

The ELL Handbook 2021/2022

An addition to the
Memorial-Spaulding School Handbook



First, a warm welcome to you and your family here at Memorial-Spaulding Elementary School. It is always wonderful to see new families at the school and we really cherish the diversity all the ELL families bring to the school community.

The ELL families at the school are here for various reasons. Some have lived abroad for a long time and are quite familiar with the school system. Others just moved here from their home country and everything seems very new and different right now.

To get introduced to the school, we highly recommend that you take a look at the Memorial-Spaulding School Handbook. It can be found here: www.memorialsauldingpto.org/handbook

The School Handbook will give you useful information about the PTO (the parent-teacher organization), the bus services, different types of fundraising, opening hours, the extended day program, parking zones, important phone numbers and lots more.

In supplement to the School Handbook, the ELL Handbook will hopefully answer the rest of the questions you might still have. It is an additional introduction to the school, and you will also be introduced to different organizations and websites that might be helpful to you.

The school

In a normal school year, Memorial-Spaulding School has around 460 students in 22 classrooms, and the classroom sizes are approximately 21 students. During COVID-19 these numbers have been a bit lower. The school is an elementary school meaning the classrooms run from kindergarten to 5th grade.

Every classroom has its own classroom teacher, and kindergarten and some classes also have an assistant teacher(s) in the classroom.

At the end of every school year the students are being mixed with the other students from the same grade level. This means that every time a new school year begins, your child will start in a class consisting of some of the old friends plus some new friends. The children will also get a new classroom teacher every school year.

Every classroom has one or more room parents. Being a room parent is voluntary, but it is important that every classroom has at least one.

The room parents have different tasks. They help organize activities outside the classroom and send out emails to the other parents if donations to the classroom are needed (e.g., paper towels, hand sanitizers, crayons). They also make sure that the classroom teachers receive a group gift from the class around holidays and at the end of the school year. See the rules about gifts in the School Handbook.

You will receive weekly emails with updates from your child's classroom teacher and the principal, Tom Morris. If you have not received anything during the first couple of weeks, please contact the school office to make sure that the school has your correct email address. Call the school at the phone number 617-559-9600 or write an email to Kim Rutherford at rutherfordk@newton.k12.ma.us

Preparation for the school start

The first days in school can be very overwhelming, especially if your child(ren) doesn't understand/speak English. Try to be as prepared as possible.

Parents/guardians are not allowed inside the school (for safety reasons) and talking to your child about saying goodbye outside the school can help prepare them, so this doesn't come as a surprise. If you need to enter the school, you will have to use the front door, sign in (either at the greeter's desk or in the main office), and get a visitor's pass.

Contacting the classroom teacher and/or the ELL teachers might also be a good idea (email is the best way). They will be able to tell you about the classroom schedule and how the first days will look like. You can also ask if there is a possibility of getting a tour around the school together with your child (but this is not guaranteed).

Your child should bring:

- A water bottle with his/her name on (not a glass bottle).
- Healthy snack for the morning break (remember there is no lunch break on Wednesdays so pack enough snacks to keep your child full until dismissal at 12.20pm).
- Lunch (remember reusable ice packs in the lunch bag since there are no refrigerators in the classrooms. Also warming up lunches is not possible).
- A bag with an extra set of clothes and an extra mask. This will stay in the child's locker during the school year. Remember to write your child's name on the bag.
- Warm clothes for the cold days and maybe an extra sweater/cardigan in the backpack. The windows in the classrooms stay open all the time for ventilation.
- Rain gear and boots for the rainy days.
- Remember to put on sunscreen on sunny days. The school doesn't provide sunscreen for the children.
- Have in mind that the children will be outside as much as possible so remember to check the weather forecast every day.

Masks must be worn at all times at the school property, except outside and during lunchtime. The masks should have a minimum of two layers, and masks without valves are preferred. These rules will change over time so keep an eye out for updates from the school.

