

Doing What's Best For Kids!



Poland Community School
Student and Family Handbook
2016 - 2017

1250 Maine Street
Poland, Maine 04274

Phone: 998 - 4915

Fax: 998 - 4998

www.rsul6.org

Poland Community School

Information for Students and Families

School Office Hours

8:00 – 4:30

School Hours

K-6 Mon, Tues, Thurs, and Fri: 8:30 – 3:15

Early Release Wednesdays: 8:30 - 2:15

Pre-K AM: 8:30 - 11:05 PM: 12:10 - 3:15

Classes begin daily at 8:45

Early Release Wednesdays: No Pre-K

Principal: Rick Benoit

Assistant Principal: Amy Hediger

Important Phone Numbers

School Office	998-4915
To call in an absence	ext. 0
Nurse	ext. 140
Lunch Program	ext. 129
School Counselor	ext. 153
Special Ed Team Leader	ext. 148
RSU16 Central Office	
Superintendent's Office	998-2727
Special Education Office	998-2762
Transportation Office	998-2727 x107

RSU #16 VISION, MISSION and FRAMEWORK

Mission and Educational Philosophy

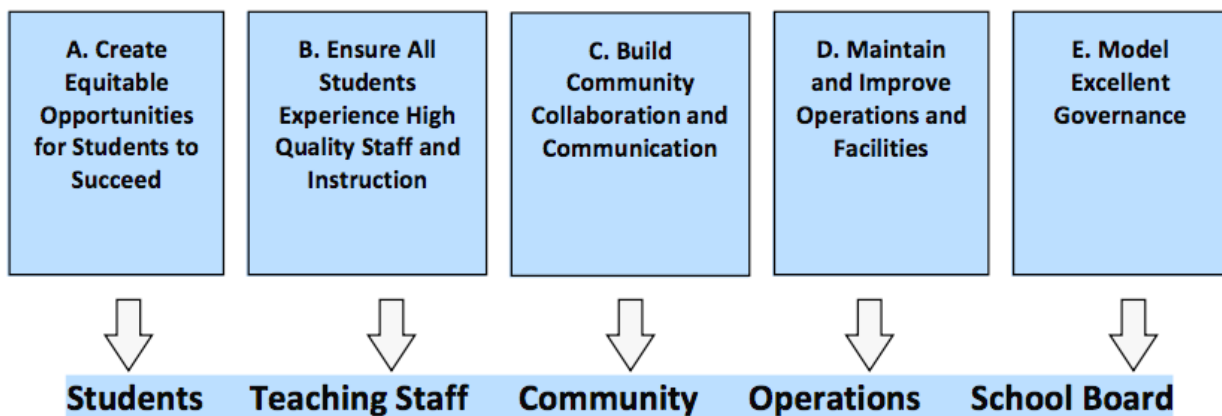
The mission of RSU 16 is to serve the community by providing its citizens with educational services in a safe and welcoming environment through our public schools and adult education programs. At RSU 16 we believe in providing each student with the opportunity to learn how they learn best, reach their full potential, become life-long learners, and contributors to their community.

Vision

In five years we envision a truly regional school district that generates pride and garners full support from the governments and citizens of Mechanic Falls, Minot, and Poland. While students and families associate with particular schools, there is a strong sense that all schools are part of a unified district and that no school is more important or privileged than any others. All schools are our schools.

In five years we envision students graduating from our schools who are well equipped for success in the 21st Century. All students have received a well-rounded education and have also been encouraged to excel in pursuit of their particular talents and aspirations. All students have skills and enthusiasm for life-long learning.

Framework



Annual Notifications

Affirmative Action

It is the policy of RSU 16 to ensure equal employment/educational opportunities and affirmative action regardless of race, sex, orientation, color, national origin, marital status, religion, age or disability in accordance with all federal and state legislation.

Student Records: Annual Notification of Rights

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students 18 years of age or older (eligible students) certain rights with respect to the student's education records. To review a complete copy of the law, please contact the Special Education Office at 998-2762.

For additional information, please contact the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, Washington, DC 20202-4605.

In the interests of the community and our students, RSU 16 maintains a policy on education records that exceeds federal legal requirements. To review the entire policy, please visit the RSU 16 website.

Restraint and Seclusion Policy

The Maine State Legislature recently passed a law that requires school districts to adopt a policy on restraint and seclusion. Please see the RSU 16 website for the district's policy ("JKAA-R-Restraint Procedure").

