

# Bishop Elementary School

## Frequently Asked Questions for New Families

### **Welcome!**

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Welcome to the Bishop community! Whether you are starting your elementary school experience with us, or whether you have just moved here, we hope that this information will help you quickly feel at home in our community.

Here are a few facts you might be interested in (for the 2011-2012 school year):

- # of students: approx. ~450 in 20 classrooms
- # faculty: 50+
- Average class size: 24
- School established: 1949
- Main office phone #: 781-316-3792
- Safe Arrival (absence) phone #: 781-316-3790

### **Drop-off, Pick-up and Busses**

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#### **Q: My child takes the bus, what time does it arrive at my bus stop?**

A: A bus pass and list of stops and times will be sent home over the summer as we organize the bus list. Parents pay for this service.

#### **Q: Where do I drop my child off? What time?**

A: Supervision is provided on the school playground at 8:00 a.m. for walkers and drop offs. School starts at 8:15 a.m. If it's raining, snowing or the temperature is less than 20 degrees, all grades will meet in the gym.

#### **Q: What is the procedure for driving my child to school?**

A: Drop-off for students in grades K-5 is on the playground. At 8:10am students line up with their teachers and enter the building. There is no parking on the school side of Columbia Rd. Parents should drive up, drop their children off, and drive away. Although Columbia Rd. is not a one-way street, in the mornings it is best to drive up Columbia Rd. towards Crosby St. Please do not leave your car unattended while dropping off your children as this causes a traffic jam. Parking is available on side streets if you would like to walk your child to the door.

#### **Q: What time is pick-up? Where do I pick them up?**

A: Pick-up is at 2:15pm. Kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades are dismissed from the door to the left of the front entrance by the Nature Center/garden and picnic tables. The children are walked outside and dismissed by their teachers. 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades are dismissed at the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor door on Crosby St. 5<sup>th</sup> Grade is dismissed to the playground. Dismissal locations and procedures do not change with rain or extreme cold.

#### **Q: What do I do if I am late?**

A: You should always check-in through the office first, when arriving late. There really isn't a choice, all other doors are locked at the bell, so you are directed through the office to enter the school. If you are running late for pick-up in the afternoon please call the office and let us know and we can have your child brought to the office to wait for you.

## **Snacks, Lunch and Recess**

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### **Q: If my child will be purchasing lunch, how do I pay for it? How much is it?**

A: Lunches are \$3 per day. Your child can bring their money with them (we recommend putting it in a Ziploc bag or envelope with their name on it) or give it to the teacher. You can pre-pay for lunches if you would like to. Simply make a check out to "Town of Arlington", and put it in an envelope with a note and send it in with your child to school (in your "School to Home" folder). You can pre-pay for as many days as you'd like. Jean French, Bishop's food services finance person, will let you know when you're getting low on funds. Milk comes with the lunch or can be purchased separately for 60¢.

The Arlington Public Schools use the Nutrikids POS (Point of Sale) system and if you pre-pay for lunches or milk, your child will be assigned a 4-digit PIN to use. Your child's PIN number will be sent home when you sign up for the pre-pay program.

### **Q: What is the schools policy about nuts for snacks and lunches?**

A: Availability of snack time varies by grade though all Kindergarten classes have snack time. For the safety of all children, we recommend sending in a nut-free snack if possible. All purchased school lunches are nut-free. Children bringing lunch from school may have nuts. There is a nut-free table provided for children with allergies. Non-allergic children who want to sit at the Nut Free table must purchase lunch from the school in order to sit at this table.

### **Q: How long is recess? How many recesses do the kids get?**

A: All grades have recess after lunch. Time allotted for recess is typically 10-20 minutes. Children must be dressed appropriately for recess. During the winter, snow pants, hats, gloves and boots are required to play anywhere except the blacktop. Additional recess is at the discretion of the teacher.

### **Q: What are the rain/cold weather policies for school recess? What do the kids do if there is no recess?**

A: If it is raining, snowing or below 20 degrees, there is no outside recess. Paper, crayons and games are provided for children in the cafeteria.

## **Communication and Involvement**

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### **Q: Who are the key people at school I should know?**

A: Besides your child's teacher, Mrs. G. (Mrs. Yvonne Gonsalves) in the front office will answer questions and guide you where you need to go, and our principal, Mr. Mark McAneny, is also accessible to parents.

### **Q: What is the best way to communicate with my child's teacher? What is the 'School to Home' folder?**

A: During the first week of school, your child's teacher will send home a "School to Home" folder. This folder is used to send home your child's work and school notices, and can also be used for you to send in notes to your teacher, payment for lunches, etc. Your teacher may also provide a notebook dedicated to Teacher/Parent communication. Teachers can also be contacted via phone, email or messages left at the Office.

