

**Student
and
Family
Handbook
2024
2025**



OMAHA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**Columbian
Elementary**

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior (MTSS-B) is being implemented in all Omaha Public Schools and Programs.

The Omaha Public Schools implements Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior (MTSS-B) to promote student use of positive behavior. Through this framework, Omaha Public Schools has committed to providing staff with tools and resources to positively engage students and families through implementation of school-wide positive behavior interventions. These practices are designed to support safe and encouraging learning environments.

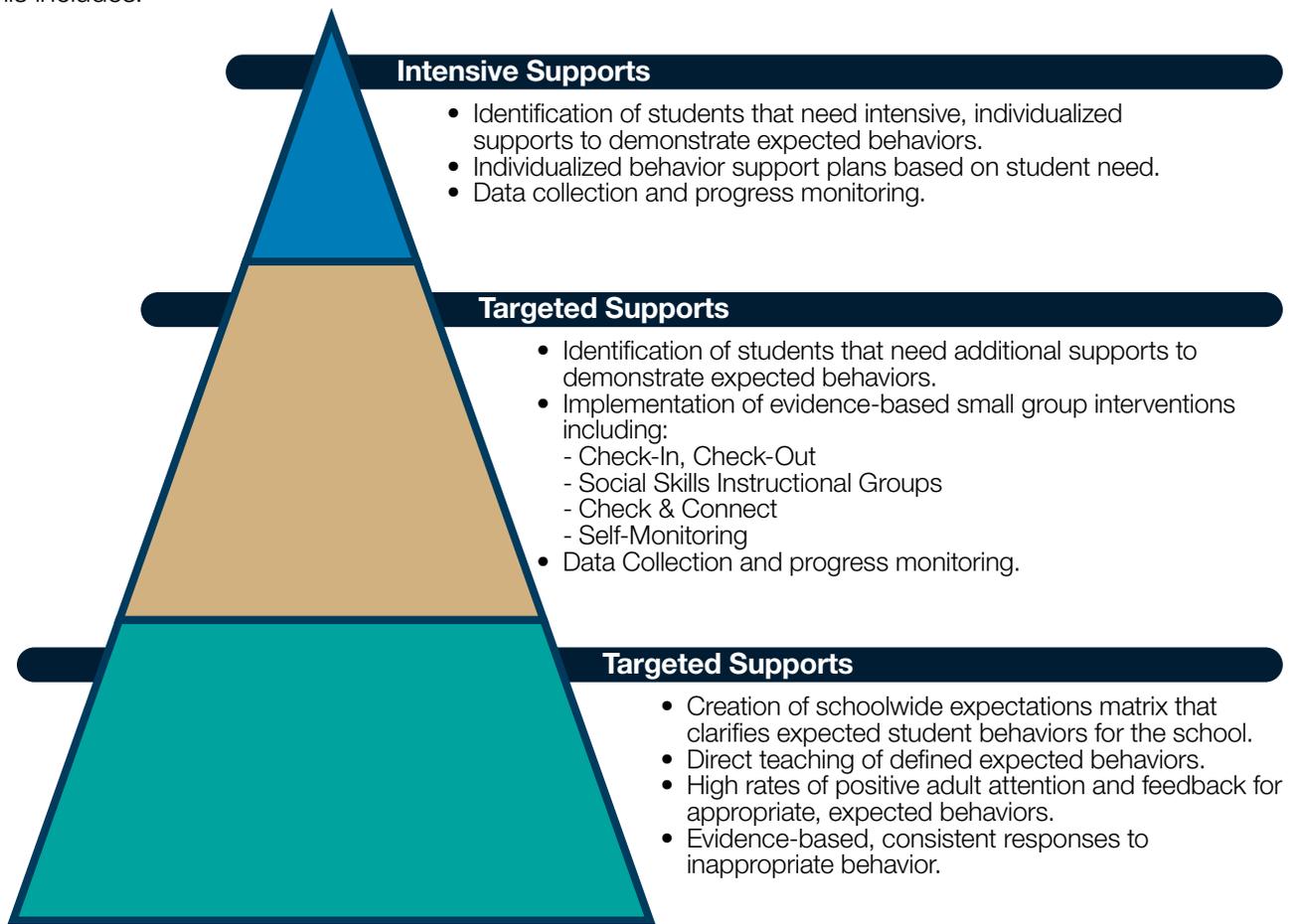
We believe that we cannot “make” students learn or behave. But we can create environments to increase the likelihood of positive behaviors occurring.