The district has recently updated the policy based on state direction. Please see an explanation of the changes at the RSU 16 website.

PARENT RIGHT TO REQUEST QUALIFICATIONS OF STUDENT'S TEACHERS

Under the "Parents' Right to Know" requirements of the federal **No Child Left Behind Act** (NCLB). Under these requirements, teachers must meet general qualifications as well as the specific requirements of the subject(s) they are teaching. This means we will be informing parents whenever a teacher who does not meet the new federal definition of "Highly Qualified" teaches a child for four consecutive weeks.

Maine has some of the most qualified teachers in the country, and we are extremely proud of our teaching staff. We work hard to assure that every class has a teacher with the appropriate background, experience, and credentials for his or her current teaching assignment. Parents have the right to request information on the qualifications of their child's teacher.

We believe that a caring, competent, and qualified teacher for every child is the most important ingredient in education reform, and we want to assure you that we consider all our teachers to be fully qualified for their positions. All of our teachers have college degrees and many have advanced degrees. In addition, every teacher continues his or her own learning through professional development activities and our teachers are given feedback each year to ensure that their teaching skills remain at the highest possible level.



PCS Procedures and Practices

Absences/Tardiness

If your child will be absent or arriving late, please notify the office by 9 a.m. You can do this by calling 998-4915 extension 0 or sending an email to pbourgoin@rsul6.org.

Admissions/Withdrawals

Parents/guardians wishing to enroll their child at PCS are required to provide immunization records, birth certificate and verification of residency in Poland. Please contact the office for appropriate registration forms. If a student transfers to another school, the new school will contact us to send the child's records. It is helpful for parents/guardians to let us know in advance that their child will be transferring to another school. This will allow us to send records in a timely manner and plan appropriate closure for your child.

Attendance

Student attendance is an important factor in promoting academic achievement. We encourage your cooperation in making sure that your child is at school every day unless they are not well. Additionally, Maine State Law governs school attendance (Title 20-A, § 5001-A):

“A student is habitually truant if the student ...is 7 years old and has not yet completed grade 6 and has the equivalent of 7 full days of unexcused absences or 5 consecutive schooldays of unexcused absences during a school year.”

By state law the definition of Excused Absence is for one of the following reasons:

1. Personal illness;
2. An appointment with a health professional that must be made during the regular school day;
3. Observance of a recognized religious holiday when the observance is required during the regular school day;
4. Family emergency;
5. Planned absence for a personal or educational purpose, which has been pre-approved by the school administration.

Please make every effort to see that your child arrives on time (between 8:25 and 8:45 a.m.). There is no supervision before 8:25 therefore; we ask that students do not arrive before this time. We appreciate your help with this. For attendance purposes, any student arriving late is to report to the office before reporting to their classroom. It is our policy that after 10 absences, excused or unexcused, parents are contacted to schedule an attendance meeting with school personnel to develop a plan to improve attendance. Once a plan has been developed, attendance will be monitored carefully. Follow-up meetings may be necessary if improvement is not made.

Books and School Materials

Students are assigned specific textbooks and learning materials for their educational programming. It is expected that each student will care for these materials and return them in good condition. If a textbook or library book is lost or damaged, parents/guardians and the student are responsible to pay the replacement cost.

Behavior

Establishing a Respectful, Responsible, Safe learning environment is a priority at PCS. The staff at Poland Community School has developed a Behavior Matrix, which identifies expected behaviors in common areas of the school. A copy is located in the appendix of this handbook. Parents are encouraged to review expectations with their children at home as well.

Bullying & Cyber Bullying in School

All students have the right to attend public schools that are safe and secure learning environments. It is the intent of the RSU #16 School Board to provide all students with an equitable opportunity to learn. To that end, the Board has a significant interest in providing a safe, orderly, and respectful school environment that is conducive to teaching and learning. Bullying is detrimental to the school environment and student learning, achievement and well being. It interferes with the mission of the schools to educate their students and disrupts the operations of the schools. Bullying affects not only students who are targets but also those who participate and witness such behavior. These behaviors must be addressed to ensure student safety and an inclusive learning environment. PCS administration does not condone and will take action in response to conduct that interferes with students' opportunity to learn, the educational mission of the RSU #16 schools and the operation of the schools. Please reference the RSU16 board policy on the district website (JICK)

Bus Behavior

Transportation on the school bus is considered part of the school day; the rules and expectations for student bus behavior are taken seriously. Students and parents are asked to review and sign a transportation contract acknowledging they have read and reviewed the bus expectations and consequences. The staff at Poland Community School works collaboratively with the transportation department, understanding that our student's day begins and ends with transportation to and from school and the experience can significantly impact their social/emotional and academic growth. We ask for parent support in reinforcing high expectations for excellent behavior on the bus. Each week we celebrate a student, from each bus, who demonstrated Outstanding Bus Behavior during the week through a drawing.