You can buy clothes, rain/snow gear and school equipment in many stores. These are just suggestions: Zappos (only online), Amazon (only online), L.L.Bean, Dick's Sporting Goods, Walmart, Target, Old Navy, Gap Kids and Children's Place.

School hours

Your child can enter the school building between 8.10-8.20am. Ask your child's classroom teacher about the morning procedure and which entrance your child should use. As it is right now, kindergarten students can use the classroom doors facing the playground structures, and the older children can go through the front and back doors.

The children can either be told to go straight inside or to use the colored 'waiting' spots outside their dedicated entrance. If the children are asked to use the colored spots, they will have to find an available spot and stand there until the teacher tells them they can go inside.

If your child is late, call phone number 617-559-9617. If your child is not feeling well and must stay at home, or if your child has to be out of school for other reasons, you should also call this number.

Dismissal is at 2.50pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and at 12.20pm on Wednesdays. Parents should wait outside the same door the children used for entrance in the morning (unless your child is taking the bus). Please be on time.

Snow days

Days with heavy snow are called 'snow days', and schools will often be closed, delayed or have early dismissals. You will receive information about this from the school department if the weather affects Memorial-Spaulding.

A snow day will be added as an extra school day at the end of the school year if the school has been closed for an entire day. Please have this in mind if you have made plans right after the scheduled last

school day. There can be a *maximum of five* extra school days added at the end of a school year (even though there actually might have been more snow days).

Be aware in the winter it is not allowed to park cars and trucks on any street in Newton for more than one hour between 2am and 6am. This ban takes effect from December 1st through March 31st. Also remember it is required that homeowners clear their sidewalk (if they have any) within 24 hours of a snowstorm's end.

The ELL program

The ELL children are receiving ELL lessons outside the classroom (pull out) and sometimes also some extra ELL help inside the classroom (push in). ELL lesson times vary depending on the English level as well as the grade level.

As students progress, the pull out lessons may decrease and perhaps more push in will occur. It is a fluid model that depends on the needs of the students.

The ELL lessons outside the classroom will be together with other ELL students, and this is a great opportunity for the children to listen to English at a slower pace. Also, in a smaller group it is easier for the children to speak up and practice their English skills.

Memorial-Spaulding has two wonderful and skilled ELL teachers, Ms. Alla Mantsur-Shane and Ms. Jaqueline Mahoney. Normally the children stay with the same ELL teacher through a school year.

Ms. Jaqueline Mahoney:

Speaks English and Russian.

Started working in Newton in 2006 as a 3rd grade classroom teacher. After about 9 years she decided that she really enjoyed working with ELL students and their families, so since 2015 she has been teaching ELL in Newton.

Ms. Alla Mantsur-Shane:

Speaks English and Russian.

Raised two bilingual and biliterate daughters. Has been teaching ELL at Memorial-Spaulding since 1999. She thinks that she has the best profession in the world!

PTO (Parent-Teacher Organization)

The PTO is made up of a group of parents who volunteer to support and help the school in many ways. The organization consists of the PTO board, several committees (working groups), and any parent who volunteers to be a part of the school community.

On the PTO board you find the executive board members, regular board members (usually chairpersons from the various committees), teacher representatives and the principal. There are board meetings every other month throughout the school year and everybody is welcome to join and get the latest updates from the organization.

The committees work with different assignments depending on their focus (Mystery Dinner, International Festival, Book Fair, ELL, etc.). They arrange wonderful events throughout the year, stand behind different kinds of fundraising and are putting together activities for kids to join after school (ASCA, After School Creative Arts). Each committee gets together several times a year depending on the assignments and the various time commitments.

At the end of every school year and in the fall, the PTO sends out signup sheets from the committees who are looking for more volunteers. You can always contact the PTO if you missed a signup sheet or have questions about how to get involved. Just send an email to info@memorialspaulding.org.

As a parent you can choose to be a part of any of the four levels of PTO:

An executive board member

There are positions as co-presidents, treasurer, secretary, fundraising coordinator, and technology liaisons. These are all two-year voluntary positions. The executive members have voting rights, meaning they decide as a group what events/programs to sponsor and how the monies are raised.

