! Please let me know if I can be of any service to you as the year progresses.

Sincerely,
Rachel Braun
Lead Teacher, TBE PT/TPIM Instructor

Meehan School Staff 2008 - 2009

Principal.....Mrs. Jody Dahlseng
Assistant Principal....Mrs. Rachel Braun
Secretary.....Ms. Julie Turner
Secretary.....Mrs. Lori Hornbeck
Nurse.....Mrs. Liz Byers
Head Custodian.....Mr. Tim Walker

KINDERGARTEN

Julie Galloway
Megan Gustafson
Nicole LaPak
Joy Lynde

Scharff

FIRST GRADE

Diane Byers
Katrina Spatz
Charlea Webb
Shannon Wagner

SECOND GRADE

Judy Carmichael
Chris Fischer
Pam Flaherty

THIRD GRADE

Carol Brenier
Bo Smith
Deb LePla
Denise McMorrow
SOCIAL WORKER

FOURTH GRADE

Deanna Thunberg
Laurie Luthin
Mary Riley
Michelle Steinkamp

FIFTH GRADE

Amy Beaver/Nicky Motos
Emily Brekenridge
Karen Conover
Megan Kaiser

LDI

Stephanie Kufalk
Denise Oaks

LDII

Andrea Stevenson
Kathy Witherby

LDIII

LaRonda Johnson

Doreen Nemec

LDIV

Laurel Galarza
Donna McElroy

INTENSIVE CLASS 1

Kamya Andrews
Nicole Hopkins
Lori Gant

INTENSIVE NCLASS 2

Jennifer Little
Amy Mihalic
Susan Brimeyer
Whitney Gould

PARA PROFESSIONALS

Diane Morgan

MUSIC

Diane Tracy
Tanya Towry

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Bob Bergman
Kristine Frank

ART

Joe Beard

RESOURCE TEACHERS

Christal Tompkins
Marybeth Sundberg

READING SPECIALIST

Lisa Crocker & Tammy

GIFTED

Joy Bauman

LIBRARY

Kathy O'Brien
Michelle Lass

SPEECH

Lauren Knodle
Victoria Werner

PSYCHOLOGIST

Kevin Johnson

Becky Holmes

SCHOOL COUNSELOR

Chris Appell

TPI

Rachel Braun

TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANT

Dena Karlson

Admissions & Book Fees

New Kindergarten students must be five years old on or before September 1 of the year in which they are enrolling. A physical and a dental examination is required when a student enters school for the first time. Immunization records must be complete and up-to-date before the registration is complete. This information must be on file in the school office before the student begins their first day of school. A student's age will need to be verified with a certificate of birth and proof of residency is required.

Registration fees for students, K-5, are \$90.00 per year. These fees entitle students to use the textbooks required for each subject, workbooks and assignment notebooks. If a child loses or damages a book or workbook, an additional fee will be charged. Refunds are made upon request of the parent or guardian. Refunds will be made according to the length of time remaining in the school year. A request for a refund must be done so in writing to the building principal. The request must include the name(s) of the child/ren, grade and the address where the refund should be sent.

Students are responsible for the textbooks and/or library books loaned to them. There will be charges for any lost or damaged materials. These charges will be billed to the parent.

A school supply list is distributed on the first day of school. Please make every effort to see that these supplies are available for your child's use at all times. It is very difficult for students to complete their assignments when they don't have the necessary materials. The Meehan supply lists can also be found at various stores in Belvidere and Rockford.

Assignment Notebooks

Assignment notebooks are to be used by students in grades 3-5. These books will be distributed to students on the first day of school. We expect students to use the assignment notebooks to help keep them organized. Assignment books also keep you informed about what is going on at school. Please check them daily.

Birthday Treats

Students may bring treats to school to celebrate their birthday. However, no obligation is intended. This is a completely optional gesture. In order to create the least amount of confusion please send something that is easy to eat. Individually packaged healthy treats are recommended. Please see the list of appropriate nutritional suggestions at the end of the handbook. **Gum is not an appropriate treat.** In lieu of a treat, some parents may wish to purchase a book or game for the classroom and donate the item in their child's name.

If you choose to send a treat, please contact the teacher in order to determine a time that the treat will be distributed. It can also help to avoid having more than one student bring a treat in one day.

Please DO NOT send party invitations to school. Often times, it creates disappointment and hurt feelings for those who do not receive an invitation. As careful and discreet as we try to be, students are aware who is invited and who is not. (Please note that the school can not provide names, addresses or phone numbers of other students.)

