

April 2023

Dear Caregiver,

Welcome to Kindergarten at Stephen Bell Elementary! Your child will be in the Class of 2036. We look forward to having your student in the fall. At Stephen Bell we have the privilege of helping our youngest students develop the foundation for success. It's a big job, and we need your help.

I encourage you to read this Handbook from cover to cover. You will find valuable information. There will be other information for you in the form of packets, forms, and emails to tell you more about our kindergarten programs and even some activities sponsored by community groups.

Once your student is assigned to a classroom, most communication will begin with the teacher. I am certainly available if you need to contact me. All of us have voicemail and email. I will email parents each Monday "The Weekly Chimes" outlining the important events for the month/week. It's vital that we have your updated email address in Final Forms.

I know you might feel a little nervous on the first day of school. We are here for you! I can recall the first day that my two daughters attended school in Bellbrook. My husband and I often reflect on their education in Bellbrook-Sugarcreek Schools and we are so grateful. Both of our daughters are now teachers in nearby districts. For me, I am celebrating my 30th year in education. Plus, I'm incredibly lucky to love what I do everyday - talking, interacting, and assisting 5-8 year olds and our staff during the day. On the weekends, I adore spending time with my four grandchildren, hiking/walking, reading, and baking. I learn names quickly and want to create a meaningful relationship with your family.

This is a time in your child's life for taking a big step toward independence with help from you and us. Please look for ways to encourage responsibility and a good work ethic. Our teachers will share expectations with the students and with you at the August Kindergarten Orientation appointment. In this way you will be fully prepared to be our team member, all year long.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Ginger C. Keeton

Principal



"Better today than yesterday; better tomorrow than today..."



2023-2024 KINDERGARTEN HANDBOOK

WELCOME TO KINDERGARTEN

In August, before school starts, you will receive an email from your child's teacher informing you of his/her name and room number. Please make sure that our school knows how your child will be transported to/from school for safety reasons.

Our August Kindergarten Orientation appointment is a time for parents & children to meet the teacher, see the classroom, tour the school, and for the teacher to assess your child's needs. This is also the time to sign up for Parent-Teacher Conferences, which will be held in October. The teacher will send home a reminder of the time you selected before the conference. Every year we have volunteers to help the teachers with preparing materials, cutting, tracing. Many times an extra pair of hands is needed in the classroom.

REQUIREMENTS

Entrance

*Section 3321.01 [A] of the Ohio Revised Code says...*No child shall be admitted to kindergarten or a public school in a district in which all children are admitted to kindergarten in August or September unless he/she is **five years of age by the thirtieth day of September of the year of admittance – September 30, 2023.**

Section 3321.01 [C] Except as provided in Division [D] of this Section. No school district shall admit to first grade any child who has not successfully completed Kindergarten.

Section 33201.01 [D] Upon request of a parent, the requirements of Division [C] of this section may be waived by the District's Pupil Personnel Services Committee in the case of a child who is at least six years of age by the thirtieth day of September of the year of admittance and who demonstrates to the satisfaction of the committee that he/she possesses the social, emotional, and cognitive skills necessary for the first grade.

Immunization

No pupil, at the time of his/her initial entry or at the beginning of each school year, to an elementary or high school for which the State Board of Education prescribes minimum standards pursuant to the Revised Code, shall be permitted to remain in school unless he/she presents written evidence satisfactory to the person in charge of admission, that he/she has been immunized by a method of immunization approved by the Department of Health pursuant to the Revised Code against poliomyelitis, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella, hepatitis and chicken pox or is in the process of being so immunized or provides a waiver. For additional questions see Section 3313.67.1 of the Ohio Revised Code. If your child is behind on immunizations or you need to sign an exemption form, please contact our school nurse at 937-848-7831 x5930. During the first semester, the school nurse will schedule vision and hearing screenings. Both screenings are state requirements. There may be additional speech screenings as well.

KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS

We have two programs in Kindergarten to offer parents.

Details	Every Other Day Program	5-day Program
Cost	State funding pays	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$100 deposit• \$3,600 tuition
Literacy Block	90-120 min. 2-3 times a week	90-120 min. daily
Math Block	30 min. 2-3 times a week	30 min. daily
Science/S.S. Block	30 min. 2-3 times a week	30 min. daily
Writer's workshop	30 min. 2-3 times a week	30 min. daily
PE & Music	30 minutes weekly	30 minutes weekly
STEM, Art, Library, Digital Literacy	30 min. monthly	30 min weekly

*We teach the Ohio Department of Education New Learning Standards.

