**Frequently Asked Questions by New Parents to Wyngate**

1. **What communication can I expect from the school?**
   1. There is a website for the school and a separate website for the PTA. Each has valuable and unique information. Wyngate Elementary School: <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/wyngatees> . Wyngate PTA: [www.wyngatepta.com](http://www.wyngatepta.com) .
   2. The “Wyngate Wednesday Monthly” - a newsletter from the Principal written the first Wednesday of each month and available online on the Wyngate website. It is very important to read every issue! Old issues are on the website. The newsletter provides a list of current events, updates on school policies, helpful parenting tips, etc.
   3. PTA weekly newsletter - will be forwarded to you by your room parents.
   4. Flyers will often be sent home in your child’s backpack - keep an eye out. Some examples: information about school events, Spirit Wear and School Picture order forms, etc.
   5. Kindergarten weekly newsletters- accessed from the Wyngate website. These are AWESOME!! Ever wonder what your child does during the day? Ask him/her and get one word answers? The newsletter summarizes what was covered in class that week- a good launching point for conversations with your child. It also provides ideas for additional home enrichment projects.
   6. Wyngate Parent Listserv - parents are highly encouraged to join the listserv, in order to stay current on Wyngate news, share ideas with other parents and post questions.  In many instances, it is the only way the PTA can communicate important school and PTA- related matters in a timely manner. To join, send an email to[**WyngateParents-subscribe@yahoogroups.com**](mailto:WyngateParents-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)**.**
2. **Where can I find information about the parking lot, school hours/delays/cancellations, school lunches, and other significant parts of my child’s day?** There are 3 ways. On the Wyngate website, under “Administration” there is a link to Policies. On the PTA website there is a section called “FAQs”. Finally, in the Wyngate Wednesday Monthly newsletter the principal will review details of certain policies that are specific to that month or season.
3. **How should I notify the school when my child is going to be late or absent?** If your child will be late or absent, please email the front office and your child’s teacher and include your child’s first and last name as well as your first and last name along with the reason for the absence or late arrival.
4. **How do I let my child’s teacher know when my child’s afternoon dismissal plans change?**
   1. If your child is going home with another student(s), parents of all of the children involved must send in a legible note using first and last names and signing the notes using first and last names.  The office matches up the notes to make sure that everyone is aware of the change in plans.
   2. If your child is involved in an afterschool activity, send in a note notifying the teacher and front office.  It is important that you send a note each and every week, even if this is an ongoing class.
   3. If you pick up your child early from school, please go to the front office and your child will be called once you arrive.  It is helpful to notify the classroom teacher ahead of time of the early dismissal.  If your child is late or returns to school from an appointment, a parent or guardian must sign the child back in.  Children are not permitted to sign themselves in and out of school.
5. **What do the students do in the gym while waiting for the bus?** Each afternoon bus riders line up in the gym by bus route and grade. As buses arrive, they are announced. Students are asked to bring a book to read while waiting so that the announcements can be heard.
6. **How do I know whether my child’s bus is a double route?**  Any questions regarding bus routes and schedules should be directed to the Transportation Office at 301-469-1070.
7. **Under what circumstances are parents called by the Nurse’s office?** The nurse’s office calls all parents in instances of head lice, vomiting, broken/possibly broken bones, fevers, head injuries and in other instances at the discretion of the nurse’s office. In addition, your child’s teacher will notify you if your child is requesting to visit the nurse’s office frequently.
8. **What are the various standardized tests, when do they happen, and what grades are involved?** All information related to testing is provided by classroom teachers and the Principal’s Wednesday Monthly newsletter.For additional information regarding testing, visit the Montgomery County Schools website at www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org. There are standardized tests in reading and math currently administered by classroom teachers Grades K-5 and State testing for Grades 3-5.
9. **When do the Kindergarten students get a report card?** 2nd and 4th quarters.