MTSS-B is a research-based, highly effective behavioral framework that is designed for teaching and reinforcing students’ social, emotional, and academic learning skills in order to sustain academic achievement and support the social, emotional, and behavioral well-being of students. Consistent implementation of MTSS-B leads to:

- Improved school climate;
- Reductions in major disciplinary infractions;
- Improved academic achievement;
- Improved concentration, positive social behavior, and emotional regulation.

Omaha Public Schools is committed to supporting students through behavior interventions and alternatives to exclusionary practices that require removal from the educational setting where the safety of the student and/or others is not of immediate concern.

MTSS-B utilizes consistent practices that have tiers of increasingly intensive supports, and in our schools, this includes:



Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

In addition to MTSS-B, OPS continues to support Social Emotional Learning (SEL) development through curriculum, strategies, and resources. SEL is defined by the Collaborative of Academic Social Emotional Learning (CASEL) as the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.

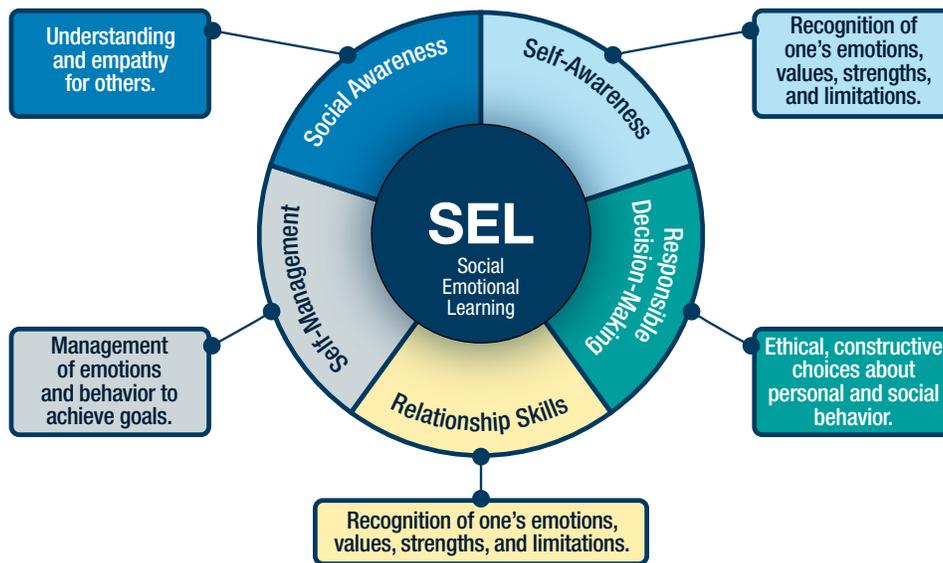
Within the Omaha Public Schools, our goal is to focus on CASEL's five SEL competencies:

- Self-Awareness
- Self-Management
- Social Awareness
- Relationship Skills
- Responsible Decision-Making

SEL promotes knowledge, skills, and attitudes that support lifelong success and advance educational equity and excellence.

How do MTSS-B and SEL Align in all Omaha Public Schools and Programs?

MTSS-B and SEL are frameworks that work together to provide an ethic of care for students and promote success in students' academics, behavior, attendance, and overall well-being. Combined they create positive learning environments where students and staff are equipped with resources and skills for successful school communities.



If you would like more information about how MTSS-B and SEL are implemented in your school, contact the building principal.



