

**University Park Elementary
Parent FAQ**



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Whom Should I Contact?

Rachel Salerno (Miss Rachel) – Secretary

rsalerno@gatewayk12.org OR 724.327.4113 x 1

1. Attendance issues or questions
2. Arranging an Early Dismissal
3. Changing your student's transportation home
4. Providing an excuse for your student's absence
5. To reach your student's teacher by phone
6. To reach the Principal, Ms. Hoffner
7. To reach the School Nurse, Food Services Manager, or Guidance Counselor, if you cannot reach them at their extensions.
8. Questions about upcoming events and their registration deadlines.

Miss Rachel is at lunch from Noon to 1:00 PM. Miss Judy will cover the front desk, and will be able to take messages, arrange for early dismissals or parent pick-ups, or connect callers to other individuals in the building. She will not be able to assist you with attendance issues, but will take a message and Miss Rachel will contact you as soon as possible.

Ms. Hoffner – Principal

jhoffner@gatewayk12.org OR 724.327.4113 x 2

1. Concerns about your student's progress or performance
2. Concerns about your student's behavior
3. Concerns about bullying or the behavior of students other than your own.
4. Concerns about safety

When Should My Child Be At School?

1. Students must be in the building by 9:10 AM. Student drop off begins at the back door at 8:40 AM, and ends at 9:10 AM.
2. Students arriving at 9:10 AM or later will need to sign-in at the Front Entrance.
 - a. Ms. Hoffner or Ms. Rachel will be at the front door beginning at 9:10 AM. They will record the student's name, teacher, time of arrival, reason for lateness, and their lunch choice.
 - i. A parent or guardian is required to sign the Tardy Sign-in Sheet.
 - ii. The student will then receive a pass to class.
 - b. The following are acceptable excuses for late arrivals:
 - i. A doctor's appointment – please provide an excuse from the doctor's office whenever possible.
 - ii. Illness – please see “*What should I do if my child is ill?*”.
 - iii. A family emergency.
 - iv. Failure of regular bus to arrive/bus was late.
 - c. If your student has an appointment early in the school day, it is perfectly acceptable to bring your student late to school with an excuse from the appointment.
3. At 10:00 AM, Skyward will make an automated call to alert parents and guardians about a reported student absence. If you have notified the office of your student's absence via telephone or email, you should not receive this call.
 - a. If you receive the automated attendance call and you believe that your child is in school, please call (724) 327-4113 extension 1. This is most likely an attendance error, but we will be happy to confirm that your child is present in class and correct the attendance record.

What Should I Do If My Child Is Ill?

1. If your child is ill, we encourage you to keep them at home.
 - a. ***District policy states that a student must be free of fever and/or vomiting for 24 hours before they are allowed to return to school.***
2. If at all possible, please contact the school to let us know that your child will not be attending.
 - a. If sending an email notification of absence, please address the email to your student's homeroom teacher, the Secretary, and the Principal. This will ensure that your student's attendance is accurately recorded.
 - b. If you choose to call the school, please dial extension 1 to reach the Secretary.
 - i. ***Please note: a written excuse must accompany a phone call in order to excuse the student.*** This can be submitted as an email later in the day, or as a note when your student returns to school.
 - c. If your student is absent due to illness for three consecutive days or longer, the office will request a medical excuse.
3. If your student has not had fever or vomiting for 24 hours, and feels better after the start of the school day, you may bring them to school. Please provide a written excuse when you arrive, so that we can excuse your student's Tardiness.

What Are The Different Types Of Excuses?

