

Kenwood FAQs – 2022-2023

Below are questions that often arise for families new to Kenwood. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us if you have other questions or concerns. Policies and procedures may change when new information is available. This document is posted on our website and is updated when needed.

What time does school start and end?

School hours are 9:30am - 4:00pm. Students can begin to enter the school at 9:20am. Breakfast is free of charge for anyone who would like to eat. Students riding buses will enter door 1. We expect that students walking or being dropped off will also enter door 1, but this policy may change. Please make every attempt to drop students off by 9:25am so that they are in their classrooms and ready to learn by 9:30am. Students arriving after 9:30am should enter door 1 to be buzzed in by the office, where they will get a late pass. Students being picked up will be at door 8 (along Franklin Avenue) or door 4 (along 21st street) at 4:00pm. All students should be picked up no later than 4:10pm.

What materials does my child need for school?

Each child should have basic supplies such as pencils, markers, crayons, glue, scissors, notebooks and folders. Specific grade level supply lists are posted on the school website in the spring.

My child is riding the bus, how does that work?

You will receive notification (email and/or robo call) regarding the location and times for the bus stop in mid-late August. Please call the school office at 612-668-2760 if you have not received notification by August 31st. Plan to arrive at the bus stop at least 5 minutes early (or more for the first few weeks) as buses adjust to the schedule. Please keep in mind that transportation may need to make updates to the schedule throughout the year. Many families exchange phone numbers with the other families at the bus stop in case of an emergency. Staff will assist students with getting off the bus in the morning and on the bus at the end of the day.

Transportation provides an app called "[Here Comes the Bus](#)" to help families navigate when the bus is coming. (This system tracks buses, not students.) Be advised that this is not a perfect system and does not work if there is a substitute bus or substitute driver. To sign up, you will need the student ID number and the school code of 87018. You can find the link on the MPS website.

I will be dropping my child off and picking up. Where should we go?

Students arriving at school by bus enter at door 1 (Penn Avenue) between 9:20 - 9:25am so they are ready to learn by 9:30am. In previous years, students with family last names A-J who are dropped off at school will enter and exit through Door 4 (the lunchroom), and students with family last names K-Z who are dropped off will enter and exit through Door 8 (by the gym/rec center). We will update you in the fall if there are any changes. If you arrive after 9:30, please send your student to door 1 to be checked in and receive a late pass. Please DO NOT park or stop in front of the school on Penn Ave. This area is reserved for buses. You may find parking in the neighborhood and walk to the school - please do not park or drop students off in the parking lots. Please use the crosswalks and do not cross in the middle of a street. Drop off and pick up is a busy time. Students may begin to be picked up at 3:55 at either Door 8 or Door 4 in a timely manner. Students who have not been picked up by 4:10 will wait in the office.

Where can I park if we are coming to Kenwood?

Our location is wonderful, but parking can be an issue. Families should find street parking in the neighborhood. Parking lots are reserved for staff members. Staff hours vary, so even if spots are available please do not park in the lots. Please check street parking signs carefully and be aware of any snow emergency rules that may be in effect. Do not park on the school side of Penn Avenue (this is reserved for buses), in front of door 4 on 21st street or door 8 on Franklin Avenue. These areas are clearly marked with city street parking signage and are for the safety of students. Thank you for your cooperation.

My child usually takes the bus but I need to pick them up, what should I do?

Whenever there is any change to the after school plan, please email both the classroom teacher and the office (danielle.sanders@mpls.k12.mn.us) before 10:30am, although earlier is better. After 10:30am, please call the main office at 612-668-2760. Teachers and staff are not always able to check email during the school day as they are busy working with students. We understand that last minute changes happen, we ask that you do what you can to avoid that happening on a regular basis as the office and classrooms are especially busy at the end of the day. If you do need to make a last minute change, please call the main office before 2:00pm.

I need to pick my child up early for an appointment. What should I do?

Please send an email to both the teacher and the office. Classes sometimes go to the school forest, have an extra recess, are in a reading buddies room, or are learning outside. If we know that your child is leaving early, teachers can make arrangements.