**Q: When are parent/teacher conferences?**

A: There are two parent/teacher conferences for Kindergarteners. The first conference is in December and the second in early June. Other grades only have one conference in December. Report cards are sent home three times (November, March, June).

**Q: Is there a school newsletter?**

A: The principal, Mr. McAneny, sends out a weekly update via email. Please be sure to read it as it includes relevant school information. Teachers may also communicate with parents through a newsletter or letters.

**Q: How do I get added to the school, grade and class e-mail distribution lists?**

A: Go to <https://www.arlington.k12.ma.us/ptodirectory/>

Once you've created a login you may enter your family's information. This information is used to create the Bishop School Directory that you'll be given sometime in the fall. There are tabs at the top of the page for "Email Lists Parent". You can sign up for entire school emails, grade specific emails and for your child's teachers emails.

It is imperative that you sign up for the school email list which is used for official school communication as most school announcements have gone paperless and this is the only way you will receive notices. Due to the desire to reduce the amount of paper sent home, this list is used frequently to communicate upcoming school programs and other school related news and business.

The "Bishop Talk" list is used for discussions relevant to Bishop. You may subscribe to this list via Yahoo groups (you do not need a yahoo ID), or by sending a blank e-mail message to: BishopTalk-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

**Q: How do I get involved with Bishop?**

A: Student achievement increases, schools improve, and parent and community involvement thrives when parents get involved with their child's education. Parent involvement is key to a successful school year and there are many ways for parents to be involved. Below are lists of groups that would love to hear from you.

*Classroom Parents and Classroom Volunteers*

Contact your child's teacher to work in your child's classroom. A form will be sent out the first week of school for parents who are interested in being a Room Parent. Additional volunteers may be welcome after the children and teachers form their routine.

Room Parents act as a liaison between classroom teachers and the parents in the class. Each class typically has two individuals who work with teachers to find volunteers for classroom celebrations, field trips, Teacher Appreciation and the Bear Fair classroom game.

If you are not able to volunteer during the school day, but still want to help, contact your child's teacher for possible "at home" projects.

*Library*

The Library is a great place to volunteer, either when your child's class visits or at any other time. We can always use help checking books in or out, and reshelving them, but there are

other ways to help out too. Our beautiful new books need to be covered with protective plastic before we can put them into circulation. And the younger grades especially love extra help in selecting books or being read to. Please contact Alison Vaishnaw at vaishnawa@aol.com

### Art Class

Ms. Martin loves to have parents in the art room. Your child will have art class once a week. You'll be notified which day your child will have class the first week of school.

### Lunch Room and Recess Monitor

Bishop is always in need of lunch and recess volunteers to help monitor the children on the playground and in the lunch rooms. If you are free to help during the hours of 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., please contact the school at (781) 316-3792 or Lil McIsaac, lunch monitor supervisor, at lilmci@hotmail.com

### Bishop Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

The PTO meets monthly and runs various community, social, enrichment and fundraising events each year. The PTO also supplements the resources available to the school and our teachers. Enrichment is fully funded through the PTO. To get involved please contact the PTO President, Brecky Peabody at [Breckpeabody@gmail.com](mailto:Breckpeabody@gmail.com) or take a look at ways you can help at <http://www.arlington.k12.ma.us/Bishop/community.asp>.

### **Q: If I'm going to be helping in the school do I need to sign anything?**

A: The school office has the paperwork for the CORI background checks required for parents that volunteer at the school. In addition, due to recent new legislation regarding conflict of interest in schools, all volunteers must sign a form acknowledging that you have received a summary copy of the law. Forms and summaries of the law are available in the office.

### **Q: I'd like to budget my support, how often are fundraisers held?**

A: The PTO holds fundraisers roughly every other month. In the fall we run a few of our larger fundraisers – school pictures, "Original Works" artwork that can be given as holiday gifts, and our Annual Fund drive. In addition to PTO programs, you will receive a Scholastic Books catalog each month. The school receives books for classrooms based on sales.

### **Q: What other ways can I support the school?**

A: There are many ways that you can support the school doing your normal day-to-day activities. For example, a percentage of your purchases at Stop & Shop, Target and Amazon.com can support Bishop. Details and a complete list is available at <http://www.arlington.k12.ma.us/Bishop/communityFundraising.asp>

### **Q: What is the Bishop Fair?**

A: The PTO's largest fundraiser of the year is the Bishop Fair, which is held in May. There are rides and games, face painting, a raffle and silent auction, and of course cotton candy, pizza and prizes. All parents and teachers contribute to this very popular annual event that is open to the community.

## **General Questions**

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### **Q: Who do I call if my child is sick?**

A: You call the "Safe Arrival Line" 781-316-3790. You must call every time your child is going to miss school. This number is on the school website as well. A note explaining your child's absence should be sent in to the nurse when your child returns to school.

