



**Donald McKay K-8 School
Student & Family Handbook
2023-2024 School Year**

**122 Cottage Street
East Boston, MA 02128
(617) 635-8510**

Jason Meland, Principal

Welcome to the Donald McKay K-8 School! We are looking forward to working with you and your child this school year. We are committed to making this a successful year for everyone in the McKay community. This Student/Family Handbook will provide you with specific information about our school. In addition to this booklet, your child will receive a copy of the **Boston Public Schools Policy Handbook for Parents and Students**, which will provide you with important information about our district. Both handbooks should be read carefully and kept readily handy for reference when you have questions.

The McKay school uses “Compass Values” as a way to empower and instill qualities for success in our students. Our four Compass Values are Kindness, Effort, Respect, and Responsibility. We are passionate about these values and we believe that they ensure a supportive and safe learning environment for all. McKay students are taught and expected to uphold these values in school, at home, and in their communities. We believe that when our students display kindness, effort, respect, and responsibility, they’re able to have optimal learning and reach their full potential.



What does it look like when students are exhibiting these qualities?

	Kindness	Respect	Effort	Responsibility
Everywhere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Include others ● Help each other ● Use kind words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be polite ● Accept differences ● Follow instructions ● Share space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Persevere ● Be brave ● Use creativity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be here and on time ● Be safe ● Be honest ● Repair harm
Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support classmates ● Consider others ● Show empathy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Listen to speaker ● Use materials appropriately ● Share space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Actively participate ● Use resources ● Take chances ● Do your best 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be ready to learn ● Stay on task ● Bring materials
Hallways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Smile at others ● Hold the door 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be quiet ● Be aware of others ● Share space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be efficient 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sign out ● Have a pass ● Keep hallway clean

We look forward to meeting you and hope you have an enjoyable school year.

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2023-2024 DISTRICT CALENDAR

2023

- ⊙ August 8-10 New Leader Institute (NLI)
- ◆ August 15-17 August Leadership Institute (ALI)
- ◆ August 22-24 New Teacher Institute (NTI)
- ◆ August 22-24 Teacher Summer Institute (TSI)
- ◆ August 31 UP Academies: Boston & Dorchester, all grades – first day of school
- September 4 Labor Day: No school
- September 5 All teachers and paras report
- ◁ September 5 UP Academy Holland, all grades – first day of school
- ▲ September 7 Students in grades 1-12 report, including grade 1 in ELCs and EECs
- ◆ September 11 Pre-K & Kindergarten students report, including EECs, ELCs, and special education
- October 9 Indigenous Peoples' Day: No school
- November 10 Veterans Day: No school (Observed)
- November 22 ... Early release for students and school staff
- November 23-24 Thanksgiving Recess: No school
- December 22-January 2 Winter Recess: No school
- December 25 Christmas Day

2024

- January 1 New Year's Day
- January 2 All teachers and paras report
- ▲ January 3 Students return from recess
- January 15 M.L. King Jr. Day: No school
- February 19 Presidents' Day: No school
- February 20-23 February Recess: No school
- ▲ February 26 Students return from recess
- March 29 Good Friday: No school
- April 15 Patriots' Day: No school
- April 16-19 Spring Recess: No school
- ▲ April 22 Students return from recess
- May 27 Memorial Day: No school
- * June 4 (or day 170) Last day for seniors
- * June 18 (or day 179) Early release for students
- June 19 Juneteenth: No school
- ▼ June 20 (or day 180) . Last day of school if no days are lost due to cancellations. Early Release Day

Major Religious & Cultural Holidays

2023

- Sep. 16-17* Rosh Hashanah
- Sep. 24-25* Yom Kippur
- Nov. 12 Diwali begins
- Nov. 23 Thanksgiving
- Dec. 8-15* Hanukkah
- Dec. 25 Christmas
- Dec. 26-Jan. 1 Kwanzaa
- Feb. 14 Ash Wednesday
- Mar. 11* Ramadan begins
- Mar. 29 Good Friday
- Mar. 31 Easter
- April 10* Eid al-Fitr
- April 22 Earth Day
- April 23*~30 Passover
- May 5 Orthodox Easter
- June 17* Eid al-Adha
- June 19 Juneteenth
- July 4 Independence Day

