

Student/Parent Handbook 2024-2025



Ponca School District

Jackson Elementary

Preschool – 2nd grade

Ponca Elementary School

3rd – 6th grade

APPENDIX A

Ponca Public Schools

Jackson Elementary / Preschool – 2nd Grade

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(402)632-4276 (402)632-5014 (Fax)

Amy Crosgrove, Office Manager

Ponca Public School / 3rd Grade – 12th Grade

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Lorrie Huston, Office Manager

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Jackson and Ponca Elementary Classroom Teachers

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1st Grade

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2nd Grade

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6th Grade

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Title I

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Mrs. Jessi Walsh jessiwalsh@poncaschool.org

Guidance

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Para-Educators

(Ponca) Stacy Swick, Kamber Hogan, Lisa Hohenstein, Sandy Jensen,
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(Jackson) Amanda Benson, Annette Schnoor, Sandy Finseth, and
Marilyn Peters, Kelsey Hamar

Dear Parents:

Welcome to the 2024-2025 school year. We're very happy that you and your children are a part of the Ponca Public School District. The following items are presented for your information and guidance during the coming year. This information is a combination of administrative regulations, past practices, common sense and concerns for the safety and well-being of all students.

At both Jackson and Ponca Elementary Schools, each classroom teacher will establish rules for expected behavior in the classrooms, on the playground, in the building hallways, and other student areas. Our expectations for student behavior, place an emphasis on respect for others and respect for property.

We believe that everyone deserves to be treated with dignity. Expectations affect performance as everyone deserves a safe learning environment. We know that you have the same expectations for your children and we will keep you informed of your child's growth in social skills, responsibility, and performance in the classroom.

Areas of Interest and Importance

STUDENT CONDUCT

- Students are expected to be prepared and conduct themselves in a manner that would be a credit to themselves and to the school.
- Such behavior as yelling and running in the halls; foul, discourteous speech; unsportsmanlike conduct at play; fighting; and destruction of school property will not be tolerated and are grounds for disciplinary action.
- In the classroom, disciplinary problems are the responsibility of the teacher. On the playground, it is handled by the teacher or person assigned to playground supervision.
- Discipline problems which the teacher feels unable to cope should be referred to the principal. The use of suspension, expulsion and mandatory reassignment are provided for in the Nebraska statutes and may be resorted to if the situation warrants.
- Students are expected to use school equipment and playground equipment in the fashion for which they are designed. Willful and/or malicious destruction of any school property can result in suspension.
- Students who bully other students verbally, physically and through the use of technology will be dealt with severely. Name calling, threats, teasing, intimidating, or other forms of abuse will not be tolerated.

VISITOR/STUDENT RELEASES CONDUCT

For the safety and security of students, faculty and staff, the following procedures will be in effect: Visitors to Ponca Public School buildings must first report to the Administrative Office upon entering either the secondary or elementary buildings. Once in the office, you will be asked to sign in. You will be issued a Visitor's Pass if you wish to visit a classroom. We will not send parents/guardians to the classrooms or to the playground to pick up their children, unless they have signed in at the office and have been issued the Visitor's Pass. Teachers and playground supervisors should not be put in a position to determine the validity of a request to release a student. That will be done from the office.

When a student needs to be dismissed during the regular school hours, parents/guardians must sign their students out in the Administrative office. Students will not be allowed to leave the facility without a signature from a parent/guardian. When a parent comes to the office to pick up their child, office personnel will contact the teacher to release that student to the office. If a parent, or other adult, enters the building and goes to a classroom, or to the playground or other area of the school to pick up a child, school personnel have been instructed to direct that person to the office.

CHILD CUSTODY MATTERS

In most cases, when parents are divorced, both parents retain parental rights. If you have a court order that limits the rights of one parent in matters such as custody or visitation, please bring a copy to the office for our files. Unless your court order is on file with the School District, we must provide equal rights to both parents.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Schools, including all employees, have a moral duty and responsibility to report all **suspected** cases of child abuse. A person who has reason to believe that a child has been abused **must report** such information to the School Administer or Counselor. The information will be forwarded to the **Department of Health and Human Services**.

STRANGER DANGER

Remind your child frequently of procedures to follow when encountering strangers. Include the following guidelines in your discussion:

- A stranger may ask you to take a ride in his or her car. **DON'T GO!**
- A stranger may ask you for directions or to find a lost pet. Ignore him or her and walk away. -A stranger may offer you toys, candy or money. Refuse it!
- A stranger may invite you into an empty building or room. **DON'T GO!**
- A stranger may act friendly, as if he or she really likes you a great deal. Don't be fooled.
- Do not allow a stranger to touch you, lift you up, pull your clothes or buttons or zippers. - If someone does something to you that makes you feel uncomfortable, funny or scared, get away fast!!