5-day Program (Tuition Cost)

This program allows more time for in-depth discovery. The Special programs (PE, Music, Digital Literacy, Library, STEM, Art) are all offered in the five day program. This program requires a tuition fee.

- ◆ Students must be registered for the program with a \$100.00 deposit. Depending on the number registered, the window for registration may be closed early or reopened at any time. It is based on a first come, first serve. So, please sign up immediately.
- ◆ \$3,600 tuition for the year -can be paid all at once or broken into 9 payments of \$400 starting in August.
- ◆ Parents should make the decision on which program is best for his/her child. Facts to consider: Is my child ready for instruction 5 days a week or does he/she need it? Can I afford the tuition fee?

All Day Every Other Day Program (State Funded)

This program allows children to attend the following schedule. The Specials program (PE, Music) are both offered weekly in the Gold & Purple program. The other Special programs (Digital Literacy, Library, STEM, Art) are all offered once a month in this program. There is no tuition fee.

- ◆ Gold Program = Mondays, Thursdays, and assigned Wednesdays (see calendar from Mrs. Keeton in June)
- ◆ Purple Program = Tuesdays, Fridays, and assigned Wednesdays (see calendar from Mrs. Keeton in June)
- ◆ Wednesdays are balanced as much as possible. They are not every other week so please pay close attention to the Purple & Gold Kindergarten calendar.

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Be sure your child
 - has been immunized against diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus (DPT), polio, hepatitis, measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR), and varicella vaccine, **before the first day of school**. If you have any questions, please contact our school nurse.

- knows his/her full name, address, and phone number; and
 - knows what to expect when he/she goes to and from school. Practice it with him/her, whether it is on the bus, in the car, or when walking.
2. Regular attendance is a necessity. Help your child stay healthy so that he/she doesn't miss a day of fun. Serve balanced meals, stress cleanliness and set up a reasonable bedtime and stick to it. The Ohio Attendance Law is defined in the K-5 Parent Handbook (available at www.sugarcreek.k12.oh.us).
 3. Call the school (848-7831) to notify the office when your child is absent—please leave a voice message about the absence before 8:05 a.m. If there is no message, the student will be marked for an unexcused absence. Parents will receive the attendance procedures regarding absences/tardies in August/September. Be sure your child knows what to do should he/she return from school and find you not at home. If there is any change from the daily routine of going home, we'll need a note from you.
 4. If your child is a bus rider he/she will ride the bus home every day unless we have a note from the parents. Students are not permitted to eat/drink on the bus. The exact wait time for the school bus is 5 minutes before the pickup time posted by the district. For transportation questions/concerns, please call transportation director Lori Smith @ 937-848-4029.
 5. Please label all clothing: coats, boots, sweaters, hats, mittens that he/she brings to school. At the end of each month all unclaimed lost & found items will be donated to Goodwill.
 6. If you need to send money to school for fees or other reasons, please put it in an envelope on which your child's name is written with an explanation of why the money is being sent.
 7. Birthday Parties: a birthday is a very special day for a youngster and a day to be shared with friends. Therefore, we do allow parents to arrange for a class treat to help their child celebrate. Parents should contact the child's teacher prior to the "special day" to be sure it is convenient to bring a treat to school. ***Treats are limited to non-food items (goodie bag with pencil, eraser, pre packaged candy, etc. Please avoid sending anything that contains nuts).*** We ask that you not send invitations to private birthday parties to school, unless you're inviting the whole class. Our office is not permitted to give out student addresses. The office staff will deliver the "non-food treats" from the parents to the classroom.
 8. If your child rides the bus, be sure he/she
 - knows how to sit still on the bus
 - knows how to talk quietly when riding the bus
 - keeps his/her feet out of the aisles and off the seats.
 9. If you are picking your child up, please sign your child out in the office and wait in the office lobby.