2024

- Jan. 1 New Year's Day (observed Jan. 2)
- Jan. 6 Three Kings Day
- Feb. 10 . Lunar New Year

- ▲ Start or End Date
- All Teachers and Paras Report
- Central Offices and School Buildings closed
- School Buildings closed
- *begins the night before at sunset

AUGUST 2023

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
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SEPTEMBER 2023

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OCTOBER 2023

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NOVEMBER 2023

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DECEMBER 2023

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JANUARY 2024

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FEBRUARY 2024

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MARCH 2024

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APRIL 2024

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MAY 2024

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JUNE 2024

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23	24	25	26	27	28	29

JULY 2024

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21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Extenuating circumstances and/or inclement weather may necessitate changes to the calendar during the year.

Visit www.bostonpublicschools.org/calendar for current information.

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INSTRUCTIONAL HOURS

The instructional day at the McKay is from 8:30am to 3:10pm. Students should arrive at school between 7:45am and 8:20am. Students arriving at or after 8:31am are considered tardy. They must sign in at the tardy desk outside the front office before reporting to class. Middle school students will receive a detention, if tardy.

School Hours: 8:30am to 3:10pm

Breakfast: 7:45am to 8:20am

Morning recess: 8:00am to 8:20am

SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICY

The McKay School Site Council has approved a McKay School Uniform for the 2023-24 school year. **All students in grades K-8 will be required to wear the McKay School Uniform.**

The uniform will consist of:

- A navy blue McKay t-shirt, McKay polo shirt, or plain navy blue polo shirt
- Black or khaki pants, shorts, or skirt
- A McKay sweatshirt



Students will be provided with 2 t-shirts, 1 polo shirt, and 1 sweatshirt free of charge at the start of the 2023-24 school year. Additional uniform items will be available for purchase at the following prices:

- T-shirts: \$5.00
- Polo shirts: \$5.00
- Long-sleeve t-shirts: \$10.00
- Sweatshirts: \$10.00
- Sweatpants: \$10.00

FOOD POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Breakfast

Breakfast begins at 7:45am and ends at 8:20am. Free breakfast is available for all students, and we encourage everyone to have a healthy well-balanced breakfast. Walkers should arrive for breakfast at 7:45am. Bus riders will always be provided with breakfast if their bus arrives after 8:10am.

Students who arrive late will have the choice of eating a quick breakfast in the cafeteria before reporting to class.

Snacks & Drinks

Elementary School (Grades K1-5): Appropriate snacks and eating times will differ based on grade-level. Homeroom teachers will communicate food expectations.

Middle School (Grades 6-8): No snacks will be allowed in the middle school. Any student with health concerns or needs will be sent to the nurse's office for nourishment.

Whole School: Water is the only drink allowed in the school building other than milk in the cafeteria.

Birthday Treats

If a student would like to bring birthday treats to the class, parents/guardians must contact the student's homeroom teacher to coordinate. Teachers will let parents/guardians know of any health or dietary restrictions.

STUDENT DROP-OFF AT SCHOOL

All students are to enter the school through the recess yard. The recess yard doors will close at 8:30am. At that point, all tardy students must come through the front door. If being dropped off by car, students are to be dropped off at the front of the building and are to walk around to the back. Cars are not to drop students off in the parking lot, as this is an active bus lane. Adult supervision in the recess yard will begin at 8:00 am.

STUDENT PICK-UP AFTER SCHOOL

Dismissal is at 3:10pm. Please be prompt and do not come too early. Parents/guardians are to wait for students in their grade-specific pick-up area.

EARLY RELEASE OF STUDENTS

Students may not be released early from school unless the parent/guardian or other authorized adults (over 18 years of age) has come to the office to sign them out. Students may not leave early other than for a doctor's appointment or a family emergency. We ask that you make such appointments after school. Teachers may not release any child to someone who is not listed on the Emergency Information Form filed in the office. The nurse will contact parents/guardians of students who become ill at school. Parents/guardians must pick up these students at school when notified.

We will not authorize early dismissal of students after 2:45 pm, unless there is an emergency.

