

East Derry Elementary NEWSLETTER

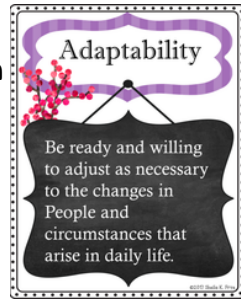
August/September 2026

Nicole O'Donnell
Principal
✉ no20@mcsdk12.org



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Lewistown, PA 17044
☎ 717-543-5615

Respectful, Responsible, Ready, & Safe:



The East Derry PBIS Team is excited to kick off another year of promoting "pawsitive" behaviors within our school! During the week of Aug. 31st, all students will participate in lessons to review RESPECTFUL, RESPONSIBLE, READY, and SAFE expectations across all settings in the building. Ask your children to let you know when they receive PAW tickets!

In September, the entire student body will focus on ADAPTABILITY. Adaptability means being ready and willing to adjust as necessary to the changes in people and circumstances that arise in daily life.



New Faces

Help us in welcoming a few new staff at
East Derry Elementary School:

Ms. O'Donnell – Principal
Mrs. Weaver – 1st Grade Teacher
Mr. Smith – Gym Teacher
Mr. Wise – Gym Teacher
Mrs. Stahl – Life Skills Teacher
Miss Carolus – Building Substitute
Miss Kylee – Speech Therapist
Miss Marsh – School Psychologist
Courtney Casner – Paraprofessional
Joseph Dubler – Paraprofessional
Kathy Goss – Custodian

A Note From Ms. O'Donnell



As we get ready to start a new school year, I wanted to take a minute to introduce myself! I'm really excited to begin my first year as principal at East Derry and, most importantly, to get to know your kids and family.

I'm a mom too, and when I'm not at school, you can usually find me spending time with my family or sitting on the sidelines of one sporting event or another! I love being around kids, and one of my favorite parts of working in education has always been building relationships with students and families.

I want East Derry to be a place where kids are happy to come to school, feel safe and cared about, and know that there are people here cheering them on. I also want our families to feel comfortable reaching out, asking questions, sharing concerns, or just saying hello.

I know I have a lot of new faces and names to learn, and I'm looking forward to every bit of it. I can't wait to welcome everyone back and get this year started!

Coming Up!

8/31 – First Day of School
9/4 – ACT 80 Day – No School
9/7 – No School
9/15 – 3rd Grade Farm Field Trip
9/17 – Home & School Mtg @ 6:30 in Library
9/18 – Fall Picture Day

9/24 – Lock Down Drill
9/28-10/2 – Ag Lab
9/30 – Open House (5:30-7:00 pm)
10/12 – ACT 80 Day – No School
10/14 & 10/15 – Hearing & Vision Screenings



Important Notes

- Student drop-off begins at 7:30 am.
- The gate will open at 2:15 pm for student pickup. Students will be dismissed at 2:35.
- All Kindergarten students must have a parent/guardian at the bus stop to meet their students at drop off.
- Family Access (Skylert) is the main source of family contact for important district information. To relay messages to parents/guardians EDES must have accurate information stored in Family Access. Please notify EDES office immediately of any changes in contact information.
- The MCSD website has the following important pieces of information: All Hazards Plan, Student Handbook, Bullying Policy, Curriculum Links, District Calendar, Lunch Menu, CYCLE Day calendar, and much more! Check it out at www.mcsdk12.org
- Students are able to take up to 5 Educational Trip days per school year. Be sure to fill out the form and have it signed PRIOR to taking the educational trip.
 - A report is due to the office within 3 days of returning from the trip for it to be considered a lawful absence.



Open House

We are so excited to welcome our students and families to Open House on Wednesday, 9/30 from 5:30pm to 7:00pm. This will be a chance for your child to show you their classroom and for you to meet their teacher. Special teachers, title teachers, our school counselor, and our principal will also be present.

Lockdown Drill

As part of our safety practices, we will be conducting a Lockdown Drill on September 24, 2026, at 9:00. During the Lockdown, our staff will secure the students in a safe location. The local Emergency Management Agency, the local police, and state police are invited to attend this drill. You can rest assured that East Derry Elementary School is practicing safe procedures.



Academic Assistance



If your child is struggling academically, or not attaining the academic standards at the proficient level, please reach out to your child's teacher or the building principal for information about accessing additional academic assistance.

FREE Breakfast & Lunch!



East Derry Elementary has been approved as a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) school for 2026–2027 school year. This program allows all EDES students to receive a FREE breakfast and lunch every day. Extras to any meal will be charged. Purchase of milk only is considered an extra item. Packers can buy milk for \$0.75.

Attendance



- Students arriving after 8:20 am will be marked tardy.
- Students arriving after 9:30 am or leaving before 2:00 pm will be marked as absent for a half day.
- Excuses MUST be turned in within 3 days to avoid being unexcused.



Skylert

The Skylert System is the main source of family contact for important district information, including delays and snow days. To relay messages to parents/guardians, East Derry must have accurate information stored in our Skyward system.

Please notify the East Derry office immediately of any changes in contact information.



Parent Pickup

If your student will not be riding the bus, a written note including the student's full name, date, and who will be picking up must be submitted. If your student is being picked up before the 2:45 dismissal time, indicate the time on the note. Students who are picked up early must be signed out and picked up in the office with proper ID. Phone calls will only be accepted for emergencies and should occur prior to 2:00 pm.

