



## **STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK**

Douglass Park Elementary School  
34 Grand Street  
Portsmouth, VA 23701-3086  
*Mrs. Dusti Johnson Brinker*, Principal  
*Ms. Garyn Clark*, Assistant Principal  
(757) 393-8646

## THE HISTORY

## OF DOUGLASS PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



The original Douglass Park building was built during World War II for Federal employees, primarily the Norfolk Naval Shipyard. Originally, it was the old Norfolk County High School in what was then Norfolk County. After the war, Portsmouth annexed this section of Norfolk County. Douglass Park School, named after Frederick Douglass, a famous black freedom fighter, was erected in the early 1950's with twelve rooms, a library, and a cafeteria. In the early 1960's the community mushroomed and an additional sixteen rooms were added. Finally, in the 2001-2002 school year Douglass Park Elementary School underwent additional renovations which included additional classrooms, a new library, a multipurpose room, air-conditioning and state-of-the-art technology.

The 1993-94 school year marked the beginning of Portsmouth's first elementary mathematics, science, and technology magnet program at Douglass Park. The program was on the cutting edge of teaching innovations with computer labs, new math programs, live animals, extracurricular clubs, NASA training, extensive field trip experiences, and guest lectures. Douglass Park was fondly referred to as "Douglass Park Earth & Space Elementary School" to reflect this innovation program.

In the spring of 1999, the Douglass Park Elementary family elected to implement the School Development Program (SDP) model of school reform. As the first CoZi Community School in Portsmouth, our school is part of the collaborative effort launched by two nationally known school reform leaders, James P. Comer, professor of child psychiatry at Yale Child Study Center, and Edward Zigler, professor of psychology at Yale University. Cozi is a reform model that links early childhood education, the school's academic program, parents, teachers, and community support services together to make sure children are ready for school.



## "Cozy Bear Pledge"

"My Cozy Bear says I will do my best.  
I will always strive to meet success.  
No matter what comes my way  
I will do my best each day!" -DJB

## SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Douglass Park is pleased to offer a number of special programs that extend and enhance regular classroom instruction.

- PBIS (Positive Behavioral Intervention Support)
- Compassion Day Treatment Counseling Program
- Boys & Girls Club After school care
- Six-to-Six Before and After school care
- Little Miss
- SCA (Student Council Association)



### DOUGLASS PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL Arrival & Dismissal Schedule

<b>Time</b>	<b>Task</b>
<b>9:00 a.m.</b>	<b>Students enter the building for free breakfast</b>
<b>9:15 a.m.</b>	<b>Tardy bell rings</b> Students arriving after <b>9:15 a.m.</b> are considered tardy and must report to the office with a parent/guardian or have a note.
<b>3:55 p.m.</b>	<b>Dismissal begins</b>

### SAFETY ALERT

Douglass Park Elementary School opens at 9:00 A.M. daily to accept students. Children who walk to school should not arrive prior to 9:00 a.m., because there **will not** be adult supervision available to monitor students arriving before that time. To ensure the welfare and safety of all children, please observe our official opening time.

### ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

Students who arrive on school buses will enter the doors closest to the bus ramp and report directly to the cafeteria if they desire to eat breakfast, before reporting to their homerooms.

Students who walk to school may line up in a calm and orderly fashion at the doors on the right corner of the front of the building nearest Grand St. A staff member will be at the door to greet them at 9:00 a.m.

Daycare van drivers and parents/guardians who drop their children off by car, may pull up within our cones in a single-file line at the door at the far right corner of the building. We ask that you pull up to the orange cone in order to maximize the space outside while students are exiting vehicles, beginning at 9:00 a.m. We ask that you wait until the car in front of you pulls away before you do, avoiding any "passing" for the safety of our children. If you need to take more time, please pull up beyond the orange cone or park on Grand St., in order to avoid delay in the drop-off line.

### DISMISSAL POLICY

Douglass Park Elementary prides itself on providing a safe and orderly environment for our students and staff. In an effort to maximize instructional time, as well as maintain safe and orderly dismissal environment, Douglass Park Elementary School will observe the following procedures:

Please do your best to schedule appointments outside of school hours. If however, occasional early dismissal is necessary prior to 3:55 p.m. please **send a note** to the teacher so that he/she can have your child waiting in the office at your requested time. It is a requirement to come into the office to sign students out. **We will not be calling the classrooms over the intercom system** in order to avoid disrupting the learning environment. Any early dismissals will need to occur before 3:40. After that all dismissals will **wait** until the official dismissal time of 3:55 p.m.