ATTENDANCE/TARDINESS

Excellent attendance and school success go hand-in-hand. The more often a student is absent, the harder it is for the student to keep up with the class. Students with great attendance are more likely to succeed academically than those students who are frequently absent. Therefore, we wanted to remind students and families of state, local, and school attendance policies.

Massachusetts law requires compulsory attendance for all students. Chapter 76, section 1 of the Massachusetts General Laws requires all children between the ages of six and sixteen to attend school. The school must uphold state laws relative to student attendance.

Absence Procedures

In order to ensure the safety of students, you are requested to notify your child's teacher and/or call the school at (617) 635-8510 by 8:15 AM every day your child will be absent from school.

Please note that only **5 absences per year** can be excused by family notes/emails/TalkingPoints messages. All other absences can be excused by a doctor's note, or will otherwise be considered unexcused.

After **8 unexcused absences in a marking term**, an administrator will file an attendance card to a BPS Supervisor of Attendance, who may file a petition with the juvenile court.

<p>What is an excused absence?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Illness, such as fever and vomiting ● Death in the immediate family ● Religious holidays ● Court appearances ● School suspension 	<p>What is an unexcused absence?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Weather related ● Student needed to babysit ● Vacation during non-vacation time
<p>How can I excuse my child's absence?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Note from the doctor ● Note/TalkingPoints message from parent/guardian stating the date of and reason for the absence.* ● *A <u>maximum of 5 absences</u> will be excused with a note/message from a parent/guardian. A note from the doctor is required for any additional absences to be excused. 	<p>When should I schedule my student's doctors appointments?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>Outside</u> of school hours ● If a student must attend an appointment during the day, please send your child to school before and/or after the appointment
<p>What are the hours of the school day?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cafeteria doors open for breakfast at 7:45am ● Morning pick-up starts at 8:20am ● Homeroom starts at 8:30am ● Dismissal occurs at 3:10pm ● Students must attend school for at least a half-day (3 hours) to be marked present 	<p>What if my child has a chronic illness (i.e. asthma, diabetes)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Please fill out a consent form for our school nurse to contact the doctor to get your child's health action plan. ● Send in a copy of the health action plan for the homeroom teacher

It is our expectation that families adhere to the district school calendar. Every day at school is meaningful to our students. **Therefore, please plan family vacations according to the school calendar.** Extended absences may result in discharge from our school; if this happens, parents/guardians will need to re-register their students at a BPS Welcome Center and may not be readmitted to our school.

NO SCHOOL AND SEVERE WEATHER DAYS

In case of severe weather conditions, classes will be held unless an announcement has been made via phone and/or public media stating that all Boston Public Schools are closed.

For all other "no school" days, please refer to the BPS calendar (see attachment at end of handbook).

EMERGENCY INFORMATION FORM

Emergency Information Forms must be filled out and returned at the beginning of the school year. Parents/guardians are asked to provide work numbers and at least two local telephone numbers of people who will be responsible for the child when the parent/guardian is not available. Remember, this information is for your child's safety. The information will not be released to anyone except your child's teachers and the main office. **PLEASE NOTIFY THE SCHOOL IMMEDIATELY OF ANY CHANGES ON THE EMERGENCY INFORMATION FORM.**

VISITOR POLICY

We encourage parents/guardians to visit their child's classroom and become acquainted with their child's teachers. Contact the teacher in advance. Upon arrival, you **MUST** sign in at the main office. All visitors

MUST wear a visitor's pass at all times while on school grounds.

MEDICATION POLICY

In accordance with Massachusetts state law, only the school nurse, another registered nurse employed by the district, or the student's parent/legal guardian may administer medication to students within the school setting. Medications must be delivered to the school nurse by the student's parent/legal guardian. In addition, all medications to be given within the school must have the following documentation:

1. A formal provider's note indicating the name of the medication, the time medication needs to be given, and the medical reason for the medication signed by the provider and parent/legal guardian.
2. Medications must be in the original container, labeled with the name of the child, accurate dosage, date of prescription, prescription number, and name of the provider.

When medications need to be given on a field trip, arrangements will be made to accommodate that child's needs. The nurse must be notified at least two weeks prior to ensure adequate accommodations can be arranged.