Anytime a child is going to deviate from their regular transportation schedule, a written note from the parent/guardian must be provided to both the bus driver and to the teacher.

Parents/guardians will be notified in writing if their child does not follow the behaviors identified on the matrix below. The parents/guardians are required to sign bus slips and return them to the driver the next morning. Administration will be notified of all bus slips and will also follow up with students. In most cases, the first slip acts as a warning however, if inappropriate behavior continues, students may be denied the privilege of riding the bus. Please contact the Director of Transportation at 998-2727 x 107 if you have questions or concerns about bus riding privileges. Bus contracts will be sent home the first week of school and must be returned by the end of the first full week of school.

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begins with
ME

BUS Expectations



Respectful

- Follow directions of bus driver
- Use appropriate and positive language
- Use a level 1 voice

Responsible

- Wait your turn to get on and off bus
- Find your seat quickly
- Keep seat and floor clean
- Stop talking and listen when the bus driver turns on lights
- Help others

Be Safe

- Cross only with eye contact and hand signal
- Respect 10 foot “danger zone” while waiting for bus to stop
- Stay sitting up with back against seat, facing forward until the bus comes to a complete stop
- Keep belongings on your lap
- Refrain from eating or drinking
- Keep aisles and exits clear
- Keep body and objects to self

Cancellation of School

We will be using our automated messaging system (Student Information Software) to notify parents of school cancellations and other important school information. It is very important that we always have updated contact information. Please notify the school as soon as possible if you have changes to your contact information.

In addition to Infinite Campus, local television stations will announce school cancellations. The following television stations will be notified: WGME Channel 14 TV, WMTW Channel 8 TV, WABI Channel 5 TV, and WCSH Channel 6 TV.

In the event of dismissal during the school day, families will be notified through Infinite Campus. Local television stations are also notified. Students will be reminded to go to the places designated on their emergency forms. K-2 Bus students will be dropped off at home only if an adult or older sibling is present. Please make sure the school office has current emergency information to help the school plan for unforeseen events.

Child Care

There is a Before and After School Child Care program located at PCS. The program is open on school days from 6:30–8:30 a.m. and from 3:15–6:00 p.m. Please contact Marilyn Morris at 312-9393 or Jayne Pillsbury at 998-4529 for more information, as the program is an independent organization from the school. A list of area day care providers is also available at the school office however; we do not make recommendations for specific daycares.

Concerns

In a building with nearly 500 students and 65 staff, misunderstandings and miscommunications can easily arise and sometimes mistakes are made. We strive to keep the lines of communication working well at all times and do our best to do the right thing in each of our interactions with children and families. If there is cause for concern or a complaint, our practice is first to discuss it with the person most directly associated with the issue. If there is a concern or question in the classroom, first talk to the classroom teacher.

Communication between parents/guardians and teacher(s) is essential. At any time throughout the year, if you have questions or concerns do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher to schedule a meeting or phone conference. Teachers may be contacted by phone, written notes, and by email. If the problem cannot be resolved and/or continues to be an issue, please do not hesitate to contact administration for assistance.

Conferences

Parent/Student/Teacher conferences are held twice a year. They are scheduled for November and March. Parents, students, and teachers meet in November to discuss goals for the school year. Our second conference is held in March to communicate student progress. Throughout the year, goals are refined or newly created to accommodate each student's needs. Both conferences provide an opportunity to review goals and student work. An opportunity for students to

showcase their work is an important part of the learning process. It is important that parents make every effort to participate in conferences.

