

# **Morris Brandon Elementary:**

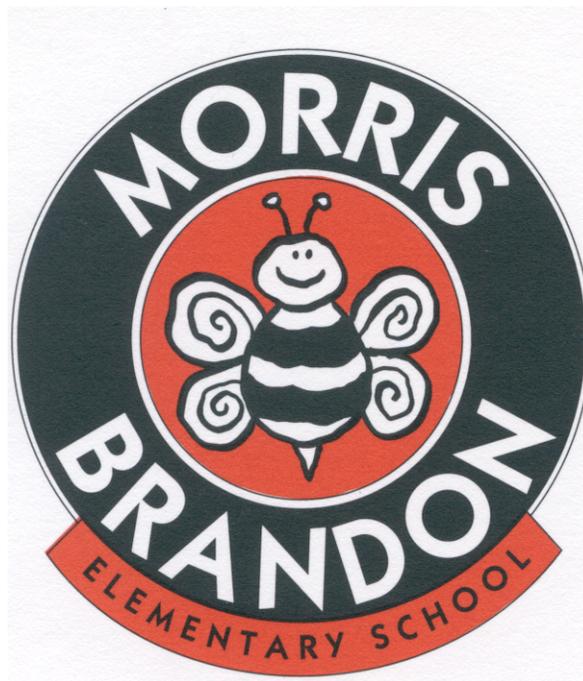
**Brandon Main Campus (2<sup>nd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> grades)**

**Brandon Primary Center (Kindergarten & 1<sup>st</sup> grade)**

**An International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program World School**

**2010/2011**

**Parent/Student Handbook**



**Karen Evans, Principal**

**Mattie Lamar, Assistant Principal**

**Pete Settlemayer, Program Administrator**

## MORRIS BRANDON ELEMENTARY

### School & PTA Policies, Procedures, Routines and Programs

Welcome to Morris Brandon 2010/2011. This booklet contains almost everything you will ever need to know about how Morris Brandon Elementary operates. Brandon is now a school of approximately 1139 students and over 130 staff members; therefore, we have found it necessary to implement an assortment of routines and procedures that help ensure a safe and smoothly run school. Please read the following information carefully and keep it within easy reach throughout the school year. If you have questions about school procedures not covered in this booklet, please contact your child's teacher or the administration.

### **SCHOOL HOURS**

The school day for students begins promptly at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 2:30 p.m. **Students should not arrive at school before 7:30 a.m. unless they have a scheduled activity.** There is no adult supervision until 7:30am. Students arriving prior to 7:45 a.m. wait in designated areas by grade level and are monitored by teachers. At 7:45 a.m. students proceed directly to their classrooms. By 7:55 a.m. all students should be in their classrooms, prepared for announcements and class work. If your child comes to school late, s/he must first report to the lobby desk for a tardy pass.

Afternoon dismissal typically ends by 2:35 when students who walk are dismissed. However, dismissal times are dependent upon many factors and may vary slightly. **All children must be picked up by 2:45 p.m. unless they have a scheduled after-school activity.**

### **TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM SCHOOL**

**APS Buses:** The telephone number for the Atlanta Public Schools' Transportation Office is (404) 802-5500. Use this number if you have any concerns about bus transportation. FYI - The transportation department of Atlanta Public Schools configures bus routes based on maximum occupancy. Our busses become over-crowded very quickly when children bring friends home that normally ride a different bus, walk, or carpool home. **Therefore, students will not be allowed to bring friends home on the bus - absolutely no exceptions.**

At both campuses, morning buses are unloaded in the front drive of the school. Buses begin arriving at 7:30 a.m. and students proceed directly to their classrooms upon arrival. Afternoon bus dismissal begins at 2:20 on both campuses. Due to the large number of buses, students are loaded for afternoon dismissal in groups. The first round of 7 or 8 buses are loaded at 2:20 on both campuses. At the main campus, the second round of buses is loaded

after all have arrived from the Primary Center. At the Primary center, buses are loaded as they arrive after the initial large group has been dismissed. At both campuses, teachers escort students to the bus each afternoon.

**Walkers:** Students who live within a mile of their assigned campus are not eligible for bus service. At the Main Campus, walkers are dismissed immediately after the first round of buses has departed, usually between 2:25 and 2:30. At the Primary Center, walkers are dismissed to the front entrance of the school at 2:20 where they should be met by a parent or caregiver.

