

Bells Mill Elementary School

2012-2013 Recess/Lunch Handbook¹

We welcome your assistance at Bells Mill Elementary School (BMES). Our school is fortunate to have such an interested, committed and involved parent community. Our active volunteer program not only provides valuable hands-on assistance throughout many areas of the school, but also benefits the children by reinforcing ties between the children's individual homes as well as the community at large, and the school. In order to ensure a successful volunteer program, each volunteer must understand the responsibilities inherent in working with the children of BMES.

- The lunch and recess period runs between 11:40am - 1:55pm each day. Please note that the students eat lunch *after* recess. The schedule is as follows:

Recess Schedule

11:40 – 12:10 Grades K, 4 and Autism classes

12:15 – 12:45 Grades 3, 5 and Autism classes

12:50 – 1:20 Grades 1, 2 and Autism classes

Lunch Schedule

12:10 – 12:40 Grades K, 4 and Autism classes

12:45 – 1:15 Grades 3, 5 and Autism classes

1:20 – 1:55 Grades 1, 2 and Autism classes

- Volunteers should come to the school on both outside and inside recess days.
- There is no limit to the number of volunteers per day.

The PTA has donated lots of balls, hula hoops, jump ropes and assorted indoor recess games and activities. Please help by making sure the students get to enjoy these supplies, and that others who follow will have the same opportunity.

Positive Encouragement

As an adult on the premises of BMES, your behavior toward the children and adults will set the tone for the children and will directly impact their view of school and confidence in themselves. Interaction that is firm but gentle, along with plenty of positive reinforcement, is the order of the day.

¹ Please refer to "Attachment A" for Montgomery County Public School Recess Procedures.

Important Points

We would like to highlight a few important points:

- *Confidentiality* — You must respect the confidentiality of your relationship with the school. Your knowledge of BMES students is privileged information and may only be shared with responsible staff at BMES.
- *Safety* — If a child shares anything that involves concerns about personal safety, please see a staff member.
- *Discipline* — You may not discipline. If needed, get assistance from a staff member. If you cannot leave the situation, ask a nearby child to bring a staff member to you.
- *Fairness* — You are here for all of the students and must treat them all equally.
- *Follow the Rules Yourself* — (e.g. If it is quiet time, please do not talk.)
- *Injury* — If a child falls and is lying on the ground, do not move him/her! Get help from a staff member.

Thank you! Parents are an invaluable asset to BMES, and we appreciate your assistance and support! We look forward to seeing you often.

Volunteer Responsibilities

1. Please collaborate with staff and other volunteers to ensure that all designated play areas are supervised during recess.
2. Monitor recess for safe play. While supervising recess, think of your role as a "lifeguard." Keep alert at all times and attempt to anticipate potential problems. While volunteers are not to participate in any activities, they are encouraged to help wandering students find age appropriate games (e.g. Duck, Duck, Goose; Snake in the Grass). Many students at this age find it difficult to initiate games on their own and do not know the rules of many games.
3. Encourage and coach conflict resolution steps when students disagree.
4. Refer to a recess staff member when a student will not follow your directions.
5. Help staff members gather students when it is time for them to line up for dismissal from recess.

Appropriate Recess Play²

Examples include:

Positive play: blacktop games (individual or small groups) include four square, hopscotch, jump rope, and basketball

Games on the field: soccer, kickball, walking relay races, and tag

A few playground rules include:

Children must have an opposed thumb grip on all climbing structures.

Children must use the slide feet-first, on their bottoms only. Walking or running up or down slide is not permitted, nor is sliding down head-first.

Injuries³

Bring all matters of injury to a staff member. In case of illness (e.g., upset stomach) or minor injury (e.g., splinter, cut, skinned limbs, bump on head), send the student to the Health Room immediately in the company of a fellow student who is considered responsible.

If a student cannot get up by themselves, stay with the student and send another student to get a staff member for you. DO NOT move the student yourself.