EMERGENCY NAMES AND PHONE NUMBERS

Report all incidences to a teacher, principal, or guidance counselor.

Accidents do happen at school and it is not always possible to know the exact extent of a student injury or illness until after x-rays or an examination by a doctor. When an accident occurs or a student becomes ill, the nurse or the school personnel will attempt to notify parents. A student is never sent home unless arrangements are made with the parents or other authorized persons identified on the student's emergency contact information.

ATTENDANCE

The alarming growth in the number of missing children makes the communication between parents and the school that much more important. The administrators of the Ponca Public School District require that parents call the school when your children are going to be absent. When absences are caused by illness or injury, the parents should phone between 7:30 and 8:15 a.m. to the center that the student attends. If we do not receive a call and a student is absent, we will attempt to make certain that the parent is aware of his/her student's absence.

Nebraska state law and Ponca school board policy require that we monitor the attendance of each student and that absences do not exceed 20 days per school year for elementary students. Parents will receive a warning letter after the 15th and 20th absence. In the event of habitual absences, we are required to notify the county attorney of such excessive absences and it is the decision of the county attorney to file charges against the student/parent/guardian for this violation of the law.

Student's absent from school may not attend extra-curricular activities unless approved by the principal. Students that leave school early because of illness will not be allowed to attend extra-curricular activities unless approved by the principal.

Listed below are guidelines for student arrival to school and absence from school:

TARDY:Late arrival to school or class up until 9:30 a.m. will be considered tardy.

ABSENT ONE-HALF DAY: A student will be counted absent one-half day if he/she arrives at school after 9:30 a.m., or leaves school prior to 2:00 p.m. Please keep this in mind when scheduling appointments.

JACKSON ELEMENTARY:

Students will be allowed to enter the building at 8:15, so we would ask that students **NOT ARRIVE AT SCHOOL BEFORE 8:15**. At Jackson Elementary, the school day begins at **8:20**. Students will be dismissed at **3:20**, the shuttle bus will leave at **3:20**.

PONCA ELEMENTARY:

Students will be allowed to enter the building at 8:00, so we would ask that students **NOT ARRIVE AT SCHOOL BEFORE 8:00**. At Ponca Elementary, the school day begins at **8:10** --Student's will be dismissed at **3:35** and allowed to get materials from their lockers, and leave the building. Buses will depart each afternoon at approximately **3:45**.

BUS ROUTES

The District operates bus routes on rural paved and gravel roads to pick up students who live outside of Ponca and Jackson. A danger exists when the bus makes a stop on the road and sits waiting for the students(s). To reduce the possibility of any accident, we ask that students riding the bus be at the bus stop when the bus arrives. It is dangerous for all concerned when the bus has to wait for extended periods of time for the student and if the student fails to appear.

For this reason, we ask that parents call their bus driver when your children will not be riding the bus.

Elementary Transportation Information

At Ponca elementary students may be dropped off at the dedicated drop-off area on the North side of the Elementary portion of the building, near the playground. They may enter the doors on the South side of the Main Entrance. The route buses will drop off students on the south side of the high school building in the morning. The shuttle bus will load on the south side of the high school building in the school bus pick-up/drop-off area in the morning and leave at 8:00am sharp.

After school at Ponca the shuttle buses will drop off students on the south side of the high school building in the bus drop-off area. Students riding route buses will be dismissed through the south doors of the high school building and load on the south side of the high school in the drop-off area. Students being picked –up after school will be dismissed through the south doors of the high school building. Parents may park in the parking area south of the bus drop-off area.

VOICE MAIL SERVICES

As a convenience for parents, the District provides a voice mail service. If you need to call early to report your child's absence for the day, you may call and leave a message on the voice mail service. The number at Ponca is 755-5700 or at Jackson 632-4276.

REPORT CARDS & PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

Report cards are issued every nine weeks with progress reports provided to parents at the mid-point of each quarter. Students in grades 3 and 4 will have grades calculated according to the following formula: 40% of their grade will come from test scores and 60% of their grade will come from daily work and homework. Students in grades 5 and 6 will have grades calculated according to the following 60% of their grade will come from test scores and 40% of their grade will come from daily work and homework. All math grades are calculated 80% test scores and 20% daily work and homework in grades 3 through 6.

Grading Scale Grades K-1 Grades 2– 6

93– 100% E (Excellent) A

85 – 92% S (Satisfactory) B

77 – 84% I (Improving) C

70 – 76% N (Needs Improvement) D

Below 70 F

Parent-Teacher Conferences will be held following the first quarter and the middle of third quarter. These conferences are an important part of the home/school communication process. The purpose of the conference is to share information and work together to help the student. Elementary parents will be notified of their scheduled conference time. Informal conferences may be arranged with your child's teacher at any time convenient to both parents and teacher. Teachers are available to parents between **8:00 to 8:05 a.m. and 3:40 to 4:00 p.m.** when school is in session. Appointments will need to be made for other times.

