

2025



2026

# PYRTLE

- Elementary -



## Student Handbook

721 Cottonwood Drive | 402-436-1162 | Fax: 402-458-3262 | [pyrtle.lps.org](http://pyrtle.lps.org)

Becky Unterseher, Principal | Amber McGregor, Coordinator

 Pyrtle Elementary School



**Lincoln**  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS









# LPS Student Calendar .....2026

## JANUARY 2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

## APRIL 2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

## FEBRUARY 2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

## MAY 2026





S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						




## MARCH 2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

## JUNE 2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

-  First Day for K, 6, & 9th Grades
-  First Day for 1-5, 7-8, & 10-12th Grades
-  Last Day for Students
-  All Schools Not in Session

-  Schools Not in Session (*Professional Learning/Planning Day*)
-  Quarter Start Dates
-  Quarter End Dates

**Calendar Options for Families:** The Lincoln Public Schools District understands and appreciates that our community has a wide variety of rich and varied religious celebrations and observances. In the event families recognize these holidays, parents should notify schools. Students will be given excused absences and allowed reasonable opportunities to make up any schoolwork missed.

**Note:** Changes to the calendar may occur as a result of inclement weather or other circumstances. If sufficient school time is lost as a result of calendar changes, and it brings the total number of school hours for the year below the state minimum requirements, the Superintendent will implement a plan for making up this time, which may require additional minutes added to the day, additional days added to the calendar, days previously identified as non-student days re-scheduled as student day, or other appropriate calendar or schedule measures.



## Welcome

Dear Students and Families,  
Welcome to Pyrtle Elementary School! This handbook has been prepared for all students and families to use to answer any questions you might have about the policies and practices of our school. Please carefully review the contents of this handbook with your child. If you have questions or concerns not covered in this handbook, please do not hesitate to call the school office.

On behalf of the entire Pyrtle staff, we look forward to partnering with you to make this a productive and successful year of learning for all.

Becky Unterseher, Principal



### **Please Note:**

*The information that has been previously housed in individual school handbooks is now in the LPS Important Information Booklet. You received a copy of this booklet via email from the district office. It is also available on the LPS website.*

*The Pyrtle School calendar is linked on the Pyrtle website at [lps.org/pyrtle/](https://lps.org/pyrtle/). The LPS Important Information Booklet is on the LPS website at [www.lps.org](https://www.lps.org).*

# Intent of Student Handbook

This handbook is intended to be used by students, parents, and staff as a guide to the rules, regulations, and general information about Pyrtle Elementary School. Each student is responsible for becoming familiar with the handbook and knowing the information contained within it. Parents are encouraged to use this handbook as a resource and to assist their child in following the rules contained in this handbook.

Although information found in this handbook contains detailed and specific information on a variety of topics, the handbook is not intended to cover every situation and circumstance that may arise during any school day, or school year. This handbook does not create a “contract.” The administration reserves the right to make decisions and rule revisions at any time to implement the educational program and to assure the well being of all students. The administration will be responsible for interpreting the rules contained in the handbook. Should the situation or circumstance arise that is not specifically covered in this handbook, the administration will make a decision based upon all applicable school district policies, and state and federal statutes and regulations.



Pyrtle Elementary School serves 450 students in grades Preschool through 5th grade. The building was originally constructed as a single-story school with 14 classrooms in 1964. In 1966, there was an addition of a sloped-floor auditorium and a multipurpose gymnasium/lunch room. The number of classrooms was expanded to 20. In 1999, an addition of a large gymnasium with high ceilings and Art and Music rooms was added to the north end. Three additional Kindergarten classrooms were added to the south end in 2009-2010. A pitched roof was added to provide attic space to house mechanical units. The school currently consists of a gymnasium, lunch room, library, vocal music room, art room, computer laboratory, and 23 classrooms.

New handicap-accessible playground equipment was installed in 2011, along with a new concrete basketball slab and rubber tiling. There is a large grassy area for sport fields. In 2012, a walking path was added. In 2021, enhancements to the current playground will begin.