Restroom Use

We encourage students to use the full half hour of outside play time for play! Please reinforce that they should use the restroom before lunch or during lunch, but not during recess. However, if it is necessary, please direct all students to the restrooms that are on the first floor near the Kindergarten Classrooms.

Student Responsibilities

1. Unless permission is given to come inside, remain outside for the entire recess.
2. Use BMES values during recess.

² Please refer to Attachment A, Section B

³ Please refer to Attachment A, Section H.

3. Use conflict resolution steps (aka, The DeBug System) to resolve disagreements. Utilize peer mediators for support with conflict resolution. The five steps of the DeBug System BMES students are taught to use are:

1. Ignore - If that doesn't work...
2. Move away – If that doesn't work...
3. Talk friendly (Use “I CARE” language.) – If that doesn't work...
4. Talk firmly (Use an “I” message,) – If that doesn't work...
5. Get adult help.

The adult response, when a child complains about a conflict with another student, is to ask the following:

1. Have you tried DeBug?
2. What step are you on?
3. Come back if you get to Step 5.

When a child has reached Step 5 and needs adult help, the adult follows these steps:

1. Send for the other child involved.
2. Provide a place they can talk. Express confidence that they can work it out. Have the children share their agreement with the adult. If necessary, help the children talk it through.

Recess Questions and Answers

Q: What are the “Top 6” things a volunteer should know before going in for lunch and recess duty?

A: 1. Sign in at the office upon arrival and place visitor sticker in a visible area for children to see. BMES students are instructed not to talk to a visitor without a sticker.

2. Proceed to the playground (or to the classroom on indoor recess days) and confer with the aide for your recess location.

3. Watch all children in that area and monitor for safe play.

4. Encourage children to resolve their own conflicts, but step in immediately if the encounter is physical.

5. Use your judgment to limit bathroom visits.

6. Seek guidance from staff if questions arise.

Q: When volunteering for recess and/or lunch, where should volunteers go first, should they check in with the aides, is there a way to help children get more involved in playing with other children, etc. How will these questions get answered?

A: Volunteers should first sign in at the office and place a visitor sticker in a visible location for students to see. Next, they should proceed to the playground (or to the classroom for indoor recess) if volunteering for recess, or to the cafeteria if volunteering for lunch. Volunteers should introduce themselves to at least one of the aides and ask what type of help the aides need. While it is understandable that volunteers especially enjoy watching their own children, please remember that volunteers are encouraged to monitor, assist and be available to all students on the playground, in the classroom, and/or in the cafeteria.

Q: There seems to be an unending need for parent volunteers to help cover lunch and recess. Why aren't teachers available to watch the children, at least during recess?

A: MCPS teachers belong to a union and, under the union rules, are not required to provide coverage for lunch and recess, so it is up to the parents to provide the extra coverage for lunch and recess. By volunteering, parents provide additional adult supervision of the children, which is particularly helpful during recess when the children tend to go all over the fields and play areas. By reducing the adult to child ratio, we can ensure that the children are receiving the adult supervision they need.

Q: How many volunteers are needed? Do we have enough volunteers providing coverage?

A: The goal is to have at least three parent volunteers daily. With fewer volunteers, the ratio of children to adults increases.

Q: When do students have Indoor Recess?⁴

A: The goal for the children is to be outside daily. Indoor recess days occur when there is constant rain, if temperatures dip below 32 degrees including wind chill factor, or if there is a high wind advisory. Volunteers are still very much needed for indoor recess!

Q: Are there specific rules about bathroom usage during lunch, such as how many children may go at one time?

A: In general, no more than three boys and three girls should be permitted to use the bathroom at the same time. When a student raises his or her hand to use the bathroom, the volunteer should remind the student to sign his or her name on the appropriate dry erase

⁴ Please refer to Attachment A, Section C.

board (labeled by gender) located near the doors closest to the stage. Volunteers should step out in the hallway and help monitor students as they are going to and from the bathroom making sure the students do not linger or play in the hallway. Volunteers should remind students returning from the bathroom to erase their names off of the dry erase board before returning to their seats.