10. **What do the students do in the computer room and how is this different than “media” time?** The Computer lab is generally separate from the students’ time in the media center (formerly called the library). If there is a lesson that requires students to be on the computer, they usually use the laptops in the media center. Examples of lessons: logging in, logging off, animal research, exploring a museum, etc. As for the computer lab, the classroom teachers determine how often they go there and what they teach. A teacher can reserve time in the computer lab when needed for a given lesson.
11. **What are some of the volunteer opportunities at Wyngate?**
    1. In the school itself the most consistent need is in the media center (library). The commitment is between 1-2 hours every 1-2 weeks. You help children find, shelve and check out books.
    2. In the classroom, each teacher has different needs. Some welcome parents to work with them in the classroom; others prefer to have parents contribute in other ways. Contact your teacher for details.
    3. Room Parents- a key link between you and the administration, teachers, and PTA.
    4. The PTA has many activities throughout the year for which they need volunteers. Each activity chairperson will send a separate email asking for volunteers.
    5. In addition, the PTA has open positions. You can volunteer to be on the board or to be a committee chairperson. A list of PTA committees is on the PTA website.
    6. Finally, you are welcome to create your own volunteer opportunity. For example- one parent this year decided to organize the Lost & Found. She gathers things each week and sends out a picture of the items. This ‘job’ did not exist before this year.
    7. \*\*Note- the Montgomery County school system requests that each school track the volunteer hours by parents on a monthly basis. Each month you will receive an email asking you to report your hours.
12. **What activities are available after school at Wyngate?** Most after school activities at Wyngate are not sponsored or endorsed by the PTA or MCPS. Usually they are run by independent organizations who rent space at Wyngate through the Interagency Coordinating Board (ICB). The exceptions are “Big Learning” foreign language classes (FLES) that are PTA-run (French, Chinese & Spanish) and a “Big Learning” science and engineering class that is PTA-sponsored. More information about these classes is on the PTA website. A parent has volunteered to compile a list per season and publish it on the Listserv. However, the list of activities is variable, because if a class does not have the minimum number of students registered then the vendor will cancel the class. This year’s coordinator is Vanita Bhargava, a parent who has volunteered time to compile a list of activities being offered each quarter. She usually distributes the list via the PTA newsletter and the Listserv. If you have specific questions her email is: [**vanita\_bhargava@stanfordalumni.org**](mailto:vanita_bhargava@stanfordalumni.org). Only non-profit organizations may send flyers home via backpacks. The non-profit class flyer distribution occurs twice a year.
13. **How can I get a class list?** The only way to get contact information for your child’s friends is through the Wyngate directory as the school is not allowed to distribute student information/class lists due to confidentiality regulations.
14. **Can I observe in the classroom?** The only designated day to observe is during the Open House. If you have concerns about your child’s learning, you can ask your child’s teacher to come and observe.
15. **Can I visit the playground?** It is discouraged, because it is time for children to play with children without parental intervention. If your child experiences social problems during recess, contact your child’s teacher.
16. **Can I visit lunch?** Yes, any day you would like except during Open House. All other days you can join your child for lunch. You can bring food along or just visit. If you order from the teacher in advance, you can even enjoy cafeteria food with your child! Either way, please email your child’s teacher ahead of time to let them know you will be there, and check in at the front desk when you arrive.
17. **What about birthdays?**
    1. Invitations cannot go through the teacher unless the entire class is invited. Invitations can be sent by mail or email using the PTA Directory for contact information.
    2. You can bring a small treat to be distributed at lunch. Email the teacher in advance about when you are coming. At that time the teacher can let you know about any allergy concerns.
18. **Are there any K specific activities or field trips?** Yes. The field trips are coordinated by the K teachers and dates are subject to change. All field trips must be tied to the curriculum. There are usually 3-4 per year. If there are monetary concerns related to the cost of field trips, please contact the principal. There are also several assemblies sponsored by the PTA. In addition, the PTA sets aside a stipend for one K-specific activity each year, and usually it is the room parents who organize that activity.