Dress Code

To promote a positive learning environment all students and staff are expected to dress in appropriate workplace attire. Clothing, including jewelry and other accessories, is expected to be appropriate and not distract from learning. Any student wearing clothing in violation of one or more of the following, will be asked to change:

- Promotes alcohol, tobacco or other drugs or contains a message that is offensive or disrespectful of others
- Presents a safety concern, such as shoes with wheels in the soles, high heels or large chains on clothing or worn around the neck
- Causes maintenance problems, such as cleats, shoes that scratch floors
- Clothing that distracts others such as short shorts/skirts, halter tops, shirts with obscene signs or words on them, sheer shirts, bathing suits, cut off shirts that expose midriff or back
- Students are asked to wear shoes that are safe and comfortable for a variety of classroom and playground activities
- During winter and spring “mud season” it is helpful for a child to have a change of clothing in his/her backpack in case of an accident on the playground
- During winter months students are asked to not wear boots or snow pants during the day. Shoes or slippers with a sole must be worn at all times.

Students not wearing acceptable attire will be reminded and given the opportunity to change into acceptable attire. Parents will be contacted if there is an ongoing issue with appropriate attire. Teachers are expected to address concerns with student dress and help the student get an appropriate change of clothing. Final determination for appropriate dress is at the discretion of administration.

Emergency Contact Information

It is extremely important that parents review the emergency form, make necessary changes and return it to the school as soon as possible. If your contact information changes during the year, please contact the office to update it. Be sure your mailing address and phone numbers are correct. Please provide names and numbers of people who live locally and can be responsible for your child in case the school cannot reach you. The emergency contacts may include friends, relatives, or neighbors who can take care of your child if he/she is ill and cannot remain in school. In an emergency requiring immediate medical attention, the school will call rescue and contact parents.

Harassment

It is the philosophy of the RSU #16 School Board that harassment and sexual harassment of students is not an acceptable condition for the positive operation of our schools.

Harassment of students because of race, color, sex, religion, ancestry or national origin, sexual orientation, or disability is prohibited. Such conduct is a violation of the RSU #16 School Board policy and may constitute illegal discrimination under State and Federal laws.

Harassment includes, but is not limited to, verbal abuse based on race, color, sex, religion, ancestry or national origin, sexual orientation, or disability. Please reference the RSU16 board policy on the district website (JCIA – Weapons, Violence and School Safety). Please contact your school administrator if you feel your child is being bullied.

Head Lice

Occasionally students contract head lice. If a problem is detected, the school nurse will notify parents and a treatment will be suggested. To help reduce the possibility of lice, students should not swap hats or other clothing, and never borrow combs or brushes.

Homework

The purpose of homework is to practice a specific skill or subject. Homework frequently involves math practice and reading a book independently or with a parent/guardian, sibling, or other adult. If your child has made a good effort by being actively engaged in completing his/her homework for a reasonable length of time, you might choose to discontinue the work and send the homework back with a quick note at the top identifying the challenges. Please let the teacher know as soon as possible.

There are clear recommendations for the amount of time students in grades 1-6 should be spending on homework. A student's grade level multiplied by ten minutes per day is the maximum amount of time student should be spending on all subjects combined per school night. See chart below for reference:

Kindergarten: Occasionally Assigned

Grade 1 - 10 minutes

Grade 2 - 20 minutes

Grade 3 - 30 minutes

Grade 4 - 40 minutes

Grade 5 - 50 minutes

Grade 6 - 60 minutes

Illness or Injury

If a student becomes ill during the school day, the nurse will evaluate the child and contact the parents/guardians or emergency contact person if the child is too ill to remain at school. The school is not equipped to care for students who are ill, but will provide a place for students who are waiting to be picked up. Accident reports are completed for all injuries sustained at school. Parents/guardian or emergency contact person is notified by phone and in writing if a student is injured and what treatment was provided.

Library Books

Students visit the school library each week, where they receive instruction in library and research skills and have the opportunity to borrow books from our children's book collection. If a library book is lost or damaged, parents/guardians and the student are responsible to pay the replacement cost.

Lost and Found

It is helpful if parents/guardians mark their child's clothing and belongings so that misplaced articles can be returned to the owners. Our school's Lost and Found is located at the entrance to the gym. Please encourage your child to check the Lost and Found regularly to retrieve missing clothing or possessions. There are an enormous amount of articles that end up in the Lost and Found each year. Items are displayed on tables in the school lobby or gym before vacations, with the hope they will be claimed. Even so, a large number of items remain at the school at the end of each school year. All remaining items are given to a charitable organization at the end of the school year.