GETTING READY FOR SCHOOL

1. Can your child:
 - remain away from you without crying
 - play happily with others
 - follow simple directions
 - listen quietly
 - put his/her things away
 - put on his/her own coat, sweater, and boots
 - zip zippers, button buttons, and tie shoes
 - take care of his/her toilet needs

- write his/her first name, first letter capitalized
 - solve his/her social problems without aggression
 - use the restroom on his/her own
2. Has your child:
 - established good health habits; such as, eating, sleeping, use of tissue
 - assumed some home responsibilities
 - learned to respect property and rights of others
 3. Does your child:
 - have an attitude of confidence toward school, teachers and self
 4. When talking with your child:
 - keep it natural and spontaneous
 - share your mutual interests
 - ask questions which require some thinking before he/she can answer
 - don't talk down: conversation is a person-to-person event
 5. The first day of school - what an exciting day!
 - up before dawn
 - dressed before breakfast
 - asking all kinds of questions
 - not eating much
 - and waiting for the bus long before it is due
 6. How does the first day go?
 - the steps are hard to climb, the bus is big
 - some children are friendly, some are not
 - lots of things happen, but they don't know why
 - playtime was the most fun
 - they're ready to go home long before the bus comes
 - they like kindergarten; tell you everything that happened
 - they don't like kindergarten; are not going back
 - they tell you they did nothing

SCHOOL READINESS

School readiness is the ability to cope with the school environment physically, socially, and emotionally, as well as academically, without undue stress, and to sustain in that environment.

When determining school readiness, there are several factors to consider. For many years, only a child's chronological age was considered. Tallness and language development are two other areas, which have often been used as indicators of school readiness. We know that to view a child from only one or two perspectives gives us only a partial picture of his/her development. We must consider gender differences, social-emotional development, hearing, perception, motor skills, and ability to learn concepts, in addition to, chronological age, physical size, and language skills.

School Readiness is NOT

1. Chronological Age - A child's age alone is not sufficient for determining school readiness. Even though a child may qualify for entrance into a kindergarten program because his/her birthday falls on or before a given date it does not ensure his/her readiness for school. The cut-off date is merely a workable legal provision for school entrance.

2. Intelligence or Academic Ability - School readiness and intelligence are two very different matters. Even though a child may be very bright, it does not mean that he/she has the maturity level to apply his/her skills to a school program. Many young children can identify the entire alphabet letters, name their corresponding sounds, count to 100, and recognize numerals 1-20, but these skills alone are not sufficient to guarantee success in a school program.

School Readiness IS

1. A combination of the child's level of skill development, emotional development, social development, and physical development. These four areas of development are all equally important in determining school readiness.
2. A developmental process that comes from within the child. We can give children opportunities to develop and grow in the four areas, but we cannot push or nudge them into being ready for a school program by a certain age.

Some Considerations for Determining School Readiness

1. Intelligence, skill development: What specific readiness skills does the child have? More importantly, though, what is the child's general knowledge about the world, how things work, how things relate to each other? What about his/her ability to generate solutions to problems? Specific skills, such as identifying letters and numbers, while desirable, are not necessary for school readiness. If a child is ready, he/she will learn those skills easily once in school.
2. Emotional development: How does the child handle stress and frustration? What is his/her reaction when asked to do something he/she does not want to do? What is his/her maturity level compared to other children of his/her age that you know? How long will he/she work on a task? How persistent is he/she? What kinds of activities does he/she choose to do? How does he/she handle separation?
3. Social development: How does the child get along with children his/her own age? How does he/she work in a group? Does he/she join the group and work with it, or is he/she more likely to observe the group's activities? Is he/she willing to wait for his/her turn? How independent is your child?
4. Physical development: How coordinated is your child? Can he/she hop, jump, skip, gallop, and stand on tiptoes for about 10 seconds? Can he/she cut, color, trace a simple picture or shape fairly successfully? Children will use these finger and hand skills extensively in school, and problems in this area can cause them much frustration.
5. Gender: Whether your child is a boy or a girl can have a large effect on school readiness. Child development experts tell us that, even from the time of birth, boys are slower in their development than girls and that this gap remains until adulthood. At the age of five, boys are, on average, six months behind girls in their development.
6. Age: While age alone is not sufficient to determine readiness, it is an important factor. Generally, children who are older when they begin kindergarten have the best chances of success, and those who are younger are the ones who may not be ready for school. Many experts suggest that the average girl should be fully five before she starts kindergarten and that the average boy should be fully five-and-a-half years. Again, though, this is a generalization, and each child needs to be judged on his/her own level of development.