19. **How do I purchase Wyngate Spirit Wear?** You can purchase Wyngate branded merchandise throughout the year at various PTA-sponsored events, including magnets, pencils, hats, mugs, etc. In addition, twice a year the PTA organizes a “Spirit Wear” sale for special order items (mostly clothes) that you can customize with a specific color, design, and logo. You can order online or via an order form that is sent home in your child’s backpack.
20. **Annual activities, in chronological order (approximate). Events are subject to change.** 
    1. PTA- Back to school picnic. We will try to designate tables for Kindergarten and 1st Grade parents. A chance to meet people and ask questions.
    2. Back to School Night- meet your homeroom teacher and tour the school to see the specials’ rooms, etc.
    3. PTA- Fun Run (AM) - 1 mile for upper grades, around the block for Kindergarten. Any parent is invited to run along with your child.
    4. Open House (AM). Meet the principal and then observe your child in class.
    5. Halloween parade and parties (PM). Room parents organize, with support from the teachers and PTA. There is a link from the PTA website with party ideas.
    6. Parent-Teacher conferences.
    7. PTA- Scholastic Book Fair. During school students have a chance to purchase books in the Media Center. After hours parents can join in. Volunteers help at the registers.
    8. PTA- Ice Skating. All Wyngate students and families are invited.
    9. PTA- BINGO night. A very fun night for kids and parents! It’s been sold out the past few years so purchase your tickets early if interested.
    10. PTA- Science Fair. Children from ANY grade (including Kindergarten!) are invited to display a science project that they have created. Every participant receives a certificate from a “visiting scientist”. This is not a contest! It is a lot of fun and the participants are very proud. A great opportunity to work with your child and encourage scientific discovery.
    11. Valentines parties (PM). Room parents organize, with support from the teachers and PTA. There is a link from the PTA website with party ideas.
    12. Staff Appreciation Luncheon.
    13. PTA- “Wyngate’s Got Talent” show. Again, children from any grade are encouraged to participate. It is not a contest! Past performances include singing, dancing, instrumental music, comedy, magic, etc.
    14. PTA- Afternoon at the Movies. Wyngate reserves a movie theatre for a showing of a first run movie.  This gives students and their families a chance to get together at the movies.
    15. PTA- Multi-Cultural Night. Families are encouraged to sponsor a “table” at which you highlight your culture or country. You can provide a traditional food, art, game, etc. The evening also includes dance and musical performances by students and families on the stage. The idea is to teach other students and families about your family’s background and traditions.
    16. Take your child to work- excused absence if a student brings a note in advance.
    17. Vision/Hearing screening- April or May. Mandatory for any student new to MCPS, and students in kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 8 who do not have evidence of hearing and vision testing within the past year.
    18. Kindergarten Orientation- 2 days in April/May. \*\*No school for current Kindergarteners.
    19. Olympic Field Day- a 2 day event to highlight Wyngate physical education, featuring sports events and friendly competition. Happens at the end of the year.
    20. “Specials Week” - Music and art department performances and exhibits.
    21. End of the year “House Party” during school for children in the winning “House.” There is an overview of Wyngate’s House reward program handed out at the back to school events. The principal usually provides more information in one of the first few newsletters.
    22. Every Wednesday- “Wednesday Treats”. Each Wednesday morning, parents volunteer to bring refreshments for our teachers and staff. Volunteers drop off food/drink in the teachers’ lounge around 8am. This is a Wyngate tradition that teachers and staff really appreciate.
    23. Dining Out- Several times throughout the year the PTA coordinates with a variety of local restaurants to organize family-friendly, community building fundraiser nights for Wyngate. Restaurant meals purchased for dine in or takeout generate funds for the PTA.
    24. WE Care activities- WE Care, which stands for Wyngate Elementary Care(s), was established to provide opportunities for Wyngate students and their families to take part in service activities that benefit the larger community.  A few examples of past activities include bag lunch making for the homeless, warm clothing drive, pet parade to benefit the Montgomery County Humane Society, and making crafts for NIH Children's Inn “Thoughtful Treasures” program.