**Carpool:** Brandon carpool traffic can be extensive and time-consuming (especially morning) and often results in careless behavior on the part of adults. **The thought behind our carpool procedures is the safety of our children not driver convenience.** Please make sure that every person who drives carpool in your household is aware of and prepared to follow all procedures. Also, carpooling with other Brandon families or riding the bus helps alleviate the number of cars in the line each morning and afternoon. We would appreciate your efforts to carpool with at least one other Brandon family. Let's make this a priority!

At the Main Campus, carpool drop off and pick up is in the Howell Mill Rd. parking lot and at the Primary Center, morning drop off is in the front drive of the school and afternoon pickup is along Parkwood Dr. **We cannot emphasize enough that students are not to be dropped off or picked up at any other location.** When you enter the driveway, pull forward as far as possible. School Safety Patrols (5<sup>TH</sup> grade students) on the Main Campus and Brandon staff members at the Primary Center will assist your child in exiting or entering the car. **Driver cell phone use is prohibited at all times in the carpool line.** If you choose to park and walk your child into the building, please park in the Howell Mill Rd. parking lot at the Main Campus and legally on a surrounding side street at the Primary Center.

**Changes in Transportation:** The Brandon staff strives to keep your child's well-being and safety first and foremost at all times. Therefore, we encourage you to keep your child's after school routine as consistent as possible. However, we realize that there will be times when you will need to alter your normal routine. For these occasions, please send a note to your child's teacher detailing all information regarding the transportation change and including your signature. Your child will then present this note to the Parent Transportation Volunteer (Morning Mom) in the lobby between 7:30 and 8:30am to be recorded in the transportation changes log. The child's name, teacher's name, and change of plans (bus number, carpool, and walker) are recorded in this log and maintained at the receptionist's desk for later reference if necessary. After your note has been recorded in the log and initialed by the Morning Mom, your child must then give it to his/her teacher.

For the safety of our children, all changes of transportation must be in writing and include a parent signature. **NO CHANGES IN TRANSPORTATION CAN BE MADE VIA TELEPHONE** and no changes in transportation will be accepted after 1:30pm, except in case of an extreme emergency. It is important that you and your child discuss how s/he is going home, and that the teacher is aware of your plans, particularly any changes you make to your normal routine. Please remember that this written notification is required to ensure that the staff is aware of any changes. This is an important security issue, and requires the cooperation of all parents!

**REMINDER:** Students are not allowed to ride a different bus or ride the bus home with a friend if they normally walk or carpool home - **ABSOLUTELY NO EXCEPTIONS.**

### **ABSENCES FROM SCHOOL**

A child is considered absent if s/he does not attend school for over one half (1/2) of the school day. More specifically, if your child arrives at school by 8:00 a.m. but leaves for the day before 11:00 a.m. or if s/he arrives at school after 11:00 a.m., or if s/he does not attend school any part of the day, s/he is considered absent. If your child is going to be absent, please email or call his/her teacher. Then, upon your child's return to school, please send a written note to his/her teacher explaining the reason for the absence. An absence is considered unexcused until you send a written explanation to the teacher. An excused absence as defined by APS is (a)personal illness of the student, (b)serious illness or death in the immediate family of the student, (c)medical or dental appointments with verifications; however, such non-emergency appointments are encouraged during non-school hours when possible, (d)special or recognized religious holidays observed by the faith of the student.

**Perfect Attendance Recognition:** Morris Brandon honors students with Perfect Attendance each year. Perfect attendance is considered as 0 days absent (excused or unexcused) and 0 days tardy (excused or unexcused). Students with Perfect attendance for each report card period will be recognized at the end of the quarter (9 weeks). Students with Perfect Attendance for the entire year will be recognized in a special way on the last day of school. When scheduling your children's routine medical and dental appointments remember that to maintain perfect attendance they must arrive at school by 8:00 and must not leave school prior to 11:00 or they must arrive by 8:00 and remain for more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the school day. In other words, leave school after 8:00 but return in time to complete  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the day.

Each year APS sets an attendance goal for each school. Brandon's attendance goal is less than 15% of our students are absent 10 days or more. Please help us achieve our goal by

limiting absences. Excused absences and tardy arrivals do count against our overall school attendance goal and recognition for perfect attendance.

**Make-Up Work:** For all absences excused due to the reasons outlined above, students are allowed to make up missed school work. The student and parent need to follow up with the teacher upon his/her return to school regarding the missed school work. Please give your child's teacher at least 24 hours notice to compile missed work. Please do not ask for missed work until your child returns to school. Students are given 1 day per day absent to complete missed work. For example, if your child misses 2 days of school, s/he is given 2 days to make up missed work upon their return to school.