Medication at School

It is the policy of PCS that only essential medications are administered to students at school. Whenever possible, medications should be scheduled to allow a student to receive all prescribed doses at home. If your child must take medication while at school a parent/guardian or other responsible adult must bring the medication to school where it will be kept in the Health Office. All medication must be in the original container. If you request a second container from your pharmacy, they will provide one at no cost to you. Parents/guardians are required to complete a medication permission form. This procedure applies to both prescription and over the counter medications. As part of our beginning of the year paperwork, we will ask parent/guardians to sign a standing order permission form for meds that might be needed at school. Due to possible adverse reactions, the first dose of any medication should be given at home at least 12 hours prior to the child coming to school.

Nutrition Program (Breakfast and Lunch)

Breakfast and lunch are available to students each day. Breakfast will be served between 8:25 and 8:45. Monthly menus are sent home. It is helpful if parents/guardians send in money on a weekly or monthly basis.

Lunch Cost: \$2.25 (includes white or chocolate milk)

Reduced: 40¢

Lunch Milk: 50¢

** If adults are going to visit the school to have lunch with a student please call the school by 10:00 to order a lunch. The adult lunch price is \$3.75.*

If a child has lost or forgotten lunch money, he/she can "borrow" from the cafeteria. Repayment is expected the next day. A lunch will be provided for any child who does not bring one from home. It is important that all students eat breakfast and lunch so they have the energy to be the best learners they can be. If a student frequently skips lunch, parents/guardians will be contacted. Students are encouraged to eat most of their meals and drink their milk or water. It is helpful for parents/guardians to check the menu with their child to decide which lunches they like and will eat. A salad bar with fresh fruits and vegetables is also available every day. Most days there is also a choice of an entree however, if your child does not like both options, please send in a lunch from home so that you are confident your child has eaten a healthy meal.

Please Note: We ask all families to complete the free/reduced lunch application, even if you don't believe you will qualify, as it provides important information that could potentially increase the state subsidy we receive. An increase in funding would result in improved educational programming. We appreciate your help with this.

Parent/Teacher Association (PTA)

PCS is fortunate to have an active and enthusiastic Parent/Teacher Association. The Poland PTA generously supports enrichment opportunities for our students. Each year the PTA funds performances for the whole school, as well as special events for individual grades or classrooms. All parents/guardians are welcome to join and get involved in the PTA. Watch for notices of PTA meetings in students' totes.

Peanut Free Zones

We have students at Poland Community School that have life-threatening allergies to peanuts and nut products. Peanuts and peanut products are some of the most common foods to cause allergic reactions in both children and adults. They are the most common cause of fatal food allergic reactions. For individuals who are allergic to peanuts and peanut products, accidental eating or contact with peanut products will produce swelling of the mouth and throat, loss of consciousness and, without timely treatment, death.

For the safety of students with allergies, we have set aside peanut-free zones at PCS that must be peanut and nut-based product free. No type of nuts or nut products can be in these areas, as they pose a threat to the safety of members of our student body. Compliance with the peanut free zone conditions must be followed at all times.

Personal Items At School

Students are discouraged from bringing cell phones, electronic games, music devices, and trading cards to school. Under special circumstances, students may use music or electronic games while they are on the bus. These items must be kept in backpacks and may not be used during the regular school day. Students are prohibited from using cell phones while at school.

Under no circumstances may students bring weapons or items that may be used as weapons to school. This includes chains of any kind and replicas of weapons.

Items of value or personal importance should not be brought to school.

Physical Education

All students have Physical Education once a week. For student safety and to preserve the gym floor, students are required to wear sneakers for Physical Education class. The sneakers should tie or fasten and fit in such a way that they don't come off during activities. Students must also wear pants or shorts during class.

If a student needs to be excused from the activity they must present the teacher with a note from a parent or doctor. If a student has an extended injury or illness, they must have a doctor's note before returning to physical activities.

Totes (Blue and white Friday folder provided by school)

Every student has a tote that is sent home at the end of each week. Totes contain important communications regarding upcoming school events, community events, and meetings. Classroom newsletters may be included as well. Please return your child's emptied tote on Monday morning.