Q: What should a volunteer do if he/she witnesses inappropriate behavior by a child during lunch or recess?

A: Depending on the circumstances and the severity of the situation, the volunteer should consider reporting the incident to a staff member.

Q: Can a volunteer assist during recess only, or during lunch only, or both if they wish?

A: Yes, volunteers are welcome to assist during recess, or during lunch, or both. Extra help is greatly appreciated in both areas.

Q: What are the primary responsibilities of lunch volunteers?

A: While supervising lunch, think of your role (again as when supervising recess) as a "lifeguard." Keep alert and watch for the "hands up" signal. Students know to raise their hand when assistance is requested. Assistance includes opening lunchbox items, obtaining any requested napkins and/or utensils, and monitoring bathroom visits. With permission, students may get up from their table only to use the bathroom, get a drink of water from the hallway water fountain, or to obtain napkins and utensils on their own if they wish, or to throw trash away. When lunch is over, encourage the students to clean up their tables, throw away trash, put their lunchboxes in the appropriate class bins, and be quiet for the final instructions from the staff members. Please note that students are discouraged from getting up and moving around in the lunchroom.



Systemwide Safety Programs
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

2012–2013

PLAYGROUND SUPERVISION
RECESS PROCEDURES FOR PLAYGROUND AIDES

This guide has been developed to assist elementary schools in establishing sound practices for the supervision of children during the recess. Furthermore, there are guidelines and standards for safe and acceptable activities, established both indoor and outdoor, which will serve to make the recess play period a learning experience for children. Playground aides and teachers are expected to be thoroughly familiar with these rules.

A. Division of Playground

The playground might be divided into areas of activity, with aides and teachers making certain every child knows the activity permitted in each area.

B. Acceptable Outdoor Activities

1. Rings, tetherball, volleyball, basketball, hopscotch, and jump rope are acceptable activities on the blacktop area. Haphazard running, chasing, and tag games on the blacktop are *not* permitted.
2. Grassed area is to be used for activities that have been taught by the physical education teacher for the grade level using the area.
3. Baseball and football games are not permitted—at any time. Skill work in both of these sports is encouraged in the fifth and sixth grades.
4. Consult the Physical Education Course of Study for detailed list of acceptable outdoor activities.
5. It is the responsibility of the teachers to instruct their students concerning standards for safety and behavior, as well as which activities are permitted on the playground and the designated areas for these activities, and to supply the necessary equipment.
6. It is the responsibility of the aide to see that common sense standards of safety and behavior are being observed, to correct youngsters in a proper manner when deviations from these standards occur, and to maintain all playground rules.
7. Children are not to play with neighborhood pets; to throw or kick dirt, stones, sticks, and debris on the playground or into neighbors' yards; to attract and/or disturb children and pets in neighboring yards; to bounce objects on school walls; to wrestle on the ground; to climb trees; to hit one another even playfully; and to tease other students.
8. Sharp objects which could cause injury, such as metal cans, broken glass, and stones, should be removed to trash cans by the teacher or aide on duty. If the quantity of such objects is large, he/she should notify a building services worker and keep students away from the area until it is safe for play. Do not ask a student to pick up the sharp object and put it in trash container. Any item on or near the playground which would cause injury—such as a hole in the ground, bees' nest in a tree, and dead

July 2012

or broken branches—must be reported to the principal's office. Such areas are off limits until they are made safe.

C. Acceptable Indoor Activities

1. When rain, snow, or bitter cold dictate that students should remain indoors during their recess play period, it will be the responsibility of teachers to instruct their classes as to which activities are permitted within the room and to make available for use those games, puzzles, and other equipment which can be used.
2. Consult Physical Education Course of Study for detailed list of acceptable indoor activities.
3. It is the responsibility of the playground aide to maintain order, to encourage proper standards of safety and behavior, to correct youngsters in a constructive manner when there is a violation of rules, and to caution children if it appears that emotions and excitement are mounting to a point where incorrect actions may soon result.
4. Students who are chronic violators of rules and those who commit serious offenses should be sent to the office. It is the duty of an aide when checking out to verify that a student sent to the office did, indeed, report to the office.
5. Injuries and illness in the classroom should be treated the same as those which might occur on the playground.