In order to ensure the safety of the children, **no students will be called off of their buses once loaded.** Once they are on the bus, parents will be able to meet them at the bus stop.

In order to provide safety for our students, bus change requests will need to be made in advance and in writing. If ever a bus change request is needed, please follow the procedure of sending a **written request** to the teacher stating which bus and which bus stop is requested, as well as the dates. A copy will then be provided to the office staff and the bus drivers.

Day care vans may line up in front of the corner door (nearest Grand St. BEHIND the orange

cone), and wait for their students to be sent out upon their arrival.

Parents/Guardians who pick up their children by car may line up in front of the right corner door (nearest Grand St. BEHIND the orange cone), and wait for their students to be sent out upon their arrival. Parents/Guardians will be asked to display their student dismissal card on their dashboard and remain in the line of vehicles. The staff member on duty outside will call for your students as you move up in line and they read your dashboard card. If a parent does not have a dashboard card issued from DPES he/she will have to park the car and enter the office with a form of identification and sign out the student. We ask that you keep the waiting line within our cones in single file, for the safety of our students. As a safety precaution, please refrain from allowing your students to exit cars in the parking lot. All students should exit onto our sidewalk, as the cars are in our drop-off line.

**Our goal is to effectively use the instructional time during the day, and keep our students safe.**

**Thank you for your support.**



#### ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Please refer to the PPS School Board's Student Code of Conduct for the Acceptable Use Policy pertaining to computer usage, social media usage, and internet usage. Bullying of any kind or inappropriate behavior is not tolerated. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to monitor student usage at home.

#### ACCIDENT INSURANCE

A student accident insurance policy will be made available. You will receive a letter explaining the cost and the coverage.

#### ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is essential to a student's success in school. This includes coming to school on time daily (9:00 a.m) and staying for the entire day (until 3:55 p.m.). The Bylaws, Policies and Procedures for the School Board, City of Portsmouth Student Absences, state:

"A student absent from a class or from school for twenty (20) or more days, (excused or unexcused) may be denied credit for that school year." Excessive tardies or early releases result in decreased attendance. Federal regulations require us to adhere to strict attendance procedures.

**Excused** absences include:

- illness
- death in the family
- pressing emergencies

When your child returns to school, *a note must be sent to the teacher including the following:* Date of absence, Reason for absence or tardiness, and signature of parent/guardian.

All absences will be unexcused until a note is received. According to Portsmouth Public Schools Policy, the parent/guardian of any child who has been absent for five (5) days will be sent a letter from the teacher reminding them of Virginia's School Attendance Law. *Students who are tardy should have a note signed by the parent stating the date and reason for the tardiness*, and be signed in by a parent. Students who are released early will need to be signed out in the office. Continual tardiness, early release, or absence may result in a required parent conference, a visit from the school attendance officer, and/or a court referral.

Please do your best to schedule appointments outside of school hours. If however, occasional early dismissal is necessary prior to 3:55 p.m. please **send a note** to the teacher so that he/she can have your child waiting in the office at your requested time. It is a requirement to come into the office to sign students out. **We will not be calling the classrooms over the intercom system** in order to avoid disrupting the learning environment. Any early dismissals will need to occur before 3:40. After that all dismissals will **wait** until the official dismissal time of 3:55 p.m.

### BUILDINGS & GROUNDS

Every effort is made by our custodial staff to keep our school safe and clean. Students are expected to join these efforts and share in the responsibility for the care of our buildings and grounds.

### CAFETERIA

Balanced breakfast and lunch meals are provided free of charge to each student at DPES Monday-Friday. Should you choose to send your child with a bag lunch please be certain to contain it in a lunchbox or bag.

According to USDA regulations, students may not bring unsolicited snacks. All opened containers of food will need to be eaten or discarded upon exiting the cafeteria.

### CELEBRATIONS

The school is permitted to have class celebrations before winter break dismissal and at the very end of the school year. Other celebrations may not occur during the school day (this also means student birthday celebrations are not permitted in school. Treat bags may be sent home with students instead.) If you choose to donate food items or prizes for any such celebrations, please consult the Wellness Policy located on the Portsmouth Public Schools website for further details.