**Early Check-out Procedure:** Early dismissal is not encouraged; however, if you must take your child out of school during regular school hours, send a note in the morning to the teacher stating the reason for checkout. This allows the teacher to give your child homework assignments and keeps disruption to a minimum. At the check-out time, you must sign your child out in the notebook on the desk in the lobby and ask the receptionist to call your child from class. Your child will not be called from class until you arrive in the front lobby. Therefore, do not ask your child's teacher to send him/her to wait in the front lobby at a designated time. Please do not go to your child's classroom to pick him/her up during the day. In order to ensure a safe and orderly afternoon dismissal, students will not be called from classrooms for early dismissal after 2:00 each afternoon.

## **INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS**

### **INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE PRIMARY YEARS PROGRAM (IB-PYP)**

Morris Brandon is an International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Program World School. As an IB Primary Years Program (IB-PYP) school, we provide an internationally respected approach to teaching and learning that along with the State Performance Standards will prepare students for challenging learning experiences now and in their futures.

The PYP curricular framework educates the whole child and provides a comprehensive, inquiry-based approach to teaching and learning. While incorporating local, state, and national curriculum requirements as well as the arts and foreign language, the PYP reaches beyond minimum standards to provide a rich, rigorous education of habit and mind.

**Art:** The objective of the elementary school art program at Morris Brandon is for the students to be able to produce their own artworks using some of the Elements (Line, Color,

Shape, Texture, Form, Space, Value) and Principles ( Balance, Contrast, Emphasis, Movement, Pattern, Rhythm, Unity) of Design. Students will develop studio skills in drawing, painting and sculpture as well as developing their aesthetic perceptions and knowledge of some art history.

Instruction in art provides special opportunities for students to develop cognitive and perceptual skills: finding the meaning of visual symbols, analyzing a work of art to find its many components, making judgments based on formal criteria and personal impressions. Art provides access to cultural heritage. Art provides opportunities for students to make original contributions and experience pride of workmanship.

**Band/Chorus/Music/Orchestra:** Each class is scheduled for a weekly lesson with the music teacher as a part of our basic curriculum. In addition, beginning in the fourth grade, students have the opportunity to participate in Band, Orchestra, or Chorus on a voluntary basis. Parents are responsible for renting or buying an instrument for their child to participate in Band or Orchestra. Information about these opportunities will be sent home at the beginning of the school year.

**Counselor Connections:** The Counselor Connections class provides interactive lessons that enhance the regular classroom curriculum. Lessons are based on the Georgia Performance Standards, IB planners and IB profiles and attitudes. The lessons reinforce what the regular classroom teacher is teaching and allow students to expand their learning while engaging in a variety of hands-on activities.

**French:** At Morris Brandon Elementary first through fifth grade students receive instruction in French for 30 minutes everyday. Our program falls under the umbrella of the language arts curriculum and mainly has a focus in oral proficiency. Students begin learning more grammar and producing more writing in the second language in fourth and fifth grades. Our units of instruction are thematically based and connect to the child's real world and his/her experiences. The French teachers are all trained experts in their field. They use different methodologies and a lot of scaffolding (gestures, flash cards, songs, etc.) to reach each learner. Much like learning one's first language, the approach we take here is a 95%-100% immersion during French class. We expect students to be great listeners, to participate enthusiastically, and to appreciate the opportunity to have an elementary foreign language program.

**Media Center:** The Media Center is open from 7:30am to 2:30pm daily. The media center supports classroom instruction by providing print and non-print resources for student and teacher use while integrating various technologies. Students check out books for a two-week

period and magazines for a three-day period. Overdue notices are given to classroom teachers periodically through out each quarter. These are then given to the individual student. Overdue materials must be returned or paid for before students can check out more materials. Lost materials must be paid for by the last day of school.

**Music:** The Morris Brandon Music Curriculum is based on the Quality Core Curriculum Standards of the Georgia Department of Education. Music students have the opportunity to perform by singing and playing classroom instruments. Students learn about famous composers and different kinds of music, instruments and voices through listening and music appreciation. Worksheets and classroom exercises are used to teach music vocabulary, basic theory, signs and symbols. Fourth and fifth grade students learn basic keyboard skills with the fully equipped portable keyboard lab.