My child is sick, who should I call?

612-668-2766 – Kenwood Health Office (put this number in your contacts) If your child is not coming to school, please call the health office to leave a message. Please make sure to include the student's first and last name, classroom teacher, reason for the absence (including any symptoms the child is having), the person making the call, and a number where you can be reached if there are any questions. Students should not return to the building until they are without symptoms (fever, vomit, diarrhea) for 24 hours with no medication.

I'm not sure if my child is too sick for school, what should I do?

Please view this [reference sheet](#) for guidelines for most illnesses. You can find more information on the district health website at

https://health.mpls.k12.mn.us/illness_and_communicable_disease

Students may not come to school if they have a fever, have been vomiting, or had diarrhea within the last 24 hours, without medication. We know it is hard for families when their child is sick, but the best way for them to get better and to stop the spread is to keep children home when they are ill.

What are excused absences?

- Illness
- Doctor/Dentist Appointments

- School Bus Problems
- Religious Holidays/Cultural Observances
- Funeral
- Family Emergency
- Family Activities - please fill out the [Family Activity/Vacation form](#) at least 10 days before the scheduled absence.

Please visit <https://kenwood.mpls.k12.mn.us/Attendance> for more details about each category above.

Where can I find the attendance policy?

Check the school or district website -

https://mps.municipalcodeonline.com/book?type=policies#name=Policy_5100:_Attendance

How does lunch work?

Students are welcome to bring a lunch prepared from home (no nuts please!) or eat a school lunch. School lunches may be prepacked and include a choice of entree along with sides of fruits and vegetables. Milk is also available. MPS does not serve any products with nuts or pork. Menus and other information can be found at <https://nutritionservices.mpls.k12.mn.us/>. All students are given a lunch number to enter when they are having school lunch. Teachers will help students learn their numbers. Please see the section “Application for Educational Benefits” for information on how to set up a lunch account. Due to allergies, we respectfully ask that if you are sending a lunch to school you save your nut products for home.

The cafeteria has policies in place for students with allergies. Kenwood has numerous students with life-threatening anaphylactic conditions and many other students with sensitivity to particular foods.

Several years ago, the school adopted a Wellness Policy, and treats are no longer allowed in the classrooms. No food items will be used in school as incentives, rewards, snacks, celebrations, etc. There are two exceptions to this rule: 1) Kindergarteners will get an afternoon snack (your child’s teacher will communicate with you about this); 2) teachers can decide to make an exception for a celebration that is a long-held Kenwood tradition.

How does breakfast work?

Students may eat at home before coming to school or eat breakfast at school. School breakfasts are FREE to anyone who would like one.

What is the Application for Educational Benefits?

<https://cws.mpls.k12.mn.us/application>

The Application for Educational Benefits (formerly known as Free and Reduced Price Lunch) needs to be filled out each year by every family for a few reasons. It lets families know if they qualify for either free or reduced prices for lunch and it is also one of the ways funding is determined for schools. Families of all income levels should complete the application. Applying matters! Information provided on Applications for Educational Benefits:

- determines benefits for students and families such as no-cost meals at school, free bus cards, and discounted internet service.

- generates about \$100 million in district funding each year, and qualifies schools and community sites to serve no-cost food to youth 18 and under both after-school and in the summer months.

The Application for Educational Benefits (formerly known as Free and Reduced) can be completed at [TITAN K-12 Family Portal](#). (see website listed above)

1. Visit [TITAN K-12 Family Portal](#).
2. Click on Apply for Meals Today (log in not required).
3. Follow the instructions to complete your online application.

How does recess work?

Students have recess for 30 minutes each day. Students go outside every day unless the temperature is below zero or the windchill is ten below. Please make sure to send winter gear (jackets, hats, gloves, snow pants and boots) each day. You are welcome to provide a set of boots and/or snow pants to leave at school in your student's designated locker/cubby. PLEASE MAKE SURE TO LABEL ALL ITEMS – we all shop at the same stores and snow gear all looks alike! There is a limited supply of snow gear in the health office for students who do not have appropriate outdoor gear or forget something at home. If you are in need of winter gear, please reach out to the office or our school social worker, Ally Adamski.