Landscaping includes a garden area with a vibrant butterfly garden. Many trees on the south end were provided by the Natural Resources District (NRD). Community and parent volunteers maintain the garden.

*Administrators serving Pyrtle include the following:*

*Lois Hegstron Hoesch (1964-1972), Marlin Johnson (1972-1996), John Weaver (1996-2001), Ann Jablonski (2001-2009), Sandi Carrington-Robertson (2010-2012), Paula Baker (2012-2017), Chris Schefdore (2017-2018), and Kristen Finley (2018-2022) , Becky Unterseher (2022-present).*

# E. Ruth Pyrtle

Emma Ruth Pyrtle (1871-1947) was born in Charleston, West Virginia. She attended elementary school in Lexington, Nebraska and was a member of the first organized graduating class of Lexington High School in 1891. She graduated from the University of Nebraska with an A.B. degree (1904) and a Master's degree (1907). She was a member of Pi Gamma Mu Honor Society.



Miss Pyrtle began a 42-year career with Lincoln Public Schools in 1898, retiring in 1940. She was principal of Bancroft School (K-8) and McKinley Elementary School (which became grades 1-9 with prevocational and evening classes). McKinley was Lincoln's largest grade school and had 700 students. She lectured at teachers' institutes in Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska.

She was credited as a national pioneer for the improvement of elementary principalship and was a prolific contributor to education journals. She authored two books: *History of the Public Schools of Lincoln* (before 1923) and *Early Virginia Families, Pyrtle-Davis-Turner-Marlin* (1930).

Miss Pyrtle served the National Education Association (NEA) as president of the Department of Elementary School Principals from 1927-28, chairman of the Retirement Committee from 1924-1929, and president from 1929-1930. She served as general secretary of the YWCA in Des Moines, Iowa, in charge of women's welfare activities during World War I. She was a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

She traveled extensively. Her hobbies were hiking outdoors and the study of birds. She died in Lincoln, Nebraska, at age 76.



## **Mission Statement**

*Pyrtle's community inspires and empowers learners for the future.*

# Communication

The preferred way to communicate with families is electronically. It is important that your current email information is on file. Hard copies are available upon request.

## School Newsletter

The school newsletter, The Panther Post, contains announcements, information, school events, etc. This newsletter is sent weekly through School Messenger on Thursdays.

## Weekly Communication Folders

Typically, school news will be sent home via Thursday folders. Please return the folder the next day including any notes to your child's teacher. General information will be sent with the oldest child in the family attending Pyrtle School.

## Community News

"Community News" is a newspaper distributed by Lincoln Public Schools. It is free to all elementary students the first week of every month from September through May. "Community News" replaces most informational flyers and can be used as a guide to community activities for students. The monthly school lunch menu is included in each issue of "Community News."

## School Website

Information is regularly updated on our website: [pyrtle.lps.org](http://pyrtle.lps.org)

## ParentVue

Parents may access communications, attendance information, report cards and more for their child through ParentVue. A "button" linking to ParentVue can be found on our school website.

## School Messenger

This district-wide communication system sends school and district emails, texts, and phone calls to families with important information. Please be sure the school has your updated phone number and email address.

## Pyrtle PTO Communication

PTBoard is an all-in-one communications and fundraising platform for PTOs. Designed to make your life easier. With features like announcements, fundraisers, signups, directories and more. PTBoard is website based, no need for an app and authorization sign up. PTBoard is open-ended and can be viewed by everyone. Many of our fellow LPS PTOs use the PTBoard platform and give great reviews!

*The web link will be available through [pyrtle.lps.org/PTO](http://pyrtle.lps.org/PTO)*

## Make-Up Work

We appreciate parent/guardians' conscientious regard for picking up homework for their child.

- If your child will be absent only one day, work may be made up or taken home upon return to school.
- If your child will be absent for an extended period of time (more than three days) please contact the classroom teacher ahead of time to plan for completion of work and notify the office.

Homework may be picked up after school in the office.

# After School Clubs and Activities

Throughout the school year, a variety of interest clubs and activities are sponsored by the Pyrtle PTO. Club and registration information will be sent home with students. Additional Lincoln Public Schools activities available to students (some for only designated grade levels) include: Chorus, Band, and Orchestra. Other clubs and activities may be organized to address special interests of students and staff.