A member of a committee

Keep an eye out for the signup sheets. These are sent out in the PTO newsletters, through the room parents, and as Facebook posts. Being a committee member has no time limit.

Volunteering when the PTO is asking for help.

This can either be one-day assignments (cleaning outside the school, helping at the book fairs, and the list goes on) or one-year assignments (being a room parent).

Visitor/guest

Joining as a visitor/guest when PTO is inviting parents and children to social events and other fun activities.

Any kind of involvement in the PTO is a great opportunity for families to be a part of the school community and it is completely up to you to decide the level of participation. Join when and if you feel ready. Remember that family engagement actually promotes academic, social and emotional well-being of students.

The ELL Committee

The mission of the ELL Committee is to help new ELL families in the transition into a new and unfamiliar school system and making sure the families feel welcome and included in the school community. Improving the communication between ELL families, PTO and the school is one of our main goals. We are also here if ELL families need any help, need translation, would like to talk to another ELL parent, or would like to get a tour around the school (seen from the outside).

At Memorial-Spaulding it is also possible to be connected with a buddy family. A buddy family is a support family with children attending the school, and it can either be another ELL family or a non-ELL family.

Having a buddy family can often be very helpful, especially in the first months after moving to a new country/community. They will be able to talk about how it is to live here, tell about the school, and they might also be able to answer some of the many questions new ELL families have. Getting to know someone with children at Memorial-Spaulding and maybe arranging a playdate for the kids can furthermore create a sense of belonging for both parents and children.

Please let us know if you are interested, and we will try to match you with a buddy family with children the same age as yours.

The ELL Committee is still very new, but we are trying to create a committee where we have representatives from the top five ELL language groups (Russian, Hebrew, Chinese, Japanese and Korean). Everybody else is of course more than welcome to join!! We are always looking for new members, so please don't hesitate to send an email if you would like to become a member, be a buddy family, or if you just want to learn more about the committee.

Remember you can always contact the committee if you have any questions.

Email address ell@memorialspauldingpto.org

Before you can volunteer

For the safety of the children, all parents who would like to volunteer at the school must complete a CORI form (Criminal Offender Record Information) and a SORI form (Sexual Offender Registry Information). Volunteer positions include library volunteers, room parents, PTO committee members and field trip chaperones. You don't need to fill out a CORI/SORI form to attend a PTO event as a guest, only if you volunteer to help at an event.

Please fill out the forms (see the link below) and bring them to the school office together with your passport or driver's license. It takes about one week for the process to be completed, so have this in mind if you want to volunteer for a specific event. As soon as your CORI/SORI-forms have been approved they will be valid for three years. It is recommended that parents fill out the forms at the beginning of the school year to ensure that they have an active Newton CORI/SORI on file in case they would like to volunteer or chaperone a field trip during the year.

Find the forms here: <https://www.newton.k12.ma.us/Page/2145>

If you have any questions or need help with the forms, please contact Kim Rutherford at the school office. She can help anyone with this, she has all the forms on hand, and submits everything on behalf of the parents. Phone number: 617-559-9600. Email address: rutherfordk@newton.k12.ma.us

ELPAC (English Learners Parent Advisory Council)

Newton ELPAC consists of a group of volunteer ELL parents who work together with the Directors on the ELL program. It is a parent advisory council, and the mission is to help the integration process of English language learners into the Newton community. ELPAC creates a network of ELL families in Newton and a forum to share information. This is open for all ELL families with children attending Newton Public Schools.

There are ELPAC zoom meetings for ELL parents almost every month and the topics change every time. You can find information about this on www.newtonelpac.org. In the meetings, there's also time for the parents to ask questions, introduce each other and talk to each other. It is always nice to meet other ELL families!

ELPAC offers translators during the meetings - you just need to request this when you register your name before a meeting.

