

McCarthy-Towne School International Family Guide



McCarthy-Towne School

Contacts

For general school questions call, Patty Lee at (978) 264-4700 extension 3703.

For questions regarding English as a second language services email **Suzanne Szwarczewicz** at sszwarczewicz@mail.ab.mec.edu, or call her, on Monday or Thursday at (978) 266-2550.

The school website is: mct.ab.mec.edu

Your Buddy Family is:

The following people speak your native language and are available to help you with translations:

Basic School Procedures

School Hours

- The school schedule alternates yearly between early and late schedules.
- If school is on the early schedule, start time is 8:30; late schedule start time is 9:15.
- Half day kindergarten students switch from morning to afternoon, or afternoon to morning midway through the school year (end of January)
- Afternoon kindergarten students do not have school on Thursday and other half days.
- Children leave school early every Thursday.
- No lunch is served on Thursday.

Winter in Massachusetts

- Children play outside for 30 minutes each day.
- In the winter your child should have boots, hat, mittens, snow pants, and warm winter coat.

Lunch

- Your child can bring lunch or buy lunch at school.
- A monthly lunch menu with daily lunch choices goes home at the start of each month. It is also available on the school website (mct.ab.mec.edu)
- Costs are: 50 cents for milk and \$2.25 for lunch & milk.
- Students may pay cash or buy tickets in advance. Order forms for tickets are in the office or on the school website.
- Give ticket order forms to teacher.
- Free lunches are available to eligible families (see office for application form).

Nurse

- Tell the nurse if your child has lice, strep throat, conjunctivitis, or chicken pox.
- Do not send sick children to school.
- If your child has a fever or vomits in school, we will call you to pick your child up.
- Parents must bring all daily medications for your child to the school nurse. (Do not send with child.)
- The nurse will test your child's hearing and vision in the fall.
- The school nurse is available during school hours. Call: (978)264-3374.

Sick Days/Safe Arrival

- Call the safe arrival number if your child will be absent: (978)264-4098.
- Say the following: child's name / child's teacher / absent date

Attendance

- Your child must sign in with the office if he/she arrives late.
- You are expected to send your child to school if he/she is healthy.

Field Trip Forms

- Your child needs a completed field trip form in order to go on the trip.
- If you need help paying for the cost of the trip, tell the classroom teacher or speak to the principal (this is confidential).

Classroom Expectations

Homework

- Homework is schoolwork which is sent home so that your child can practice what he or she has learned at school.
- Homework should be completed at home and returned to the teacher.
- The amount of homework increases each year.
- Your child may not have homework every night.
- Please give your child a quiet space and time each day to complete this work.
- If the work is too hard for your child you should tell the teacher.

Long term projects

- Some homework assignments are long-term projects.
- A long-term project is an assignment that your child may have to work on for a few weeks.
- These assignments are divided into parts that may be due at different times.
- Sometimes your child will work on long-term projects with other children.

Band

- In grades 5 and 6 your child can choose to learn a musical instrument.
- Lessons are given before school and there is a fee to participate.
- Ask your teacher about scholarship money.
- The band meets one day a week at the start of the school day.

Emergencies

School closings

- Schools may be closed in bad weather. Information about school closings is found:
 - TV channels 4, 5, 7
 - Radio stations 1030 AM
- When there is bad weather always check to make sure there is school that day. The announcement will say 'Acton Public Schools cancelled or closed (no school all day).'

- If the announcement says ‘opening delayed’, school will start late, but there will be school that day. There is no morning kindergarten on a delayed opening day.

Personal Emergencies

If you have an emergency and can't be home when your child gets off the bus, or you are not able to pick up your child as planned:

- Try to find a friend or neighbor who can meet your child.
- Talk to your child beforehand about what to do if they come home to an empty house or apartment.
- If you cannot find anyone, call the school office at 978-264-3377.