The decision of whether a child is ready for kindergarten or whether he/she should wait another year to grow and develop before beginning kindergarten is a parent's decision. It is a decision that you will make for your child, which will affect him/her throughout the school years, not just for

the kindergarten year. If you are concerned that your child is not ready for kindergarten, you may call the school to speak with a kindergarten teacher, counselor, psychologist, and/or the principal. Please call the school office at 848-7831 if you have any questions.

DEVELOPMENTAL AGE

The concept of developmental age allows for the consideration of four areas of human growth and development: physical, social, emotional, and intellectual. A developmentally appropriate program recognizes that “over” consideration of any of these areas may violate the basic unity of the child’s behavior. The concept of developmental age attempts to understand the child’s present position on the road to unfolding behavior that is childhood.

School readiness is defined as the ability to cope with the school environment physically, socially, and emotionally, as well as academically, without undue stress. The developmental (or total) concept of child behavior assures a greater understanding of a child’s readiness level during the important early years of school.

AREAS OF INSTRUCTION

Handwriting - Our school utilizes a program called Foundations. We teach the children to write their names with the first letter capital and all the rest lowercase. We expect each student to print correctly the letters of his/her first name by the end of the first quarter.

Computers – The children absolutely love working on the chromebooks. Each student has his/her own computer number to login, which will be used through their senior year. This number allows the teacher to assess the student's records to see what they have done, how well and how long. The children will have daily access to a chromebook. In kindergarten we have stories on the chromebook that go along with our language arts themes. These stories have activities to get them excited about the story; and, then, the chromebook reads the story to the child. We have numerous math games; such as, pattern blocks, measuring, more and less, counting, and many more. The chromebook allows students to work at their own pace and provide enrichment or extra practice. Our Digital Literacy weekly class allows our students to work on keyboarding skills throughout the year as well as other application skills.

Math - Our Math program is called Everyday Math, meaning Math that is developmentally appropriate for kindergarten children. The goal of this curriculum is to develop understanding and insight into the patterns of Math through the use of concrete materials; materials the children can touch, feel and manipulate with their own hands. The children will learn Math skills; such as counting, graphing, patterning and basic number operations. The biggest Math day of the year is “Day 100” in which the children will put together a collection of 100 items.

Language Arts - Our Structured Literacy will include a program called Foundations. We incorporate explicit phonics instruction. Being A Writer balances the very best of literature-based learning with contextualized phonemic awareness, phonics-building, and to strengthen all cuing systems of reading at the same time. All subject-area learning is centered on this approach.

Social Studies - Students begin to understand the importance of rules, responsibility and decision-making. They are introduced to the cultural heritage of the United States and democratic principles through the study of national symbols and holidays. They also learn about other

cultures so that they can begin to form concepts about the world beyond their own classroom and community.

Science – Kindergarten students learn through discovery about changes on Earth, in the sky, plants, animals, their habitats and nonliving things in their local community. Through hands-on exploration, students learn the characteristics of objects, tools, materials, how they move, and whether or not they are natural or man-made. Students explore the different ways people learn about science and interact with living things and the environment to promote respect for nature. To complete this year, students show knowledge of scientific concepts through demonstration of verbal and nonverbal skills and activities.

Read Aloud To Your Children---WHY?

Children learn to read more easily if they come from the “right kind” of background. The “right kind” of background does not mean that their parents have to be college graduates. It means that the child’s parents show interest in his/her learning.

One important way that parents show interest is by reading to their children. This means helping the child learn certain important things which will help him/her become a good reader.

Below are some of the things that a child learns while he/she is being read to:

1. **An interest in knowing what books have to say.** This is important because a child who has no interest in reading will not want to read well and will probably never become a good reader.
2. **The ability to think and reason.** Understanding what is read is nothing more than being able to think about what is read and to reason well. A child who does not understand what he/she reads is not really reading. He/she is only pronouncing words.
3. **New word meanings and factual knowledge.** Children become good readers if they have factual information and a good vocabulary. They do not become good readers if they have very little factual knowledge and only a limited vocabulary. Many experiences within the family enhance both.
4. **The relationship between the printed word and the spoken word.** Children become good readers as they connect the printed words on a page and the oral words they hear. They discover that words have meaning.

Read Aloud To Your Children---HOW?