Breakfast Program

The breakfast program will continue this 2007 – 2008 school year at all Belvidere Elementary Schools. Students will be offered a nutritious breakfast from 7:20 to 7:40 am. The cost of each breakfast meal is \$1.50 and will be taken of your child's lunch account. The breakfast will be served and eaten in the cafeteria. This is an optional program for interested families.

Change of Address

It is very important for emergency and administrative reasons, that every student has an up-to-date address record at the school office. Notify the school immediately if any changes such as change of address, phone or place of employment have been made since the beginning of the school year. **It is essential that the emergency numbers be on file at the school in case of an emergency.**

Communications (Newsletter)

Meehan's newsletter, the Meehan Messenger, contains items of interest to students and parents. This newsletter is distributed every other Friday. At least one article will discuss a facet of the school program. Other timely information will be featured in this newsletter.

Computer Lab

Meehan School is very fortunate to have a computer lab. Due to the expense of buying and maintaining this lab, strict rules will be enforced. Any misuse of the equipment will result in the suspension of privilege to use the lab. If a student damages any software or equipment, the parent will be responsible for paying for it. An Internet Agreement will be sent home at the beginning of the year. Each parent is expected to read, sign and return the agreement after discussing the terms with their child.

Conduct

The school provides an orderly and friendly environment for learning to take place. Students at all times and in all school settings should conduct themselves as responsible persons in the school community. They should respect the rights and feelings of fellow students, behave in ways which assure safety to both themselves and others, follow all school rules and cooperate fully with all adult supervisors.

Teachers and parents should stress good manners and courtesy as being a necessary ingredient for good safety. Good safety practices are learned. Your help in transmitting these rules could help to prevent accidents and will be appreciated.

School-wide Standard of Discipline

To assist students in following the Code of Conduct, the Meehan staff has adopted a program called Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS). As part of this program, Meehan School will have their rules as previously outlined posted in each setting. An incentive program will reward students for respecting themselves, others and property. Any staff member can reward appropriate behavior with "Mustang MVP" coupons. Students will then be part of a weekly and monthly drawing for a special reward. Semester rewards for individual students and classrooms will also be included.

Discipline Referral Forms will be used by staff members to determine consequences for inappropriate behavior. Consequences are dependent on the severity of the behavior and the grade level of the student. These consequences range from verbal warnings to out-of-school suspensions and, for severe behavior, expulsion.

The following items are not allowed in school:

Gum or candy, matches, cigarettes, radios, tape recorders, walkman, portable CD players, walkie-talkies, squirt guns, knives, skateboards, roller skates or roller blades, virtual pets, toys of any kind, toy guns or any item considered dangerous or unsafe for students to play with. Cell phones are allowed only in the child's backpack – turned off until after school. Please remember the school is not responsible for items lost, broken or stolen.

Look-alike weapons are also not allowed in school.

Food is not allowed anywhere but in the cafeteria.

The classroom provides the environment where students spend most of their learning time at school. Teachers are responsible for establishing their individual classroom rules and they are responsible for providing students with appropriate instructions. Students are expected to be responsible, attentive and cooperative. They must remember that only through their own genuine efforts can they make academic progress. Students have a further responsibility not to interfere with the opportunities of other students to learn.

In case of student suspension, there are several “Due Process” requirements that will be observed:

1. The student will be given notice of the charges and evidence leading up to the suspension.
2. The student will be given the opportunity to tell his/her side of the story.
3. The student’s parents will be notified by phone and written statement.
4. the Written statement will indicate the violation(s), the length of the suspension, and indication of the right to and procedure for appeal of the suspension to the district’s hearing officer.

Conferences (Parent – Teacher)

Parent teacher conferences will be held during the month of November. Parents are asked to make a specific appointment with the teachers of their children, regardless of the progress of the child. Conference forms will be sent home from the office. We will schedule conferences on a first-come-first-serve basis. These conference times, if spent wisely, can be very valuable to your child’s overall program.

Some parents may be hesitant about participating in conferences, but our teachers can do a much better job with students if they can share their understanding of the students directly with the parent. It is not necessary to wait till regular conference time if a parent has a special concern. Parent conferences are encouraged and can be arranged at any time during the school year.