HOMEWORK

Work assignments outside the classroom shall be for the purpose of enrichment, review, and reinforcement of the principles taught that day or completion of daily class assignment not completed in a timely manner. Homework should not be disciplinary in nature. Homework assignments will be made at the discretion of the individual teacher.

Assignments are due the next day unless otherwise stipulated by the teacher.

Homework assignments should be finished neatly. Any assignment not meeting requirements will not be accepted. Parents and teachers realize that all children differ; one student might have more homework than another. Parental involvement in their child's homework experiences will greatly enhance their child's learning environment.

DISTRICT TESTING PROGRAMS

MAP Testing (Measures of Academic Progress) will be administered three times during the school year to grades K through 6. The purpose of such testing is to measure the academic growth of each child from year to year and to provide a profile of the student's academic strengths and weaknesses. Nebraska State Standard Tests are given to grades 3-6 during the spring time.

Children will be tested for special services after the Student Assistance Team (SAT) and Response To Intervention (RTI) Team have recommended the student for further evaluation. Each child referred will be assessed by the appropriate specialists. With this information, the child's team will determine if the child qualifies for services. If services are appropriate for the child, he/she will have goals written in a plan that the team will follow for one year.

ELEMENTARY GUIDANCE PROGRAM

The elementary school guidance program is part of the total school program plus the guidance program compliments learning in the classroom. It is child-centered, preventative, developmental, encourages students' social, emotional, and personal growth.

The goal of elementary guidance in the classroom is to provide students with opportunities to learn and practice effective communication skills, friendship building techniques, drug/alcohol resistance skills, personal strengths and talents, effective study skills, character education skills, safety skills, and planning for the future by goal setting along with obtaining information about careers. In addition, students learn about the role of the guidance counselor in the school setting.

Parents, students and teachers/administrators can request the counselor to meet with a student. Individual and group counseling sessions can be scheduled where topics that could be addressed include: helping children cope with difficult and/or unchangeable life events, giving children the opportunity to share their feelings and concerns, teaching and developing communication, problem solving, and decision-making skills, and building self-esteem and confidence.

The school counselor consults with parents and/or teachers to help promote student success. The counselor intervenes in conflict, crisis, and emergency situations. They also help build tolerance and appreciation of persons of all ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

CHAIN OF COMMAND: COMPLAINTS & SUGGESTIONS

When there is a situation or matter that arises where the parent wishes to notify the school regarding a specific problem, concern, or question, we believe the correct process to follow to resolve matters or to have questions answered is as follows:

1. Teacher – Parent contact.
2. Teacher - Parent – Principal meeting
3. Teacher - Parent – Principal – Superintendent meeting

Parental complaints must be addressed before classes start (8:00 – 8:05 a.m.) or after the School Day ends (3:40 – 4:00 p.m.).

STUDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Ponca Public School District uses the student management system PowerSchool. Parents are able to access their child's grades, attendance, lunch balances etc. from any computer that has Internet access or using an app on their phone. To access your child's information, go to www.poncaschool.org, click the button which is located on the right-hand side of the school webpage. Parents and students are given separate logins and passwords to access their information.

PARTY INVITATIONS

Birthday party invitations may not be distributed at school unless the entire class or the entire boy/girl population is invited.

LIBRARY

Library facilities are available to all pupils enrolled at the school. Students will visit the library with their teachers or other supervising personnel. They may also be allowed additional library visits/privileges as permitted by their teachers. Encourage your child to return library materials promptly and to inform the teacher of any damage to library materials so that they may be repaired. If library material is lost, a fine in the amount of the original purchase price of the book will be charged in order to replace the item. Fines for overdue library materials are assessed at one cent per school day. If materials are not returned, replaced, repaired or if fines are not paid by the end of the school year, report cards will be withheld and students will need to pay for the materials.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are planned to provide educational experiences for the students. Field trips may be an extension of the classroom experience and have educational value relevant to the material being studied. A field trip may create a unique learning experience to be expanded on in the classroom. Written permission is necessary for any child to participate in a field trip activity. Advance notice of field trips will be provided. Parents may be asked to assist with supervision and transportation for some field trips. School administration officials and/or teachers retain the responsibility and authority for behavior control management.

PETS

Pets and other animals are not permitted in or on school grounds except for use in the classroom. Health and safety considerations make this rule necessary. Parents must make arrangements with the classroom teacher before an animal will be allowed in the school.

