Mark Bills
Middle School

Parent/Guardian
&
Student
Handbook
2021-2022

Marcy Burdette Steele - Principal
6001 N. Frostwood Parkway
Peoria, IL 61615
Phone: 693-4437
Fax: 693-4438
Dear Mark Bills Families,

In accordance with ESEA Section 1111(h)(6) PARENTS RIGHT-TO-KNOW, Peoria Public School Schools is notifying every parent of a student in a Title I school that you have the right and may request information regarding the professional qualifications of your student’s classroom teacher. This information regarding the professional qualifications of your student’s classroom teachers including, at a minimum, the following:

1. Whether the teacher has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.
2. Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived.
3. The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.
4. Whether the student is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

If at any time your student has been taught for 4 or more consecutive weeks by a teacher not highly qualified, the school will notify you.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact the school at (309) 693-4427.

Sincerely,

Marcy Burdette Steele
Principal

July 1, 2021
Eagle Mission
As Eagles, we SOAR TOGETHER with STEADFAST SUPPORT for all members of our Eagle community. We live with OPTIMISM and find the good. We accept OWNERSHIP for our work and our actions, and we make AMENDS when needed. We strive for personal and academic ACHIEVEMENT or growth. And we forge meaningful, collaborative RELATIONSHIPS with everyone in our Eagle community and beyond. We SOAR HIGHER by lifting others.

Steadfast Support
Optimism & Ownership
Amends & Achievement
Relationships

#SOARtogether
#SOARhigherByLiftingOthers

@markbillschool

School Hours
7:30 A.M. to 2:00 P.M.
No supervision will be available until 7:15. Students may enter the building through the front doors. Upon entering the building, students must go to breakfast or sit in the bleachers. Please encourage promptness on the part of the student, but discourage early arrivals.

Proper School Attendance
In addition to the State Law, which requires daily attendance of all students when school is in session, it is understood that a child cannot reach his/her fullest academic potential if he/she is not in school. It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to get the student to school each day, if the student is not ill. While it is fully realized that it is often easier to accept a poor excuse for absence, it is both our job and yours to do our very best to keep each student in school whenever he/she is not ill.

PLEASE CALL MARK BILLS AT 693-4437 BEFORE 7:45 A.M. IF YOUR CHILD IS GOING TO BE ABSENT.

The following are acceptable excuses for being absent from school:
- Student illness
- Serious family illness requiring a student's presence at home
- Death in the family
- Medical and dental appointments which cannot be scheduled outside of school hours
- Religious holidays

It is important that students have regular attendance at school. If your child is sick and must be absent from school, please call the school office by 7:45 a.m. If you do not call, you will receive a recorded phone message informing you that your child is absent and will be marked as unexcused. If your child has an appointment or you have not called, please send a note when your child returns to school. There is a 2-day window (starting the day the student returns to school from an absence) to correct any problems with attendance by phone or by sending a note with your child upon their return. We appreciate your support in helping us keep our records accurate.

Please remember that students arriving late or leaving early must sign the appropriate form in the office. Students that are absent for two consecutive periods will earn a half day absent.

Unexcused Absence
Unexcused absence as used in Section 7:70 School Policy is defined as absent without valid cause for a school day or a portion thereof. The following corrected responses will be made with unexcused absences: Phone call to parent/guardian when student is absent.
- On 3rd unexcused absence, principal or designee will meet with student to discuss reasons for absence.
- On the 5th unexcused absence, the principal/designee will send letter to parent requesting a conference to create an intervention plan.
- On the 10th unexcused absence, the principal/designee will mail or hand-deliver a letter to parent/guardian requesting a scheduled appointment.
- Upon the 15th and 18th unexcused absence without a Doctor’s note, parents will receive a letter from the school requesting a signature and acknowledgement of consequences of 18 unexcused absences.
• Upon the 18th unexcused absence of students ages 7-14, Project Target will refer to the Peoria County State’s Attorney’s Office. On the 18th unexcused absence, students, ages 13+ and their parent/guardian may sign an Alternative Attendance Contract which states if the student receives two more days of absence, they will be transferred to an alternative site.