Dress Code

We would like to review with parents and students some basic guidelines to be aware of concerning school attire. The following rules or guidelines should be followed:

- Students should **not** wear see through clothing.
- Shirts should be long enough so that when hands are raised, no skin is visible.
- Shirts with profanity or inappropriate pictures may **not** be worn to school.
- Shirts referencing drugs, alcohol or cigarettes are inappropriate to wear to school.
- Students are **not** to wear hats in school.
- “Heelies” or shoes with wheels may not be worn for P.E. class. The wheels should never be down on school property.
- Chains are **not** to be worn as part of the student’s attire.
- Shirts or blouses should cover all underwear straps. Shirts that have spaghetti straps should not be worn to school.
- **NO tattoos or blatantly colored hair such as blue, crayon red, orange, etc.**

In general, students should dress in a neat, clean manner that will not disrupt the educational process.

Homework

Homework is important. It is an extension of the learning that takes place at school. Homework can provide practice and drill that reinforces classroom learning and can provide opportunities for practice, independent study, research and creative thinking. Parents can help their children by arranging a quiet comfortable place for the students to work and by seeing that assignments are completed. One way of accomplishing this would be to review your child's agenda planner with him or her each day.

Reading at least fifteen minutes each night is an expectation that we have for each and every child who attends Meehan. This expectation can be accomplished by students reading silently to themselves, parents or an older child reading to the child or the parents reading to the child. It is also important that students practice their weekly spelling words and memorize their basic math facts. These areas can be mastered most effectively with the help students can receive at home.

Meehan's Late Work Policy

Our academic policies at Meehan allow students to have late work, but there is some penalty attached.

1. All work must be turned in by the following Monday morning at 8:00 A.M. (or the first day of the school week if a holiday is celebrated on Monday).
2. The deduction for late work is as follows:

Third Grade – Homework turned in on time is given an effort grade of 5 points. Late assignments are reduced to 3 points. Assignments not turned in by the following Monday receive a zero. At the end of the quarter, these points are totaled and used as a portion of the student's grade.

Fourth Grade – 10 points off the grade.

Fifth Grade - 20 points off the grade.

3. Any work not turned after Monday will result in a zero for the assignment.
4. Exceptions are made to this policy if the student is absent. Students will be given 1 day for each day absent in order to complete and turn in make-up work.

Lost and Found

All clothing found on the school grounds, regardless of its value, is placed in the lost and found box. Money, jewelry and any other articles of value are turned into the office. Students may claim them after proper identification. We encourage you to **mark your child's belongings**, including clothing. In doing so, the owner of the items can be readily found. **All items not claimed at the end of the year will be given to the Salvation Army.

Lunch program

Children going home for lunch:

If your child is going home for lunch, please send a note to the principal requesting that your child be allowed to leave the school for lunch at home. We expect that proper adult supervision would be present during this lunchtime in the interest of the student's well being. Please make sure that your note is dated and signed.

Do's and Don'ts of the Cafeteria

1. **DO... WALK** down the hall to get your lunch card and stay in line.
2. **DO...KNOW** which lunch choice you ordered when it is your turn to be served. It will make the line go faster for all.
3. **DO ...TALK IN SOFT** voices in the cafeteria.
4. **DO...WALK** carefully when going to throw away your tray or garbage.
5. **DO...WAIT** patiently in line. The kitchen staff is serving everyone as quickly as they can.
6. **DO...LOOK** carefully at the names on the lunch card. Be sure the card you have has **YOUR** name on it. The cashier can not remember 400 faces.
7. **DO NOT...DUMP** your garbage in a garbage can that is already full. Move down the line to one of the other garbage cans that are not as full.
8. **DO NOT...RUN** at all in the cafeteria. This helps to avoid bumping into others and trays of food falling to the floor. Plus, it will avoid any injuries that can happen because of running in the cafeteria.
9. **DO NOT...WAVE** your lunch card in the cashier's face. This is both rude and unnecessary.
10. **DO NOT ...** bring pop to school in your lunch. We have had incidents where pop explodes, once it is opened, making a big mess.
11. **DO NOT ... PUT** your lunch ticket in your mouth. This is very unsanitary both for yourself and for those that have to handle your card.
12. **DO NOT ... BEND** your lunch card. You will be charged for a replacement card. (EVEN if t he kid named "**NOT ME**" is the one that bent it.)
13. **DO NOT...TOUCH** anyone's card but your own.

REMEMBER: SAYING "PLEASE" AND "THANK YOU" AND FOLLOWING THE RULES MAKESFOR A MORE ENJOYABLE LUNCHTIME!

Medication

Please refer to the District Handbook for details regarding medicines to be administered at school. Under no circumstances will medication be dispensed by the nurse or by the principal unless the proper district procedures have been followed.