*Food items provided for celebrations may be purchased from Food Services or **may be commercially packaged** (with unbroken seals) **foods containing a nutrition label listing all ingredients**. Approved snacks: most crackers, animal crackers, some popcorns, pretzels, nuts, baked chips, fruit bites, fruit, pudding, etc.*

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS/PHONE NUMBER

It is critical to report any change of address and/or telephone number during the school year to the classroom teacher and office immediately. This will ensure timely notification in case your child becomes ill and help us accurately deliver important information regarding your child. Proof of residency can only be changed with a current lease/mortgage agreement or utility bill.

You can assist us by:

- \* Completing the Student Emergency and contact forms. These forms provide us with a contact telephone number where you or another responsible adult can be reached when necessary. Once you receive this form from your child, please return it to the school as soon as possible. We will request an update regularly.
- \* Providing a number where you can be reached at all times. If you do not have a telephone, you must give the school a number of someone who can pick up your child in case of illness or emergency.

### CLIMATE/CULTURE

Douglass Park Elementary School is an institution of learning. Our primary goal is to educate the whole child, and all persons visiting our campus are asked to remain respectful of that goal.

We ask for support by implementing the following procedures:

- Check in at the office with ID, to sign in, and obtain a visitor's badge.
- Remaining in compliance with Portsmouth Public Schools code of conduct and school board policies, as well as Douglass Park Elementary's school procedures.
- Removing hats upon entering the building.
- Adhering to the dress code, by having midribs and undershirts covered upon entering the building.
- Speaking respectfully to students, staff, parents, community visitors, and administration. **Raising of voices and cursing is not permitted.**
- Keeping our hallways silent during the instructional day.

In addition, students are asked to be compliant to the staff members' requests.

### CONFERENCES

We are aware that a constant line of communication must be maintained between the classroom teacher and the parent to create a successful student, however, we are unable to permit conferences during daily instructional time. The teachers' number one responsibility is to educate the students from 9:00 a.m. – 3:55 p.m., but they will be able to meet with you before or after school, or during their planning time. Please arrange a mutually convenient time by sending a note to your child's teacher or by calling the school at (757) 393-8646 to arrange an appointment.



### DISCIPLINE & DRESS CODE POLICIES

Please be sure that you and your child become familiar with the Portsmouth Public School Student Conduct and Discipline Book. This booklet lists the rules for conduct, dress code, and discipline. A copy of the Student Code of Conduct Book is sent home the first day of school. The front page needs to be signed by the parent/guardian and returned by the student the next day. \* Please be sure to specifically read the section pertaining to weapons. It is the policy of the school board that possession of or use of any weapon including toy guns, look alike guns, guns, knives, screws, brass knuckles, etc. will result in a recommendation for expulsion. \* A copy of our school-wide discipline plan will be sent home by the homeroom teachers.

We are implementing the PBIS (Positive Behavioral Intervention Support) program, where students can earn rewards and prizes according to their *Cozy credits*. We like to offer

plentiful incentives and rewards for positive behavior; donations of such rewards and prizes are always welcome.

### EARLY RELEASE AND INCLEMENT WEATHER

Please note the dates on the school calendar when the school closes early for parent-teacher conferences or staff development. Early dismissal occurs at 1:30p.m. Inclement weather conditions such as snow, tornadoes, or other threatening situations may at times require the immediate closing of school. Announcements of early dismissal or closing of school are made on local radio and television stations, as well as voice mail messages sent electronically. Parents are encouraged to make arrangements for their children's care when school closes early for any reason. Please discuss these procedures with your children ahead of time.



### ELECTRONIC DEVICES

#### CONFISCATION OF ITEMS

Cellular telephones or other electronic devices (cell phones, and other electronic devices radios, iPads, IPODs, mp3 players, etc.) are not to be used, seen, or heard during school hours. Any electronic device or cell phone in violation of this policy will be confiscated and held for the parent/guardian. Repeat offenders will face disciplinary actions according to the code of conduct. Please see the PPS code of conduct book for further details. Portsmouth Public Schools is not responsible for electronic devices brought to school or on school grounds. Valuables should be left at home.