Transportation

Bus Transportation

- All elementary school students are provided with free bus transportation.
- Bus routes are published in the local paper (The Beacon) the week before school begins.
- Bus routes are available on the school website (ab.mec.edu)
- Each bus route has a number. Bus numbers are on each bus.
- Buses operate only during regular school hours.
- Parents must provide transportation outside of regular school hours.
- If your child will be riding a different bus, you must send in a signed bus pass.
- Bus passes are available from the office and on the school website.
- Kindergarten children are not allowed to use bus passes.

Parent Transportation

- Parents may drive children to and from school.
- Do not drop your child off more than 15 minutes before the start of school. School doors are not open until 15 minutes before school starts.
- If your child usually rides the bus, and you need to pick him or her up, you must send in a signed walkers pass.
- Passes are available in the office.
- Students third grade and up may walk or ride bikes to and from school. Bike helmets and locks are required.

Communication

Websites

- The website for Acton Public Schools is ab.mec.edu.
- Click on McCarthy-Towne to find information about our school.

- The website includes names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses for all staff, descriptions of our curriculum, and reading lists.
- Another good website is www.traduccion.com. On this website, you can type in your native language, and it will translate into English.

Contacting teachers

- You can contact your child's teacher through written notes, e-mail and phone calls.
- Ask your child's teacher which way they prefer to be contacted.
- Tell your child's teacher the way that you prefer to be contacted.

Conferences

- Student progress is discussed at parent-teacher conferences in the fall and spring.
- The teacher will contact you to schedule the conferences.
- A conference is a time for parents and teachers to talk about your child's progress in the classroom, as well as expectations and concerns the teacher may have about your child.
- Some teachers also have mid-year conferences with parents. Sometimes, students are present at this conference.
- The spring conference includes an end of the year report written by the teacher to talk about at the conference.
- Conferences are used in place of report cards in our school.
- Please do not bring other children to conferences.
- If you have any questions or concerns about your child's progress in school, contact the teacher to set up a meeting time.

Classroom Communication

- Some teachers send classroom newsletters to parents.
- Newsletters are about what students are learning in the classroom and any special events.
- Newsletters can be sent home weekly, biweekly, or monthly
- Finished schoolwork is sent home on Fridays.
- Permission slips for field trip are also sent home in your child's backpack

School Communication

- The PTSO sends the McCarthy-Towne Bulletin home the first Friday of every month.
- The school principal writes an article for the Bulletin every month.
- The Bulletin also includes a monthly calendar and other announcements and important information.
- School and community notices are also sent home on Fridays.
- A school directory with students' names is published
- Remember to check your child's backpack regularly for important information.

Social Norms

Birthday Etiquette

- Some children like to bring in special treats to share with the class on their birthday.
- The teacher will let you know classroom rules regarding birthday treats.
- If your child is having a birthday party, please do not send invitations into school with your child. Invitations should be mailed to children's homes. Addresses are in the school directory.

Arranging Play dates

- Arrange play dates from home using the school directory, which has student addresses and phone numbers.
- If your child has a play date and needs to take a different bus, they will need a bus pass for that day.
- If your child is being picked up at school, they will need a dismissal pass with the name of the adult.

First Name Basis

- Most adults at McCarthy-Towne choose to be called by their first names.

Holiday Parties

- Some classes may choose to celebrate Halloween on or around October 31st, and Valentine's Day on or around February 14th.
- Your child's teacher will write about special classroom celebrations in newsletters.

Snacks

- Each class has a snack break in the morning.
- Please send in a healthy snack and/or beverage daily.

Appropriate Clothing for School

A reasonable guideline is for children to wear clothing that allows them to perform all school activities comfortably without drawing undue attention to themselves and that their torso is covered.

- Some of the apparel that we feel should not be worn to school include:
shirts or tops with spaghetti straps,
shirts or tops that leave the midriff exposed,
shirts or tops that have very large armholes,
halter tops,
very short shorts,

any clothing that would cause discomfort to the child or others.

School Events

Parent Teacher Student Organization (PTSO)

- All McCarthy-Towne parents are members of the PTSO.
- All parents are welcome to attend and vote at monthly PTSO meetings.
- The PTSO hosts many social and fund raising events during the year.
- All parents are welcome to help plan PTSO events.
- All parents are welcome to attend PTSO events.
- Information about special events is published in the Bulletin and in special flyers.