1. Parent Excuse – this is a note written by the parent excusing a student from school for illness, religious holidays, educational trips or tours which are not sponsored by Gateway School District, or “urgent reasons.”
 - a. Parent Excuses may either be a written note, a completed Absence Excuse Form, or an email sent to the Homeroom Teacher and the Front Office.
 - b. Students are only permitted **10 Parent Excused Absences per year**.
 - c. A note indicating that a child attended a funeral will not count as a Parent Excuse, but rather as a Funeral Absence.
 - d. “Urgent reasons” will be strictly interpreted and will need to be approved by Ms. Hoffner.
 - e. **To reduce the number of items our students and teachers are handling, we highly encourage parents to email Absence Excuses.**

2. Medical Excuse – this is an official excuse from a Medical Professional for either an extended illness or an appointment which conflicts with the student’s school hours.
 - a. Medical Excuses must come from the medical professional attending your student. They can be requested at the time of appointment.
 - b. After three consecutive absences where a student was reported to be ill, the Front Office will request a medical excuse.

3. Extended Absence – an absence of 2 or more consecutive days accrued by travel.
 - a. Extended Absences **must** be approved **before** the absence. The Extended Absence Request form must be completed and submitted to the Front Office.
 - i. An absence of 2-5 days must be approved by the Principal.
 - ii. An absence of 6-10 days must be approved by the Superintendent.
 - iii. An absence of longer than 10 days may result in a Withdrawal.
 - iv. If you are leaving the country for an extended period of time, it is possible to arrange Cyber school while you and your student are away, so that they will not be withdrawn. Please contact the Front Office for more information.
 - b. This will be coded as a Vacation, and will not count towards the student’s Parent Excuses.

When And How Should I Send In An Excuse For My Child?

1. Per District policy, parents may provide 10 excuses for their student for the year. After a student has accrued 10 parent excuses, you must provide a medical excuse from your student's doctor for any further absences.
2. **Excuses must be submitted in writing.** The office will accept written notes, completed Absence Excuse Forms, and emails as legitimate excuses.
 - a. **To reduce the number of items our students and teachers are handling, we highly encourage parents to email Absence Excuses.**
3. Excuses must be submitted **within three days** of the absence.
 - a. An extension must be approved by the Principal.

Where Is My Child's Busing Information, And When Will The Bus Arrive?

Bussing information can be found on your student's Skyward page, under the "Busing" Tab on the menu on the left side of the page.

1. The arrival time listed on Skyward is an estimate which could be affected by many factors: weather, traffic, issues at previous stops, or issues during previous bus runs. University Park Elementary has no control over when the bus arrives at a particular stop. The busing garage and the Transportation Department have advised us that there is a 5- to 10-minute window before and after the times posted in Skyward when it is possible for a student's bus to arrive at the stop. Please keep this in mind when planning your student's day.
2. ***For Kindergarten Students:*** **an adult must be present at the stop in order for the bus driver to release a Kindergarten student from the bus.** If an adult is not present at the stop, the bus will continue to the next few stops and then return to check the stop again. Afterwards, the bus will return the student to school. When this happens, the bus garage will contact UP to try and coordinate with contacting the parent or guardian of the Kindergarten student.

How Do I Pick Up My Child From School?

For the safety and security of all students in the building, we ask that all parents and guardians follow these guidelines when picking up students from the school.

1. Students may be picked up from either the Main Entrance or the Parent Carpool. Students will not be released to an adult at any other location.
2. Parents should notify the Front Office and the homeroom teacher of any changes to a student's dismissal as soon as possible. Sending a note or email is completely acceptable and will be honored. **Ideally, we would like to know of any changes to a student's dismissal no later 1:30 PM.**
3. If an emergency arises after 1:30 PM, please call directly to the Front Office to change your student's dismissal.
4. In order to pick up your student in the Carpool Line, you must complete the UP Carpool Registration Google Form. You can register your student for the Carpool at any time.
 - a. We highly encourage parents who wish to regularly pick their students up to register for the Carpool.
 - b. After registering for the Carpool, you will receive a Carpool Registration Confirmation email. This will provide your carpool number, instructions for the first day of school, the Carpool Guidelines, and a video for how to navigate the Carpool line.
 - c. The teachers monitoring the Carpool line will only release a student to a car that is displaying the correct UP Carpool Tag, and to an adult listed on the Carpool Registry.
 - d. Please see the Carpool Guidelines for more details.
5. When picking up a student from the Office, please do the following:
 - a. You will scan your driver's license in at the Security Kiosk. If you are having issues, please ring the doorbell beside the Red Box and the Ms. Rachel can assist you.
 - b. **Please be aware: any adult picking up a student from University Park must have their Driver's License scanned.**
 - c. Ring the doorbell to the right of the Security Kiosk to contact Ms. Rachel and let her know your student's name.
 - d. Once we have confirmed that the adult picking up the student is approved on Skyward, Ms. Rachel will call down your student and then bring out a Sign Out sheet.
 - e. Please sign out your student on the Student Sign-Out sheet by providing your name. Please DO NOT simply list "mom", "dad", or "aunt", as we need an accurate record of who took the student out of school.
6. When picking up a student, you must wait outside the door or in your car near the Main Entrance.