School Tardiness
All students should be in their assigned classrooms at the beginning of the session. On rare occasions being late to school or class may be unavoidable. If repeated tardiness takes place, the parent or guardian will be notified and a conference will be required to discuss this problem. Students who continue to be tardy may be required to serve a detention. Students arriving late to school must have a note signed by the parent explaining why the student was late.

Progress Reports
Progress reports are sent home three times each semester to inform parents of their student’s progress. A final report card will be sent home at the end of each semester. Any questions regarding progress should be addressed to his/her teachers. This can be done by telephone, email or by requesting a conference.

Student Learning Conferences
At Student Learning Conferences, parents, students, and teachers gather to discuss the progress and goals of each student for the following weeks of school. The students will share their progress with the parents during the conferences. Grades and developmental achievements are discussed and assigned. Parents, students, and teachers determine goals moving forward through the semester. Parents/guardians are recommended to be in attendance during these conferences.

Homework
Homework assignments are an extension of the classroom. Homework is another way of developing self-discipline and organizational skills. Homework assignments will include:

• Guided reading of assigned literature or text material
• Research activities in locating information
• Work on reports or projects
• Studying for quizzes or tests

People study in different ways. The time you spend on an assignment may differ drastically from the time your friend uses. The key is to organize your time well. You are responsible for your assignments. Work is expected to be completed and turned in on time. Also, you are responsible for getting the make-up work for missed assignments due to absences.

Study Habits
You are expected to give your best effort every day because you are the “best and the brightest” students in this district. Good study habits are extremely important in being a successful learner. Here are some hints that will help you do well:

• Every person has a time of day that is better for learning. Figure out when it is best for you to study.
• Use your planner to organize your work.
• Be sure you understand what your assignment is. If you don't know, ask.
• Before leaving school, ask yourself what you need to take home.
• When studying, find a place where it is easy to think.
• Have all necessary materials when you begin.
• Avoid interruptions.

Preparations for Class
Students will have specific times when they may stop at their lockers. To avoid penalties for not being prepared for class, planning and organization should take place to ensure that all materials required for class are with the student. This includes having their planner, all homework, supplies, and textbooks. In addition, students should always carry their library book with them should the opportunity for reading occur.

Make-up Work
If a student has been absent from school one day, it is his/her responsibility to get the work that has been assigned from his/her teachers. Students will have the same period of time to make-up the work as the number of days they were absent, except in the case of a prolonged illness. If a long illness does occur, arrangements should be made to bring home the student’s assignments, books, etc., from his/her teachers. This can be accomplished by contacting the office and the secretary will gather the assignments. It is very important that a student does not get very far behind in his/her work. If a major disabling injury or illness does occur, requiring a long period of hospital or home care, a home tutor may be provided, in many cases, by the school district. This will depend directly on comments and recommendations provided to the school district by the attending physician.
Health Services
Students who become ill during the school day should immediately notify his/her teacher, the office, or lunchroom staff. The ill student will be sent to the office where we will attempt to make an accurate determination as to how sick the student is and determine what the best follow-up action should be. Emergency first aid will be provided as necessary. Please report any health concerns your child might have to their teacher and the school office. Current state law does not allow the school to dispense aspirin or other such medications without proper medical authorization.

Administering Medication
The Board of Education recognizes that some students, due to health problems, will require medication during school hours. When medication is to be administered during school hours, the following guidelines will be used. These guidelines are recommended by the Illinois Association of School Nurses and by the American Medical Association.

- Proper written authorization is to be provided to the school in advance of any medication being administered. This authorization should be from the attending physician and should detail the name of the drug, the dosage, and the time interval in which the medication is to be taken.
- The medicine must be brought to school by the parents in a container appropriately labeled by the pharmacy or the physician.
- Our school health technician who will discuss the medicine and any possible side effects with the staff will administer the initial dose at school.
- All medicine will be kept in a secured area and will only be dispensed by an adult through the office. While we will make every attempt to see that the medicine is dispensed at the proper time, the final responsibility for remembering to take the medication rests with the student.

Excuses from Physical Education
Generally speaking, students who are healthy enough to be in attendance at school are also capable of participation in physical education classes. A request to be excused from participation in physical education classes will require an excuse from a licensed physician.