# Playing Outdoors

We feel that children need to play outside. Therefore, every attempt will be made to use the playground when possible. If children are not well enough to play outside, they are usually not well enough to be in school. Unless a physician's excuse has been obtained, a note is required each day that a child is to remain indoors during recess. The note should state the reason for the request.

Students are encouraged to dress appropriately for the weather. During wet, snowy weather, students not adequately dressed for the conditions (outdoor boots, etc.) will be asked to remain on the hard surface area for recess. Please do not send snow pants to school. Children lose too much time pulling them on and off. Indoor recess will be scheduled when the windchill or temperature is 10° or below or when it is raining.

# Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

The Pyrtle Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is a vital part of Pyrtle's success with children. As an organization, they represent parents/guardians and organize events and projects that serve children and families. Scheduled PTO meetings and activities are listed on the Pyrtle web calendar. All teachers and families are encouraged to attend PTO meetings and activities. Pyrtle-wear is also offered by the PTO each year.

# Arrival Procedures

The Pyrtle campus will be closed until 8:45 a.m. for the safety of students.

## Arrival Times

- Students arriving for breakfast should not go before 8:30 a.m. Breakfast is served between 8:30-8:55 a.m. Enter at Door #1.
- Earliest arrival (unless entering breakfast, chorus, instrumental music, or before-school YMCA services) is signaled by the bell at 8:45 a.m.
- Students NOT eating breakfast will line up outside their assigned door.

ARRIVAL DOORS	
Kindergarten	Door #3
1st Grade & 2nd Grade	Door #2
3rd Grade	Door #1
4th Grade & 5th Grade	Door #17

- Students arriving after 8:55 a.m. will use Door #1 and go straight to their classroom.
- If your child arrives before 8:45 a.m. and is not eating breakfast, we will be contacting you. There is no supervision for students outside before 8:45 a.m.
- School begins at 9:00 a.m. After 9:00 a.m., all students use the main entrance and must check in with the office. All other doors will be locked.

## Dismissal Procedures

For the safety of students, parents/guardians must come to the office when picking up their child before the regular dismissal. Office staff will contact the classroom teacher and the student will be sent to the office. Students will NOT be called out of class until a parent has arrived.

## Dismissal Times

- All K-5th students are dismissed from the building and teachers will escort them out their designated exit door at 3:38 p.m.
- All students must go directly home, to daycare, or to a school sanctioned activity after dismissal.
- School Campus (including playground) is closed until 6:00 p.m. except for use by school childcare and clubs. Reservations for rooms/playground should be entered in the district Archibus system.
- If students are not picked up by 3:45 p.m., they will be brought to the office.

## Dismissal Areas

- Students participating in YMCA will meet staff in the classroom hallway.
- Participants in school sponsored activities will meet their supervisor at a designated location.
- Parents should arrange to pick up their child(ren) outside at the same location each day.
- Students staying after school for longer than 10 minutes will notify parents by phone.
- Students will not be allowed to play on the playground while waiting for rides after school.

Families must make plans to have siblings meet up outside the building. Grade levels will dismiss out the following doors:

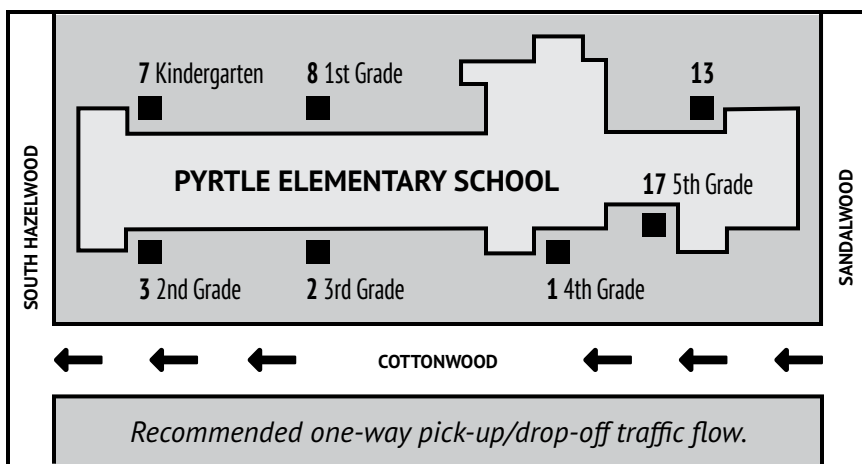
<b>DISMISSAL DOORS</b>			
Kindergarten	Door #7	1st Grade	Door #8
2nd Grade	Door #3	3rd Grade	Door #1
4th Grade	Door #1	5th Grade	Door #17