How Will I Know What Is Happening At University Park Elementary?

1. At the beginning of every month, Miss Rachel sends home a calendar listing any planned or regular events, along with registration due dates and our Daily Rotation schedule.
 - a. This calendar can also be found on the University Park page of the Gateway School District website.
 - b. This calendar is also sent home via email using Skyward's message center.
2. The Front Office frequently communicates using Skyward's message center.
 - a. Please make sure that the email address listed on Skyward is accurate and up-to-date.
3. The Front Office will, if necessary, use Skylert to mass call, text, and email parents of a situation. This may happen in the event of an early dismissal due to weather conditions, a change to an important event, a delay in student transportation home, or an emergency.
 - a. Please make sure that the phone numbers listed on Skyward are accurate and up-to-date.
 - b. If you see you have a missed call, please check your voice mail. Skylert will leave voice messages if you are unable to answer.
4. The Front Office tries to reserve the use of phone calls for urgent or emergency communication. We prefer to send out reminders regarding upcoming events or upcoming schedule changes via email. ***Please make sure that the email address listed on Skyward is accurate and up-to-date.***
 - a. If you have an issue with updating or changing your Skyward information, please contact the Secretary in the Front Office.

Does UP Do Anything Special For Student Birthdays?

We love celebrating birthdays at UP! We are always ready to assist you in celebrating your child's special day. We ask that you keep the following in mind: University Park Elementary strictly adheres to the Gateway School District Wellness policy (AR 246) regarding edible snacks for celebrations of any kind.

1. Before sending treat bags for your child's birthday, please make sure to contact your child's homeroom teacher and the Front Office in order to coordinate and schedule accordingly.
2. We highly encourage families to consider sending in non-edible treats, such as pencils, erasers, small toys, slime, etc. These items do not require prior approval from the Nurse's Office to be distributed.
3. If you would like for your child to have an edible treat, you must do the following:
 - a. You may purchase items from the Cafeteria using the Party Snack Order Form.
 - i. **The completed Party Snack Order Form and payment must be submitted at least 2 full weeks before your event.**
 - ii. The Order Form will be submitted to the Nurse's Office for approval. If there are any substitutions which need to be made due to food allergies or other dietary restrictions, the Nurse and the Cafeteria Manager will work to provide an alternate treat if needed.
 - iii. Once the Nurse's Office has approved the Order Form, the Cafeteria Manager will order the treats from their supplier. This may take some time, and is one of the main reasons we suggest placing your order as soon as possible.
 - iv. Once the treats have arrived, the Cafeteria Manager will work with your child's homeroom teacher on scheduling when to deliver the treats on your requested day.
 - b. You may make a selection from the Pre-Approved Snack List to purchase yourself.
 - i. **You will need to send your selection to the Front Office at least 2 full weeks before your event.**
 - ii. Once the Front Office has received your selection, we will forward it to the Nurse's Office for approval. If there are any substitutions which need to be made due to food allergies or other dietary restrictions, the Nurse or Front Office Will reach out to coordinate an alternate treat.
 - iii. Once the Nurse's Office has approved, you may either send in the treat bags with your child or drop them off with the Front Office after morning drop off has ended.
4. If your child would like to invite their classmates to a birthday party outside of school, invitations should not be addressed to any specific student and will be distributed to the entire class. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to the Font Office.