Columbian Elementary

Student and Family Handbook 2024-2025

330 South 127 Street / Omaha, Nebraska 68154-2300
531-299-1240 / Fax 531-299-1259 / www.ops.org/columbian

This handbook is prepared to serve as a guide to Columbian Elementary students. In it you will find the policies and procedures that are followed at Columbian We hope that you will find this handbook a convenient reference during the school year.



Mission Statement

Omaha Public Schools prepares all students to excel in college, career, and life.

Vision Statement

Every student. Every day. Prepared for success.

Omaha Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including pregnancy), marital status, sexual orientation, disability, age, genetic information, gender identity, gender expression, citizenship status, veteran status, political affiliation or economic status in its programs, activities and employment and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following individual has been designated to accept allegations regarding non-discrimination policies: Superintendent of Schools, 3215 Cuming Street, Omaha, NE 68131 (531-299-9822). The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Director of Equity and Diversity, 3215 Cuming Street, Omaha, NE 68131 (531-299-0307).

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Welcome To Columbian Elementary

Welcome!

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to Columbian Elementary. My name is Craig McGee and I am thrilled to be the principal. I look forward to meeting new students and their families, seeing our returning students and families, and beginning the new school year.

This handbook is prepared for the parents of our students and the students themselves. The student handbook contains important guidelines concerning Columbian Elementary. It also identifies our school expectations, which all students are responsible for knowing and observing. Please read the information carefully and keep this handbook for future reference.

I am here to support the students, staff, parents, and community in a safe, caring and progressive learning environment. Here at Columbian, every staff member is committed to making this a successful year for your child. Through teamwork, open communication, and a dedication to continuous improvement, we can continue to make this school a place children delight in and develop a deep love of learning to meet their highest potential. The entire Columbian Staff joins me in welcoming you to the new school year. Please do not hesitate to contact me at craig.mcgee@ops.org or 531-299-1240, if you ever have any questions or concerns.

Columbian Elementary...a once in a lifetime learning experience...every day!

Sincerely,

Mr. Craig McGee, Principal

Columbian Elementary Daily Schedule

- 8:00 Office Opens
- 8:35 Teachers on duty
- 8:35 Breakfast begins/Students may enter building/Patrols on duty
- 8:50 School begins
- 4:05 School is dismissed
- 4:10 Patrols off duty
- 4:25 Teachers off duty
- 4:30 Office closes



Important Numbers/Contacts

- School Phone 531-299-1240
- School FAX..... 531-299-1259
- Omaha Public Schools Board of Education..... 402-557-2222
- Omaha Public Schools Transportation Office 402-557-2900
- Student Transportation of America 402-933-0661
- E-mail craig.mcgee@ops.org
- School Web Site www.ops.org/columbian



Columbian Elementary Mission Statement

Columbian Elementary...a once in a lifetime learning experience...every day!

Make it count!

- C – Community partnerships
- O – Optimizing student achievement
- U – Understanding citizenship
- N – Nurturing leaders of tomorrow
- T – Tradition of excellence



Cobras Count!



Columbian Elementary

...a once in a lifetime learning experience...everyday!

Level III Expectations

Make It Count!!!



All Settings

Be Safe

- Walk
- Stay in your space
- Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself
- Report unsafe situations

Be Respectful

- Respect learning time
- Respectful greeting
- Stay on sidewalks
- Follow directions
- Be kind

Be Responsible

- Be in area only with permission
- Clean up after yourself
- Use appropriate voice level

Classroom/Specials

Be Safe

- Push in chairs
- Keep feet and chair legs on floor

Be Respectful

- Raise hand and wait
- Participate
- Try your best
- Use materials appropriately

