

August 2016

Dear Ross Families,

While the violent events of the summer of 2016 continue to weigh heavily upon my heart and mind, I hope your family was able to balance the overwhelming feelings and questions by sharing positive, joyful experiences with children. Our family continued our quest to visit all 50 states with a road trip from Santa Fe, New Mexico to Seattle, Washington. Highlights included visiting the Taos Pueblo World Heritage Site, Rocky Mountain National Park, and a return to Yellowstone National Park. Closer to home we enjoyed biking, kayaking, reading, visiting monuments and museums and eating a lot of ice cream. Our new local favorite is Ice Cream Jubilee. I cannot wait to hear about your summer adventures.

We look forward to seeing all K-5 students on Monday, August 22 for the first day of school. PK3 and PK4 students begin on Tuesday, August 23 for a half-day from 8:45-11:30. Join us for “Sneak a Peek” Open House on Friday, August 19 at 2:30. After visiting classrooms and greeting teachers, enjoy a popsicle on the playground at 3:30.

Arrival and Dismissal

School hours are 8:45-3:15 for PK3/PK4 and 8:45-3:30 for K-5. Breakfast opens at 8:15 and is FREE for all Ross students. Families are welcome to attend breakfast with their children. Playground supervision begins at 8:30. Please do not drop your children off before 8:30 as we do not offer Before School Care.

We ask that drop-off during the first month of school be “short and sweet” in order to ease the transition into a new school year. A quick good-bye on the playground (not on the field) or at the curb is expected. Please do not come onto the field and try to engage teachers in conversation and conferences during arrival. This prevents lines from entering safely and efficiently and prolongs good-byes. We will welcome parent visitors into the classroom after the first four to six weeks of school in order to give teachers and students time to create their new classroom community and establish routines. Therefore, please do not plan on accompanying your child into the classroom in the mornings except for **PK3 and PK4 students who should be dropped off directly in the classroom beginning at 8:30.**

Dismissal will take place outside on the patio and field by grade level for K-5 students at 3:30. All PK3/PK4 students will be dismissed directly from their classrooms beginning at 3:15. Please do not come into the K-5 classrooms to pick up your child. If you must collect your child early, kindly report to the main office and we will call the classroom to alert the teacher of an early pick-up. Any **changes in**

dismissal plans must be called in to the Ross Main Office by 1:00 pm on the day of the change. Please DO NOT email or text teachers the day of a plan change.

They are teaching and are not able to mind electronic communications to manage after school schedules for children throughout the day. The DCJCC and Ross will communicate new changes in dismissal policies for all families enrolled in a separate communication.

Bikes should be locked up on the racks on R Street. Scooters should be walked through the gates and can be stored outside near the back doors of the school.

Communication

The majority of home/school communication is handled electronically through the Ross Elementary website and through email from teachers and room parents. In addition, a green folder will be provided to each student and sent home regularly with student work, homework, and fliers/announcements. Please ensure that your child's folder is reviewed, emptied, and returned to school daily. Students in Grades 4-5 will also have a take-home binder and agenda book. A weekly Principal's Bulletin will be sent electronically with hard copies available on request. Please pay careful attention to these communications for important dates, reminders, and announcements. Teachers will email a weekly communication that outlines instructional objectives/topics for the coming week along with class news and announcements. We also strongly recommend visiting the DCPS homepage (www.dcps.dc.gov) to sign up for email and text alerts directly from DCPS and follow the John W. Ross Facebook page.

Uniforms

Ross is a uniform school and as such, we expect families to comply with the uniform expectations. Uniforms consist of **solid** navy or khaki bottoms such as shorts, pants, skirts, skorts, or jumpers. Denim jeans are not part of the uniform. Tops may be **solid** navy, white, or light blue such as a long or short-sleeved polo style shirt or blouse. Students may also wear their Ross t-shirts. The PTA will sell t-shirts at the beginning of the school year. Prints and patterns, jeans, halters, sundresses and assorted blue/white clothing are **not** part of the uniform. All students must be in closed-toe shoes appropriate for Physical Education and safe play at recess. Greater detail about the Uniform and Dress Code policy is in the Ross Family Handbook. School uniforms may be purchased from a variety of vendors including, but not limited to, Lands End, Old Navy, French Toast, Target, etc. The PTA will also offer a "uniform exchange" a few times during the school year. If you need assistance securing uniforms, please contact Principal Searl. Throughout the year, "free dress" days are scheduled and usually coincide with half-days and days before holiday breaks. A full list of free dress days will be posted on the Ross website and sent home the first week of school.

After School Programs

Ross partners with the YMCA for on-site After School Programming. Programming runs from dismissal until 6:00 pm. If you are unable to pick your child up on time

after school, we expect you to register for the After School Program. Ross staff are not available to babysit after school. Aftercare for K-5 students will begin on the first day of school. Aftercare for PK3/PK4 will begin on Wednesday, August 24. Reduced rates are available to qualifying families. Kindly register for Aftercare directly with the YMCA. Contact the YMCA at 202.862.9684 for more information. Ross partners with the DCJCC for off-site After School Programming. JCC staff will pick students up from Ross at 3:20 and will depart Ross at 3:30. Programming for K-5 students will begin on the first day of school. Programming for PK3/PK4 will begin on Wednesday, August 24. Kindly register for After School Programming directly with the DCJCC. Contact the JCC for more information at 202.777.3276.

Food Services

SodexoMAGIC is the food service vendor for DCPS/Ross Elementary and will provide breakfast and lunch daily, including early release days. Please set up your child's lunch account at www.myschoolbucks.com or call 1.800.479.3531. We cannot accept cash in the cafeteria. If your child plans to purchase lunch, you must set up the online account. You will need your child's ID number to set up an account. This number is on your child's report card. New families may contact Ms. Williams (dairen.williams@dc.gov or 202.673.7200) to retrieve the ID number. Breakfast is FREE for all Ross students and available every day at 8:15 am. Students may either bring lunch from home or purchase a school lunch. Reduced rates are available for qualifying families.. You may also complete the "Free/Reduced Lunch Application form online by visiting dcps.heartlandapps.com. Forms are also available in the main office. **Please note that we do not allow gum, candy, or soda at Ross.** The contact number for DCPS Office of Food and Nutrition is 202.719.6599.

Additional Paperwork

Please remember to bring any outstanding medical and dental forms to the school nurse on or before the first day of school. Permission slips for Fillmore, Walking Around the Neighborhood, and Emergency Contacts and Pick-up Permission are available on the Ross website and in the main office if you have not yet completed them. The PTA will have membership materials and volunteer information available at the beginning of the school year as well. Fillmore course selection forms for Grades 3-5 will be sent home the first day of school. Fillmore related questions should be addressed to Director Maggie Meenehan. Margaret.meenehan@dc.gov

We look forward to a positive and productive year of learning with your family! Please contact me with any questions or concerns. My door is open! The best way to reach me is via email holly.searl@dc.gov

With Warm Regards,

Holly Searl, Principal