How will the teachers and staff communicate with me?

Look for the blue Kenwood School folder in your child's backpack. This folder will travel back and forth to school and will hold homework, notes from the teacher, field trip notices, school newsletters and other school information. Be sure you know when the teacher wants it back and when it should come back to you. Each teacher may have a slightly different schedule for folders, but always look for it on the first school day of the week, as that is when most school-wide communications come home. Teachers also each have a section on the school website with information including their daily schedule. Updates from school and the district are sent through School Messenger. Please make sure to update the office any time your contact information changes.

I'm not sure I am getting the emails or texts. How can I check?

Go to the district site and look for School Messenger or visit the website below. You will be able to log in or create your account and update your preferences on how you receive information. You can also add others to the account. https://mpls.k12.mn.us/school_messenger

Can I volunteer in my child's classroom?

Every teacher has a different system of using parent volunteers. Most teachers don't use volunteers until October. Teachers use the first month to allow students to familiarize themselves with Kenwood and the classroom routine. This way when a parent comes in to volunteer, the children already feel like classroom experts.

In addition to classroom and field trip help, volunteers often help in the lunchroom, with PTA events and fundraisers, the Woodchuck Walk and MIA Art Adventures. If you have 30 minutes a week or 30 minutes a year, there are multiple ways to get involved if you are interested. Volunteering is not a requirement, but if you are interested we would be happy to have you. Volunteer needs will be communicated through E-Blasts, classroom emails, and Sign Up

Genius. All volunteers attending events outside of the building (field trips) will need to complete a basic background check, provided free of charge by MPS. Background checks are valid for two years. More information will be coming out regarding this process.

Also, each class has a Room Parent(s) who acts as a main contact for the teacher and as a liaison between the PTA and classroom families. Room parents are responsible for identifying classroom needs and helping to communicate and support volunteer efforts within the class. Again, each teacher has their own approach but look for the sign-up at the beginning of the year.

Does Kenwood participate in “green” living?

Kenwood Elementary promotes several environmental learning initiatives and efforts to reduce, reuse and recycle. Look for different programs going on around school throughout the year. The Green Team has built and maintained a garden outside the school playground along 21st Street since 2010 and installed 2 more garden beds in the spring of 2021. We have a DNR certified school forest classroom at Cedar Lake. In the spring, our students get to help plan and plant the garden. Kenwood also participates in a twice-yearly bike/walk to school day. A few years ago, we started the Woodchuck Walk which allows students to walk through Kenwood Park once a week on their way to school in the Fall/Spring.

Are there any dates that I need to be aware of?

The district calendar is posted online at <https://mpls.k12.mn.us/calendar.html>.

We also have an event calendar on the Kenwood website where you can find events more specific to our school. It's a great idea to view the district calendar and enter dates into your personal calendar for when students will not have school so they do not take you by surprise. MPS is diverse, and the district has added days off throughout the year to better reflect the culture and celebrations of our families. Please make sure you know what days school will not be in session.

September 6: First Day of School, grades 1-12

September 8: First Day of School, grade K

September 8: Coffee and Kleenex (kindergarten and new families)

September 26: Rosh Hashanah

October 5: Yom Kippur

October TBD: Curriculum Night

October 13: Picture Day

October 19: Parent Teacher Conferences (all day) (NO SCHOOL)

October 20-21: MEA (NO SCHOOL)

November 4: Teacher Record Keeping (NO SCHOOL)

November 15: Picture Retakes

November 23-25: Thanksgiving Break (NO SCHOOL)

December 9: NO SCHOOL

December 19-30: Winter Break (NO SCHOOL)

January 16: Martin Luther King Jr. Day (NO SCHOOL)

January 27: Teacher Record Keeping Day (NO SCHOOL)

February 20: Presidents' Day (NO SCHOOL)

February 21: Parent Teacher Conferences (all day) (NO SCHOOL)

March 3: NO SCHOOL

March 31: Teacher Record Keeping Day (NO SCHOOL)

April 3-7: Spring Break (NO SCHOOL)
May 29: Memorial Day (NO SCHOOL)
June 15: Last Day of School

How do conferences work?