Fundraising and donations

Fundraising, meaning voluntary financial contributions, is a way for the school to raise extra money to support events, extracurricular programs, sports, music, arts and more. Maintenance and improvements inside and outside the school are also made easier with the financial support from a lot of families.

Different fundraising activities at the school give parents several options to contribute. Examples could be buying books at the book fair or ordering the cool M-S spiritwear. Single or monthly donations from families, organizations and companies are also made possible on the PTO website www.memorialspauldingpto.org. And finally, room parents and classroom teachers send out emails to the families during the school year asking for specific donations to the classroom (that could be disinfecting wipes, pencils, tissue paper etc.).

Contributions are of great value to the school, but please remember this is completely voluntary and you should only give what you are comfortable with.

Useful websites

- Memorial-Spaulding PTO
<http://memorialspauldingpto.org/>
- Newton Public Schools, NPS
<https://www.newton.k12.ma.us>
- Memorial-Spaulding Elementary School (it is also here you can find the School Handbook)
<https://www.newton.k12.ma.us/Page/29>
- Newton ELPAC
<http://newtonelpac.org>
- Aspen (the NPS student database system, it is important to keep your information updated in here)
<https://aspen.newton.k12.ma.us/aspen/logon.do>
- The food service program (all students in the Newton Public Schools are eligible for free lunch in the school year 2021-2022. They just need to sign up for it).
<https://www.newton.k12.ma.us/Page/799>
- Massachusetts School Immunization Requirements 2021-2022
<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/school-immunizations>
- At any point in the school year, if you believe that your student is falling behind or may need extra help, you have the right to request a special education eligibility evaluation. Discuss your concerns with your student's classroom teacher, who will help guide you through the process. Resources for special education are found here
<https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/parents.html>
- Newton Free Library (tip, it is a great idea to get an account! There are different events at the library, plus you can get discounts on several museum passes)
<https://www.newtonfreelibrary.net>
- BostonCentral has lots of information about Boston, activities, events, camps, etc.
<https://www.bostoncentral.com/>
- The City of Newton
<https://www.newtonma.gov>
To receive the weekly updates from the Mayor in Newton (Ruthann Fuller), you have to register at the following link: <https://www.newtonma.gov/government/mayor-fuller/updates>

Useful Facebook groups

- Memorial-Spaulding PTO
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/memorialspauldingpto>
- Memorial-Spaulding ELL
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/873772613382651>
- Newton ELPAC
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2782809175326285>

Playgrounds in Newton

You will find a lot of great playgrounds if you search for ‘playground’ or ‘elementary school’ on Google Maps. Here are some ideas:

Public playgrounds:

- Newton Centre Playground
- Soule Playground (the playground has sprinklers and a water play area in the summertime so remember to bring swimsuits)
- Skyline Park
- Newton Highlands Playground
- Hyde Playground
- Larz Anderson Park Playground

Elementary School Playgrounds:

(Remember that it is not allowed to use these playgrounds during school hours)

- Memorial Spaulding
- Mason-Rice
- Baker
- Countryside
- Zervas
- Bowen

Grocery stores

You can easily use Google Maps to locate stores near you. Here are some ideas:

- StarMarket
- Wegmans
- Trader Joe’s
- Stop&Shop
- Whole Foods Market
- Market Basket

Parks

There are many wonderful parks in Newton and in the nearby cities. Going for walks and getting some fresh air can really clear the mind after an entire day on Zoom meetings. Google Maps is very helpful, but here are some ideas:

- Cutler Park Reservation
- Franklin Park
- Larz Anderson Park (tip, great sledding hills on snowy days)
- Arnold Arboretum
- Walk around Jamaica Pond
- Walk around Chestnut Hill Reservoir

Camps and classes

Summer camps are supervised programs for children or teenagers conducted during the summer months and these camps offer a wide variety of activities. Some camps are dedicated to a certain field (e.g., sports, drama, computer programming, science, or music), while other camps may offer a little bit of everything. The duration of the camps varies from one to seven weeks and can be either half day or full day.