A form will be given to parents at registration that needs to be completed in the event that your child needs to take medication at school. **This form must be completed before the medication can be administered.**

Money

Children should not bring money to school unless for specific reasons. Money for lunch and/or milk, book orders or other special occasions should be sent in an envelope that clearly states the intent and to whom the money should go. **The student's name should also be clearly labeled somewhere on the envelope.** Then, if the money is lost, we know to whom the money should be returned.

Nutritional Emphasis

A Wellness and Nutrition Committee was formed to identify areas that our school district can improve and emphasize the health of our students. This is in compliance with state regulations. A list of suggested healthy food for snacks, birthday treats and parties can be found at the back of this handbook. Our district and school newsletters will also highlight activities and healthy ideas for the family and school.

Pets

Due to the carpeting at Meehan School, students are not allowed to bring pets to school.

Photography Agreement

Parents of students of District 100 are asked to fill out a photography agreement permission form. This form will be sent home with your students and allows the school to publish your child's picture in the newspaper and other publications. Please read the agreement, make your decision and send the agreement back to school.

Physical Education

Students are required to wear gym shoes during physical education class. This is a measure taken to protect health and safety while participating in physical education classes. If students have class early in the morning, it is strongly advised that they have an extra pair of shoes and socks available to change into should their feet get wet from the early morning dew.

If for some reason your child cannot participate in physical education classes, please request this in writing. Any restrictions from P.E. classes for more than five days will require a doctor's note.

Student's requesting to be excused from gym class will also be excluded from recess.

Report Cards

Report cards are issued following the completion of each nine-week grading period. The report card is an important message from the school concerning your child's progress, not only in school subjects, but also according to his character traits. Please carefully review your child's progress and contact the school if you have any questions. Midway through the grading period, you will be notified if your child is doing poorly in a subject area. This will be reported through the use of a progress report that will be mailed.

Grading Scale:

100 - 93 = A	74 - 70 = D
92 - 85 = B	69 - 60 = F
84 - 75 = C	

Telephone

The office telephone is a business phone and is not to be used by the students except in an emergency. Students are not allowed to use the phone to make personal arrangements. Such arrangements should be made before coming to school.

Visitors

All visitors are required to report to the school office to sign in upon entering the building. Parents are welcome and are encouraged to visit the school. Meehan student's friends and relatives from other schools or school districts are not permitted to be in attendance or to visit during the school day.

Zero Tolerance Program

The Belvidere School District has adopted a "zero tolerance" policy with regard to weapons or look-alike weapons on school district property. Possession by students of any weapons or look-alike weapons on school property or on buses is strictly prohibited. Students found in violation of this policy will be disciplined by the building principal. Discipline measures may include counseling, suspension or expulsion. All incidents of students in possession of dangerous weapons will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency. Please be advised that knives of any kind, including pocket knives, are considered weapons. Please talk to your child/children and advise them that under no circumstances should they bring a knife to school, and that the consequences for not complying with this rule will result in disciplinary action.

Healthy Food and Beverage Options for School

- Raw vegetable sticks/slices with low-fat dressing or yogurt dip
- Fresh fruit wedges – cantaloupe, honeydew, watermelon, pineapple, oranges, tangelos, etc.
- Sliced fruit – nectarines, peaches, kiwi, star fruit, plums, pears, mangos, apples, etc.
- Fruit salad
- Cereal and low-fat milk.
- 100% fruit or vegetable juice.
- Frozen fruit pops with fruit juice of fruit as the first ingredient.
- Dried fruits – raisins, cranberries, apples and apricots
- Single serving applesauce or canned fruit in juice.
- Peanut Butter with apple wedges or celery sticks
- Fruit smoothies made with fat-free or low-fat milk
- Trail mix
- Dry roasted peanuts, tree nuts or soy nuts
- Lean meats and reduced fat cheese sandwiches
- Party Mix (variety of cereals, nuts, pretzels, etc.)
- Pretzels or reduced fat crackers
- Baked chips with salsa or low-fat dip
- Low-fat muffins, granola bars and cookies (graham crackers, fig bars)
- Mini bagels with whipped light or fat-free cream cheese
- Pasta salad
- Bread sticks with marinara
- Yogurt and fruit parfaits
- Pudding cups
- String Cheese, cheese cubes, single serving cottage cheese
- Pure ice cold water

These are only a few suggestions to get you started. Please know that some students in our building have peanut allergies. If your child is in a peanut-free room, you will be notified by the teacher.