### HOMEWORK/SIGNED PAPERS

Homework is an important part of the educational experience, as students need time to practice skills taught in school. **Every student in grades K-6 will receive homework Monday-Thursday, in addition to reading for 15-20 minutes nightly.**

Students in primary grades will receive a weekly homework sheet, while students in upper grades will receive a homework agenda to record their assignments, upcoming tests or projects, and provide room for parent/teacher communication. You are welcome to include notes to the teacher in the agenda or in the folder; please review nightly.

Each grade level will send home a weekly plastic folder with graded assignments and communication of student progress on Wednesdays. Please sign and return the papers in the "return to school" pocket the very next school day, and keep the papers from the "keep at home" pocket.

### INTERRUPTION OF CLASS

Classes will not be interrupted between the hours of 9:15 A.M. and 3:55P.M. The first duty of the teachers is to the students. Too much valuable instructional time can be lost through interruptions. If possible, please schedule necessary appointments around instructional time.

### MEDICATIONS

If a student needs to take prescription medication at school, a formal permission slip,

signed by the parent and doctor, must be completed and filed with the nurse stating the name of the medication, amount to be given, time of day to be administered and the length of use it is to be used. This includes all prescription medication. Over-the-counter medication (ex. Aspirin, Tylenol, cough syrup) must have a note signed by the doctor before it can be administered to the child. This also needs to be on file with the nurse.

School Board policy states:

“...medication must be in the original container and Delivered to the principal, school nurse, or school Division designee by the parent/guardian of the Student”.



Please note that medication cannot be given unless the procedures outlined above have been followed.

Medication may not be transported by students. Parents/guardians need to deliver the medication to the school nurse with doctor’s authorization form.

### PARENT - TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)

The PTA invites all parents and teachers to join the association. The cost is minimal at \$5.00. With the accumulation of the membership fees, the PTA is able to help support the school with student needs. Everyone is welcome and all are encouraged to attend the PTA meetings. They are generally held on the third Wednesday of every month in the school cafeteria. Notices will be sent home prior to the scheduled PTA meetings. When you attend meetings we recommend parking near the cafeteria and entering through the door at the Grand St. entrance. Teachers and staff have reached 100% membership, so we challenge our parents to do the same. Please be sure to join the next time you come to the school. ☺

### REPORT CARDS & PROGRESS REPORTS

Report cards are issued each nine weeks are supplemented by progress reports at the midpoint for each marking period. Students are evaluated on achievement, work-student habits, attitude, and behavior.

#### Grading system for students in grades K-2

- O (90-100)** - **Outstanding:** Consistently exceeds grade level standards and objectives
- S (80-89)** - **Satisfactory:** Consistently meets grade level standards and objectives.
- P (70-79)** - **Progressing:** Making progress towards meeting grade level standards and objectives
- N (64-69)** - **Needs Improvement:** Experiences difficulty meeting grade level standards and objectives.
- U (63-0)** - **Unsatisfactory:** Does not meet grade level standards and objectives.
- Not Evaluated at this Time



#### Grading system by %for students in GRADES 3-6

- 93 – 100 = A
- 90 – 92 = A-
- 87 – 89 = B+
- 77 – 79 = C+
- 73 – 76 = C
- 70 – 72 = C-
- 64 – below = F

83 – 86 = B                      67 – 69 = D+  
80 – 82 = B-                      64 – 66 = D

**\*\*\*At the completion of each school year, students need to receive passing grades in order to promote to the next grade level.\*\*\***

### PPS POWERSCHOOL PARENT PORTAL

This resource is a web-based communication tool that allows parents/guardians and students in grades 3-6 secure access to view grade, assignment, and attendance information. Assignments and student performance can be viewed as soon as entries are made by teachers into their electronic grade-books. Reports and email notifications are also available in the viewer. Students will have separate accounts with unique login information. Currently this service is only available for our students in the upper grades.

Although the *PowerSchool Parent Portal* is a very useful tool, it is not intended to replace direct communication between students, parents, and other staff members. The program is straightforward and very user-friendly – just point and click and you will have secure access to your student’s attendance, assignments, and grades. If questions arise, please check with your child’s teacher.

#### Security and Accountability

Each parent/guardian will receive a separate Access ID and Password for each student. Once each parent/guardian enters the Access ID and Password, they will be able to create their own account, specifying their email address and the password they want to use. The Access ID and Password is randomly generated and must be picked up at your student's school. Students will be given their own Username and Password. The Access ID/Password and Username/Password are confidential and should not be shared with others. If you have more than one student, you will enter the Access ID and Password for each student in the account you created. Note: Students **cannot** change their passwords.