Parental Visitation
We at Mark Bills are very proud of our school, its educational programs, and staff. Parents are always welcome to visit our school. We do ask, however, that if a visit is contemplated, please notify the teacher or the office in advance in order to let us make the proper arrangements to help alleviate any unnecessary disruption to student learning. Also, if you would like to talk to a particular teacher at any time, please call the office at 693-4437 and we will be very happy to arrange an appointment or have a telephone call returned. You may also email a teacher directly.

Student Record Information
In accordance with the current privacy laws and the rules and regulations currently in force involving student records, each child's school records are both maintained and updated throughout the year. If at any time you wish to inspect your child's cumulative folder, you may make an appointment and the building principal or his/her designee will be very happy to go over these records with you. Due to the fact that some of the records, such as test scores, may need some specialized interpretation, access to these records will not always be immediate. If at any time you have any questions concerning these records, please feel free to ask.

Note: All information that we possess on any current or former student is always confidential and thus cannot be shared with anyone but the parent(s)/guardian(s).

Divorced Parent - Access to Student Records
If a request for a student's record is made by the parent (listed in Skyward) not having legal custody, information will be released unless a copy of a court order giving access to only one parent or other guardian is on file at the school.

Change of Address or Phone Numbers
Please report any and all changes of either your address or phone number to the school office immediately following the change in order to maintain accurate and updated records. This is vital in case of an emergency situation. Unlisted numbers are held strictly confidential and will not be given to anyone.

Lost and Found
Over the course of a normal school year, a large number of items are either lost or misplaced around the school. Students should check in the office after school for lost or missing items. Articles not claimed after a reasonable length of time will be donated to an appropriate charitable organization.
Safety
Always walk on the sidewalk. If there is no sidewalk available, do not walk more than two people side-by-side and always face the on-coming traffic. Always make every attempt possible to stay out of the road. Care should be taken in crossing streets and highways that are encountered on the way to and from school. Students should never cross private lawns or private property on their way to or from school. Never accept rides of any type from strangers. Always report any such comments or invitations to the office immediately. If possible, try to get a description of the car, the license plate number, and a description of the person driving the automobile. Parents picking up and dropping off students are asked to allow busses to access the front of the school.

Lockers
Your homeroom teacher will assign you a locker at the start of the school year. This will be your locker for the remainder of the year. We expect you to keep it clean and neat. Do not write on or deface your locker in any way. The teacher will keep a copy of your locker number and your combination in case you should forget. The combinations are changed every summer. If you don't give your combination to anyone, you will be the only one who can open your locker.

A Reminder: School is not a place to bring items that you treasure or are valuable. Please leave these things at home. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Search of Desks and Lockers
All students' desk and lockers are the property of the Peoria Public Schools and school personnel reserve the right to inspect these desks and lockers at any time, with or without the presence of the student. Students must be responsible for locking and securing their locker after each use. Students are not to share or give other students the combination to their locker.

Textbook Information
Each student will be issued a set of textbooks. Each child is responsible for any lost or damaged books that come from his/her rental set. If any additional costs are necessary to either replace or repair a book, the student is responsible and will be required to pay such costs.
- Book fees can be handled in any one of the following ways:
- Cash or check (made payable to Peoria Public Schools) or online at PSD150.org
- Letter of Verification from the A.F.D.C. Office
- Indigent form application: This form can be obtained from the office

It will be processed and forwarded to the central office, following its completion. Each student will be required have a student planner. Students are not charged for the first planner. The cost to replace a lost planner is $5.00.

Library Rules
The library is a place of learning, and students who make use of the library facilities will be asked to follow proper library rules and etiquette, just as they do in the classroom. The Library Media Specialist and the classroom teacher will determine the specific use of the library and the books. Each student who checks out a book, or books, from the library is responsible for them, and if a book is lost or damaged, the student will be expected to make proper financial restitution to the school or district for the cost of replacement or repair of the book. A small fine will be imposed for students who are late returning the books that they have borrowed. Specific rules regarding the management of the library and student expectations will be posted and communicated to the students, prior to their using the facility.

Meal Program
Breakfast and hot lunches are available for free to all students who are in grades five through eight. Students may also bring a sack lunch and purchase milk at school.