Student Council Snack Sale

- On most Thursdays the school has a snack sale in the front hall.
- Students can buy one snack for 50 cents.
- Some teachers choose NOT to send their students to the snack sale.
- Students in grades 4 –6 run the snack sale on assigned dates and provide the snacks that week. The classroom teacher will let parents know when they should send in snacks

5th Grade Overnight Field Trip

- 5th grade classes go on an overnight field trip in the fall.
- The students attend an environmental camp for two nights.
- Financial assistance is available to help families pay for the field trip.
- Students fund raise in school to help pay for the field trip.
- Parents help chaperone the field trip for a day or night.

Parent Involvement

- There are many opportunities for parents to volunteer at McCarthy-Towne.
- Volunteer sign-up forms are distributed the first week of school.
- You must file a CORI form with the office to volunteer in school. Ask one of the office staff for the form.
- Contact the Parent Involvement Coordinator in the office with any questions.

In-School Volunteer Opportunities

- Classroom teachers sometimes have parents volunteer in the classroom on a regular schedule or for special events.
- Room parents can help teachers plan special events and help with book orders.
- Parent volunteers help chaperone field trips.
- Parents help in the library and school office on a weekly schedule.
- Parents plan special events for graduating 6th grade students.
- Parents help with other short-term projects and special events.

PTSO Volunteer Opportunities

- The PTSO is a parent volunteer run organization.
- Parent volunteers publish the school directory and monthly newsletter
- Parent volunteers run social events open to all McCarthy-Towne families.
- Parent volunteers run the Safe Arrival Hotline program.
- Parent volunteers hold many different fund raising events open to all McCarthy-Towne families.
- Parent volunteers help with other short-term projects and special events.

School Council

- Parents are elected to serve on the School Council.
- Parents and teachers serve on the School Council.
- School Council members work on school-wide issues.

Parker Damon Building Committee

- Parents and staff from McCarthy-Towne and Merriam schools work together on building-wide issues.
- Parent volunteers take care of the plants and trees around the building.

Community Resources/Outreach

Town of Acton

- Acton Town Hall is located at 472 Main Street. Parking is in the back of the building.
- The Town Clerk's phone number is 978-264-9615.
- Town website is www.acton-ma.gov.

Acton Public Health Nursing Service

- Located on the 2nd floor of Acton Town Hall, 472 Main St, phone 978-264-9653.
- Provides public health services
- Vaccinations and blood pressure screenings are available.

Acton Recreation Department

- Located on main floor of Acton Town Hall, 472 Main St, phone 978-264-9608.
- Brochures with programs for children and adults are mailed to Acton homes twice a year.
- The Recreation Department runs summer camps, concerts and special events at NARA Park.
- Swimming passes for NARA Park can be purchased through the recreation department.

Acton Memorial Library

- The library is located at 486 Main St. (Rt. 27), phone: (978)264-9641.
- The library website is www.actonmemoriallibrary.org
- Any Acton resident can get a free library card. Bring a piece of mail with your address.
- The library has books, audio and video in English and other languages.
- The library has free story hours and summer programs for children.

Community Education

- Community Education Is located in the Administration Building, 15 Charter Rd, phone: (978)266-2525.
- The Community Education website is comed.ab.mec.edu
- Community Education sends a brochure called “Interaction” to Acton homes 4 times a year.
- Programs for adults and children are offered.
- The “Interaction” also has a list of other community organizations.
- Community Ed “Extended Day” program offers before and after school day care.

Sports

- Many boys and girls participate in sports activities outside the school day, including football (Pop Warner), soccer, basketball and baseball.
- Contact information is listed in the back of the “Interaction”
- Scholarships are available where there is financial hardship.

Child Care

- The office has a list of local child care providers.

“Danny’s Place”

- This is a supervised gathering place for students in grades 6-12.
- “Danny’s Place” is located at in the Administration Building at 15 Charter Road.
- The “Danny’s Place” is www.dannys-place.org.