The ability to access your student’s grade information and monitor their progress is a privilege for parents. The PPS *PowerSchool Parent Portal* site is governed by the [Division’s Acceptable Use Agreement \(AUP\)](#). In addition to this main agreement, there are also product-specific terms detailed on the Conditions of Use Pre-Login Entry Page. Any misuse or abuse of this account will result in denial of access.

If a student is new to the district or parents/guardians have never picked up an Access ID and Password, please contact the school. For security purposes, the Access ID and Password must be picked up from the student's school in person; they will not be given out over the phone.

### TRANSPORTATION AND SAFETY OF BUS CHILDREN

Transportation is provided to students who live 1/2 mile or further from the school, and are specifically assigned to a bus and a bus stop. Unless requests to change buses are in writing, students are only permitted to ride their assigned bus. Requests made by phone are not permitted. Buses will only pick up and drop off at the designated locations as outlined by the Portsmouth Department of Transportation. Please note that UNAUTHORIZED persons are NOT permitted to ride the bus under any circumstances. Students in grades KG and one, will only be released to a parent or guardian at their bus stop; they will not be able to exit the bus unattended.

Riding the bus is a privilege and should be appreciated. Improper conduct on the bus can result in transportation being suspended temporarily or permanently. THEREFORE, THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHILD ARRIVING TO SCHOOL IN A TIMELY MANNER WILL BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PARENT/GUARDIAN. If you discover that your child experiences a problem on the bus please speak to the driver. Students are expected to follow the following safety rules while riding the bus:

**RIDERS ARE:**

1. under the supervision of the bus driver and school staff while loading and unloading.
2. to use only the assigned bus and bus stops.
3. to be at the bus stop on time.
4. to remain seated, facing the front when the bus is in motion.
5. to keep their heads and limbs inside the bus at all times.
6. not to play rough, push, or make loud noises on the bus.
7. not to use profane or indecent language.
8. not to litter on the bus.
9. not to throw objects on, out, or at the bus.
10. not to use or possess tobacco, drugs, or alcohol on the bus or bus stops.
11. not to eat or drink on the bus.



**VISITORS**

For the safety and protection of students and staff, all persons entering the building are required to report to the office and sign in to receive an identification badge, which is to be displayed while on school grounds. All visitors are requested to enter and exit through the main entrance of the school. Sex offenders may not come onto school grounds. Tobacco, alcohol, and drugs are prohibited on school grounds; this includes our parking lot.

**VOLUNTEERS**

We welcome the support of volunteers. At the beginning of the school year, we send home a volunteer survey asking how you or another family member would like to volunteer. Please complete the form and return in to school. We appreciate support by helping at the school during the day and/or helping complete tasks at home for the teachers. As much or as little time you'd like is appreciated.

**WALKING STUDENTS**

Teach your child the route you wish him/her to take to and from school. Remind your child to walk on sidewalks, cross at street corners with the traffic guards and observe all traffic lights.

**WELLNESS POLICY STATEMENT**

The Portsmouth Public Schools recognizes the link between student health and learning, so desires to provide a comprehensive program promoting healthy eating and physical activity.

**NUTRITION GUIDELINES**

*The nutritional content of foods and beverages donated for class parties or other school events should meet the same nutrition guidelines as for food items sold at school.*

Beverages

- 100% fruit juices or fruit juice drinks with a minimum of 20% fruit juice, water, diet drinks, sports drinks, and low-fat or non-fat milk.

Snacks

- 400 calories or less per item.
- No more than 35% of the calories from fat (except nuts and seeds).
- No more than 15% of the calories from saturated fat per serving.
- No more than 35% weight by sugar.

Food items provided for celebrations may be purchased from Food Services or **may be commercially packaged** (with unbroken seals) **foods containing a nutrition label listing all ingredients**. Approved snacks: most crackers, animal crackers, some popcorns, pretzels, nuts, baked chips, fruit bites, fruit, pudding, etc.



**Acknowledgement of student handbook:**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (student)  
 reviewed the policies and procedures with my  
 parent/guardian.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent/guardian)  
 reviewed the policies and procedures within  
 this student handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

Please sign and return this form on the next school day. Thank you.