District-Wide Testing
Mark Bills participates in a wide variety of Peoria Public Schools sponsored testing programs to help evaluate the progress of students. The testing program evaluates the many different aspects of our educational program that directly affect our student population. Students may also be taking NWEA, Easy CBMs and IAR assessments throughout the year. Results and explanations of the tests are shared with parents during the conferences and as they become available.

Field Trips
All of our students will, at one time or another, be going on school-sponsored trips to supplement our pupils’ education. Parents will be notified in advance of these trips. If you have any reason for your child not to go, (allergies or other such medical reasons), please notify the school and we will attempt to make arrangements. School attendance is still required during this time if a student does not participate in the field trip activity. Students who receive in-school suspensions and/or out of school suspensions will be evaluated
individually on whether or not they will be able to participate in these activities. The building principal reserves the right to exclude students from field trips if they have behavior problems at school and in class.

Honor Roll
Our sole purpose at Mark Bills is to try and promote academic excellence. We are very proud to have the opportunity to honor our students who do exceptionally well academically. In order to be eligible for honor roll, a student must earn A’s and B’s in all classes. Students who earn all A’s will be recognized on the Principal’s Honor Roll.

Eighth Grade Promotion
Listed below are guidelines for 8th grade promotion:
- All fees for books, library, locks, etc. must be paid
- Students will have to meet all academic requirements
- Students must have appropriate behavior throughout the school year and give an adequate effort on their school work.

Extra-Curricular Activities
Mark Bills offers a variety of extracurricular activities for our students. While this list is always evolving and expanding as conditions and circumstances warrant, the following is a partial list of these activities.
- Cheerleading
- Music (Band, Orchestra, Chorus)
- Athletics (Softball, Baseball, Basketball, Volleyball, and Soccer)
- Math Counts
- Student Leadership
- Yearbook
- Chess Club

To be able to participate in any of the above activities, students must be able to satisfactorily meet the academic requirements as set forth in the District 150 Eligibility Requirements. All participants need to have a physical on file to take part in athletic competitions. All students who intend to participate in these activities should
- adhere to Peoria Public Schools academic requirements
- have a current physical on file
- obtain written permission from a parent or guardian to participate

PTC
Mark Bills is fortunate to have an active PTC. We encourage all parents to join. Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm in the library.
Student Dress Code Policy

Mark Bills Middle School - Student Dress Code

STUDENT UNIFORM POLICY AT MARK BILLS MIDDLE SCHOOL

SHIRTS
Color choices for shirts are navy blue, light blue, black, or white. Shirts must have a collar (polo or oxford type). Shirts must be free of stripes, emblems, and other decorations. Mark Bills spirit wear shirts may be worn in place of a collared shirt. Shirts must be long enough to be tucked in at all times. Oversized shirts as well as tight fitting shirts will not be allowed. Students are permitted to wear turtleneck shirts in uniform top colors.

SWEATERS/SWEATSHIRTS/JACKETS
Sweaters can be worn over a uniform shirt. The color choices are black, gray, white, or navy. Sweaters should be free of logos, stripes, emblems, and other decorations.

Mark Bills spirit wear sweatshirts, purchased through the PTO, and crewneck sweatshirts that are gray, white or navy may be worn. Crewneck sweatshirts must be free of logos, stripes, emblems, and other decorations.

SLACKS/SHORTS/SKIRTS
Color choices are navy, khaki (light tan), or black. These items of clothing must be free of stripes, other decorations, or embroidery. Slacks should be purchased in the correct size to avoid “sagging” or to prevent clothes from being too form fitting. Sweat pants and low-riders are not allowed. Girls may wear capri/cropped length pants.

Specialty Attire for Girls: Girls may wear jumpers or skirts in navy, black, or tan. Length regulation for skirts and shorts is below the fingertips when arms are held at the sides. Please note – denim pants of any color, stretch pants, yoga pants, sweatpants, and nylon warm-up pants are not acceptable.

SHOES
Students can wear any type of shoes as long as the shoes do not pose a safety hazard. Due to safety issues, all shoes must have a back strap and flip-flops cannot be worn by students. NO OPEN TOE SHOES MAY BE WORN.