Be Responsible

- Be productive
- Be concerned about yourself
- Complete work
- Come prepared

Cafeteria

Be Safe

- Clean hands
- Stay seated until dismissed

Be Respectful

- Take turns
- Be polite
- Use manners

Be Responsible

- Clean up after yourself
- Eat first, talk second

Arrival/Dismissal

Be Safe

- Use crosswalks
- Listen to Safety Patrol

Be Respectful

- Wait quietly to enter the building

Be Responsible

- Be on time
- Come to school ready to learn

Hallway/Stair

Be Safe

- Eyes forward
- Stay to the right

Be Respectful

- Walk quietly
- Hands to sides

Be Responsible

- Use stairs as taught
- Go directly to your destination

Restrooms

Be Safe

- Wash hands using soap

Be Respectful

- Give people privacy
- Clean up after yourself

Be Responsible

- Use restroom as taught
- Report when needed

Playground/Recess

Be Safe

- Play by the rules
- Play carefully

Be Respectful

- Use good sportsmanship
- Include others

Be Responsible

- Line up when signaled
- Use and return equipment as taught

Bus

Be Safe

- Back-to-Back, Seat to Seat
- Listen to driver
- Stay in assigned seats

Be Respectful

- Use quiet voices

Be Responsible

- Keep your belongings with you
- Enter and exit bus as taught

Columbian Elementary



...a once in a lifetime learning experience...everyday!

Level III Expectations

Make It Count!!!

Step 1: Preventative Practices

Columbian use best practices to help be successful and provides teaching and reteaching of expectations.

Step 2: Verbal Warming

Step 3: Reflect & Reset (R&R)

Verbal or written problem solving

Reflect: (corrective behavior statement)

1. What was the problem? Name or confirm the problem.
2. Why is it not appropriate?

Reset: (replacement behavior statement)

3. What should you do next time?
4. Are you ready to join the class?

Step 4: Teacher Calls Family

Step 5: PAC Referral (Documented in Infinite Campus)

Family is contacted

Step 6: Office Referral (Documented in Infinite Campus)

Family is contacted

GENERAL INFORMATION

Arrival at School

The school day begins at 8:50 A.M. The breakfast bell rings at 8:35 a.m. and students can enter Columbian at that time. Students are not allowed to play on the playground before or after school. Teachers are not available for supervision at these times. All students enter through the front doors.

Assignment Notebooks

Assignment notebooks are an important part of the study skills taught at Columbian Elementary. They are intended to help with organization of assignments and scheduling of time. They also are a wonderful communication piece between home and school. It is expected that students complete this notebook as part of the lesson as each assignment is given.

Bicycles, Skates, Skateboards

For your child's safety the use of bicycles, skateboards, roller skates and roller blades at or to and from school is not permitted. This includes shoes with wheels in the heels.

Birthdays

In an effort to be sensitive to our students with food allergies and medical conditions, birthday treats are not encouraged to be brought into the school. If a child wants to contribute something to the school in honor of his/her birthday, a Cobra Celebration Book is available through the school library. A new library book can be contributed to the library, with the student's name recorded inside the book, for any donation. This is a lasting recognition for a child.

Invitations to birthday parties or any other type of party may not be distributed at school. This will help prevent hurt feelings for those children who are not included in the party plans. We also ask that deliveries of flowers, balloons or other items for students not be directed to the school.

Communications

The Columbian Courier newsletter will be sent home in the oldest or only Child's "Friday Folder" and emailed to parents. The PTO sends important PTO information monthly in the PTO Publisher that is attached to the Cobra Courier.

Field Trips

Occasionally, teachers plan field trips to enhance learning. Your child will bring a permission note home informing you of the trip and asking for your permission to join the class on the trip. In order for your child to go on a field trip, we must have the signed permission note returned to school in order for your child to attend.

Library

Every child has scheduled library periods with our Librarian to learn skills and check out books. Lost or damaged books are paid for by the child. Library books, just as classroom texts, must be transported to and from school in a bag to protect them.

Lockers

Student lockers, desks, and other such property are owned by the school. The school exercises exclusive control over this school property, and students should not expect privacy regarding items placed in school property because school property is subject to search at any time by school officials. Students are responsible for whatever is contained in desks and lockers issued to them by the school. Students may not glue or tape mirrors, pictures, or anything else inside desks or lockers. Locks are not permitted.