# Traffic Flow Legend

Recommended one-way flow for loading/unloading students in the Loading / Unloading area.

**(NO PARKING 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. School Days, Bus Zone)**

## Dismissal Areas Map



## ! Emergency Contact Information

In case of emergency or illness, can we reach you? **Please make sure we have your current phone number and email!** Just stop in, call or email the office with any changes.

## Attendance at Special Events, After-School and/or Evening Activities

Students attending after-school and or evening activities at Pyrtle School must be accompanied by a parent/guardian. Students must be in attendance during the school day in order to attend special events, after school and/or evening activities.

# Volunteers

We appreciate the help of volunteers at Pyrtle School. Volunteers can assist in our classrooms in addition to helping with PTO activities and committees.

Complete the Volunteer Application online at [www.lps.org](http://www.lps.org). All field trip volunteers must be approved as a Level 3 volunteer. To insure you get this status, sign up at least four weeks prior to the scheduled event/field trip. There will be no exceptions to the level 3 expectations.



## YMCA Adventure Club

Adventure Club is a before and after school program available to families at Pyrtle School through the YMCA. YMCA provides before-and-after school care for kindergarten through fifth grade students.

Please call 402-434-9262 for registration and fee schedule.

## Student Use of Telephone / Cell Phone

Students will be permitted to call home on a school phone regarding school matters after getting permission from the classroom teacher. Calls by students must be kept to a minimum, as there are a very limited number of phone lines in and out of school. Students are asked to make arrangements for participating in after-school activities or going home with a friend before arriving at school. Cell phones and other electronic devices have been found to be disruptive to learning. **If a student brings them to school they must remain in the child's backpack and turned off.** If the student takes an electronic device out during the school day, it will be kept in the office until a parent/guardian can pick it up. Students have the option to leave their phones with their teacher during the day.

## Leave Distractions at Home

Please leave play items and items that may distract from learning at home. Only school supplies, forms to be returned to school, and schoolwork should be brought to school. Leave gum, candy, trading cards, other electronic devices, etc. at home. Items that become a distraction will be kept by the teacher or office staff until a parent/guardian can pick it up. Certain types of clothing can be a distraction. Schools may communicate additional information on dress code expectations to students and parents/guardians.

Items that might be considered a weapon are strictly prohibited and should **NEVER** be brought to school. Students who violate this rule face the penalty of suspension and expulsion from school, in accordance with state law.

## Mental and Behavioral Health Point of Contact

Your student's mental health is important to their academic success. If you have concerns about your student's mental or behavioral health, you can contact the social worker at your student's school/program. LPS social workers are licensed mental health practitioners and can help connect you to appropriate mental health or behavioral supports. Please click on the QR code below for more information. You may also call 402-436-1144 and ask for the school social worker.



# Bullying

If you feel that peers are bullying your child, please contact your child's teacher or the building Principal. All reported incidences of bullying/unsafe behavior will follow the protocol outlined in Lincoln Public Schools Board Policy 5482: Anti-Bullying Policy.

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.

In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must include:

- **Imbalance of Power:** Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- **Repetition:** Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.
- Hurtful aggressive physical and/or verbal behavior.

Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

As an added prevention piece, please discuss with your child adults in the building who they can talk to if they feel that they are being bullied or are in an unsafe situation. These people may include, but are not limited to, their teacher, the administrator, school psychologist, school social worker or any other adult in the building that they have built a positive relationship with.