STUDENT DRESS GUIDELINES

How a student dresses for school has an impact on how he/she acts. Therefore, we ask that students wear neat and appropriate clothes to school. Examples of inappropriate clothes would be attire which advertises or supports the use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco or has any sexual connotation which is derogatory or offensive. Dress or grooming styles should be modest. **Hats or caps are not suitable in the building.** Hats, scarves and bandanas, or any head covering may not be worn in the building during school or at school activities. Shoes must be worn at all times. Shoes that mark the floors may not be worn indoors, they must have white soles or be marked “non-marking” soles. We feel it is important for students to participate in recess activities that will be held outside during most days. Please send boots, gloves, hats, and warm winter coats with your child during the winter season. Parents will sometimes ask that students not go outside during recess. We would ask that this be done in a very limited basis due to supervision and scheduling difficulties. Students must have a physician’s note in order to not go outside for recess. The physician’s note will be for one day only.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING

Most generally, prior to 6:00am, a decision will be made whether to cancel school, or to start late for the day. Information is entered online. The relevant information for our school district is released from there to area radio stations, television stations and the school reach system. This information will also be available to our school district patrons online. You can access this by going to the school district's website www.poncaschool.org. This will let you see what decision has been made for Ponca School District. This same information will be scrolling along the top of the district's webpage.

There are occasions when the weather patterns and forecasts are clearly obvious that a decision can be made the night before. When this happens, the online process will begin to air the announcement on the 10 o'clock news. However, this may not always be possible. Should the decision be made to start school late, this will always be a **two (2) hour late start**. Classes will start in Jackson and Ponca two (2) hours later than their normal starting time. Buses will run their regular routes, but will be two (2) hours later than normal.

Occasionally, weather conditions will deteriorate during the school day to a point where early dismissal is necessary. We will try to avoid early dismissal, if possible, because contacting parents is difficult. Parents may, during inclement weather, pick up your child/children at your own discretion. Please make arrangements for the care of your child in case an early dismissal is necessary. In case of the early dismissal, all activity practices will be cancelled.

RECESS

Recess will be held inside if the temperature outside is below 10 degrees or wind chill is below 10 degrees. When the weather is cold, please make sure to dress appropriately for playing outside.

IMMUNIZATIONS AND HEALTH PRACTICES

Nebraska State Law requires a certificate of immunization for attendance at any Nebraska school. A revised immunization law has been passed by the Nebraska legislature that makes immunization waivers much harder to obtain. The **ONLY REASONS** a student in Nebraska can have a waiver of immunizations on file are:

1. For a medical reason (Forms are available at the school for your physician to sign).
2. Religious reasons: If this is the case, you will need to request a special waiver from the school and then it will have to be notarized.

We are required by state law to have your child's immunization records on file the first day of school or your child will not be allowed to attend school.

Please keep your child out of school if he/she has, or you suspect he/she has a temperature or potentially infectious or contagious condition. Please inform the school if your child has an infectious condition or illness (chicken pox, head lice, pink eye, etc.) Students returning to school after an absence due to a contagious condition may be required to provide a doctor's statement concerning the student's condition and fitness. A child with head lice will be dismissed from school to a parent or guardian. The child will not be allowed back in school for a period of 24 hours from treatment.

MEDICATION

Laws have been enacted that limit the school's ability to dispense medicine. We cannot administer any medicine to students without proper authorization by parents. Forms are available at the school for that purpose. Notes from parents can be sent with precise information to include the following: type of medicine, quantity included, amount per dose, how often and under what circumstances it should be given to the child; and what length of time the medication is to be administered. All medications will be kept in the office. Please include the student's name and provide a parent's signature to the note. Prescription drugs must be in the original container with the pharmacist's label containing directions for administration. A staff member will administer all medications and all administrations will be documented. If you should have additional questions, please contact the school nurse.

ALLERGIES/ASTHMA

Please let the school know if your child has any allergies or a history of asthma. Ponca school has an Emergency Response Team. They keep track of the students with these conditions and set up a treatment plan, so they are prepared in case of an emergency. If your child requires an epi-pen or an inhaler, please make sure they carry these items to school with them, or the office has a supply on hand for your child if it is needed.

LUNCH

The District's hot lunch program offers a nutritionally balanced lunch with milk to all students in grades K-6. The current price for lunch is \$3.10 daily for PreK-2 and \$3.35 daily for 3-6. Students may purchase extra half-pint milk for \$.55. Students choosing to bring a lunch from home may also purchase milk at school. Students may bring beverages from home with their lunch, although soda pop is not allowed. Students will be allowed to purchase ice cream for \$1.25 after having eaten their lunch with approval from their teacher.

The District participates in the National School Lunch Program, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, to provide free or reduced price meals to eligible students.

Eligibility for this program is based on income guidelines provided by the USDA. The issues of privacy and confidentiality of personal applicant information is strictly maintained.