1. Get them interested before you start to read by discussing the title and pictures. Then ask them what they expect the story to be about.
2. Keep them thinking about the story by stopping occasionally and discussing what has happened.
3. Read slowly, clearly, with good pronunciation.
4. Discuss the pictures; they help tell the story. .
5. Ask a question or two about what has been read. This encourages good listening habits. With good listening habits, children will remember what they have heard. This builds good reading comprehension.

Read Aloud To Your Children---WHEN?

1. Read to them **every day**. It is the biggest boost you can give your children toward reading.

2. Have your reading session at a regular time.
3. It is important that the reading session be a relaxed and happy period. This is more important than when it is held. The period just before bedtime is usually a good time to read to your children.

Read Aloud To Your Children---WHAT?

1. Be sure to choose books with lots of pictures.
2. Let the children share in choosing the book to be read. They will be more interested if they share in the selection of the book.
3. Don't overlook poetry and Mother Goose Rhymes. All children will love them.
4. Many children enjoy hearing the same story many times. Do not hesitate to re-read a favorite story as often as your child wants to hear it.
5. Select wordless picture books. Have the child "read" to you. Encourage creative imagination and descriptive words for each page.
6. Read non-fiction as well as fiction books. Reading non-fiction material leads children to ask questions concerning real-life-experiences.

VOLUNTEERS

We are hopeful that you will join our school as a volunteer. In order to enhance a safe environment for all, you will need to complete a background check. Secure Volunteer is an easy way to use an online system created to help organizations manage volunteering screening. SecureVolunteer is powered by Background Investigation Bureau (BIB), a nationally recognized screening firm founded in 1955. The BIB is PCI Certified, with safeguards to protect personal data and credit card information. Secure Volunteer is easy to use. Just visit the website and follow the steps. It only takes about five minutes to complete and is a secure portal as applicants enter their own private data. You will receive notifications via email about status and approval. Approved volunteers also receive a Secure Volunteer ID card, which you should bring with you to all volunteer events. All volunteers must have an approved background check in order to help in our schools (help in the classroom, field trips, help in building, field day, etc). If you are visiting for a school event/assembly or eating lunch with your child, you don't need a required background check. However, everyone must sign in at the front office with a driver's license to enter our school.

Here are the necessary steps:

<https://bib.com/SECUREVOLUNTEER/BELLBROOK-SUGARCREEK-LOCAL-SCHOOL-DISTRICT/>

- #2. Follow the link to the Secure Volunteer site to initiate your required background screen.
- #3. Click on "I want to volunteer!"
- #4. Follow the rest of the directions.
- #5. The fee is \$13.95 for a valid check that is good for three years.
- #6. Our school will be notified of your approval within two business days.

Volunteer BIB required	Visitor = BIB not required
Helping in classroom/library or workroom	School/class play or school assembly
Field trip	Star student as long as teacher is in the room

Kids Heart Challenge (jump rope)	Lunch with student
Field day/ Book Fair during the day	Courtyard gardening
Class PTO party	Popcorn helpers with the teacher

PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION

During the school year each kindergarten teacher will email newsletters/Google classroom. These emails share about classroom activities and upcoming events. We encourage parents to read these newsletters carefully and to post them somewhere in the home, like the refrigerator. Your child's teacher will send home a daily folder with important information too. Report cards are available 2nd-4th quarters. Report cards are available online via Progress Book and we send home a printed copy.

Standards Based Stephen Bell Report Card (aligned to the Ohio Standards)

3 = Met Quarterly Expectations

2 = Progressing Toward Quarterly Expectations

1 = Limited Progress Toward Quarterly Expectations

** = Receives Additional Learning Support*

M = Modified Learning Targets With Additional Learning Support

Stephen Bell Elementary Staff

We are proud to have a friendly office staff: full-time school counselor, two secretaries, full-time nurse, a full-time psychologist, and one principal. We have several Intervention Specialist teachers if your child needs intervention. Also, we have Gifted Intervention Specialist teachers if your child needs enrichment.

Your child will be escorted to his/her kindergarten classroom on the first day of school and if he/she needs reminders afterwards, we have plenty of staff members in the hallways/doorways to help our youngest learners. We are ready to work with you. Together, we can make a difference in your child's life!

Best regards,

Mrs. Ginger C. Keeton
Principal