Students are taught about what bullying looks like and sounds like, along with how to advocate for themselves through the District's Second Step program.

# School-Wide Expectations

We believe that all children have the right to a positive, successful learning climate. The staff and parents work cooperatively to reinforce students' positive behavior to ensure this type of environment. It is our philosophy that learning appropriate behavior represents a problem solving opportunity. We use a school-wide behavior-philosophy plan that increases student learning time, stops disruptive/hurtful behavior, and teaches skills that will lead to life success.

Lincoln Public Schools provides physically safe and emotionally secure environments for all students and staff. Positive behaviors (non-violence, cooperation, teamwork, understanding and acceptance of others) are encouraged in the educational program and are required of all students and staff. Inappropriate behaviors, including but not limited to bullying, intimidation and harassment, must be avoided by all students and staff. Strategies and practices are implemented to reinforce positive behaviors and to discourage and protect others from inappropriate behaviors.

Students are taught expectations across all environments at school. Common area expectations (areas such as hallways, cafeteria, restrooms, etc.) are reviewed throughout the year. Children receive positive reinforcement for exhibiting appropriate behavior.

# Recess / Lunch Schedule

SCHEDULE		
Grade	Lunch	Recess
Kindergarten	11:00 - 11:25	11:25 - 11:40
1st Grade	11:25 - 11:45	11:45 - 12:00
2nd Grade	11:40 - 12:00	12:00 - 12:15
3rd Grade	11:55 - 12:15	12:15 - 12:30
4th Grade	12:10 - 12:30	12:30 - 12:45
5th Grade	12:20 - 12:40	12:40 - 12:55

Feel free to join us for breakfast or lunch! Here are the prices:

BREAKFAST	
Students	\$1.30
Reduced Price	\$.30

LUNCH	
Students	\$2.50
Reduced Price	\$.40
Adults and Visitors	\$4.00
Milk Only	\$.60

Prices subject to change. Please see the LPS Nutrition Services website at [www.lps.org](http://www.lps.org) for current pricing or Free and Reduced Meal Applications.

## Copyright and Fair Use Policy

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# Tips for Lunch Visitors

We encourage you and your family to join your child or children for lunch as often as possible!

- **Time:** We suggest arriving about 10 minutes prior to your child's scheduled lunch so that you have time to check in and get a badge from our Office Staff at Door #1. If you have more than one child attending Pyrtle, you may stay in the designated area so that you can eat with each of your children during their scheduled lunchtime. Your child must join their class when they leave lunch so that they do not miss instruction in their classroom.
- **Additional Guests:** You are welcome to bring other family members to sit and eat with you as well. If someone other than a legal guardian plans to eat with a Pyrtle student, the legal guardian must call the school and alert the office staff before the guest is allowed to eat with the student.
- **Food:** You are welcome to buy a school lunch or bring lunch for yourself and your child/family. You may not share food with other children, due to potential allergies and government guidelines.
- **Seating:** We ask families to sit at the designated guest area. Seating is assigned so we cannot accommodate seats at the regular table.
- **Delays:** If you are not able to arrive by the time the last child in their grade gets a school lunch, we will explain to your child that sometimes things come up that prevent families from getting to school on time. We will have them get a school lunch so that they can eat within their scheduled time. If you happen to arrive late, you will still be able to join them for whatever time is left during their lunch period.

# Tips for Student Lunch

Independence is the key!

- **Lunches from Home:** Please make sure your child can be independent with the items packed in their lunch. Items that prove difficult for many children include fruit cups, yogurt sticks, cheese sticks, etc. Help your child practice at home so that you can include these fun items when they are ready. If we notice that a child does not have enough items in their lunch from home or appears to have forgotten to pack a lunch for that day, we will have your child get a school lunch. If this becomes a pattern, we will call you to develop a plan together.
- **Lunches from School:** Pyrtle staff assist students with learning the procedures for getting a school lunch. We will also assist them in learning to take the appropriate condiments and silverware needed for the meal that day. Occasionally there are items included that are difficult to open and we will help them practice these as well.



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5/25

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