The district sets aside two days per year (fall and spring) for teachers and parents to sit down and engage in conversation regarding individual students. Each school will also designate 2 other evenings for conferences. Fall conferences are scheduled for October 18 and 19. Spring conferences are February 21 and 22. Interpreters are available upon request.

How can I reach other parents?

We have an online directory. The directory is the best tool for getting in touch with other parents and finding emails, phone numbers and addresses. It is an opt-in directory so you must sign up in order for your information to be included. Only Kenwood families will have access to this directory. More information will be sent after the start of the school year.

What is the Site Council?

The Site Council is a representative forum of licensed staff, parents, community members and school administration to give all stakeholders in the Kenwood School community a voice in the school's decision-making process. Unlike the PTA, the Site Council does not host events and activities to build community or raise funds. Its primary focus is on school policies, the budget, and issues that Kenwood might face in relation to the District. Check the school website for exact meeting dates and times. The Site Council Board members are listed on the Kenwood website.

What is the PTA?

The PTA is an organization made up of parents and staff. The main goal of the PTA is to create community-building events, although it also fundraises for our arts residencies. PTA is currently undergoing some shifting as they look to see how to engage with all families, how to support families and staff, what the money is being raised for and how to be equitable within our larger community. The Kenwood PTA is part of the National PTA organization. Information can also be found on the PTA Facebook page, *Kenwood Community School PTA*. The current PTA Board members are listed on the Kenwood website, along with meeting minutes. PTA is actively looking for new members and would love to have an opportunity to talk with you. If you are interested in joining, please contact the PTA President or Lori Smith. You can also visit the Kenwood PTA webpage at <https://www.kenwood-pta.org/>.

What kind of fundraising activities can I expect?

There will be some opportunities this year for families to contribute to our arts residencies programming, and more information will be communicated in the future. In the past, we have incorporated some of our fundraisers into a few community events such as The Kenwood Crawl and the Read-A-Thon.

What are Residencies?

Residencies bring professional artists to Kenwood to work with students and teachers to enrich the classroom experience and reinforce aspects of current curriculum. Residencies are a crucial and unique piece of the Kenwood experience and are funded 100% by the PTA. Some examples are: Brother Ghana African drumming, Fall Family Festival, Midwest Food Connection, Taiko

and the MN Center for Book Arts. A number of the residencies provide final performances. Your child's teacher will communicate residency dates and performance times to you.

What if I don't have a ride to an event, performance or conference?

The PTA has an arrangement with a cab company to provide free rides to Kenwood for events. If you need to get to the school for an event, performance or conference, call the main office at 612-668-2760 to make arrangements.

What other groups does Kenwood have?

In addition to the Site Council and PTA, Kenwood families have created Kenwood Families for Equity and Justice, The Kenwood Green Team, and Kenwood PAALs (Parents Advocating for Advanced Learners). These groups are always happy to welcome new members at any time. To learn more about any of these groups, please visit the Kenwood website at <https://kenwood.mpls.k12.mn.us/home>

Contacts

Kenwood Website - <https://kenwood.mpls.k12.mn.us/home>

Principal: Heidi Johnson – heidi.johnson@mpls.k12.mn.us

School Secretary: Danielle Sanders – danielle.sanders@mpls.k12.mn.us

School Social Worker: Ally Adamski – allison.adamski@mpls.k12.mn.us

School Nurse: Traci Cruikshank – traci.cruikshank@mpls.k12.mn.us

School Health Associate: TBD

Kenwood Office – 612-668-2760

Kenwood Attendance Line/Health Office – 612-668-2766

I have a question and don't know who to ask. What should I do?

First, take a look at the Kenwood website – there's lots of good information there!

<https://kenwood.mpls.k12.mn.us/home> If it's more of a district question, check out the MPS website at <https://mpls.k12.mn.us/>. If you can't find it in either of those places, feel free to reach out to the school office.