**Physical Education: "Building a stronger youth through heart healthy activities, fitness, cooperation and character."**

We are excited that everyone will have P.E. every other day and we want to remind students and parents of our P.E. Rules that maximize safety and participation:

**"P.E. Rules!"**

1. FREEZE/whistle: Stop, Look and Listen
2. GO: start your activity
3. RESPECT EACH OTHER: Move safely, participate with different people, encourage others
4. RESPECT EQUIPMENT: Treat PE equipment better than your own, use equipment properly
5. PARTICIPATE: Wear tennis shoes, appropriate clothing, hair out of eyes, try new things, work hard

Students will be assessed on:

I. Skill development:

Demonstration of proper form

Ex. Stepping with opposition when rolling a ball.

II. Knowledge of movement concepts:

Written or verbal test of the cues for a skill or strategy

Ex. Name the cues for the proper form when throwing a ball overhand.

### III. Participation:

Principled Performers: (Daily behavior grade)

1. Needs frequent reminders to follow directions.
2. Needs to be reminded to dress for PE (shoes, hair, etc.).
3. Needs one reminder during class.
4. Participates appropriately.
5. Takes the initiative to help others.

If your child can't participate in PE, a written excuse must be provided or your child's grade will be affected. For all major medical issues please submit a written excuse from your child's physician.

**For all chronic medical conditions, please inform the PE staff and the Nurse in writing ASAP.**

## **HOMEWORK**

Brandon Homework Philosophy -

We the staff of Morris Brandon Elementary School believe that homework assignments should be purposeful, concise, and based upon academic goals that are derived from the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) and the IB Program of Inquiry Units of Study. These assignments should create a true connection between the classroom and home and provide relevant practice in appropriate areas of grade level curriculum. The teacher will provide meaningful feedback that enhances the students' mastery of curriculum standards. The credit given for these assignments will be reflected in the Work/Study Habits section of the report card and is not to be included in the students' overall grade averages.

Expectations for the amount and rigor of homework will be consistent across each grade level as determined by the team of teachers. These expectations will be clearly and effectively communicated to parents and students so there is no misunderstanding as to the requirements of each grade level. Parents help best by providing a quiet, well-equipped place for study and by monitoring the time and effort put into homework activities.

## **SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM/BRANDON CAFETERIA**

Students may purchase lunch at school or bring lunch from home. The price of a school lunch is \$1.75. Student lunches may be paid on [www.mealpay.com](http://www.mealpay.com) for the entire week, or by the month or semester. If your child does not purchase lunch, but would like to purchase milk, the cost of milk alone is 45 cents per day. You can pay for milk on a weekly basis. The cafeteria serves lunch from 10:30 to 12:45. Sharing lunchtime with your child is a great way to see your child interact with their classmates and we encourage you to join your child

for lunch any time. Adult lunches are \$2.50. Siblings and grandparents are also welcome. **DO NOT BRING FAST FOOD LUNCHESES TO SCHOOL FOR YOUR CHILD. If your child forgets his/her lunch or lunch money**, you may bring the lunch or lunch money to the receptionist in the lobby.

**Cafeteria Conduct:** All students at Brandon are expected to observe the following guidelines in the cafeteria: (1) Be respectful of the cafeteria monitor on duty; (2) Stay seated at your assigned table and talk softly only with those seated near you; (3) Stay seated until your table is dismissed; (4) Clean up your area of the table and floor for the next student.

## **SCHOOL DRESS GUIDELINES**

Students are expected to look neat, clean and tidy at all times, and to use good judgment in choosing clothes to wear to school. Clothes should be comfortable and conform to general standards of good taste. Athletic shoes and shorts or pants must be worn on the day the student attends physical education class.

## **FORGOTTEN ITEMS**

If your child leaves something at home that is absolutely essential to complete the school day, you may bring it to the receptionist. Use this as an opportunity to teach your child responsibility. Instructional time will not be interrupted to call students to the lobby to retrieve forgotten items.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER ANNOUNCEMENTS**

In the event of inclement weather or a large-scale emergency, parents should tune into radio or TV for information regarding school closings. Remember that Brandon is an Atlanta City School, part of the Atlanta Public Schools system, NOT a Fulton County School. Listen to instructions carefully; different instructions are given for each school system.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

All clothing and personal property should be labeled clearly with the child's full name. Articles found at the Main Campus will be placed in the Lost and Found located in the storage cabinet in hallway leading to the fifth grade wing. At the Primary Center, Lost and Found is located on a rack and in a box in a break-room off the main hallway to the right of the front office. Periodically, thanks to our terrific PTA volunteers, the Lost and Found will

be cleared out and labeled items will be returned to the child's classroom. All unlabeled items will be dated. Any unclaimed items remaining after one month will be donated to charity.