Personal Items/Lost and Found

Students are directed not to bring unnecessary items to school without the express approval of their teacher for a class/school project. The school district's insurance does not cover personal items owned by students. Unnecessary items would include toys, games, yo-yos, music players, cell phones and electronic games. Students who bring personal items to school do so at their own risk and if those items are lost, stolen, or damaged, they will not be covered by the school district's insurance or school district funds. If these items are lost, stolen, or damaged by other students or visitors, the school will not be responsible for replacing or repairing the personal items. If the personal items are brought to school, a school staff member will confiscate them and hold them for the student's parent to pick up. If the confiscated item is lost, stolen or damaged while in the school's possession, the school will not be responsible for replacement or repair of such item.

All items brought to school should be marked with your child's name. If your child loses an article, please have him/her check with the school office lost and found area.

Parent Visitations

Dear Parents,

Thank you so much for coming to visit Columbian Elementary. We encourage parents to visit the classroom; however, we don't want the students to miss any instruction. To address this, we have created this visitor policy.

What should I do if I want to visit my child's classroom?

- Advance notice is appreciated, but not required for a visit. You could call the office or teacher, email the teacher, or write a note to let the teacher know. It is acceptable to do a drop-in visit if you just want to check out how things are going.
- Please check in at the office for a visitor pass and to sign-in. The office will then notify the teacher that a visitor is on the way to the room.
- Please do not expect to have a meeting with the teacher when visiting. If you would like to meet with the teacher, please be sure to make an appointment.

What should I do once I get to my child's classroom?

- Please go into the classroom quietly and take a seat in the back of the room.
- It is the teacher's discretion as to the amount of participation of the visitor.
- Please do not interrupt the lesson or visit with the students.
- Encourage your child to focus and pay attention if they get distracted by your visit.
- Please refrain from texting or talking on your cell phone.

What will the teacher do?

- The teacher will say hello and let the visitor know where to sit, but will not stop for an extended conversation.
- At a breaking point in the lesson, the teacher may speak shortly with the visitor, but if the visitor has several questions, an appointment will have to be made.

How long may I visit for?

- The district suggests that visits should be 20 minutes or less. This is so that the normal routine and procedure of the classroom is not disrupted.

Parent Participation

Active participation by parents of Columbian Elementary students is strongly encouraged. Many opportunities exist for parents to volunteer their time and expertise.

All parents are encouraged to join the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO). Columbian parents have a history of strong involvement in the workings of the school. Your active participation will allow you to become more informed about the school program and will give you an opportunity to become acquainted with other parents and teachers. Keep in mind that active participation includes reviewing work in the Friday folder, asking about the day's activities, and discussing the daily assignment notebook with your child.

Positive Action Center

Columbian Elementary uses the Positive Action Center (PAC) as an intervention for students who may need assistance in appropriate decision making. The purpose of our PAC is to teach students to accept logical consequences for their behavior, provide students time to evaluate their actions, provide students with instruction and practice that stresses assuming responsibility and using problem solving strategies, and assist students with realistic goals and a productive plan for classroom success.

Safety Patrol

The school Safety Patrol has been established for one reason – the safety of children. Volunteers from the fifth grade are on duty in hot, cold, wet and snowy weather. Patrol members are on duty from 8:35-8:50 a.m. and from 4:00-4:10 p.m.

The Safety Patrol asks that students follow a few common sense rules:

1. **Cross with the safety patrols.**
2. **Listen to the safety patrols for directions.**
3. **Don't push, shove or run.**
4. **Walk while crossing the street.**
5. **Stand behind the safety patrol while waiting to cross.**

The map on the following page illustrates our major traffic area. Our four safety patrol crossings are numbered for you

- (1) **front of school driveway;**
- (2) **parking lot;**
- (3) **127th Street; and**
- (4) **bus front loading zone.**

Please study the map for a simple, less congested route to use during delivery and pick up of children. Using fenced, safe walkthroughs located at patrol crossings 2 and 3, your child can meet you at a less congested, safer location just a short distance from school. Designate your location to the children you drive and the traffic jams will be lessened greatly. Where sidewalks are not available, children should walk on the grass along the curb, not in the street.