Title IA Services

Title I Literacy Teacher: Jacque Russo

Title I Math Teacher: Brandi Comeau

Title IA is a federally funded program under the No Child Left Behind Act. Its purpose is to provide supplemental instruction in reading, writing and math for eligible students on a short or long-term basis. This assistance is in addition to classroom instruction and supports the regular language arts and math programs. Teacher recommendations, as well as various assessments are used to determine eligibility. A Math Teacher, a Literacy Teacher and two Title IA Educational Technicians provide support services. Parental input is a valuable part of the Title IA program and therefore, parents are encouraged to become involved in their child's learning. Persons interested in obtaining more information about Title IA are encouraged to contact their child's classroom teacher or our Title IA Math and/or Literacy Teacher(s).

Recess

All children go outside for a 20-30 minute recess each day, weather permitting. Children should come to school prepared with appropriate clothing to play outside each day. During winter months, students should have boots with them every day. In order to play in the snow, younger children must wear snow pants or waterproof pants. Hats, mittens or gloves, and a warm coat are essential for winter recess!

Report Cards/Progress Reports

Report cards are completed three times each year, early December, March, and June. Our grading system is a 4-point scale. The points on this scale indicate the child's progress compared to expectations for students at that grade level at that time in the school year.

Visitors

While we welcome visitors to our school, to maintain a productive learning environment, it is important that visits to our classrooms are scheduled and designed to support the educational process. Visits to observe a classroom or teacher are not encouraged or generally approved. This practice is enforced to maintain the integrity of our learning environment, the ability of our teachers to focus their full attention on our students and their instruction, and confidentiality of our students. All visitors should stop by the office to be issued a badge.

Volunteers

Volunteers are parents, guardians, and community members who assist in the classroom or provide other support in school. These roles may range from performing clerical tasks, to sharing personal travel or vocational experiences, supporting instruction, working with small groups and/or individual students. Volunteers are always needed! There are many ways volunteers can help our school community. There are also things that can be done in your home if you are not

PCS Behavior Expectations Matrix



BE RESPECTFUL	BE RESPONSIBLE	BE SAFE
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give quiet waves to greet others Respect all hallway displays Use a 0 - 1 voice level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go directly to where you need to be Keep eyes forward Space between you and others Walk single file 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk on right hand side of hallway/stairway Carry personal belongings properly Walk up and down stairs one step at a time Keep body to yourself
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use 0 voice level in line until seated Use quiet v while seated (0 - 2 voice level) Use appropriate, polite language Use table manners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take appropriate serving size and materials Sit at assigned table Raise your hand for help and permission to leave your table Clean up your space - <i>table and floor</i> 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enter and exit the cafeteria orderly Eat only your own food Keep body and objects to self Walk at all times Stay seated until dismissed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect the privacy of others Leave area clean and neat - <i>take care of our school</i> Wait patiently and quietly in line (0-1 voice level) Treat bathroom/fountain equipment appropriately 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go, flush, wash, leave Return to class promptly - get back to work Use appropriate amount of bathroom supplies and dispose of them properly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use bathroom/fountain with permission Keep personal space Report inappropriate/unsafe behavior
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice sportsmanship Show kindness with words and actions - <i>Use appropriate and positive language</i> Be inclusive Take turns and share 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Return equipment to appropriate place First whistle = freeze, second whistle = line up Be an effective problem solver Follow rules and directions Be prepared for the activity and conditions 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay within boundaries Use equipment appropriately and safely Keep body and objects to self Report unresolved conflicts, accidents, or injuries to duty staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enter and exit the assembly quietly (0-1 voice level) Raise hand to answer a question Follow staff directions Applaud appropriately to show appreciation 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be an active listener Look, listen, and learn 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep the aisles clear Stay with your teacher Keep hands and feet still and to yourself
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow directions of bus driver Use appropriate and positive language Use a level 1 voice 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find your seat quickly Keep seat and floor clean Stop talking and listen when the bus driver turns on lights Help others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect no foot "danger zone" while waiting for bus to stop Stay sitting up, back against seat, facing forward Keep belongings on your lap Refrain from eating or drinking Keep aisles and exits clear Keep hands, feet, body and objects to self

Handbook Acknowledgement Form

The 2016-2017 handbook can be reviewed electronically



Poland Community School

Student and Family Handbook

Acknowledgement Form 2016-2017

Student Name (please print)

Teacher

Grade

My signature indicates that I have read and reviewed the 2016-2017 Poland Community School Student and Family Handbook with my child (*electronic or hardcopy*).

An electronic version can be found on the Poland Community School web page.

If you would like a hardcopy, please notify the school office and we will send one to you.

998-4915 x118 or sbarron16@rsu16.org

Signature

Date