D. Policy Concerning Children Who Stay Indoors During Outdoor Play Period

If for reasons of health, discipline, or completing assigned schoolwork a student remains in the classroom during the outdoor play period, the student is the responsibility of the teacher for that classroom.

E. Specification of "Off-Limit" Areas

Teachers should provide students the opportunity to use restrooms and water fountains before they go to the playground. Some emergencies will arise and aides are requested to exercise good judgment. No student should enter the building during play period without the knowledge and consent of person on duty.

1. Students are not to play near windows of classrooms.
2. Students are not to leave school property.

F. Rules for Safe Use of Permanent Equipment

1. Do not use when wet.
2. Students should form a single file line, awaiting turns to use all equipment.
3. Opposed thumb grip should be used on all climbing and swinging structures.
4. Students may not sit in rings, but rather swing from one to the other until they have reached the end.
5. A student may not begin to swing on rings and bars until the student ahead of him/her has finished.
6. Students may not sit on top of equipment (such as monkey bars, jungle gyms, rock walls, etc.).

G. Responsibilities of Playground Aides and Use of Discipline

1. Since the primary responsibility of the aide is the supervision of all students on the playground, the aide shall not participate in or umpire any games or activities.

2. If playground rules are being broken, aides are expected to speak to the student in question in a constructive manner and tone. Example: "John/Jane, please do not run on the blacktop. You may run into someone or you may fall and skin your knee. Play tag on the grass area."
3. If students *consistently* violate the rules of the playground despite reminders (insubordination), refer them to the office.
4. If the student's first offense is serious (example: breaking a window, fighting, using profane language), refer the student to the office. The administration and/or teacher will determine discipline.
5. **Never** tell a student to sit in the classroom the remainder of the period.

H. Injuries, Illnesses, and First Aid

1. In case of injury to one's pride, be sympathetic and understanding.
2. In case of injury (e.g., splinter, cut, skinned limbs, bump on head), send the student to office immediately in the company of a fellow student who is considered responsible. *Each school should develop its own emergency procedures.*
3. In case of serious injury, notify the front office *immediately* by an expedient method at your disposal (interrupt a teacher's class if need be so the teacher can help). *Beware of moving the child.* Keep area clear of other students. Momentarily, at least, the welfare of this child becomes your sole responsibility. (See First Aid Procedures.)
4. If a child becomes ill, he/she should be sent to the office in the company of a responsible student.
5. First aid, whenever possible, should be administered in the health room by the office staff.
6. Should an aide ever leave the playground area while on duty? If in your judgment, the safety, welfare, or survival of a student is dependent upon such action, do not hesitate.

I. Procedure for Termination of Play Period

1. When bell rings, students should line up on designated area space.
2. When a line is orderly, you may dismiss students to enter the building.
3. Students are to go in the building quietly at all times in an orderly manner and single file.

MAKING EXISTING PLAYGROUNDS SAFER

A. As follows, the playground aide should:

1. Have a thorough knowledge of all rules. These should be obtained from the school's physical education teacher.
2. Know what games may be played in each predetermined area.
3. Know the school's accident-reporting procedures.
4. Know the school's discipline policy.
5. Have a basic understanding of first aid procedures.
6. Be consistent in dealing with problems that arise. Deal with problems constructively.
7. Be constantly moving from area to area while keeping the total playground in view and do not get involved in games.
8. Be alert to potential problem situations such as the following:
 - a. Organized team games that result in arguments on rule interpretation
 - b. Individual games, like 3 square and tetherball, which require taking turns