Immunization

Massachusetts students must provide documentation of immunization according to school requirements or show a medical or religious exemption. Medical exemptions come from the student's doctor and document a contraindication, which is a reason why an individual cannot medically receive the vaccine. Religious exemptions come from the parent/guardian and state in writing that a vaccine conflicts with his/her sincerely held religious belief. The school nurse must be provided an updated immunization record and if the student's school immunization record does not comply with Massachusetts state law then he/she will be excluded from school until such documentation is obtained.

FIELD TRIPS

Prior to any field trip, a note will be sent home describing the trip and explaining any fees involved. This notice includes a permission slip that MUST be signed by the parent/guardian and returned to the child's teacher. Students will not be allowed to go on a field trip unless the permission slip is signed and returned. Field trips are an extension of the curriculum, and all students are expected to participate on the trips. Often there are follow-up lessons that directly relate to the field trip experience.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT & SCHOOL-WIDE COMMUNICATION

There are many opportunities to connect and engage with the McKay. Please check your child's backpack and TalkingPoints for a monthly newsletter and calendar of events, and reach out to your child's teacher(s).

The School Parent Council (SPC) will meet on a regular basis. All parents/guardians of children at the McKay are automatically enrolled in the SPC and are encouraged to attend meetings. This is a great chance for you to voice your opinions, concerns, and comments regarding your child's education at the McKay. There is also a monthly Principal Coffee Hour to learn about the McKay and to have your voice heard.

Parents, guardians, and other family members are encouraged and welcome to volunteer in the classroom and as a chaperone on field trips. If you wish to volunteer some of your time, please contact your child's teacher. Depending on the volunteer responsibilities, parents/guardians/family members may be asked to complete a CORI check before spending time with students in the classroom or on field trips. The CORI check can be completed through the main office. All volunteers and visitors must register in the office upon arrival and must wear a visitor's pass at all times while on the school grounds.

Open houses and family/teacher conferences are held twice a year, in the fall and in the spring. Ongoing communication between home and school is critical to your child's success. Please keep your child's teacher(s) informed of changes that might affect your child's performance.

DETENTION/CONSEQUENCES

If a student violates any of the Compass Values, a detention is a potential consequence of his/her decisions. If assigned a detention, the parent/guardian will be notified via email, text, letter, or phone call and the student will be expected to serve the detention within one day of the infraction. If the student does not serve the detention within the acceptable time frame, they will be held accountable with additional consequences.

HALLWAY EXPECTATIONS

In order to maintain safety in the school, students are required to have a pass when traveling in the hallway outside of transition times. Students who do not have a pass while in the hallway without an adult will earn a detention. Individual circumstances will be taken into consideration.

TECHNOLOGY USE

The McKay is a cell phone-free school for all students. If there is an emergency and you would like to get in contact with your child during the school day, please call the McKay Main Office at 617-635-8510. You may also call Michelle DeLucia (857-269-9810) or Naomi Zuckerman (857-332-1481 - *habla español*).

Students in grades 5-8 will be using Yondr pouches to secure their cell phones during the school day.

- All McKay students in grades 5-8 will be given a personalized Yondr pouch. Students are responsible for bringing their Yondr pouch to school every day.
- Students must lock their cell phone inside their Yondr pouch upon arrival every day or they must leave their cell phone at home.
- Yondr pouches will remain locked at all times while at school, even during fire/emergency drills.
- McKay students will not try to open their Yondr pouch during the school day without administrator permission.
- McKay students may remain in possession of their locked Yondr pouch and phone at all times or put the locked pouch in a locker. The McKay is not responsible for lost or damaged phones.
- Any phones found outside of the Yondr pouch will be confiscated and a parent/guardian will need to meet with school administration before the phone is returned. Additional consequences may be assigned.
- Yondr pouches are property of the McKay School. Students are responsible for intentional damage to the pouch and will be responsible for purchasing a replacement. The replacement cost is \$20.00.

Chromebooks and Other Technological Devices

Students and parents/guardians will sign a “Student Chromebook Use Agreement” in order to have full access to technology during instruction at the McKay. Failure to adhere to this agreement may result in loss of privileges. The agreement is attached to the end of the handbook. Students and parents/guardians must read, sign and return to school.