NOTE: The person picking up your child MUST be listed on their Emergency Information Form



Golden Tickets

Each marking period, EDES staff will each award one student a "Golden Ticket" for showing exceptional improvement or effort at being either Respectful, Responsible, Ready or Safe in all areas of the school. When a student wins a "Golden Ticket," he/she is recognized on the morning announcements and receives a GOLDEN TICKET spirit stick. The student's picture is also placed on the "Principal's Club" bulletin board in the cafeteria and has lunch with the principal at the Golden Ticket Luncheon!



Tier 2 Behavioral Supports

East Derry has systems in place to identify and assist students in need of behavioral supports. Each month, a Tier 2 team analyzes discipline referrals to determine if students are in need of more support. If your child has frequent "minor" discipline referrals or any "major" discipline referrals, a team member will be in contact for parent permission to help eliminate barriers and assist the student. Parents may also reach out to their child's teacher or the school counselor to see if Tier 2 supports may be of assistance.

Volunteering



Opportunities throughout the school year will allow us to welcome volunteers into the classrooms and school. In order to be eligible to volunteer, the following is required:

- Act 34 PA Criminal History Clearance
- Act 151 PA Child Abuse History Clearance
- Act 114 Federal Criminal History & Fingerprinting or Volunteer Affidavit in lieu (restrictions apply)
- Volunteer Packet (required to be completed each school year)

As an additional layer of security, your driver's license (or state ID) will need to be scanned into our visitor management database, School Gate Guardian, to receive a visitor's badge.

Title 1

East Derry Elementary receives Title I funding. If you would like to review the Schoolwide Title I Plan, you may access it on the district's website at: www.mcSDK12.org

- Students/Parents tab
- Federal Programs tab
- Schoolwide Plans tab
- Title I – EDES

Home & School

Home & School is an important part of making our school community special!

We raise funds and provide special experiences, activities, and opportunities for East Derry students throughout the year. When parents join and get involved, they help make these opportunities possible and strengthen our school community!

Join us on 9/17 at 6:30 in the EDES Library to learn more!



Instructional Supplies for Students



If provision of instructional supplies imposes a financial hardship on a family, the school district can assist with some of these costs. An application process for such materials is located under MCSD Policy 110, and is available for review on our website. Families may also contact Ms. O'Donnell to see if you qualify for any assistance with school materials.

ParentSquare



MCSD has moved to ParentSquare district wide for communication with parents. This replaces ClassDojo for our school. We encourage you to register your account and ensure your contact information is correct. Any changes made to contact information in ParentSquare will be updated in Skyward by Miss Aleisa. Thank you for your patience with us as we navigate this new system.



MCSD Policies



Parents are encouraged to share concerns through the proper channels. Policy 906 outlines the steps for addressing complaints. The full policy is located on the MCSD website.

You can view all MCSD policies on the MCSD website by clicking the About Tab, clicking School Board, and then selecting the Mifflin County School District – Policies box. A full printed copy is also available at the Administration Building.

School Board Policy 105.1

Mifflin County School District School Board Policy 105.1 requires annual notification to parents/guardians and students that parents/guardians and students have an opportunity to review instructional materials and have access to information about the curriculum, including academic standards to be achieved, instructional materials and assessment techniques. Requests to review instructional materials and access information about the curriculum, including academic standards to be achieved, instructional materials and assessment techniques should be made by submitting a written request to the building principal.

Right to Know

As a parent of a student attending a school that is receiving Federal Title I dollars, you have the right to know the professional qualifications of the teacher(s) and instructional paraprofessional(s) who instruct your child. Federal law requires every Title I school district to comply and to provide you with the requested information in a timely manner. We are happy to provide this information to you. At any time, you may ask:

- Whether the teacher met state qualifications and certification requirements for the grade level and subject he/she is teaching,
- Whether the teacher received an emergency or conditional certificate through which state qualifications were waived, and
- What undergraduate or graduate degrees the teacher holds, including graduate certificates and additional degrees, and major(s) or area(s) of concentration.
- Whether your child receives help from a paraprofessional. If your child receives this assistance, we can provide you with information about the paraprofessional's qualifications.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which was signed into law in December 2015 and reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1956 (ESEA), includes additional right to know requests. At any time, parents and family members can request:

- Information on policies regarding student participation in assessments and procedures for opting out, and
- Information on required assessments that include
 - subject matter tested,
 - purpose of the test,
 - source of the requirement (if applicable),
 - amount of time it takes students to complete the test, and
 - time and format of disseminating results.

Our staff is committed to helping your child develop the academic knowledge and critical thinking he/she needs to succeed in school and beyond. That commitment includes making sure that all of our teachers and paraprofessionals meet applicable Pennsylvania state requirements.

If you have any questions about your child's assignment to a teacher or paraprofessional, please contact Ms. O'Donnell at East Derry Elementary School at 717-543-5615 or by email at no20@mcsdk12.org. We look forward to the upcoming school year, and together we will make a difference in your child's life.



Medication Policy

Over-the-Counter Medication forms were handed out to students on the first day of school. This form must be completed and signed by a parent/guardian in order for students to receive medication from the school nurse. If your child has not submitted the Over-the-Counter Medication form to the Nurse's Office, your child will not receive medication at school. Forms are available in the nurse's office.

As a reminder, students are NOT permitted to carry any medications on their person during school hours. This includes cough drops, medicated creams, eye drops or anything used for medicinal purposes. Any medication that is required to be taken at school MUST be transported to and from school by a parent/guardian or designated adult and accompanied with a physician's order. Parents and guardians are required to sign medications into the nurse's office at drop-off.

If your child requires an inhaler, a new physician order must be submitted to the school nurse EACH school year before your child can carry an inhaler on their person. Failure to do so is a violation of the MCSd Medication Policy.

Please contact the School Nurse with any questions.