## **CLINIC PROCEDURES**

**Medical Emergencies and Accidents:** In case of any kind of emergency, every effort will be made to reach a parent or guardian using the phone numbers that you have provided. Please keep your contact numbers current at all times. If a parent cannot be reached, the student will be taken to the nearest emergency health care center if immediate medical care is required. The parent/legal guardian will assume all costs for transport and medical care.

**Medicine at School:** Written orders from a medical doctor must be on file for all prescription and nonprescription medication to be administered at school. Forms can be obtained from the school nurse's office. Students are not allowed to self-administer any medications at school.

## **PARKING**

At the Main Campus, the Dover Rd. parking lot is reserved **exclusively** for faculty and staff at all times. Visitors can park in any of the designated spots in the front drive of the school or in the Howell Mill Rd. parking lot. At the Primary Center, parking is extremely limited. The designated spots in the front of the school are reserved at all times and other spots are available on a first come basis. At both campuses, we encourage you not to park on the grass or on the sidewalks around the school. The areas around each campus are frequently patrolled by the Atlanta Police Department and tickets are issued for illegal parking. Please use common sense and consideration for others and our neighbors' property when parking your vehicle.

## **REPORT CARDS**

Report cards are issued four times each year; at the end of each quarter. Report cards are generally sent home with the students in a sealed envelope a few school days after the end of the quarter. End-of-the-year report cards are mailed to your home in early June each year.

## VISITING THE SCHOOL

Parent involvement is welcomed, encouraged, and appreciated at Brandon. However, **you must sign the visitors' register in the lobby and wear a visitor's badge** anytime you come to school to have lunch with your child, read to the class, work on a special project, etc. The classroom teacher must approve all visits to classrooms during instructional time and all observations of classrooms must be approved by the Principal, Karen Evans, and scheduled through the classroom teacher. This is consistent with the Atlanta Board of Education policies and minimizes interruption of instruction. Preservation of valuable instructional time is our number one goal at Brandon.

## STUDENT CONDUCT

Brandon students generally conduct themselves in a way that makes us proud of our school and is in accordance with the Atlanta Public Schools' Guidelines on Conduct. However, it is sometimes necessary to contact parents if a child misbehaves repeatedly. Continued misbehavior may result in an in-school suspension, out of school suspension, or referral to a higher authority for action. Physically aggressive behavior toward other students and/or staff members and physical or verbal bullying will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

## CONFERENCES

**Teacher:** All Brandon teachers are required to hold at least one conference with each parent by the end of the first quarter (9 weeks). For the remainder of the school year, conferences may be requested at any time by the parent or teacher. If you would like to schedule a conference, please coordinate directly with the teacher. Conferences are often held during the planning time, so please respect the teacher's time by arriving promptly and coming prepared with specific questions or concerns. **Always call ahead or send a note if you need time with your child's teacher. Please do not drop by your child's classroom unannounced for a conference.** It is unfair to ask a teacher for quick answers without adequate time to refer to your child's records. Impromptu conferences in the hallways disrupt the teacher's schedule and interrupt instructional time for all students in the class. Please do not put our teachers in the difficult position of denying you an impromptu conference.

**Administration:** Anyone on the administrative team, Karen Evans (Principal), Mattie Lamar (Assistant Principal), and/or Pete Settelmayer (Program Administrator) is happy to meet with you at any time to discuss your concerns. Please schedule appointments by calling either front office staff at the main school numbers.

## STANDARDIZED TESTING

**Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Test (GA CRCT):** Every April students in grades 3-5 take the Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Test (GA CRCT), which is an assessment developed by the Georgia Department of Education. These tests are aligned with the Georgia Performance Standards and are designed to measure our students' progress in mastering the Georgia curriculum. Students in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades **not** meeting the **minimum** standard on the Georgia CRCT will not be promoted to the next grade. All 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students not passing must attend summer school. These students will be given an opportunity to take the test again during the summer school session and will be promoted upon passing.

**Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS):** Students in grades 3 and 5 take the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) in March. The ITBS is designed to measure the performance of Brandon students against students nationally at the same grade level.

## TEXTBOOKS

Students are assigned textbooks for the year by their homeroom teacher. Each student is responsible for taking care of these expensive materials. If a textbook is lost or damaged, parents will be asked to pay for a replacement book.

## TUTORING

If your child is struggling academically, you may request tutoring from your child's current teacher at any time. Per APS policy, teachers are not permitted to tutor students for pay even after school hours. Teachers are available for tutoring after school on Wednesday afternoons or any other day/time that suits the schedules of the teacher and/or parent/child. Tutoring by outside sources (non-Brandon staff) is not permitted on school grounds at any time under any circumstances.