### **Q: What supplies will my child need for school?**

A: In August, your child's teacher will send a welcome letter and list of school supplies needed for the coming school year.

### **Q: What happens if my child loses his/her sweatshirt, gloves, lunchbox, etc. at school?**

A: Lost and found boxes are located in the gym and the cafeteria. Please clearly label all clothing and lunch boxes.

### **Q: Please tell me more about the Thompson School students that are attending Bishop.**

A: The Thompson Elementary school in E. Arlington is currently closed and is slated to be re-built and open for the 2013-2014 school year. In the meantime, the students from the Thompson school are being hosted by Bishop, Hardy and Stratton Schools. Thompson's 5<sup>th</sup> grade students are attending the Bishop School, K, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades are attending the Stratton School and 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades are attending the Hardy School.

### **Q: How can I connect with other parents?**

A: The PTO hosts a "BooHoo" Breakfast for Kindergarten parents with the principal the first day of school outside at the picnic tables by the school garden. Stop by after drop-off.

Attending PTO meetings, volunteering at a fall event (Town Day) or becoming a room parent are excellent ways to meet other parents. The school also hosts an ice cream social in September and many other school functions throughout the year to help families connect with one another.

### **Q: How do I find out about school delays/closings?**

A: School closings and delays are reported on the Arlington Public School Web site at <http://www.arlington.k12.ma.us/home/> and are also on all area TV and radio stations.

### **Q: How many adults are on the playground during each recess? At lunch time?**

A: There are at least 2 adults on the playground during lunch recess, and during class recess the teachers monitor.

### **Q: Do all classrooms have teacher assistants?**

A: All Kindergarten classrooms have teacher assistants. Assistants in other grades are there for student-specific needs and some for classroom assistance.

## **Kindergarten-Specific Questions**

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### **Q: Can I go to the classroom the first day of school? Should I let my child go into school with the class then go in or just bring them in myself?**

A: The first week of school, you may walk your child to the classroom, but the sooner they get used to walking in-line with their friends the better. On the first day or two almost every parent walks down with their child. The sooner the children have the entrance routine established and get settled in the classroom, the more successful the day.

### **Q: Should I pack an extra set of clothes for my child?**

A: Yes, and the teacher will send home information with what else you should have.

### **Q: Does my child need slippers for the classroom?**

A: No, but you could check with the teacher to see if it would be acceptable if you wanted to use them.

### **Q: Do Kindergarteners get help in the bathroom?**

A: Kindergarteners are required to be self-sufficient in the bathroom. Please discuss any concerns you have with your teacher or with the school nurse.

### **Q: At the start of the year what should Kindergarteners know? What assessments are performed?**

A: Your child should be able to write their name, count to at least 10, and be able to identify most of the letters of the alphabet. Your child does not need to know how to read. In October, all children undergo a screening process to help the teacher understand their individual needs and strengths. This includes basic letter and sound identification and number concepts. This information is used to plan instruction and look at areas where a child may need support.

## **Fall School Events**

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### **Q: Is there a Welcome event in the fall?**

A: There is typically some sort of social in the fall either right before school starts or shortly thereafter. The date of the social will be publicized on the Bishop email list.

### **Q: What is the curriculum review?**

A: In September, a curriculum review is scheduled for each grade. During the review, all teachers in the grade will review the goals and curriculum for the coming school year. Parents are highly encouraged to attend and ask questions. These sessions are an excellent way for you to get to know the teachers in your child's grade, and to understand the curriculum vocabulary they use at school (and you can use at home).

### **Q: Is there an opportunity for parents (and siblings) to visit the school?**

A: For incoming Kindergarten families, children and parents are encouraged to attend the Student Orientation in May. During your visit, you are encouraged to explore the school – including the classrooms, cafeteria, gym and library. Siblings are encouraged to stay at home. The Bishop Fair in May is also a great family event.

Grades 1-5 typically start school the Wednesday or Thursday before Kindergarten starts. That week, students and their parents will be invited to visit your classroom to look around and meet your teacher.

Other school social activities are scheduled throughout the year including a school wide Music concert and an Art Show. Parents and siblings are welcome to attend both events.

**Q: School Picture Day**

A: Official school pictures are taken in the fall. Information and prices will be sent home with your child during the first few weeks of school. Individual and class pictures are taken.

**Web Resources**

Bishop School - <http://www.arlington.k12.ma.us>

Arlington Public Schools - <http://www.arlington.k12.ma.us>

Town of Arlington – <http://www.town.arlington.ma.us>

Wicked Local.com (Arlington Advocate newspaper) – <http://www.wickedlocal.com/arlington>

Boston.com Arlington - <http://www.boston.com/yourtown/arlington/>

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