

KINDERGARTEN FAQs

Kindergarten Questions

At what age can my child start kindergarten?

Children need to turn five before September 1st to enter kindergarten. Kindergarten registration for the 2021-22 school year is open to those children who will turn five by September 1, 2021.

How do half-day and full-day differ?

While each covers the same curriculum content, all day has more time to do so. The structure of the day differs in many ways, but the two biggest are:

- Half day students have less time to practice academic skills
- Half day students spend less time on social emotional learning

Afternoons in full day are pretty much dedicated to these two areas, plus lunch and an extra recess time.

Is financial support provided to help with the cost of Full Day Kindergarten?

Financial support may be available. Families can contact Karen Coll (kcoll@abschools.org) for more information.

Do kinders eat lunch? And if so, where do they eat?

Half day: No. Half day kindergarten students are dismissed at 11:30.

Full day: Yes. Full day kindergarten students typically eat lunch in our cafeteria. They have the option to purchase lunch at school or eat a lunch brought from home. Kindergarten students have the first lunch period and usually are the only group of students in the cafeteria during their lunch period.

Is there snack time?

Yes. Half day students have one snack break. Full day students have two snack breaks (in addition to lunch).

How many recesses do kinders have?

Half day: 1

Full day: 3

How long is recess?

The scheduled lunch and recess times are 25 minute each for all students K-6 (total of 50 minutes)

Do kinders have homework?

No. But we always encourage reading- independent, reading to, and reading with your child. Please see the District homework policy for more information.

Is there a nap/rest time built into the day?

Yes. There is a 30-minute period of quiet time in the middle of the day.

Are there assistants in the classroom?

Yes.

How will my child know how to get to the classroom in the morning?

A teacher greets the buses as they arrive in the morning. The children wait with the teacher and walk to the classroom together.

How will my child get on the correct bus at the end of the day?

Kindergarten teachers take their responsibility very seriously to ensure kids get home safely, whether by bus or by car pick-up. Each student is given a name tag with a bus number or other pick-up plan clearly identified.

General Questions**When do kids start reading?**

Reading instruction begins on the first day, with students exposed to a variety of print and text experiences. Some students will come into the year already reading, others will still be developing their readiness skills. Kindergarten is a big growth year, with students given many new strategies for reading and opportunities to grow at their own pace. Teachers constantly assess student growth, both formally and informally, to help guide their instruction.

What curriculum does McCarthy-Towne follow?

Every elementary school in Acton and Boxborough follows the same curriculum as outlined by the district and in accordance with the Massachusetts Department of Education guidelines.

Curriculum standards for the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District can be found here:

<https://www.abschools.org/cms/One.aspx?portalId=216111&pageId=477516>

What math program does McCarthy-Towne use?

Beginning next year, we will use Illustrative Math in all grades. This is true across the District as all elementary schools K-6 plan to adopt the Illustrative Math program for the 2021-2022 year.

How much homework do students receive?

McCarthy-Towne follows the district guidelines which can be found here:

https://z2policy.ctspublish.com/masc/browse/actonset/acton/IKB/z2Code_IKBhttps:

What support does McCarthy-Towne provide for gifted students?

The District does not have a gifted program at any of the schools. At McT, we believe in meeting the student where they are and growing them by a year, whether they are at, above, or below grade level expectations.

What support does McCarthy-Towne provide for students who need academic support?

What sort of technology is used at McCarthy-Towne?

Beginning in the 2021-2022 school year, students will have devices on a “1-1” basis. K and Grade 1 students will have iPads and students in grades 2-6 will be assigned Chromebooks. Additionally, every classroom is equipped with a Smartboard to facilitate teaching.
(link to Ed Tech site for more info)

How often do students have Music class, Art class, Physical Education and Library?

At McCarthy-Towne, we refer to these classes as “Specials” and students in all grades visit each Special, once a week, for 45 minutes. This is common to all AB elementary schools.

Beginning in fourth grade, students gain an additional section of Music each week. In fourth grade students participate in an all-grade Chorus program and by fifth grade, students have the option to continue with Chorus or to participate in Band or the Strings program.

How long is recess?

Students in grades first through sixth have a schedule 25 minute recess and a 25 minute lunch. Additional break time may be scheduled at the teacher’s discretion and varies by grade level.

Are there conferences?

McCarthy-Towne teachers schedule two conferences every year, one in the fall and one in the spring. There is also an optional winter conference. Without a typical trimester reporting

instrument, parent-teacher conferences are crucial for communicating student performance and growth.

What is the best way to reach out to the classroom teacher?

Teachers send a welcome letter to families, typically a week or two before the start of each school year. In this letter, they will discuss the common and preferred means of communication.

How does McCarthy-Towne support diversity?

McCarthy-Towne values its diversity and celebrates it with events such as World Heritage Day and school-wide projects such as this self-portrait example: Grades 3, 4, 5, and 6 created self-portraits. These self-portraits were cut into quarters and reassembled so that each new square is composed of four different students, celebrating differences and sending a message of support and friendship. Through cooperation and respect for each other and our unique characteristics, we build and foster a strong, diverse and accepting community.

What is the typical class size at McCarthy-Towne?

It's important to note that class sizes are balanced throughout the district so that numbers are similar across the six elementary schools.

In kindergarten, the average class is 18-19 students

In 1st and 2nd grades, the average is 21-22

In grades third through sixth, the average is 23-25 students.

Does McCarthy-Towne have report cards?

No. McCarthy-Towne uses formative assessments to guide its instruction. Parent conferences are held 2-3 times each year to review and discuss student progress.

How do McCarthy-Towne students transition to the junior high?

At McCarthy-Towne, the transition to junior high begins in 5th grade with the introduction of agenda books. The end of each day includes time to update their agenda with upcoming assignments in all subject areas.

In sixth grade, students start rotating for different subjects. Our sixth grade teachers operate as "specialists" and will teach their subject area multiple times each day to accommodate the number of sections.

By all accounts, the transition for McCarthy-Towne students to the junior high is seamless.

General Registration Questions

How can I register a student entering grades 1 - 6?

Contact the district Registrar, Karen Coll, by email registrar@abschools.org or by phone 978-264-4700 x3310. The Registrar's office is located at 15 Charter Road in Acton.

Who do I contact if I need childcare beyond school hours?

The district offers several options through its Extended Day program. You can find additional information here: <https://abce.abschools.org/home>

Want more information?

You can find the full Elementary School Handbook here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XON_pVuanCULPNmoEx-ekIeFcdSQhW4/view?usp=sharing

Want to know more about McCarthy-Towne? Check out our “What makes McT special” section on our school website.