Bicycles are dangerous to use in our traffic pattern and are not permitted.

School Breakfast and Lunch

Breakfast is served from 8:35-8:50 a.m. daily. All students are invited to enjoy a complimentary breakfast each morning and participate in the Grab and Go Breakfast Program.

Students may bring their lunch to school or they may purchase a lunch in the school cafeteria. If your child is eligible for free or reduced lunch you may make application at any time during the school year.

We encourage parents to join us for lunch throughout the year. Please call in your reservation so that we have enough meals prepared. Our Columbian Elementary policy encourages healthy food at lunch time. When joining your child, we ask that you avoid bringing sodas and fast food meals. Food cannot be shared between students.

Occasionally, students forget their lunch money. Should this occur, it is the policy of Omaha Public Schools Nutrition Services that the child will be given lunch. A note will be sent home stating money is owed.

A courtesy call will be made to a parent when a student's eating habits appear out of the usual. All students are expected to eat lunch daily. We feel that teaching healthy eating habits is a part of the education we provide for our students.

School Directory

The PTO publishes a school directory at the beginning of the year. It lists names, addresses, and phone numbers of students. One directory is distributed to each PTO membership. Additional copies are available for a small cost. Families are responsible for filling out a form in order to be included in the directory.

School Mascot

All of us at Columbian take great pride in our school and the activities we do. School pride is important for all persons in the Columbian Elementary family. It instills the feeling of belonging and security. This feeling contributes to a positive learning environment in school.

As part of our pride and spirit we have chosen a mascot and school colors. Our school colors are purple and gold. Our mascot is the Cobra.

Spirit Day is every Friday. Students and staff wear school shirts, sweatshirts and/or school colors.

Security

In order to continue our efforts to create a safe and secure learning environment, we have a security guard and security cameras here at Columbian Elementary. These cameras are displayed in our office area at all times via flat screen TV as well on various computers throughout the building. We also have an electronic lock system (buzzer entry system) on the front door and Kids Club gym door. Here are the top 5 things you need to know about the buzzer system:

- The buzzer is mounted outside of the building beside the front door and Kids Club gym door.
- The buzzer beeps through via an entry system with a video and speaker access.
- When you buzz, you will be asked how we can help and we will need for you to tell us the nature of your visit. A photo ID may be required.
- Upon entering you will head into the main office area so that we may assist you. All visitors will continue to sign in and get visitor badge.
- The buzzer system will NOT allow access unless the visitor buzzes in first. For example, even if we was you approach the door and were expecting you, the buzzer system will not engage to allow you access unless you buzz. This is a security setting to ensure the doors are locked as much as possible.
- Only Kids Club families will be using the electronic entry system on the Kids Club door. All visitors during the school day will use the front door entry system.
- The front door will be unlocked only at the arrival of school from 8:35-8:50 a.m. Columbian Staff is on duty to monitor the doors during these times and welcome our students to begin their school day. The electronic entry system will be in effect at all other times.

It will work best if you have a designated plan for drop off and pick up outside of the arrival and dismissal doors. Please let your child know where you will park or where to meet on the school grounds once they exit the building. As always, all students will enter through the front door.

Thank you for your cooperation with this routine of entering the building in order to make our environment as safe and secure as possible for our students, families and staff.

Special Occasions, Parties, and Treats

There are two parties during the school year. There is a Halloween party and a Valentine's Day party. The PTO room parents help to organize these parties. According to District policy no homemade or home baked treats are permitted to be brought to school by the students at any time. All food must be commercially purchased and wrapped individually.

If a student wants to contribute something to the school in honor of his/her birthday, a Book Club has been established for the library. The student's name is recorded in a new library book for any contribution to the library.

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District Calendar**

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