JACKETS/COATS AND ACCESSORIES:
Jackets/coats of any kind may not be worn during the school day. Hats, sweatbands, and do-rags are not to be worn in the building. Excessive jewelry should not be worn to school.
Discipline at Mark Bills
State School Code
Maintenance of Discipline
Section 5/10-22.6
Of The Illinois School Code

“Teachers and other certificated educational employees shall maintain discipline in the schools, including school grounds, which are owned or leased by the Board of Education and are used for school purposes and activities. In all matters relating to the discipline in, and conduct of, the school, and the school children, they stand in the relation of parents and guardians to the pupils. En Loco Parentis – This relationship shall extend to all activities that are connected with the school program and may be exercised at any time for the safety and supervision of the pupils in the absence of their parents or guardians.”

Mark Bills follows the district’s discipline handbook in all discipline related matters. The district discipline handbook can be found by visiting www.peoriapublicschools.org/discipline or requesting the document in print by visiting the school office.

"The policies and procedures outlined in this Student Handbook are subject to change for the 2021-2022 school year. If any changes are made, they will be posted on the school's and district's websites."

The following forms of discipline may be used at Mark Bills:
- Individual and group discussions as to proper and acceptable means of solving a problem
- Removal of privilege from a student as a result of unacceptable behavior
- Time in Re-Align room
- Keeping a student after school (teacher detentions)
- Suspension from school
- Recommendation for an expulsion from school to the Board of Education

Below are some examples of behavior that will not be tolerated and thus be disciplined at Mark Bills:
- Physical and/or verbal assaults (fighting will result in suspension from school)
- Acts disruptive and coercive to the operation of the school.
- Stealing or defacing of school property.
- Disrespect, insubordination, and verbal abuse of school personnel.
- Disrespect or verbal abuse of other students (including sexual harassment)
- Use of or possession of, alcoholic beverages on school grounds or property during school hours or activities.
- Carrying of or possession of, weapons on school grounds or property during school hours or activities.
- Truancy, class cutting, or leaving building without permission.
- Refusal to identify oneself.
- Smoking (possible suspension)
- Gambling
- Indecent exposure of the body, or engaging in an act of sexual conduct with another.
- Engaging in any kind of aggressive behavior that does physical or psychological harm to another or urging of another student to engage in such conduct. This includes bullying, extortion, threats, intimidation, harassment, hazing, fighting. (These are only a few examples.)

School Rules
- When the bell rings at 7:20, students will begin to get breakfast and head to homeroom. At 7:30, all students are to be seated in the classroom and not in the hallway or restrooms.
- Bicycles are to be parked in the bike rack. NO RIDING ON THE PLAYGROUND.
- Roller blades are not to be worn in the building.
- SKATEBOARDS ARE NOT TO BE RIDDEN ON SCHOOL PROPERTY.
- No one will be admitted into the building before 7:00, without the permission of the principal or a teacher. The only exception to this would be in case of bad weather. Then, students may enter and go to the bleachers until the bell rings.
- Once students are on the school grounds, they may not leave unless they have a note from parents or permission from the office. Anyone who goes home for any reason must be cleared through the office. A sign out sheet is located in the office.
- Purses, book bags, and coats are to be left in lockers.
- Pushing, shoving, hitting, tackling, fighting, kicking, etc., throwing of snowballs, snow, food or other objects is not allowed.
- For special purposes, pets may be brought to school when prior permission has been obtained from the principal.
• No visitors will be allowed in the classroom without prior consent from the office and the teacher/teachers involved.
• Keep hands off of the fire alarms.
• Students must use the office phone for emergencies.
• Students are expected to leave school as soon as they are dismissed.
• School rules will be enforced during the following times:
  1. On the way to school
  2. On the way home
  3. While at school, on any district property, or attending any school-related function.
• We expect all students to address all adults, teachers, and staff members in a courteous manner. (No nicknames or first names)
• All students are expected to respect private property and not use it as a short cut to and from school.
• Gum chewing is not permitted, while in school.
• Physical assault or severe verbal intimidation is not permitted.
• No student or group may impede another's freedom to properly utilize school facilities and programs or in any way impede educational or school sponsored, supervised or sanctioned activities.
• No person may take or destroy personal or public property.
• Profanity, vulgarity, obscene gestures, and defiance of duly constituted authority are not permitted.
• Being under the influence of alcohol, consumption of alcohol on the school grounds or at school activities is not permitted.
• The use of, possession of or the sale of dangerous drugs or chemicals is strictly forbidden.
• Weapons are not permitted on school grounds.
• Students must follow reasonable requests and directives of school personnel.
• State law requires attendance at school. Truancy, cutting class, or leaving the building without permission is against school rule