Camps are the perfect way for kids to meet and interact with others their own age during the summer vacation. Also, the kids will learn new skills and get knowledge that will help them grow. And one last thing - if you are working all summer, you won’t have to worry about childcare.

Remember to ask your child what they think before you sign them up. Summer camp is only fun if they want to go.

Enrichment classes are after-school or weekend activities designed to give the children the opportunity to try new things and explore and develop interests outside of the classroom. It is often one-hour lessons and typically once or twice a week. When you sign your child up for a class, it will usually be for a couple of months (classes are often seasonal). Classes can be a great opportunity for your child to try out new things before deciding to sign up for a summer camp.

There is a huge selection of possibilities when it comes to camps and classes. The list is long but here are some suggestions to start out with.

- S.P.A.C.E. Camp is a four-week summer enrichment program run by the Newton Public Schools. Students entering kindergarten through 9th grade are eligible to attend.
<https://www.newton.k12.ma.us/spacecamp>
- Newton Community Education offers programs for everyone, from toddlers to seniors. When the school day ends, the classes begin, offering access to school facilities for community learning.
<http://newtoncommunityed.org>
- Newton Parks and Recreation offers all kinds of activities, both classes and camps. Soccer, tennis, theater, horseback riding, aquatics, camps, youth and adult sports, and lots more.
<https://www.newtonma.gov/government/parks-recreation-culture>
- A variety of classes and camps at Greater Boston JCC for both kids and adults. They also have a gym, fitness center and indoor/outdoor swimming pools.
<https://www.bostonjcc.org>
- ASCA (After School Creative Arts) is a program offered by parent volunteers from Memorial-Spaulding. Some of the classes are run by outside organizations and other classes are run by parents. Check out the classes at the website.
<http://memorialspauldingpto.org/registration/>
- Goldfish swim school
<https://www.goldfishswimschool.com>
- Dedham Health and Athletic Complex has lots of options if you're looking for a fitness center, tennis lessons, indoor pools, kids programs or camps.
www.dedhamhealth.com
- Taking music lessons is a wonderful idea if you want to learn how to play a new instrument or want to get better. Singing is also an option.
<https://www.jamminwithyou.com> or <http://www.inhomejams.com/>
- Time For Partners is a program for children 18 months to 4 years (with an adult). Learn, explore, and make friends through play, music, and art.
<https://www.newtonma.gov/government/parks-recreation-culture/cultural-development/programs/time-for-partners>
- Dancing is so much fun! Consider joining a class.
<https://www.creativestepsdancestudio.com>

- Exxcel offers gymnastics, climbing and different camps.
<https://www.exxcel.net>
- At Empow Studios, kids ages 7-15 have fun learning coding, robotics, film & animation, Minecraft, engineering and more. With both classes and camps across five STEM domains – Digital Art & Design, Minecraft, Coding, Robotics, and Video Game Design — kids deepen their technology skills as they build amazing beginner to advanced projects.
<https://empow.me/>
- If you would like to sign your child up for summer camp but need financial assistance to do so, please fill out an application for a scholarship. This application is only valid for camps offered by Newton Parks and Recreation.
<https://www.newtonma.gov/government/parks-recreation-culture/camps/scholarship-information>

English lessons for adults

The focus is on the children when it comes to the ELL program, but this doesn't mean that the parents should be left out. Here are some suggestions for adult English lessons:

- <https://www.newtonfreelibrary.net/ell/>
- <http://www2.newtoncommunityed.org>

It is a huge thing to move to another country - and bringing children can make the transition even more challenging. All the ELL families at the school know this feeling so you are not alone in this. If you still have unanswered questions, please reach out to the ELL Committee.

Once again, welcome to Newton and Memorial-Spaulding!

Sincerely,

The ELL Committee

Marie Lundbak Eriksen, Chairperson and Danish ELL parent

Eri Yamada, Board member and Japanese ELL parent

Celia Zhu, Board member and Chinese ELL parent

Ala Berdichevsky, Board member and Russian/Israeli parent

ell@memorialspauldingpto.org