ELECTRONICS ARE NOT TO BE BROUGHT TO SCHOOL. If these items are lost or stolen, the school accepts no responsibility or liability for these items. Students are not to use IPODS, MP3 players or cell phones during school hours. If a student is caught using these devices, the device goes off, or the student has the device out, the device may be confiscated. Students will receive their confiscated item at the end of the school day on their first offense. Parents will be required to pick up the item from school after it has been taken for each additional offense. If one of these items is lost or stolen, the school accepts no responsibility or liability for the items.

Gang Policy
No student shall wear, possess, use, distribute, display, or sell clothing, jewelry, emblems, badges, symbols, signs, or other things which are evidence of membership or affiliation to any gang. Such behavior is subject to suspension and/or expulsion. (School Board Policy 5114.2)

Weapons Policy
Possession of knives, guns, pocketknives, look-alike guns, or other sharp objects deemed to be potentially life threatening will not be tolerated from any student. Those objects will not be allowed in the school building, on the way to or from school, lockers, book bags, etc. A suspension and/or expulsion may result from the possession of any items deemed as a potential weapon.

Use of Internet
Please refer to the Internet policy located in the Peoria Public Schools Calendar. Students and parents must also sign the acceptable use policy in this handbook before computers may be used at school. The signed form must be available in the planner at all times.

Pagers/Cellular Telephones
Cell phones should be off while at school. They are not to be seen, heard or used during the school day. If a cell phone is heard or seen during the school day, it will be confiscated and turned over to school personnel. Students will receive their confiscated item at the end of the school day on their first offense. Parents will be required to pick up the item from school after it has been taken for each additional offense. If one of these items is lost or stolen, the school accepts no responsibility or liability for the items. Consequences will be given for refusing to adhere to the cell phone policy.

Boundary waiver students
Students who attend Mark Bills under the boundary waiver option may be returned to their home school as a result of poor attendance or poor behavior.
Stalking
Stalking may be defined as, but not limited to, the following definition: A student or group of students that follow another student(s) to or from school with the intent to harass, intimidate or threaten that student(s). Such actions will not be tolerated and will lead to appropriate school discipline such as suspension.

Bus Conduct
Use of Video Cameras on School Buses
The content of the video/audio tapes are used to monitor conduct and maintain a safe environment for students and employees. Recordings are confidential records and may only be used by school officials and law enforcement for investigations, school disciplinary actions, hearings, proceedings under the Juvenile Court Act of 1987, and criminal prosecution, related to incidents occurring in or around the school bus.

Note: The content of the video/audio tapes are used to monitor conduct and maintain a safe environment for students and employees. Recordings are confidential records.

What Do You Do If…?
...you must contact your parents?
If an emergency exists, students may ask their teacher for a pass to use the phone in the office.

...you are requested to stay after school by a teacher?
If you are requested to stay after school by a teacher, it is your responsibility to make arrangements to fulfill this obligation. Students will be permitted to use the phone in the office to notify parents that they are staying after school.

...you get sick or injured during school time?
Ask your teacher for permission to go to the office to see the secretary. If further treatment is necessary, the secretary will contact your parent/guardian.

...you are late to school?
If you are late to school, bring a signed note from your parent/guardian. The tardy will be appropriately recorded and a pass will be issued if necessary. You must notify the office and sign in or out when you leave and when you return.

...you lose or damage a textbook or library book?
You are responsible for all books given to you during the year. You must pay for any schoolbook you damage or lose.

...you lose money or personal property?
Report any losses immediately to the teacher in charge. Check in the office or inquire at the custodian's office about lost property. To prevent losses, please do not bring valued and treasured items to school.

...you have a question about the bus?
Contact transportation at 693-4418.